IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

GREEN BUYING: THE IMPACT OF GREEN MARKETING MIX AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS ON GREEN PURCHASE DECISION

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Abstract: Increasing awareness of the various environmental problems has led to a shift in the way consumers go about their life. Many consumers now display concern about environmental deterioration and are moving towards a greener lifestyle. People are now aiming to reduce their impact on the environment. In this paper, the researcher has focused on the youth and has tried to understand their level of environmental awareness, their perception about the 4P's of green marketing, and purchase intention. An online questionnaire was used to collect responses from people across India. A total of 236 responses was tabulated and analyzed. The results showed that factors like price, availability, and product perception affect the green purchase. Further studies are needed to widen the scope of research in other areas of green marketing programs and strategy. Future research can be done for different types of buying situations or for buying decisions having different levels of involvement.

Index Terms – Green Marketing mix, Green Purchase, Green Product, Sustainable Product

I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation has become one of the most crucial issues for businesses, governments, and all other stakeholders. Over the year's consumers have become increasingly environmentally conscious because of an increase in awareness about the rising numbers of critical environmental issues like acid rains, climate changes, depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, health concerns, rapid rate of species extinction, and other such concerns. The increased level of consciousness has caused them to question business practices and raise demand regarding the restoration of ecological balance. The worry for the environment has also resulted in them preferring environment-friendly products. Taking notice of this, the companies have begun modifying or introducing new marketing strategies to target this segment. This marketing strategy is known as Green marketing or Ecological marketing or environmental marketing and sustainable marketing.

The term Green marketing was first discussed in a seminar on "ecological marketing" organized by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975 and took its place in the literature. The AMA defines Green Marketing in three different ways. The first is the retailing definition, which defines green marketing as the marketing of environmentally safe products. The second one is the social marketing definition, which defines Green Marketing as the development and marketing of products designed to minimize adverse effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality. The last one is the Environmental Definition; it defines Green Marketing as the efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products in a manner that is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns.

Businesses no longer want to be viewed as profit-making organizations; instead, they want consumers to see them as establishments that are sensible towards social problems. Today, Environment friendly does not just limit itself to products or services; but is required to be incorporated into the organization culture. The shift towards 'green' may appear to be costly in the short run, but in the long run, it proves to be essential and advantageous.

The concept of green marketing has evolved. According to Peattie (2001), the evolution of Green marketing has three long phases. The first was called the 'ecological phase' involved marketing activities carried out to resist the ever-increasing environmental problems and provide suitable remedies. The second phase is known as 'environmental' here; the entire focus was shifted on the implementation of cleaner technologies and designing innovative products that would either improve the environment or would not degrade it further. The last phase that came into existence in the late nineties and early twenties is the 'sustainable phase' and is still prevailing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Polonsky, 2011) green marketing is defined as the effort by a company to design, promote, price, and distribute products in a manner that helps environmental protection. According to him, all marketing activities should have a minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment.

According to (Chitra, 2007) the green marketing mix consists of product, price, place promotion, process, people, and physical distribution. The product created is to provide healthy consumption, the place is the availability of the products and its awareness, price is the value of the product or service produced, promotion refers to an eco-friendly approach in the utilization resources and awareness of pollution, the physical distribution could be involved in the storage and other logistics should temper or harm to the environment Finally, people are the employees and customers should have the eco-friendless or eco mindset in the production and consumption to achieve green marketing objectives. They are very important elements of marketing to safeguard or preserve the environment due to the process of the eco-products and final consumption.

(Abzari, Shad, Sharbiyani, & Morad, 2013) (Mahmoud, Ibrahim, Ali, & Bleady, 2017) found a considerable positive connection between green marketing mix and consumer purchase intention. (Mahmoud, Ibrahim, Ali, & Bleady, 2017) identified environmental knowledge as the moderator of this affiliation.

(Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Morgan, 2013)'s investigation indicated that the application of green marketing programs by firms had significant performance payoffs. Outcomes implied that green product and distribution positively affected product-market performance, whereas green pricing and promotion enhanced its return on assets. Additionally, industry-level environmental reputation directs the link between green marketing components and firms' product-market and financial performance.

