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CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND ACCEPTANCE OF GREEN MARKETING INITIATIVES

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Abstract

Climatic changes and their consequences are one among the major threats the world is now dealing with and Go Green measures are the major weapon used. Marketing is the most considerable field where these green initiatives can be found at a core level. Green Marketing focuses on the production, marketing and consumption of eco-friendly products in an eco-friendly manner and thereby protect the environment without compromising the needs of the market. The societal attitude of preserving nature adds fuel to the growth and acceptance of green marketing. In this context, the present study measures the awareness and acceptance among the consumers. In addition, the inhibiting factors of its success is considered under the purview of study.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Perception, Green Products, Eco-friendly

Introduction

Global warming, ozone layer depletion, climatic changes, pollution etc have become the common terms of today, which reflect the consciousness, society hold for the environment. Along with these issues, the limited and scarce means and the unlimited human wants is forcing the business houses to utilize what they have to the fullest, judiciously without harming the environment. All these led to the path of go green. The green initiatives reflect the attitude of business houses and the stake holders towards the environment.

In the recent years, there is a rise for this concern which is reflected in the emergence of various ecological marketing strategies, later termed as green marketing strategies in the market. Through green marketing companies are focused on achieving a reduction in wastage and increase in energy efficiency and of course through eco-friendly marketing, attract much consumer interest. Green Marketing has been defined by AMA as “the development and marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe (i.e., designed to minimize negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality)”. LG India are the pioneers in offering green products and following green marketing strategies in India. HCL, Haier, TCL, ONGC and so on also succeeded in the adoption of green marketing here.

Statement of the Problem

Environmental issues and concern for the same among public has guide to the emergence of green initiatives. The societal attitude is now changing with a focus on preserving for the coming generations. To match with this societal attitude many green initiatives has emerged in each corner, the success and sustainability of these green initiative depends on how the society perceive and adopt the same. Keeping this in mind, the present study is making an attempt to find the awareness, perception and adoption of various green marketing strategies among the public.

Objectives

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:

- ✓ to find out the consumer awareness and perception towards green marketing
- ✓ to analyse the attitude of the consumers towards green products and their buying behaviour for the same.
- ✓ to know the factors that inhibit the adoption of green marketing among consumers.

Research Methodology

The study has adopted a descriptive and exploratory research design by incorporating both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from 130 respondents from Kottayam Town chosen conveniently by distributing questionnaires structured for the study through google forms. The secondary data are gathered from various professional journals, project reports and websites. The collected data is analysed using SPSS software by adopting simple analysis tools like percentage and the hypotheses are tested using Chi square, Kruskal Wallis H test and Friedman test.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are:

- The study is confined to Kottayam town area only. It cannot be generalised to other places.
- Perceptions of respondents can change over time.
- Inherent limitations of sampling may have affected the study.

Review of Literature

Previous studies on green marketing and their findings are discussed here:

Saleena and Ahammed (2019) conducted a study on awareness and perception of college teachers towards green products. Findings of the study reveal that majority of respondents are aware and satisfied with performance of green products.

Thapa (2019) made a study on Consumers' Perception towards Green Products in Nepal. Study reveals that consumers have adequate knowledge about green products features, majority of them view green products as healthy and safe. He also finds that consumers prefer to believe that green products are offering high quality over conventional products.

Fouziya and Gracious (2018) conducted an exploratory study with an attempt to analyze the influence of consumer's awareness of green and environment friendly marketing on their buying behavior. The findings of the study indicate that the awareness of consumers on green marketing has a significant impact on consumer's buying behavior.

Hameed and Waris (2018) conducted research study to explore the relationship between eco labels and eco conscious consumer behavior for green products. The results of the study depict a significant direct impact of eco labels on consumer's eco-conscious behavior, green trust and environmental concern.

Agarwal and Ganesh (2016) conducted a research on the effectiveness and perception of 4P's (product, price, place, promotion) on attitude and purchase intentions of consumers on green products in FMCG sector. Findings reveal that there exists a significant positive relationship between promotion and attitudes towards green products. Green products and packages make significant impact on consumer's purchase intention.

Analysis of data and Discussions

The 130 respondents are categorized based on various demographic factors viz. age, education, occupation and monthly income for the study.

Table 1- Awareness level about Green Products

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage
High	34	26.2
Moderate	65	50
Low	31	23.8
Total	130	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 deals with the awareness of respondents about the various categories of green products. It shows that majority of the respondents are moderately aware about the various categories of green products. To test whether there is any association between awareness level on green products and the gender of respondents, Chi Square test is conducted and the hypothesis is stated as under:

H₀: There is no association between the awareness level about green products and gender of the respondents.

