

A STUDY ON CUSTOMER'S PERCEPTION ON GREEN MARKETING

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Abstract: This research investigates the role of green markets in promoting sustainable consumption and influencing consumer behavior amidst growing environmental concerns. Emphasizing eco- friendly products, ethical sourcing, and community engagement, green markets offer sustainable alternatives to conventional markets.

A mixed-methods approach was utilized, incorporating qualitative interviews and surveys to explore consumer motivations, attitudes, and behaviors towards green markets. The study gathered data from 80-85 consumers who have purchased green products and who have ideas about green product, analyzing the impact of marketing strategies on consumer perceptions and decision-making processes through the Theory of Reasoned Action.

Index Terms: Green marketing, Consumer perception, Environmental consciousness, Sustainable consumption, Eco-friendly products, Consumer attitudes, Environmental responsibility, Greenwashing, Marketing communication, Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Sustainability messaging, Purchase intention, Ethical consumerism, Environmental impact, Brand image, Consumer Behavior, Buyers Perception, Green Products, Green Marketing Business Strategy.

Introduction

In the quest for a sustainable planet, adopting conservation behaviors is crucial. The resource- intensive lifestyles prevalent today pose significant challenges, requiring rapid and enduring behavioral changes. Historically, efforts to promote conservation have focused on immediate behavior change due to the perceived urgency of environmental issues. However, achieving stable, long-term behavior change is equally important. Raymond (1993) categorized behavior change techniques based on their informational or motivational nature and the source of change, emphasizing the difficulty of achieving durable change.

The Rise of Green Marketing

Green marketing has emerged as a powerful tool in promoting sustainable consumption. The American Marketing Association defines green marketing as the marketing of products presumed to be environmentally safe, encompassing activities such as product modification, changes to production processes, packaging changes, and advertising modifications. Despite its potential, green marketing faces challenges, including varied definitions and the risk of greenwashing, where companies make misleading environmental claims.

Historical Context and Evolution

The concept of green marketing gained prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with significant milestones such as the American Marketing Association's first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975 and the Brundtland Report in 1987, which defined sustainable development. Books like Ken Peattie's "Green Marketing" (1992) and Jacquelyn Ottman's "Green Marketing" (1993) further solidified the foundation of green marketing strategies.

Consumer Perception and Challenges

Despite high public awareness and professed willingness to support green products, the actual consumer behavior often falls short. This discrepancy is partly due to the lack of clear standards and public consensus on what constitutes "green" products. Consumers remain skeptical about green claims, and companies hesitate to promote their green attributes due to fear of backlash or accusations of greenwashing.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Green Marketing

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has played a significant role in integrating environmental considerations into marketing strategies. Companies like Ben & Jerry's pioneered the inclusion of environmental impact in their financial reports, setting a precedent for others. CSR reports and green marketing efforts have become essential in addressing

the ecological and social realities of the wider marketing environment.

Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

The legal implications of green marketing claims necessitate caution. Exaggerated or inaccurate statements may result in legal repercussions or regulatory scrutiny. In the USA, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides guidance on environmental marketing claims, emphasizing the need for accuracy and transparency in green marketing practices.

Strategies for Effective Green Marketing

Effective green marketing requires a holistic approach, integrating environmental considerations into all aspects of marketing, from product development to communication. Engaging stakeholders, including educators, community members, regulators, and NGOs, is crucial.

Balancing environmental issues with primary customer needs is essential for successful green marketing campaigns.

Adoption of Green Marketing by Companies :

Green marketing has become a significant strategy for companies aiming to meet the growing consumer demand for environmentally friendly products and practices. This approach not only enhances a company's reputation but also contributes to sustainability goals. Here are several ways companies are adopting green marketing:

1. Product Modification

Companies modify their products to reduce environmental impact. This includes using sustainable materials, improving energy efficiency, and ensuring products are recyclable or biodegradable. For example, Tesla focuses on electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions, while companies like Patagonia use recycled materials for their clothing lines.

2. Sustainable Packaging

Switching to eco-friendly packaging is a common green marketing practice. This includes utilizing products that can be reused, decompose naturally, or are derived from sustainable sources. Brands like Coca-Cola have invested in plant-based bottles, and Unilever has committed to reducing its use of virgin plastic by 50% by 2025.

3. Eco-labeling

Eco-labels provide information about the environmental impact of products, helping consumers make informed choices. Certifications like Energy Star, USDA Organic, and Fair Trade are widely recognized. These labels assure consumers of the product's compliance with specific environmental standards.

4. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Many companies integrate green marketing into their broader CSR strategies. This involves reducing the environmental impact of their operations, supporting environmental causes, and engaging in sustainable practices. For instance, Ben & Jerry's incorporates environmental considerations into its business model, focusing on sustainable sourcing and reducing its carbon footprint.

5. Marketing Communications

Green marketing often includes campaigns that highlight a company's commitment to sustainability. This can involve advertising, public relations efforts, and social media campaigns. IKEA's "People & Planet Positive" initiative and Procter & Gamble's "Ambition 2030" sustainability goals are examples of how companies communicate their green efforts.

6. Consumer Education

Educating consumers about the benefits of green products and sustainable practices is crucial. Companies often create content that raises awareness about environmental issues and provides tips for sustainable living. For instance, the Body Shop runs campaigns to educate consumers on topics like cruelty-free products and sustainable sourcing.

7. Partnerships and Collaborations

Collaborating with environmental organizations, governments, and other companies can enhance the credibility of green marketing efforts. These partnerships can lead to initiatives that address broader environmental challenges. Starbucks, for example, collaborates with Conservation International to promote sustainable coffee sourcing.

Scope Of Study :

Green marketing is an innovative business strategy that integrates environmental considerations into marketing activities. This approach addresses the growing consumer demand for products that are not only effective but also environmentally friendly. Green products are defined by their minimal environmental impact during production, usage, and disposal stages, making them safe for both consumers and the planet (Kumar, 2011).

In today's business landscape, environmental sustainability has emerged as a critical issue for companies, governments, and societies alike. Environmental problems, exacerbated by industrial activities, pose significant health risks and necessitate urgent action (Khawaja, 2008; Eater et al., 2010). Given these pressing concerns, green marketing has been posited as a vital strategy to mitigate environmental damage while supporting business sustainability (Smith, 2009).

Recent trends indicate that consumers are increasingly discerning about their purchasing decisions, prioritizing products that align with their environmental values (Sarigöllü, 2009). This shift in consumer behavior has been documented extensively, with numerous studies highlighting the heightened importance of environmental issues among consumers (Diekmann & Franzen, 1999; Dunlap & Meriting, 1995). Over the past few decades, the urgency surrounding environmental degradation has grown, prompting greater consumer awareness and demand for eco-friendly products (Chan & Lam, 2002).

Research by Kalafatis et al. (1999) underscores the transformation of environmental issues into a significant market force. As consumers become more ecologically conscious, their preferences increasingly favor businesses that prioritize environmental sustainability. This trend is further supported by studies demonstrating consumers' readiness to choose eco-friendly products and services (Laroche et al., 2001; Kalafatis et al., 1999; Roberts, 1996).

The rising environmental consciousness among consumers is largely attributed to the severe pollution and environmental damage witnessed globally (Chen, 2011). This awareness drives the demand for products that contribute to environmental preservation, thereby encouraging businesses to adopt green marketing practices.

Relevance to Business and Society

The relevance of green marketing extends beyond individual businesses to the broader societal and environmental context. By adopting green marketing strategies, companies can not only meet consumer demand but also play a crucial role in mitigating environmental degradation. This alignment with consumer values can lead to enhanced brand loyalty and competitive advantage in the market.

Moreover, green marketing supports regulatory compliance and can reduce the risk of legal penalties associated with environmental violations. Governments worldwide are implementing stricter environmental regulations, making it imperative for businesses to incorporate sustainability into their core operations.

Green Marketing Strategies

Successful green marketing involves a comprehensive approach that includes product design, production processes, and promotional activities. Companies need to ensure that their products are designed with minimal environmental impact, utilizing sustainable materials and production methods. Additionally, effective green marketing communication is essential to convey the environmental benefits of products to consumers transparently.

Future Directions

The future of green marketing lies in continued innovation and adaptation to evolving consumer expectations and regulatory requirements. As environmental issues become more pressing, the demand for sustainable products will likely increase, driving further advancements in green marketing practices.

Businesses that can successfully integrate environmental sustainability into their marketing strategies will not only contribute to global efforts to combat environmental degradation but also achieve long-term success in a competitive market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The present study was carried out with the primary aim of identifying the consumer's perception towards green products and the strategies that impact the customer perceptions. In the context of the same the objectives of the study include the following:

- To understand how well customers are informed about Green Marketing.
- To know the customers opinion about eco-friendly products.

