



EXPLORING CONSUMER AWARENESS OF GREEN MARKETING AND THEIR PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS IN CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Green marketing is the promotion of products presumed to be environmentally safe. It encompasses a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, sustainable packaging, and modifications to advertising. Thus, green marketing embodies a holistic marketing concept in which the production, consumption, and disposal of products and services occur in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment. With growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, and the harmful impact of pollutants, both marketers and consumers are increasingly sensitive to the need for green products and services. While the shift to 'green' may appear expensive in the short run, it will prove indispensable and advantageous in the long run. This study is necessary to identify whether consumers in Chennai City are aware of green marketing and green products. It examines the factors influencing consumers' buying behavior towards green products and focuses on the reasons that make consumers willing to pay for green products. Additionally, it aims to identify the

difficulties faced by consumers. This paper presents primary data from 150 respondents in Chennai City. The statistical tools used in the study include frequency tables were used to perform statistical analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Green marketing, a modern concept that has evolved in recent years, extends beyond traditional marketing practices. While marketing typically focuses on identifying and satisfying the needs and wants of consumers, Green Marketing specifically emphasizes the manufacturing and marketing of products and services through environmentally friendly processes. This approach transcends mere surface-level changes, such as adding a green theme to a brand name or incorporating green colors into design elements. Instead, it encompasses comprehensive efforts by companies to eliminate environmentally detrimental processes and adopt sustainable practices throughout the production and presentation of goods. In response to increasing consumer concerns about environmental sustainability and the need to protect our planet, companies have begun to integrate Green Marketing strategies into their overall marketing approaches. As environmental issues gain prominence globally, the importance of green products and services becomes more apparent. Despite potential short-term costs, the long-term benefits of transitioning to environmentally friendly practices are undeniable.

The global green movement is rapidly gaining momentum, with consumers advocating for eco-friendly practices and demanding more green products in the marketplace. However, compared to consumers in developed countries, Indian consumers may have less awareness of issues such as global warming. Thus, there is a need for extensive education and awareness campaigns to inform consumers about environmental threats and the importance of supporting green initiatives. Successful marketing has always relied on recognizing trends and aligning products, services, and brands with consumer preferences. In today's context, environmental concerns have become increasingly prevalent, driving the emergence of green marketing as a significant area of interest for marketers. However, the success of green marketing initiatives hinges on a deep understanding of consumer behavior and motivations. In India, green is gradually emerging as the symbolic color of eco-consciousness. With consumers becoming more aware of product origins and environmental challenges, marketers

have an opportunity to leverage this growing awareness to promote green products effectively.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The study aims to assess the level of consumer awareness regarding green marketing and green products in Chennai city. It seeks to investigate the factors influencing consumer buying behavior towards green products and determine the reasons why consumers are willing to pay for them. Additionally, the study aims to identify the difficulties faced by consumers in adopting green products.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Primarily revolves around green marketing and green products, with a specific focus on assessing consumer awareness levels. The study aims to educate consumers about green marketing practices and increase their awareness of green products. Additionally, it seeks to understand consumer decision-making processes when purchasing green products and their willingness to pay for them. Furthermore, the study endeavors to identify any challenges consumers face regarding green marketing and products, with the intention of finding solutions to address these issues.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Green marketing encompasses the process of promoting products or services based on their environmental benefits. Such products or services are typically environmentally friendly in nature, either in their composition or in the manner in which they are produced or packaged. Green marketing operates under the assumption that consumers perceive environmental friendliness as a positive attribute and are willing to base their purchasing decisions accordingly. An underlying assumption of green marketing is that consumers may be willing to pay a premium for products deemed to be more environmentally friendly than comparable alternatives.

DEFINITION

Green marketing involves marketing products and services based on environmental factors or awareness. Companies engaged in green marketing make decisions pertaining to the entire lifecycle of their products, including processing methods, packaging, and distribution.

HISTORY OF GREEN MARKETING

The term "Green Marketing" gained prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The American Marketing Association (AMA) held its first workshop on "Ecological Marketing" in 1975, which led to the publication of one of the earliest books on green marketing titled "Ecological Marketing." The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) gained traction, exemplified by companies like Ben & Jerry's, which supplemented financial reports with assessments of environmental impact. The term "sustainable development" gained prominence in 1987 with the release of the Brundtland Report, further catalyzing discussions on sustainability. Significant milestones in the evolution of green marketing include publications such as "Green Marketing" by Ken Peattie (1992) in the UK and by Jacquelyn Ottman (1993) in the US.