The green product helps maintain and improve the natural environment along with maintenance of energy or resources and reduction or omission of using poisonous materials, pollution, and wastes (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006) .In other words, the green product is the one which incurs less harm to the environment (Dahl & Persson, 2008)

(Yaacob & Zakaria, 2011) conferred that in general, consumers engage in green products for the benefits of environmental improvement they live in. In some cases, direct personal benefits, such as perceived health advantages of organic foods or the energy saving of an eco-friendly air conditioner, are mostly observed.

(Suki, 2016) found green product purchase was impacted by epistemic value and functional value quality. Functional value price, emotional value, and conditional value did not affect. According to (Ranjan & Kushwaha, 2017) purchase decision is strongly influenced by beliefs in the benefits of green products.

According to the study of (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011), Malaysian consumers purchased more green products in the category of cleaning products or pesticides, as they are considered as non-eco-friendly. (Chitra, 2007) showed in a survey made on 60 consumers that among green products such as food, cosmetics, medicines, and furniture, most consumers are "fully aware of eco-friendly food, and "partially aware" of cosmetics and medicine.

(Chang, 2011) in his study stated that some of the consumers see the price of eco-friendly products as more expensive than the conventional ones.

Some consumers justify the higher price, as they believe the product will prevent deterioration of the earth. According to a survey made in the 27 European countries, it was found that around 75% of the respondents are ready to pay more for green products and the Swedish have one of the highest percentages: 88,8% (Secondi & Pirani, 2011)

As indicated by (Maheshwari & Malhotra, 2011) price and brand are considered by a consumer before buying green products. Buyers are reluctant to spend more on green products. This was upheld by (Verru, 2013) who exhibited that while purchase behavior is impacted by Green marketing practices of organizations, price and quality are progressively significant. However, the findings of (Ansar, 2013) uncovered that buyers are willing to pay extra for green products.

According to (D'Souza, Lamb, & Taghian, 2006) consumers will generally purchase green items regardless of whether they are lower in quality as compared to alternatives, yet would hunt for environmental information on labels. Price sensitive green consumers would consistently look for adequate information on product labels to make informed purchase decisions.

Green prices should be reasonable and competitive (Soonthonsmai, 2007). It is assumed that initially the cost and price of the green products will be higher but in the long run, it will be less due to learning by doing, incremental change in knowledge, and advance and cheap technology (Fan & Zeng, 2011)

According to (Shil, 2012) green place refers to the management of logistics to minimize the emissions caused by transportation, thereby aiming to reduce carbon footprint. (Awan, 2011) stated that place is not a cost generator factor, rather it has numerous features that can create revenues and certain outcomes.

The choice of where and when to make a product obtainable by an organization will have a significant impact on the customers. Very few customers will go out of their way to buy green products merely for the sake of it (Sharma, 2011). This is in contrast to the findings of (Singh, 2013) according to which few interested customers will go out of their way to buy green products.

(Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011) describes promotion as the provision of genuine information about the products in a way that does not harm the materialistic and moral consumers' interests. It involves communicating information on the environmental commitments and the efforts made by companies to consumers (Fan & Zeng, 2011), (Singh, 2013). Green advertising as promotional messages is a significant promotional tool.

According to (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011) the objective of green advertisements is to influence consumers' purchase behavior by encouraging them to buy products that do not pollute the environment and to direct their interest to the positive consequences of their purchase behavior, for themselves as well as the environment.

Consumers are skeptical about Green advertising, they don't generally trust the eco-friendly claim, and think that it is exaggerated. The survey done on Malaysian consumers demonstrated that there is no relationship between environmental advertisements and purchase intention of green products (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). This is contradictory to the findings of (Wannimayake & Randiwela, 2008) where it was found that promotion affected purchase decisions.

Green marketing is very essential for the sustainability of an organization these days. As revealed by the literature review there is a lot of gap in research on this topic. Most of the studies are concentrated on one or two marketing-mix elements. Furthermore, previous findings concerning consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly products are conflicting. Also, in India not much study is done as far as the influence of green marketing on consumer purchase behavior is concerned, the majority of the above studies and surveys were done in other countries.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors that influence the purchase of eco-friendly products among Indian Youth. The factors are analyzed from the consumers' point of view. This paper specifically tries to answer the following questions:

- Which factors in the marketing-mix influence consumers to purchase eco-friendly products?
- To what extent these factors influence consumers to purchase green products?
- Does environmental knowledge influence purchase intention?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research paper, questionnaires are used to collect primary data on the factors of demography, environmental knowledge, marketing mix of eco-friendly products, and purchase intention.