Table 2- Gender of the Respondents and Awareness Level about Green Products
Crosstabulation

		Gender of Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Level of awareness about green products	Low	13	18	31
	Moderate	33	32	65
	High	19	15	34
Total		65	65	130

Source: Table 1

Table 3- Chi –Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2 sided)
Pearson Chi – Square	1.292	2	.524

Computed figures

Since the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level of significance and 2 degree of freedom is 0.05 ($0.524 > 0.05$), the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no association between the gender of respondents and the awareness level on green products.

Table 4- Category of Green Products Mostly Purchased

Category	N	Mean	Rank
Food	130	2.1077	1
Health care/ cosmetic products	130	2.7000	2
Clothes	130	3.4231	4
Cleaning products	130	3.4462	5
Electronic appliances	130	3.3538	3

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the category of green products mostly purchased by consumers. The mean scores indicate that food is the mostly purchased category of green products. Health care or cosmetic products are the next preferred category of green products. However, cleaning products is the least preferred category of green products.

Since there is difference in mean scores, Friedman test is used to test whether the difference is significant or not. Hypothesis is:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the category of green products mostly purchased by consumers.

Table 5- Friedman Test

N	Chi – Square	Df	Asymp.Sig.
130	72.051	4	.000

Computed figures

As the significance value obtained at 5 per cent level of significance and at a degree of freedom of 4 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.

Table 6- Consumer Perception regarding Green Products

Statements	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Promotes health benefits	130	4.4692	.70643
Have a better quality than conventional products	130	4.0154	.75724
Have a reasonable price	130	3.3692	.96560
Are good for the environment	130	4.2231	.90875
Easily accessible in the market	130	3.4077	1.09045
Eco – friendly products reduces wastage	130	4.0615	.91290
Perception	130	3.9244	.52994

Source: Primary data

Table 6 deals with the Consumer Perception regarding green products. They have a strong sense of agreement towards the fact that green products promote health benefits. Respondents show an agreement towards other statements like green products being good for the environment, eco – friendly products reduce wastage and they have a better quality than conventional products. However, the agreement level on the green products having easy accessibility and reasonable price is lower compared to other aspects of perception. The overall perception score on green products is 3.9244 which indicate that the consumers have a positive attitude towards green products.

To test whether there is education -wise difference in the perception towards green products, a Kruskal Wallis H Test is conducted. The relevant hypothesis is stated as under:

H₀: There is no education wise difference in the perception towards green products.

Table 7- Ranks

	Education	N	Mean Rank
Perception	SSLC	9	63.61
	Plus two	22	43.05
	Graduate	56	67.87
	Postgraduate	27	70.69
	Professional	16	80.41
Total		130	

Source: Table 6

Table 8- Kruskal Wallis Test

	Perception
Chi – Square	11.197
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.024

Computed figures

Since the significance value obtained at a level 5 per cent and at a degree of freedom of 4 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is education-wise difference in the perception towards green products.

Table 9- Attitude of Consumers towards Green Products

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I appreciate the packaging of green products	130	4.0615	.96251
I am willing to pay high price for green products	130	3.4846	.97436
I pay attention to advertisements of green products	130	3.8077	.90730
Sufficient information is provided on Eco – labels	130	3.6769	.93357
Eco – friendly packaging is easily recyclable	130	3.8923	.99803
I understand the information on eco – friendly packaging	130	3.7231	1.01931
I am happy to purchase green products	130	4.0231	.86683
I recommend green products to my family and colleagues	130	4.1462	.82698
Attitude	130	3.8519	.66122

Source: Primary data

Table 9 deals with the attitude of consumers towards green products. Most of the respondents recommend green products to their family members and colleagues. Respondents do agree on the statements that they appreciate the packaging of green products and they are happy to purchase green products. Thus, consumers are very much willing to purchase green products which are evident from the high mean score.

Kruskal Wallis H Test is conducted to test the existence of education -wise difference on the attitude towards green products. The hypothesis is as under:

H₀: There is no education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.

Table 10- Ranks

	Education	N	Mean Rank
Attitude	SSLC	9	49.00
	Plus two	22	41.36
	Graduate	56	73.12
	Postgraduate	27	70.33
	Professional	16	73.16
Total		130	

Source: Table 9

Table 11- Kruskal Wallis Test

	Attitude
Chi – Square	14.219
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.007

Computed figures

Since the p value obtained at a level of significance of 5 per cent and at a degree of freedom of 4 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.