- To assess the level of customer satisfaction with the Green Marketing Concept.
- To find out the relation between Green Marketing and consumer's Perception.

Literature Review :

The literature review on green marketing provides a comprehensive overview of various aspects related to the adoption, implementation, and impact of environmentally responsible practices in business.

- **Customer Behavior and Satisfaction:** Several studies analyze the influence of green marketing efforts on consumer behavior and satisfaction. Kumar (2010) focuses on how hotels in the tourism sector meet customer needs through green marketing, while Bhattacharya (2011) emphasizes the importance of promotional campaigns in price-sensitive markets like India.
 - **Implementation Strategies:** Jain et al. (2010) propose the "three C's" process for green marketing implementation: Consumer Value Positioning, Calibration of Consumer Knowledge, and Credibility of product. Aggrawal et al. (2010) discuss the challenges faced by eco-responsible organizations in optimizing their product offerings while remaining price competitive.
 - **Motivations for Going Green:** Ramakrishna et al. (2010) identify various factors that drive businesses to adopt green practices, including goodwill, differentiation, competition, and government pressure.
 - **Challenges and Opportunities:** Studies highlight the challenges faced by green marketers, such as increased costs and inflated claims of greenness (Diwan & Bodla, 2011), while also noting the potential benefits for firms in terms of cost savings and brand loyalty (Murugesan, 2008; Lamb et al., 2004).
 - **Scope for Further Research:** Researchers emphasize the need for more in-depth studies on green marketing, particularly in developing countries like India (Joseph & Korlekar, 2012). They suggest exploring consumer perceptions and profiles to better understand attitudes towards green products.
 - **Environmental Messaging:** Kronrod et al. (2012) discuss the prevalence of assertive environmental messages in the media and the importance of understanding consumer awareness and concerns.
 - **Benefits to Multiple Stakeholders:** Ahlstrom (2011) and Kerin et al. (2007) highlight the positive impacts of green marketing on various stakeholders, including the environment, consumers, corporate strategy, and supply chain.
 - **Evolution and Challenges:** Ghoshal (2011) notes that green marketing is still in its infancy, with scholars focusing on eco-level market segmentation and factors influencing consumer behavior. Sinha & Gilpin (2009) discuss technological innovations in renewable energy production and waste recycling as part of the green marketing landscape.
 - **Green Building Practices:** Thomas & Gowda (2010) discuss the concept of environmentally friendly buildings and the visible features that signal their green credentials.
- Overall, the literature review underscores the complexity of green marketing, highlighting its multifaceted nature and the need for further research to address emerging challenges and opportunities in promoting environmental sustainability in business practices.

Strategies used in green marketing :

Green marketing strategies revolve around incorporating environmental considerations into business practices. These strategies aim to align manufacturing processes and distribution channels with eco-friendly principles, ultimately appealing to environmentally conscious consumers. However, there are pitfalls to avoid, such as greenwashing, which involves misleading consumers about the environmental benefits of products. Greenwashing can lead to confusion and undermine trust.

Eco-labeling emerges as a valuable tool in green marketing. It helps communicate a product's environmental credentials to consumers, facilitating informed purchasing decisions. By prominently displaying eco-labels, companies can highlight the eco-friendly attributes of their products, thus attracting green-minded consumers. This emphasizes the importance of clear and transparent communication in promoting sustainability.

Overall, green marketing strategies emphasize the importance of authenticity and transparency in addressing environmental concerns. By adopting eco-labeling and avoiding greenwashing, businesses can effectively engage with environmentally conscious consumers and contribute to sustainable consumption patterns.

Reasons behind the growth of green products:

The growth of green products can be attributed to various factors. Marketers play a crucial role by implementing

strategies to minimize environmental impact, such as sourcing sustainable materials, reducing carbon footprint, and adopting eco-friendly packaging and distribution channels. Despite consumer ambivalence towards green products, initiatives like product trials and effective merchandising have contributed to increased preference. Consumers increasingly prioritize the eco-friendliness of products in their purchasing decisions. Effective marketing campaigns raise awareness and justify higher prices for green products. Emotional brand appeals influence consumer choices, driving increased sales of green products. Government regulations and heightened competition compel marketers to continually innovate and develop greener offerings, further accelerating the growth of green products.

Research Methodology :

Studying research methods equips you with the expertise and capabilities required to address problems and tackle the challenges of making swift, informed decisions.