3.1 Research Approach

This paper follows a quantitative methodology where quantitative information is gathered and is put to a thorough quantitative examination formally and inflexibly.

3.2 Research Design

For this study, a cross-sectional design is used. Data is collected on each of the four marketing-mix elements, environmental knowledge, purchase intention at a single point in time.

3.3 Population for the research

People in India, between the ages of 15 to 30 is considered as the population for this study.

3.4 Sampling Element

In this paper, the element could be any person belonging to Indian nationality between 15 to 30 years.

3.5 Sampling Method

The snowball sampling method was used as this method is simple, cost-efficient, and makes it comparatively quicker to find samples.

3.6.1 Sample Size

A 95% confidence interval is selected. For the data on population the last census that was conducted in 2011, is used and estimation of the present population between the age groups of 15 to 34 years is done. The sample size calculated is 384.

3.6.2 Limitations

To make the data generalized and replicable, the researcher will try their best to have an equal number of respondents for each age group, and a sample composed of around half of men and half of women. However, it will not be possible to reach a wide variety of people and this can be a limitation.

3.7 Scales Used

To measure attitudes Likert scales were used. It is composed of "five scale point descriptors", thus calculation of positive or negative attitudes could be measured by using "the summation of the scores associated with all statements" (Shiu, Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2009)
Single choice scales were used to collect data on demography, green products, price, quality, promotion of green products.

3.8 Instruments Used

3.8.1 Self-completion questionnaire

A self-completion questionnaire was spread using the internet. For this study, the researcher has used Google doc which permits elaborate surveys with multiple choice questions, etc. Then this survey was spread through Facebook and WhatsApp.

3.8.2 Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions (or other types of prompts) to gather information from respondents. (Gault, 1907) There were 7 sections in total.
The first section is used for the demographic classification of the respondents. A single Choice scale is used to gather information on the age and gender of the respondent. The second section was used to find out about the existing environment knowledge of the respondent. This also used a single choice scale (Yes/No) to obtain information on 4 environmental concerns. The third section consisted of 7 statements on eco-friendly product perception and a Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) was used to collect data. The fourth section was based on a single statement about the green place and again Likert scale was used.
The fifth section asked 2 questions related to green promotion, the first question was based on a Likert scale, whereas the second one about advertisement used a single choice scale. The sixth section asked 2 questions related to green price, the first question was based on a Likert scale, whereas the second one about higher price willingness used a single choice scale. The last section consists of 2 questions. The first one was to know about the past green behavior of the consumer. The last question aims to measure the purchase intention of the respondent and puts forward two statements relating to their future purchase intention. Likert Scale from 1= 'No, I will not' to 5= 'I definitively will' is used.
All the questions used were closed and thus are easily analyzable, comparable with other answers, and permit to save time for the respondent and the researcher.

3.8.3 Tools Used

A total of 257 responses were received and out of the responses received 236 responses were selected based on complete information availability. The responses were then tabulated using SPSS and then analyzed.

V. RESULTS

The sample of 236 people from different age groups was randomly collected inclusive of 133 females and 102 males and one of the respondents did not wish to disclose the gender. Around 50% of the respondents belonged to the age group 19-22, followed by the 15-18 year age group, which made up 38.55% of the total respondents. There were 11 responses from the 23-26 years group and only 9 for between 27-30 years.

When it comes to environmental knowledge, around 90% of the total respondents were aware of Global Warming.75.4% of them were aware of Greenhouse effects. 50 of them did not know about Species Extinction. 52 of them did not know about Climate Change. So, overall, the respondents had adequate environmental knowledge to qualify as a suitable sample.

Coming to environmentally friendly product perception 200 of the respondents Strongly agree that eco-friendly products are biodegradable. 70% of respondents strongly agree that Eco-friendly products are organic while 13% somewhat disagree and 6% strongly disagree with this. Whether or not Sustainable wood is an eco-friendly product received a mixed response from the respondents, with around 46.6% of the agreeing to it, 23% of the were neutral, and 30% of them disagreeing with it. Half of the respondents strongly agree that eco-friendly, products are made from natural ingredients, 37 of them are neutral to this suggestion and approx. 31% of the people are on the disagreement side. 104 of the responses strongly agree that eco-friendly products should come with Minimum packaging materials, 37 are neutral to it, while 78 of them are on the disagreement side. 45.8% strongly see eco-friendly products as healthy, 28.4% of them somewhat agree to it, 11.5% hold a neutral view, 5% somewhat disagree, while 9.3% are in strong disagreement. As per 74 respondents' eco-friendly products are of better quality compared to conventional products, 63 of them somewhat agree to this, while 61 of them find no difference in the quality of both. 16 of them find eco-friendly products to be of inferior quality and 22 of them somewhat agree with this.

