

GREEN MARKETING: AWARENESS AND PREFERENCE AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS OF AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Increasing awareness on the various environmental problems has directed a shift in the way consumers go about their life. There has been a positive change in consumer attitudes toward a green lifestyle. People are keenly trying to reduce their impact on the environment. However, this is not extensive and is still evolving. Consumers and manufacturers have directed their attention toward environment-friendly products that are presumed to be “green” or environment-friendly like low power consuming (energy-efficient) electrical appliances, organic foods, lead-free paints, recyclable paper, and phosphate-free detergents. Indian marketers and consumers are also realizing the importance of the green marketing concept. Although a variety of research on green marketing has been conducted across the globe; little academic research on consumer awareness and preferences has been carried out in India. This paper highlights the awareness and preference among faculty members of the agricultural university with the help of a structured questionnaire. A study was conducted on 120 respondents working in the Anand Agricultural University. High level of awareness about green marketing practices and products was found among the consumers. Research has given good insights for marketers of the green products and suggests the need of designing the marketing communication campaigns promoting green products due to high green value among the consumers.

KEYWORDS: *Green Marketing, Green Products, Consumer Preference, Consumer Awareness*

INTRODUCTION

Green Marketing is the most latest and popular trend market which facilitated for the environment-friendly in individual, animal, and planet (Rajeshkumar, 2012). Due to the increase in climate change and global warming, the public concern for environmental problems is continuously increased over the past decades. The businesses and consumers have started to challenge eco-friendly products as they become more concerned on the environment, health and wealth in order to protect the earth's resources and the environment.

Dahlstorm (2011) and Ottman (2011) have characterized green marketing as an integration of ecological concerns into marketing aspects including production, distribution and logistics, promotion and packaging along with marketing communications.

Green marketing is the marketing of products that are supposed to be environmentally safe. The green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes in the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying the advertising. This marketing is not a simple task where several meanings intersect and

contradict each other. Other similar terms used are Environmental friendly Marketing and Ecological Marketing. Green, environmental and eco-marketing is part of the new marketing approaches which do not just refocus, adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and practice, but seek to challenge those approaches and provide a substantially different perspective.

The need for production and consumption of Green Products is because of climate change and global warming, the call for the production and consumption of green products becomes even more urgent and necessary. The growing momentum to promote the use of green products only proves that people are already accepting the fact that climate change is no fad and it is necessary to use green products to protect the environment. We are more aware about it now than in the past because the effects are more apparent today. This trend creates a huge niche for both environmentalists and entrepreneurs to come up with innovative solutions that would change people's mindset toward the environment by introducing new eco-friendly products in the market.

Objectives of the Study

Main marketing effort aimed to generate customer satisfaction which in turn is vital to achieve the organizational goals. Majority of the people, purchasing an Eco-friendly product is the second most important and expensive next to purchase of regular products. People wanted some changes in the present products and protect health through eco-friendly products, customer attention drawn towards eco-friendly products neither low-priced nor high priced, and most of the manufacturer produces eco-friendly products (Accessories) with confidence and winning the customers. The main problem for the manufacturer is to create awareness about new eco-friendly products and to change the preference of consumers from regular products to green products. So, a study has been conducted to understand the awareness and preference about green marketing among faculty members of the agricultural university with the following objectives.

- To identify awareness and preference level of the consumer about the various Eco-friendly products
- To study the customer ideas and opinion towards Eco-friendly products
- To study the customer satisfaction towards Eco-friendly products

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Need for Green Marketing

The literature in the area of green marketing abundantly consists of studies examining the need for green marketing particularly inclining upon the consumer requirements and environmental considerations. Stafford (2003) and Ottman et al. (2006), through their researches, have acutely concluded that as the concern regarding the environment is growing globally and continually, green marketing has gained more popularity. Over time, numerous researchers have stimulated further investigations on environmental issues and conservation with regard to marketplaces across the globe (Mintel, 2006). In 2006, the green industry was projected at 200 billion dollars (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). This shows that there is an increase in environmental awareness, therefore supporting the rise in the market share of green industries.

Consumer Awareness and Preference to Green Marketing

In 2007, Chitra made a survey on 60 respondents in India and showed that he could classify respondents in four categories the "aspirants", "the addicts", the "adjusters" and the "avoiders". This survey showed that the majority of the

respondents can be categorized as “aspirants”; that means those individuals are aware of environmental issues and want to develop green purchase behaviors (Chitra, 2007).

