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Consumer behavior towards green products

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Abstract

Green is an umbrella term that refers to products and practices that are organic, sustainable or otherwise environmentally friendly. Corporate are constantly trying to find the best way to reach the customers with their green message. With the 'triple bottom line' or 'three pillars of business' - People, Planet and Profit; gaining more attention day by day and green is becoming the new mantra of success in any business. This paper aims to find out the effect of green products on consumers buying behavior. To promote green products and green markets it is imperative to conduct a research study. The research study was conducted in Nilambur Municipality selecting a sample of 60 green consumers. The data was collected through questionnaire. The research design adopted is descriptive. The data was analyzed with the help of tools like t-test and ANOVA. It has become very essential to know the factors that create the desire of consumers to purchase a product. Hence, the present study contributes to the field by investigating and exploring the extent of the impact of consumer's buying behavior towards the marketing of green products.

Keywords: Environmental friendly, green marketing, sustainable development

Introduction

Green marketing term was first discussed in a seminar on 'Ecological Marketing' organized by American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1995 and took place in the literature. Green marketing refers to the process of selling products or services based on their environmental benefits. Welford defined green marketing as "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the requirements of customers and society in a profitable and sustainable way." Green is an umbrella term that refers to products and practices that are organic, sustainable or otherwise environmentally friendly.

While globalization process continues in its full speed across the world, this process has also brought some serious problems with it. Leading one of these problems is environmental problems that affect all living beings negatively. Green product is a term that describes "a product that protects the environment and replaces artificial ingredients with natural ones". Greening of a product takes place over its complete life-cycle from product design and raw material procurement to manufacturing, storage, transportation, and usage and post usage activities.

Literature Review

According to Kamal Manaktola (2007)^[1], green purchase behavior refers to the consumption of products that are benevolent or beneficial to the environment, recyclable or conservable and sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns. Kaman Lee (2008)^[2] reveals that going green reflects a social consciousness around saving and advancing the Earth's natural resources, preserving and protecting them for the sake of civilization. Consumers are becoming more and more aware of environmental issues and this has increased the demand for ecological products. If consumers have a favourable attitude toward greening environment, they are more inclined to purchase green products. The continuous awareness of environmental problems may in turn change consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions as well.

Consumer purchase intention has been an important concept in marketing literature. Previous studies have exposed that consumer with intention to buy products exhibit higher actual buying rates than those customers who demonstrate that they have no intention of buying (Brown, 2003)^[10]. Blackwell *et al.* (2001)^[10] also support this by indicating that

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purchase intentions represent what consumers think they will buy. Furthermore, behavior towards a particular object is approximated by an intention to perform that behavior. Thus, purchase intention positively affects the probability of a customer decision that he will buy green products.

Statement of the problem

The research intends to find whether green marketing triggers the purchasing of green products and to find the extent of relationship between both in Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector in Nilambur Municipality. Now a day, companies are making claims about green nature of their products; one of the aims of the study was to find whether people accepted those claims. The study aims to find the relationship between various constituents of green marketing and how it converts into purchasing decision by customers. Also, the role of demographic factors like age, sex, education and income level on consumers purchasing decision of green products are studied.

Objectives

- To examine the awareness level of respondents towards green products.
- To study the factors influencing while purchasing green products.
- To analyze the satisfaction level of respondents towards green products.
- To study the problems faced by consumers while consuming green products.

Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference between the awareness levels of respondents towards green products.

H02: There is no significant difference between the satisfaction levels of respondents towards green products.

H0 3: There is no significant difference between the problems faced by consumers while consuming green products.

Significance and scope of the study

Population Growth, Global Warming, exhaustion of Natural Resources are threatening the future of human beings, develops and revealed the concept of “ Green Marketing”. With the “triple bottom line” or the “three pillars of business”- People, Planet and Profit; gaining more attention day by day and green is becoming the new mantra of success in any business. On the other side, a new trend of Green Consumerism is also emerging. The main purpose of the study is to discover how ecological balance and innate environmental features can be reserved through sustainable development system. The study proposes to identify and examine the strategies employed by the FMCGs to achieve their goal and how the consumer switches over their interest from conventional products to green products.