EVOLUTION OF GREEN MARKETING

The evolution of green marketing can be categorized into three phases. The first phase, termed "Ecological" green marketing, focused on addressing environmental problems. The second phase, "Environmental" green marketing, emphasized clean technology and innovative product design to address pollution and waste issues. The third phase, "Sustainable" green marketing, emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, aligning with the concept of sustainable development and the aim of meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

GREEN MARKETING CONCEPT

Environmental sustainability is increasingly recognized as offering competitive advantages and opportunities for businesses. Consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious, driving demand for sustainable and socially responsible products and services. Green marketing involves promoting products presumed to be environmentally preferable, incorporating various activities such as product modification, changes to production processes, sustainable packaging, and modified advertising. Other terms synonymous with green marketing include environmental marketing and ecological marketing. Green, environmental, and eco-marketing represent new marketing approaches that challenge traditional practices and seek to address ecological and social realities. These approaches aim to develop and promote products and services that meet customers' wants and needs for

quality, performance, affordability, and convenience without adversely impacting the environment. Successful green marketers stand to benefit from increased profits, improved shareholder value, and contributing to a better future.

Environmentalists evaluate products based on their environmental impact, endorsing environmentally safe products for advertising and packaging. The aim of green marketing is to sustain the environment by:

1. **Eliminating the Concept of Waste:** Focusing on waste reduction and efficiency to minimize environmental impact.
2. **Reinventing the Concept of a Product:** Designing products to be consumable or durable, with minimal environmental impact.
3. **Making Environmentalism Profitable:** Encouraging competition between companies to minimize environmental harm.
4. **Reflecting Costs in Prices:** Ensuring product prices reflect their true environmental costs, including air, water, and soil impacts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The primary problem addressed in this study is the level of consumer awareness regarding green marketing practices and their opinions toward these practices. This includes understanding whether consumers are knowledgeable about environmentally friendly marketing strategies and how they perceive such initiatives. Another key problem to be explored is consumer behavior when purchasing green products and the factors that influence their buying decisions. This involves investigating the motivations behind consumers' choices for environmentally friendly products and identifying the drivers and barriers to their adoption. Additionally, the study seeks to assess the willingness of consumers to pay a premium for green products compared to non-green alternatives. Understanding consumers' price sensitivity and their willingness to invest in sustainable options is crucial for market analysis and strategic planning. Lastly, the research aims to identify the challenges faced by consumers in adopting a green lifestyle and examine how these challenges impact their attitudes and behaviors towards environmentally friendly products. This involves recognizing obstacles consumers encounter when attempting to lead environmentally conscious lives and evaluating the implications for their purchasing behaviors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of awareness among consumers regarding green marketing practices, and what are their opinions toward these practices?
2. How do consumers behave when purchasing green products, and what factors influence their buying decisions?
3. What is the willingness of consumers to pay a premium for green products compared to non-green alternatives?
4. What are the challenges faced by consumers in adopting a green lifestyle, and how do these challenges impact their attitudes and behaviors towards environmentally friendly products?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Investigating Consumer Awareness and Attitudes towards Green Marketing.
2. Analyzing Consumer Purchasing Behavior Regarding Green Products.
3. Assessing Consumer Willingness to Pay for Green Products.
4. Identifying Challenges Encountered by Consumers in Adopting a Green Lifestyle.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study relies heavily on primary data acquired from 150 respondents residing in Chennai city. To effectively gather this data, a meticulously structured questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was specifically tailored to investigate consumer awareness regarding green marketing and their purchasing behavior towards green products. Utilizing a Likert five-point scale, respondents provided their feedback, while the questionnaire incorporated a diverse range of question types, including open-ended, closed-ended, and multiple-choice questions.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLING

The sampling procedure involved adopting a convenience sampling interview method to collect primary data. Respondents were interviewed face-to-face by the researcher to gather their responses. Additionally, secondary data was obtained from relevant published sources such as journals.

THE STATISTICAL TOOLS USED.

The statistical analysis of the study involved utilizing percentage analysis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Geographic Scope: The research is confined to consumers in Chennai city, limiting the generalizability of findings to other regions.
2. Sample Size: The study's sample size is restricted to only 50 respondents, which may limit the representativeness of the data and the ability to draw broad conclusions.
3. Time Frame: The research study was conducted over a period of six months only, potentially limiting the depth and scope of data collection and analysis.
4. Response Rate: Respondents were occasionally hesitant or reluctant to complete the questionnaire, which could introduce bias or affect the reliability of the collected data.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Percentage analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of responses and the prevalence of different attitudes, opinions, and behaviors among the respondents. This analysis helped to quantify the level of awareness, buying behavior, willingness to pay, and challenges faced by consumers regarding green marketing and products.