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When it comes to green place only 26% believe that it is easily available in the market, while 45% of them do not find eco-friendly products easily in the market.

58.5% of the people have seen advertisements where the brands explain the eco-friendly nature of their products.

47% of the people find eco-friendly products to be expensively priced, while 26.2% find it to be inexpensive and 26.7% of them find that the price for the product is justified. 12.7% of the people were not ready to pay an extra price for green products. 28.8% were ready to pay up to 5%, 33.5% were ready to pay between 5-10% extra, 19.5% were ready to pay 10-15% extra for it, while around 5.5% of them were ready to pay above 15% if the product was eco-friendly. On average people are willing to pay only around 5% extra for the product.

Around 85.6% of the respondents had previously purchased a green product. 63% of them plan to purchase it in the future, while 14% are averse to purchasing eco-friendly products and 23% of them gave a neutral response. 60% of the respondents will search for alternatives for conventional products, 14.5% disagreed in doing so, 25.4% were not sure.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

The diversity of genders and age group prevails in the study, however, the age groups 15-18, 19-22 dominates in the present study. The majority of the respondents were aware of the prevailing environmental conditions. A large number of respondents perceive eco-friendly products to be biodegradable, organic, made from natural ingredients, have minimum packaging, are healthy, and of good quality. Marketers need to play an important role here and educate people about eco-friendly products. Most of them find it difficult to locate green products in the market. There exists a gap in the supply chain, the marketing activities of a corporation with green products should be such that it should be accessible to a large group of people. This can be achieved through either building a strong online presence or traditional retail stores. The majority of the people find the products to be expensive compared to conventional products and on average are not willing to pay more than 5% extra for the product. In a market that is price-sensitive to appeal to a larger base, brands either need to justify the price asked with the value offered, or they need to set a price that is close to the price of the conventional product. More than four-fifths of the people had previously purchased a green product. Three-fifth of the people are willing to purchase it in the future and search for greener alternatives. This study enhances the understanding of young green purchasers in the Indian context and offers insights to understand consumer demand for green products in the Indian market. The findings can be used by the managers of green products who are interested to know the underlying behavior of prospective green purchasers of their green products. Thus, marketers can use them to effectively communicate with consumers so that they can maintain or grow their market shares.

VII. CONCLUSION

As the demand for green products undoubtedly exists, Green Marketing provides an opportunity for organizations to increase their market share by introducing eco-friendly products. It is a means towards the broader goal of sustainable development. Green marketing does not only focus on satisfying customer needs but also on benefitting society as a whole.

The task for the marketers is to use promotion tools to make consumers familiar with green products. They need to relate green products with the functional, emotional, and experiential needs of consumers. Consumers should also be informed about the facts related to the environmental performance of the companies, information related to green products, congruence with their desirable social image, and relevance to their lifestyles. Marketers should carefully understand the needs of their consumer segments, and accordingly, position products as green products to them. Corporations need to re-engineer their manufacturing processes and product/service design to stay competitive.

VIII. LIMITATIONS

- The study has limitations in terms of sampling bias due to snowball sampling.
- It is a cross-sectional study rather than a longitudinal approach that could have measured changes in behavior.
- This also focuses only on four dimensions of the green marketing mix.
- Enough responses for the age group 23-26 and 27-30 were not available.