Consumer behavior trends toward eco-friendly attitudes have been increasing. According to a survey made by the Co-operative Bank in the UK, in 1999, 17% of respondents “felt guilty about unethical purchase” and in 2005 there were 44% (Grant, 2007, p. 35). Consumers who have a positive attitude towards the environment are more willing to purchase green products (Balderjahn, 1988, p.53). As previously said, however, it is also true that even if consumers are concerned about environmental issues; they will not necessarily purchase green products (Mc Eachern and Carrigan, 2010, cited in Solomon et al., 2010, p. 229) as the following studies show it.

METHODOLOGY

Area of the Study: This study is done in the Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat.

Sources of Data: The study uses primary data and secondary data. The data is collected through the Questionnaire. A Sample of 120 respondents was selected at convenience.

Sampling Method: Convenient Data Sampling method is used for Data collection.

Tools for Analysis: The data collected from the pre-structured questionnaire were entered into the SPSS software and sub-tables by using the percentage analysis and Average Rank analysis.

Limitations of the Study: Only 120 responders are taken for the Data Collection. The findings are based entirely upon the research conducted in Anand Agricultural University.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 presents the descriptive investigation on the demographic profile of respondents. Majority of the respondent was males (83.33 percent) with females constituting 16.66 percent. It appeared that respondents were mostly in the age categories more than 32 years old. With regards to marital status, 85 percent of the respondents were married. Educational qualification 28.33 postgraduate and 71.66 have a doctoral degree.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	100	83.33
Female	20	16.66
Age		
17-21		
22-26		
27-31	30	25.00
>32	90	75.00
Marital Status		
Single	18	15.00
Married	102	85.00
Education		
UG	0	0
PG	34	28.33
Doctorate	86	71.66

The questionnaire some questions to measure general environmental beliefs with the possible responses of strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree and strongly disagree scale.

Table 2: Consumers Environmental Beliefs

Sr. No	Consumers Environmental Beliefs	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Population size is growing to the limit of the number of people the earth can bear.	2.32	0.92
2	The symmetry of nature is very delicate and easily gets upset	3.16	0.70
3	Humans have the right to change the natural environment to suit their needs.	3.21	0.81
4	When humans interfere with nature it often has tragic consequences.	2.86	0.98
5	Mankind created to rule over the nature	2.82	0.90
6	Animals and plants exist primarily to be used by humans	3.41	0.58
7	To maintain a healthy economy, we will have to control industrial growth	3.26	0.64
8	Humans must live in synchronization with nature in order to survive.	3.34	0.77
9	The earth is like a boat with only limited room and resources.	2.98	0.77
10	There are limits to which our industrialized society can expand	2.34	1.12

Out of 10 propositions on Consumer General Environmental Beliefs (GEB), 6 propositions mean score is 3 or above. For the Propositions 4, 5 and 9 respondents gave a good mean score ranging from 2.82 to 2.98 which implies respondents more or less agreed on these propositions. For proposition 1 and 10 most of the respondents gave average mean score and they are slightly agreeing on these propositions.

The questions also include questions about environmental behavior. The results were measured on a 5 point scale of never, situational, sometimes, frequently and always used as a benchmark for comparison of all other data in this study

Table 3: Environmental Behaviour Questions

Sr. No	Environmental Behaviour Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Use ecological/recyclable products.	2.91	0.85
2	Avoid buying aerosol products.	2.84	0.91
3	Read labels to see if contents are environmentally safe	2.76	0.76
4	Buy products made of recycled materials.	2.88	0.78
5	Buy refilled products packages	2.81	0.76
6	Take your own carry bags to the supermarket.	2.44	1.01
7	Cut down the use of motorcycle/car	2.89	0.84

Out of seven propositions on Consumer Environmental Behaviour Questions, all the propositions except 6th one are in the range of 2.76 to 2.91, that means all the respondents more or less agreed and 6th proposition respondents gave average mean score.