TABLE -1
Age of the Respondent

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 26	23	15
27-35	26	17
36-44	24	16
45-53	27	18
53-61	29	19
Above 61	21	14
Total	150	100

Based on the table and chart above, it is evident that 19% of the respondents fall within the age group of 53-61, while 18% is aged 45-53. Additionally, 17% of respondents are between 27-35 years old, 16% are aged 36-44, 15% are below the age of 26, and 14% are above the age of 61. The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 53-61.

TABLE -2
Gender of the Respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	85	57

Female	65	43
Total	150	100

From the provided table and chart, it is evident that 57% of the respondents are male, while 43% are female. Notably, male respondents comprise a larger proportion compared to female respondents.

TABLE -3
Awareness of Green Marketing

Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	26	17
High	44	29
Moderate	27	18
Low	24	16
Very low	29	19
Total	150	100

Very high: 26 respondents, constituting 17% of the total sample, demonstrate a very high level of awareness regarding green marketing practices. This suggests that a notable proportion of respondents possess an extensive understanding and knowledge of green marketing concepts and practices. High: 44 respondents, comprising 29% of the total sample, exhibit a high level of awareness. This indicates that a substantial portion of respondents have a good understanding of green marketing but may not possess as comprehensive knowledge as those in the "Very high" category. Moderate: 27 respondents, representing 18% of the total sample, have a moderate level of awareness. This suggests that these respondents have a basic understanding of green marketing practices but may require further education or information to enhance their knowledge. Low: 24 respondents, making up 16% of the total sample, have a low level of awareness. This implies that these respondents have limited knowledge or understanding of green marketing practices and may benefit from targeted education or awareness initiatives. Very low: 29 respondents, constituting 19% of the total sample, demonstrate a very low level of awareness regarding green marketing practices. This indicates a significant portion of respondents have minimal to no understanding of green marketing concepts, highlighting the need for comprehensive educational efforts in this area.

THE MAJOR KEY FINDINGS:

1. The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 53-61, constituting 19% of the total sample.
2. The age groups of 27-35 and 45-53 have a similar frequency, each comprising 17% and 18% of the total sample, respectively.
3. The age groups of 36-44 and Below 26 have slightly lower frequencies, constituting 16% and 15% of the total sample, respectively.
4. The age group Above 61 has the lowest frequency, accounting for 14% of the total sample.
5. The finding indicates that the majority of respondents identify as male.
6. The finding indicates that the majority of respondents, comprising 29% of the total sample, demonstrate a high level of awareness.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. The primary challenge identified in this study is the lack of awareness about green marketing and green products among the population in Chennai city. To address this, it is crucial to provide more information to the public regarding the concepts of green marketing and the benefits of using green products.
2. Government agencies and marketers should take proactive steps to promote green products through awareness campaigns and educational initiatives. By increasing awareness, consumers can make more informed choices that align with environmental sustainability.
3. Marketers need to utilize effective communication channels to disseminate information about green products to a wider audience. Utilizing the right sources of information ensures that the message reaches a larger number of people, thereby increasing awareness and adoption of green practices.
4. It is essential to incorporate education about green marketing and the benefits of using green products into the curriculum of schools and colleges. By educating students, they can become advocates for sustainability and spread awareness among their families and communities.
5. Additionally, barriers to adopting a green lifestyle should be identified and addressed. By understanding and overcoming these barriers, consumers can more easily embrace environmentally friendly practices and enjoy the benefits of living a green lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

This research has provided valuable insights into the realm of green marketing and green products. Through this study, we have gained a deeper understanding of the significance of green marketing practices and the adoption of environmentally friendly products. It has become evident that embracing green marketing strategies and utilizing green products not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the preservation of our environment. Furthermore, the analysis of consumer buying behavior and the identification of challenges faced in transitioning to a green lifestyle have shed light on the complexities and opportunities within this field. By recognizing these challenges, we can work towards overcoming them and promoting widespread adoption of sustainable practices. It is worth noting that there exists a diverse array of green products, such as solar panels and solar water heaters, which offer recyclable and reusable solutions to environmental concerns. These products play a pivotal role in mitigating environmental degradation and fostering a more sustainable future. Moving forward, the findings of this research will serve as a foundation for future studies in the field of green marketing and consumer behavior. Moreover, it is hoped that this research will inspire individuals to make informed choices and opt for green products, thereby enhancing their quality of life while contributing to environmental sustainability. By implementing the suggestions outlined in this study, we can envision a future where green marketing and products occupy a prominent position in the industry. With concerted efforts and collective action, we can pave the way for a greener and more sustainable tomorrow.

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