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APPENDICES

			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Valid	Female	133	56.4	56.4	56.4
		Male	102	43.2	43.2	99.6
		Prefer Not to Say	1	.4	.4	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	Valid	15-18	91	38.6	38.6	38.6
		19-22	121	51.3	51.3	89.8
		23-26	15	6.4	6.4	96.2
		27-30	9	3.8	3.8	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Global Warming	Valid	Yes	211	89.4	89.4	89.4
		No	25	10.6	10.6	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Species Extinction	Valid	Yes	186	78.8	78.8	78.8
		No	50	21.2	21.2	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Climate Change	Valid	Yes	184	78.0	78.0	78.0
		No	52	22.0	22.0	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Greenhouse Effects	Valid	Yes	178	75.4	75.4	75.4
		No	58	24.6	24.6	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Biodegradable			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
		Somewhat Disagree	9	3.8	3.8	5.1
		Neutral	9	3.8	3.8	8.9
		Somewhat Agree	15	6.4	6.4	15.3
		Strongly Agree	200	84.7	84.7	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Organic	Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	6.4	6.4	6.4
		Somewhat Disagree	31	13.1	13.1	19.5
		Neutral	24	10.2	10.2	29.7
		Somewhat Agree	8	3.4	3.4	33.1
		Strongly Agree	158	66.9	66.9	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Sustainable Wood			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	24	10.2	10.2	10.2
		Somewhat Disagree	47	19.9	19.9	30.1
		Neutral	55	23.3	23.3	53.4
		Somewhat Agree	24	10.2	10.2	63.6
		Strongly Agree	86	36.4	36.4	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Natural Ingredients			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	30	12.7	12.7	12.7
		Somewhat Disagree	44	18.6	18.6	31.4
		Neutral	37	15.7	15.7	47.0
		Somewhat Agree	7	3.0	3.0	50.0
		Strongly Agree	118	50.0	50.0	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Minimum Packaging			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	26	11.0	11.0	11.0
		Somewhat Disagree	52	22.0	22.0	33.1
		Neutral	37	15.7	15.7	48.7
		Somewhat Agree	17	7.2	7.2	55.9
		Strongly Agree	104	44.1	44.1	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Healthy			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	9.3	9.3	9.3

		Somewhat Disagree	12	5.1	5.1	14.4
		Neutral	27	11.4	11.4	25.8
		Somewhat Agree	67	28.4	28.4	54.2
		Strongly Agree	108	45.8	45.8	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Good Quality			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	6.8	6.8	6.8
		Somewhat Disagree	22	9.3	9.3	16.1
		Neutral	61	25.8	25.8	41.9
		Somewhat Agree	63	26.7	26.7	68.6
		Strongly Agree	74	31.4	31.4	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Easily Available			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	41	17.4	17.4	17.4
		Somewhat Disagree	63	26.7	26.7	44.1
		Neutral	71	30.1	30.1	74.2
		Somewhat Agree	43	18.2	18.2	92.4
		Strongly Agree	18	7.6	7.6	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Well Promoted			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	27	11.4	11.4	11.4
		Somewhat Disagree	44	18.6	18.6	30.1
		Neutral	61	25.8	25.8	55.9
		Somewhat Agree	64	27.1	27.1	83.1
		Strongly Agree	40	16.9	16.9	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Advertisement			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Yes	138	58.5	58.5	58.5
		No	98	41.5	41.5	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Expensive			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	9.3	9.3	9.3
		Somewhat Disagree	40	16.9	16.9	26.3
		Neutral	63	26.7	26.7	53.0
		Somewhat Agree	68	28.8	28.8	81.8
		Strongly Agree	43	18.2	18.2	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Higher Price Willingness			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	No	30	12.7	12.7	12.7
		Yes, but up to 5%	68	28.8	28.8	41.5
		Yes, between 5-10%	79	33.5	33.5	75.0
		Yes, between 10-15%	46	19.5	19.5	94.5
			13	5.5	5.5	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Previous Purchase			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	22	9.3	9.3	9.3
		Somewhat Disagree	6	2.5	2.5	11.9
		Neutral	6	2.5	2.5	14.4
		Somewhat Agree	124	52.5	52.5	66.9
		Strongly Agree	78	33.1	33.1	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Plan to Purchase			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	30	12.7	12.7	12.7
		Somewhat Disagree	3	1.3	1.3	14.0
		Neutral	53	22.5	22.5	36.4
		Somewhat Agree	73	30.9	30.9	67.4
		Strongly Agree	77	32.6	32.6	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	
Search for Green Products			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Valid	Strongly Disagree	18	7.6	7.6	7.6
		Somewhat Disagree	16	6.8	6.8	14.4
		Neutral	60	25.4	25.4	39.8
		Somewhat Agree	69	29.2	29.2	69.1
		Strongly Agree	73	30.9	30.9	100.0
		Total	236	100.0	100.0	

Frequency Table