Area of study-Roorkee.

Tools of Data Collection :- The various method of data gathering involves the use of appropriate recording forms. These methods are referred to as data collection techniques.

Sample size- Approx 80-85 respondents from some Roorkee participated in survey :

1. To assess the awareness of consumers regarding green products.
2. To analyze the attitude and behavior of Indian consumers towards green products.
3. To pinpoint the challenges respondents believe hinder their ability to embrace a sustainable lifestyle.
4. To segment consumers in Pune according to their green lifestyle and to come up with five consumer segments:
 - a) Belonging to highly green group (True Blue Greens)
 - b) Belonging to moderately high green group (Green Backs)
 - c) Belonging to medium green group (Sprouts)
 - d) Belonging to low green group (Grouzers)
 - e) Belonging to non-green group (Basic Browns)

Roorkee being economically well-developed city, has emerged as an educationally established in India, there is nothing wrong in assuming that the city with considerably good literacy rate is well aware of the environmental degradation and its repercussions to the human race, thus hypothesis developed.

Hypothesis :

H1: Environmental concern fluctuates based on the age and income levels of respondents..

H2: There is no relationship between consumer's attitude and purchase behavior of green products.

H3: There is no relationship between consumer's attitude and conservation behavior.

H4: Consumers of Roorkee city are well aware of environmental problems.

Analysis :

Descriptive Analysis:

This type of research is a fact-finding investigation with thorough interpretation. It focuses on a specific aspect of the problem being studied, making it more specific than an explanatory study. The primary goal is to gather descriptive information that can help in formulating more detailed and sophisticated studies in the future. It aims to provide a clear understanding of the particular issue under investigation, laying the groundwork for further research.

Sample Size :

The questionnaire was given to 80-85 samples. Data was collected from 80 consumers who are frequent purchasers. Non probability sampling techniques was used. The various tests like percentage analysis, correlation, and weighted average method are used. The questionnaire is designed with straightforward language to minimize the chance of misunderstandings.

Limitation of the study :

- The project's duration is very limited.
- Due to time constraints, the study is restricted to consumer perceptions of green products.

Initiatives taken for promoting Green Marketing practices by the agencies :

Agencies	Percentages
Environment Ministry	85
NGO'S	40
India's Small Business	75
India's Largest Business	60

Suggestions :

To enhance green marketing practices, several measures need to be initiated:

Improved Marketing Communication: Agencies should effectively communicate their green initiatives to customers, highlighting the advantages of green products and eco-friendly business practices.

Customer Awareness: Organizations should make customers aware of their commitment to the environment through focused marketing messages and strategies.

Consumer Inclusion: Firms should involve consumers in their green marketing initiatives to build engagement and support.

Continuous Innovation: Companies should continuously seek out green materials and methods to create commercially viable green products.

These steps will help organizations promote sustainability and strengthen their green marketing efforts.

Conclusion :

Based on the research, it is evident that consumers are significantly influenced by the GOGREEN campaign, demonstrating a heightened awareness and concern for the natural environment. Key findings include:

1. **Environmental Consciousness:** Consumers are increasingly conscious about environmental preservation and the eco-friendliness of products.
2. **Production and Packaging:** There is a strong consumer interest in how products are produced, labeled, and packaged, with a preference for sustainable practices.
3. **Food and Beverages:** People prioritize eco-friendly options for food and drinks to ensure health and well-being, both personally and societally.
4. **Energy-efficient Appliances:** Consumers seek home appliances that consume less energy and are willing to pay a premium for such eco-friendly products.
5. **Corporate Strategies:** Companies are adopting various green marketing strategies to attract environmentally conscious customers.

To further enhance the adoption of eco-friendly products, several recommendations are made:

1. **Government Campaigns:** The government should conduct awareness campaigns to promote eco-friendly products.
2. **Subsidies:** Providing subsidies to companies that produce eco-friendly products can encourage more businesses to adopt sustainable practices.
3. **NGO and Social Club Programs:** NGOs and social clubs should carry out awareness programs to educate the public on the importance of eco-friendly products.
4. **Educational Initiatives:** Education is crucial for raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices among consumers.
5. **Promotion of Eco-friendly Products:** Eco-friendly products should be actively promoted to maximize their reach and impact.
6. **Government Incentives:** The government should encourage people to buy eco-friendly products through

incentives and promotional campaigns.

By implementing these measures, we can foster a more environmentally conscious society and contribute to a greener, cleaner world.

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