Table 12- Buying Behaviour of Respondents

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I make a special effort to buy green products as they are eco- friendly	130	4.0077	.83986
I avoid products having harmful effect on environment	130	4.0154	.73648
I conserve energy by turning off lights and electrical items after its usage	130	4.2615	.74244
I almost recycle all or most home waste products	130	3.8000	.77159
Promotional measures of green products attract me	130	3.7846	.93994
Usage by friends/colleagues motivate me to purchase green products	130	4.0692	.89951
Buying behavior	130	3.9897	.53223

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the buying behavior of respondents towards green products. Majority of the respondents conserve energy by turning off lights and electrical items after its usage. Respondents also agree to the statements which are usage by friends or colleagues motivate them to purchase green products, and avoiding products having harmful effect on environment etc. The mean score of 3.9897 indicates the positive attitude towards purchase behaviour regarding green products.

To test the significance of income-wise difference on the buying behaviour of respondents regarding green products, Kruskal- allis H Test is conducted. The hypothesis is stated as under:

H0: There is no income-wise difference on the buying behaviour of respondents on green products

Table 13- Ranks

	Monthly income of the Respondents	N	Mean Rank
Buying behaviour	Less than 10000	42	61.37
	10000-20000	48	65.70
	30000-50000	31	64.24
	Above 50000	9	88.06
Total		130	

Source: Table 12

Table 14- Kruskal Wallis Test

	Buying behaviour
Chi – Square	3.805
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.283

Computed figures

Since the significance value obtained at a level of 5 per cent and at a degree of freedom of 3 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Then, there is no significant income-wise difference green buying behaviour of respondents.

Table 15- Difficulties in Adopting Green Products

Difficulties	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Non – availability of green products of all categories	130	4.2538	.75031
Misleading advertisements	130	3.8923	.75991
Lack of education on environmental impact	130	4.2077	.71198
Lack of awareness about availability of green products	130	4.2385	.78557
Belief that green products are costlier	130	4.0923	.96002

Source: Primary data

Table 15 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding difficulties in adopting green products. The most important difficulties shared is with regard to non- availability of green products of all categories and lack of awareness about availability of green products. It is noticed that lack of education on environmental impact are also matters of concern.

Summary of findings

On the basis of analysis of the data collected and processed using various statistical tools, the following findings have been arrived at:

- Majority of the respondents are moderately aware about the various categories of green products.
- Chi Square test is used to test whether there is any association between awareness level on green products and the gender of respondents. It reveals that there is no association between the gender of respondents and the awareness level on green products.
- It is found that food is the mostly purchased category of green products by respondents and cleaning products is the least preferred category of green products.
- Friedman test is used to test whether there is significant difference in the category of green products mostly purchased by consumers. It reveals that there is significant difference in the category of green products purchased by the respondents.
- There is education-wise difference in the perception towards green products.
- From the study, it is observed that consumers have a positive attitude towards green products. They have a strong sense of agreement towards the fact that green products promote health benefits.
- Kruskal Wallis H Test reveals that there is education-wise difference in the attitude of respondents towards green products.
- There is no significant income-wise difference on green buying behaviour of respondents as revealed by Kruskal Wallis H Test.
- Most of the respondents recommend green products to their family members and colleagues. They are very much willing to purchase green products.
- It is observed that majority of the respondents conserve energy by turning off lights and electrical items after its usage.
- It is found that non- availability of green products of all categories and lack of awareness about availability of green products are the most important hindrances in adopting green products.

Conclusion

The unstoppable run of business houses, for profit, found it is not possible to sustain without giving much attention for the environment. This realisation encourages the green initiatives in its functioning which is popularly termed as green marketing. Adoption of green and eco-friendly practices and the offering of green products are the results. In this realisation, the present study focuses on the awareness, perception and the adoption of go green practices particularly the green marketing among the public. The moderate level of awareness shows a light of hope for the sustainable growth, the preservation for future. The better perception and positive attitude among the society towards green marketing contributes to this belief. Still non-availability of green products and lack of awareness about the availability stood as a threat for its growth. The notable contributions of business houses for green initiatives indicates a better future.

Suggestions

- Expand consumer awareness about green products by creating effective green marketing campaigns or environment related activities.
- Companies may create ads that are more focused on green, eco – friendly image that will influence their customer's purchase decision.
- It is the responsibility of the government to monitor the credibility of the green marketing campaigns and inform the citizens about the availability and benefits of the new green products in the market.

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