Table 4: Consumer Product Questions

Sr. No	Consumer Product Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I feel good about buying brands which are eco-friendly	3.16	0.72
2	It is easy for me to identify these green products	3.17	0.84
3	Green products are lower in performance compare to non-green products.	2.71	0.95
4	I have formed this opinion because of other people's influence	2.84	0.82
5	I have formed this opinion from my recent experience of a product	3.19	0.67
6	I trust well-known brands	3.44	0.71
7	In the marketing communication about a product, I expect to be informed of a new improved point of difference of the products (formula/ design)	2.67	0.88
8	In the marketing communication about a product, I expect to be informed of how environmentally friendly a product is	2.08	1.05
9	Green products are marketed to me in a different way which I never notice.	3.07	0.73
10	Green products are marketed in a unique way and which are relevant to my lifestyle	2.24	1.05

Out of 10 propositions on Consumer Product Questions, 5 propositions mean score is 3 or above on Likert-5 point scale for propositions 1,2,5,6 and 9 which mean most of the respondents have strongly agreed for these propositions. For the propositions 3, 4 and 7 respondents gave above average mean score which means they all agreed on these propositions and for remaining 8 and 10th propositions respondents gave a poor score

Factor Analysis of Barriers of Green Building Practices

Through the literature review, 10 variables were identified as barriers to green building practices. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to extract the barriers of green building practices. From KMO and Bartlett's Test, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 0.000, which meets the criteria of a value lower than 0.05 in order for the Factor Analysis to be considered appropriate. Furthermore, the result of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.703, which exceeds the minimum value of 0.6 for good factor analysis. Factors were extracted using the maximum likelihood method, followed by a varimax rotation. The Kaiser criterion (Eigenvalues > 1) was employed. As discussed earlier, as per the Kaiser 's Criterion, the particular factor should have the Eigenvalues higher than 1 to be considered for further analysis. The 3 factors are extracted, which have Eigenvalue more than 1 for each of the 3 factors extracted, consisting of 10 variables as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Barriers for Green Building Practices

Factor	Cronbach Alpha Value	Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.
Less Awareness	0.893	Lack of Information	3.94	1.08
		Lack of Interest	3.86	1.08
		Price	3.85	1.05
		Lack of Faith in its Effectiveness	3.88	1.01
Limited Cost Savings	0.915	Cost Saving is Lower	3.28	1.19
		Lack of Reliability	3.25	1.22
		Unwillingness to Change	3.37	1.21
Less Reliable	0.712	Returns are Uncertain	3.38	0.66
		Fear of Cheating	3.31	0.77
		Limited Options	3.31	0.82

Table 5 shows that Less Awareness barrier has a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.91. Limited cost Savings barrier has a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.11. A less Reliable barrier has a mean of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 0.58.

FINDINGS

University employees' awareness and preference towards Environmentally Friendly Products:

- No one strongly disagrees, where three-fourth of the respondents strongly agree that they would choose eco friendly brands. Respondents reacted positively about buying brands which are less damaging to the environment (more than 80 per cent). However, the expectation of the customer is not away from the effective functioning of green brands as that of non-green products.
- Majority (60 percent) consumers expressed that identifying environmentally products on the store is slightly difficult. When asked, the majority of the respondents are unable to name a specific product or product type which is eco-friendly. This speaks about the consumer unawareness of green brands.
- Marketing plays a pivotal role in bringing consumer awareness. As the response show, consumers would be more likely to choose environmentally friendly brands and were unable to recall green products/brands. This speaks about the gap in marketing effort put by the green marketers in bringing consumer awareness.
- Survey reveals that green product performance was significantly affected by environmental beliefs. Further, it is expressed by as large as of more than 85 per cent of the respondents that they are likely to trust well-known products and judge green products basing on their previous experience.

CONCLUSIONS

This study confirms the existence of an environmental value-action gap, a gap between consumers' awareness and behaviors over being green. This paper has highlighted various aspects of consumer awareness and shown that consumer preference for greener goods could be influenced by different marketing tactics. Products given greater exposure will be more likely to sell in greater numbers. Pro-environmental values are more likely to result in more pro-environmental behavior when values and beliefs are specific enough, the green action aligns with consumers' subjective interests, and product attributes are positively perceived. A major barrier in the purchasing of green products is: performance of the product compares to non-green products. However, consumers generally trust the performance of branded, so green products that work well and do not make over-inflated green claims could sell successfully under well-known brands. The current low levels of consumer awareness about global warming, India's manufacturing and service brands need to help raise consumer consciousness. Indian manufacturers have yet to find a market for green products, even as consumers have a low awareness of them because of the inadequate efforts made by the marketers. But by embracing the green imperative, and investing in green initiatives and consumer education, Indian brands can break this vicious cycle. Overall, it is clear that the Indian market for greener products is under-expectation by marketers within consumer groups with pro-environmental values. This finding suggests the there is greater use of marketing brands to sell green products that are genuinely eco-friendly.

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