



A study on perception of consumers towards green marketing

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Abstract

Green marketing refers to the marketing of goods and services based on their environmental benefits. These products or services are basically environment friendly in nature and they are produced and packaged in an Eco friendly manner. Thus the term green marketing is known in different names such as environmental marketing, ecological marketing, eco-friendly marketing and sustainable marketing. All the products and services under green marketing are assumed to be environmentally safer and mostly preferred by the consumers. The concept of green marketing has developed with an intention to protect the environment. In green marketing goods are manufactured and marketed using green processes. Green marketing aims to satisfy all the needs and wants of consumers without causing any harmful impact on environment. It covers a wide range of activities like product development and modification, changes to production process, sustainable packaging, modifying advertising etc. It is an important marketing approach with growing awareness regarding negative impacts of global warming, non bio-degradable solid waste, harmful effects of pollutants etc. This particular study focuses on the consumer's attitude towards green marketing and green products and how it influences their buying behavior. Analyzing the awareness level of consumers regarding green marketing and identifying the factors influencing consumer buying behavior on green products are the other important objectives behind conducting this study.

Keywords: green marketing, green product

Introduction

Green marketing has emerged in recent years and has gained significant importance in today's business world due to the numerous environmental issues we face, such as various forms of pollution, ecological imbalances, exploitation of scarce natural resources, climate change, excessive use of non-renewable resources, and a drastic rise in carbon footprints. These negative impacts on the environment result from human and organizational activities aimed at generating monetary benefits, which have caused considerable damage to our planet. Now, it is high time to take responsibility and work towards healing the injuries inflicted upon the Earth by adopting environmentally sustainable development practices. Recognizing this, individuals, societies, and businesses are striving to correct past mistakes and promote a more sustainable and balanced relationship with our environment.

Green marketing is one of the important techniques adopted by companies as a solution for the environmental problems they have created. Green marketing involves the systematic development and promotion of goods and services that do not harm the environment while simultaneously satisfying the needs and wants of consumers. It is not just about promoting and advertising environmentally friendly products and services, but also encompasses a wide range of activities, including designing the entire production process, product modifications, packaging, and planning for advertising.

All of these efforts are aimed at having only positive impacts on the environment, which makes green marketing a complex task. In short, green marketing can be explained as the process of selling, buying, packaging, and promoting goods or services in an environmentally friendly manner.

Green marketing evolved from the late 1980s and early 1990s. One of the first books on green marketing, entitled *Ecological Marketing*, was the result of the first workshop held by the American Marketing Association in 1975. The concept of green marketing has evolved in three phases, namely: ecological green marketing, environmental green marketing, and sustainable green marketing. During the first phase, all environmental problems were identified, and efforts were made to find remedial measures to solve the problems. The second phase focused on designing innovative products in a way that minimizes pollution and reduces waste. The third phase gained much importance during the late 1980s and early 2000s, as it emphasized meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and wants.

Review of literature

- Dharmendra Mehta states that Indian citizens are conscious about both the environment and their health simultaneously. This attitude among Indian customers paved the way for the emergence of green markets. It became the main reason for the strong response and awareness from Indian customers regarding green marketing.
- Welling and Anupamaa S. Chavan express the opinion that green marketing has a very positive influence on firms, even though it may not be easy in the short run. Due to this particular feature, firms need to be very cautious in planning and conducting various research programs to make the concept of green marketing more feasible.
- Saranya observed that marketers are required to educate customers about the benefits of green products over non-green products. She also states that marketers have to exert more effort in promoting the consumption of green products.
- Vijay Jain *et al.* focus on describing the three C's process for implementing green marketing, which includes customer value positioning, calibration of consumer knowledge, and the credibility of products.
- Robert Dahlstrom observed that green marketing has a positive impact on various market participants, such as the environment, developing countries, consumers, corporate companies, products, production processes, and the supply chain. They all greatly benefit from the concept of green marketing. Companies adopting green marketing concepts take efforts to build strategic alliances with the government, competitors, NGOs, industrial experts, etc.
- Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller point out that companies implementing green marketing face two major problems: consumers feel that these products may be of inferior quality because they are green, and they also think that these products are not truly green.
- Arun Kumar & N. Meenakshi state that customers are taking greater roles in making companies aware of their responsibility to protect the environment. To support this, customers are becoming reluctant to buy products

that pollute the environment. Along with customers, NGOs also play a major role in educating companies about the importance of green marketing. To achieve this goal, NGOs conduct research programs and instruct companies on how to make their business processes eco-friendly.

Research methodology

Research design

The data is primarily collected from 60 randomly chosen customers. Simple random sampling under probability sampling is adopted for the study. Data is collected by distributing questionnaires among 60 respondents residing exclusively in Ernakulam city.

Data Collection

The study relies on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected by distributing questionnaires via email to the randomly selected customers. The questionnaire is prepared with all relevant questions sufficient to gather data on the topic under study. It is designed using a 5-point Likert scale method. The format assigns 5 points to "strongly agree" responses, 4 points to "agree," 3 points to "neither agree nor disagree," 2 points to "disagree," and 1 point to "strongly disagree."

Meanwhile, secondary data helps gather the theoretical background regarding the concept of green marketing. For this purpose, various websites were visited, and several articles related to the topic were reviewed.

Objectives

- To identify the customers' attitude towards green marketing.
- To analyse the level of satisfaction of consumers with green products.
- To evaluate the benefits and challenges associated with green marketing
- To study the various measures adopted by companies to encourage the green marketing of products and services.
- To find out different factors influencing customers' buying behaviour regarding green products.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between green marketing and customer satisfaction.
- There is no significant relationship between customer age and their preference for green products.

Limitations of the study

- The study is conducted within a short span of time.
- Small sample size of 60 respondents is yet another constraint to the study.
- Non response and mere negligence on the part of customers affected the reliability of the study.

Findings

- It has been found from the study that most customers are aware of the green marketing of products and services nowadays.
- Female customers are more conscious about green products than males.
- Customers between the age range of 27-38 are more aware of green products and buy them regularly.
- It is inferred from the study that some customers are

conscious about environmental protection, while others are concerned about their own health. These two are the main reasons behind customers preferring green products.

- According to the study, the purchase of green products provides customer satisfaction, leading them to believe that their purchase will improve their lifestyle.
- The majority of customers hold a very positive attitude toward green products. Thus, almost all green marketing strategies adopted by companies are welcomed by customers.
- The study reveals that the new generation is more concerned about environmental protection and is ready to embrace eco-friendly practices.
- As the environment is going through a very difficult situation nowadays, customers are expecting more initiatives from the government in promoting green marketing.

Conclusion

It has been concluded from the study that the mindset of both customers and organizations is shifting towards the concept of going green. Every sector of the economy is following green protocols as an initiative toward environmental protection and sustainable development. At the same time, the marketing of green products and services remains the greatest challenge for every company. This is because companies are required to produce and market products following green protocols without compromising product quality, and they have the responsibility to satisfy customers' needs and wants without sacrificing their primary motive of profit generation. On the other hand, customers expect the same from companies—high product quality, attractive performance, and product utility—without harming the environment. Both customers and companies are making maximum efforts to build a green environment.

In addition to this, central and state governments are introducing numerous initiatives and framing policies to be followed by companies to transform the environment into an eco-friendly state, with the belief that all of Mother Earth's sufferings will come to an end very soon.

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