Methodology of the study

The study consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from respondents through questionnaires. Secondary data was collected from various books, magazines, journals, theses and internet. The area of the study confined to Nilambur Municipality. The data for were collected from 60 respondents. The research design adopted is Descriptive. Convenience sampling method is adopted for the study. Questionnaire is used as a tool for

data collection and tables, charts, diagrams are used for presentation. Tools like t-test and ANOVA are used for data analysis.

Limitations of the study

- Only limited time is available.
- Since study is based on sampling, sampling errors are bound to occur.
- Cover only a limited geographical area.
- Only 60 samples are used for study.

Analysis and interpretation

Ranking

Table 1: Sources of awareness in providing information regarding green products

Sources	N	Mean	Rank
Television	60	2.53	1
Magazines	60	3.82	4
Internet Ads	60	2.95	2
Friends / Relatives	60	3.97	5
News paper	60	3.68	3
Seminar / Conference	60	5.93	7
Shop keepers	60	5.12	6

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 reveals that Television is the main source of awareness in providing information regarding green products with a mean score of 2. 53. Seminar / Conference are the least important source of awareness in providing information regarding green products with a mean score of 5.93.

Table 2: Factors that influence while purchasing green products

Factors	N	Mean	Rank
Health	60	2.10	1
Environmental concerns	60	3.83	2
Status	60	6.13	5
Quality products	60	3.97	3
Price	60	7.55	7
Availability	60	7.77	8
Marketing campaigns	60	9.32	12
Choices	60	7.92	9
Packaging	60	8.63	11
Reputation	60	8.47	10
Brand	60	7.35	6
Durability	60	4.92	4

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 reveals that Health is the main factor that influence while purchasing green products with a mean score of 2.10. Marketing campaigns is the least factor that influence while purchasing green products with a mean score of 2.10.

Table 3: Satisfaction level of Gender towards green products

Factors	N	T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Satisfaction level of green products * Gender	60	-.150	58	.882

Source: Primary Data, *5% level of significance

H0: There is no significance difference between the gender and satisfaction level of green products

Independent't' test was applied to test the significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondent's satisfaction level towards the usage of green

products. The calculated 't' value and P value for usage of green products ($t = -0.150$, $p = 0.882$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. So there is no significant difference

between the gender and satisfaction level with the usage of green products.

Table 4: Problems faced by Male and Female respondents while purchasing green products

Factors	N	T	Df	Sig. (2 tailed)
Problems faced * Gender	60	-1.471	58	.147

Source: Primary Data, *5% level of significance

H0: There is no significance difference between the gender and problems faced while purchasing green products

Independent 't' test was applied to test the significant difference between the mean scores of male and female respondent's problems faced while purchasing green products. The calculated 't' value and P value for purchase

of green products ($t = -1.471$, $p = 0.147$). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. So there is no significant difference between the gender and problems faced while purchasing green product.

Table 5: Difference in opinion between the age of the respondents and their Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems towards green products

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Awareness	Between Groups	.387	3	.129	.460	.711*
	Within Groups	15.714	56	.281		
	Total	16.101	59			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	.100	3	.033	.232	.873*
	Within Groups	8.023	56	.143		
	Total	8.123	59			
Problems	Between Groups	1.205	3	.402	1.900	.140*
	Within Groups	11.833	56	.211		
	Total	13.038	59			

Source: Primary Data, * 5% level of significance

H0: There is no significant difference between the age of the respondents and their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products

Table 5 reveals the result of One-way ANOVA applied to find whether the mean scores vary according to the age group of the respondents on their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products.

Calculated P value for the behavior towards Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems show that there is no significant difference between the age group of the respondents, since its P value is more than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6: Difference in opinion between educational qualification of the respondents and their Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems towards green products

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Awareness	Between Groups	1.866	4	.466	1.802	.142*
	Within Groups	14.236	55	.259		
	Total	16.101	59			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	.189	4	.047	.327	.859*
	Within Groups	7.935	55	.144		
	Total	8.123	59			
Problems	Between Groups	1.034	4	.259	1.185	.328*
	Within Groups	12.004	55	.218		
	Total	13.038	59			

Source: Primary Data, *5% level of significance

H0: There is no significant difference between the educational qualification of the respondents and their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products

Table 6 reveals the result of One Way ANOVA applied to find whether the mean scores vary according to the educational qualification of the respondents on their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products. The calculated P value for the behavior towards

Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems show that there is no significant difference between the educational qualifications of the respondents, since its P value is more than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 7: Difference in opinion between the employment status of the respondents and their Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems towards green products

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Awareness	Between Groups	2.021	3	.674	2.679	.056*
	Within Groups	14.081	56	.251		
	Total	16.101	59			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	.515	3	.172	1.263	.296*
	Within Groups	7.609	56	.136		
	Total	8.123	59			
Problems	Between Groups	1.264	3	.421	2.005	.124*
	Within Groups	11.773	56	.210		
	Total	13.038	59			

Source: Primary Data, * 5% level of significance

H0: There is no significant difference between the employment status of the respondents and their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products

Table 7 reveals the result of One Way ANOVA applied to find whether the mean scores vary according to the employment status of the respondents on their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products. The calculated P value for the behavior towards Awareness,

Satisfaction and Problem show that there is no significant difference between the educational qualifications of the respondents, since its P value is more than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8: Difference in opinion between the monthly income level of the respondents and their Awareness, Satisfaction and Problems towards green products

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Awareness	Between Groups	1.631	5	.326	1.217	.314*
	Within Groups	14.470	54	.268		
	Total	16.101	59			
Satisfaction	Between Groups	.094	5	.019	.126	.986*
	Within Groups	8.030	54	.149		
	Total	8.123	59			
Problems	Between Groups	.365	5	.073	.311	.904*
	Within Groups	12.673	54	.235		
	Total	13.038	59			

Source: Primary Data, * 5% level of significance

H0: There is no significant difference between the income level of the respondents and their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products

Table 8 reveals the result of One-way ANOVA applied to find whether the mean scores vary according to the income level of the respondents on their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced towards green products. The calculated P value for the behavior towards Awareness, Satisfaction and Problem show that there is no significant difference between the incomes level of the respondents, since its P value is more than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Findings

- Television is the main source of awareness among respondents in providing information regarding green products.
- The study proves that health is the main factor that influences respondents while purchasing green products.
- The study proves that there is no difference between the gender and satisfaction level of respondents with the usage of green products.
- The study proves that there is no significant difference between the gender and problems faced while purchasing green products.
- The study reveals that age, educational qualification, employment status and monthly income of the respondents have no significant difference towards their awareness, satisfaction and problems faced

Suggestions

- It is understood from the study that still many of the consumers are not having awareness on green products. In order to increase the awareness on green marketing Government and NGOs have to conduct many awareness programs like street plays, TV programs, debates etc.
- Manufacturers may broadcast many advertisements for their green products through various media like TV, newspapers, online and so on, as many consumers opined that advertisement is the main promotion for getting information about green products. Particularly they would like to watch TV channels, so manufacturers may conduct more ads through TV channels by sponsoring various programmes.
- Researchers need to explore the factors that motivate consumers towards green product usage.
- Retailers are suggested to open more number of organic retail stores for sale of green products. As point of purchase of green products in nearby area is minimum.

Conclusion

The study focuses on examining the buying behaviour of respondents towards green products. Based on the results, buying behaviour supports consumers for using green products. However, it is felt that if the suggestions are taken into consideration with due care by the authorities, it will

help to enhance the awareness, attitude and buying behaviour of green products among consumers that will help the human beings to live in pollution-free environment in the near present and for the future generations.

In the present era of development and growth, environment is being degraded at a rapid rate. It is hence, necessary to worry now rather than regret later. Green products can lower the negative impact on environment and ensure a sustainable future for the coming generations.

Most consumers intend to purchase such products to safeguard the health and environment. The researchers need to explore factors that motivate consumers towards green product usage. The present study finds out that, consumers are motivated to use green products because of environmental sustainability, their personal consciousness towards the environment and to safeguard them. However, unavailability of such products and unawareness refrain them from using such products.

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