Green Marketing – Concept, Awareness and Linkage with Consumer Purchase Decision

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Abstract
Environmental protection and safety is a major issue in recent times and government of our country enacted many rules and regulation regarding the same. Green marketing and green products is also a brand new concept in our country although awareness towards the same has been very low in India. In recent time, companies have also started adopting green marketing practices and emphasize consumers more towards green products which are less detrimental to environment than the conventional products available in the market. The research is an attempt to find out the whether the efforts taken by marketers to promote green products and sensitize consumers about the same are benefiting the consumers. Also the research tries to find out the whether these marketing activities and advertisements have any influence over the purchase or buying intention of consumers. A total of 100 respondents were interviewed across Pune City of Maharashtra to collect the primary data through well structured questionnaire. The research clearly highlighted the fact that the marketers’ activities and advertisements don’t influence the consumer to make purchase decision regarding purchase of green product. Even majority of the consumers are willing to pay an extra high price for the green products if it adds value, but few of them are not much eager in paying high price.

Keywords – Green Marketing, Green Product, Purchase Intention.

Introduction
As per the American Marketing Association, green marketing is an emerging concept of marketing of products that are considered to be environmentally safe. Thus with this emerging concept there lies a immense responsibility of marketers to re - conceptualize their products and modify the same which includes modifications of range of activities which includes modification in production process, in product type, packaging as well as in advertising. The concept of Green marketing is in intersection with “Environmental and Ecological Marketing”. But somehow, Green marketing is somewhat different in its own way. It’s not only about environmentally safe products, it’s more about a holistic mode of marketing where production, marketing, consumption and disposal of products happens in less damaging manners so that doesn’t cause much harm to the environment. Also it creates awareness through its promotions and advertising to sensitize consumers towards the needs of switching to green products and services. Initially consumers lack interest towards these products due to higher price but later due to its indispensable and profitable nature, cost-wise in long run too people started generating trust towards these products and slowly the concept of “Green marketing and Green Products” are rising in present day market. Since 1990’s researcher across world have actually started thinking about the concept and started analyzing the same blending with consumer’s perception and behaviour. Majority of these researches happened in developed countries but these studies are still in pre- mature stage in nation like India. The present study and effort is an attempt by researcher to understand the concept of Green Marketing and systematically analyze the interface where it is linked with consumer and also extract the attitude, behaviour and perception of consumers towards green products. The study is a primary survey where data is collected through well designed questionnaire and the well constructed survey tool will help us to understand consumer’s perception and attitude towards this concept and product.

Literature Review

Green Marketing
As per the research work of Polansky & Rosenberger (2011), green marketing is a concept of designing, promoting and distributing products in effective prices to consumers which are environmental friendly and encourages environmental protection. Thus Green marketing today is an important constituent of marketing as well as in research for understanding as well as implementing eco–friendly behaviour. Implementation and awareness towards this concept generated consciousness among marketers and consumers to properly adapt the green marketing policies in packaging and presentation so that the visibility is clear in terms of implementation of the same by marketers.

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Vernekar and Wadhwa (2011) characterized the green consumer as “who accepts and adopts eco-friendly behaviours, and those who prefers to purchase green products over the standard alternatives”. As per Balderjahn (1988), green consumers are the consumers who have optimistic attitudes towards the surroundings and environment protection and are more eager to procure green products.

Impact of Green Branding on Consumer

According to Pickett et al. (1995), the major contribution towards establishing a product is proper communications. If the green branded features are not properly commenced, the green products will be commercially unsuccessful. Likewise, W. Coddington (1993) suggested that green positioning of the product is also important factor that directs to the accomplishment of green branding tactic and strategies. However, according to Schlegelmilch et al. (1996), the professed substitution between efficient performance of brands and its effects on the surrounding and environment leads to unenthusiastic responses from consumer. Hartmann et al. (2005) stated that exciting brand benefits are the driving factors encouraging consumers to change their definite purchase behaviour and switch towards environment - friendly products.

Impact of Green Advertising on Consumer

D’Souza (2005), explained about few advertising terms used such as “environmentally friendly, recyclable, biodegradable, and ozone safe” which are most commonly viewed in green advertisements and consumers are not often understand such messages successfully. Though, Chan (2004) stated that, every customer indeed have a perception that from a particular advertisement they should congregate more authenticated and concrete product information which will guide them in their purchase decisions. Thus, marketers should advertise every environmental-friendly information effectively. According to Mendleson (1994), in order to accomplish the objective of shifting the consumer’s perception and attitude towards the green products, marketers as well as organizations have started focusing on the environmental knowledge in their organizations, in their products also in their advertising campaigns. This will facilitate towards change in consumers perception and attitude in preferred manner. Extensive and elaborate search of existing literatures in this area of green marketing highlighted the fact that gap exists on this topic, particularly in Indian context. Moreover, not much emphasis has been given on this area with respect to consumer behaviour and consumer perception towards this concept. This research is a sincere attempt to find out the impact of green marketing concept on consumer and what they think about the same.

Objective of the Study

While companies today are trying hard to implement suitable green marketing strategies in order to achieve a competitive advantage, there comes up a need to understand whether the consumers in today world are currently aware of green marketing and green products. Additionally there also exists a need to understand the perception of consumer while making a purchase decision. Thus the research study will primarily focus into the area of green marketing and consumer perception in purchasing green product with specific objective of:

a. Whether consumers are aware of green marketing and green products.
b. Whether purchase of green products are due to the green marketing activities undertaken by the marketers.
c. Whether green advertising has an impact on influencing their purchase decision.

Hypothesis Formulation

The null hypothesis (H0) for this research is:
H0: Consumers are aware of green marketing and green products.
H0a: Purchase decision is influenced by the green marketing activities undertaken by marketers.
H0b: Green advertising undertaken by companies has an impact on influencing the purchase decision of green products

Research Methodology

An exploratory study and a quantitative research approach have been carried out in this study. A well structured questionnaire was designed as tool for collecting primary data. The questionnaire is segmented into two sections one...
related to basic information related to their profile and the other part related to the impact of the green marketing activities on their buying behaviour. Likert Scale has been incorporated into the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in the different areas in Pune, Maharashtra. The respondents were mainly targeted across the city in various retail stores such as the sample of respondents included consumers in various retail stores in Kolkata such as Big Bazaar, Pantaloons, Westside, Shoppers Stop, Central etc. The sampling method adopted is convenience sampling of non-probability sampling technique and the total sample size restricted for this study is up to 100. Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5 has been incorporated in this study, where 1 - strongly agree and 5 - strongly disagree. Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and independent t-test has been used for analyzing the data using SPSS version 20.0.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

The table (Table1) below gives an idea about the demographic profile of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 and Above</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:** Table 1 clearly indicates that majority of the responses were from the respondents from age group of 16-30 years and are males

**H0: Consumers are aware of green marketing and green products**

The figure (Figure 1) below for the shows very clearly that the survey indicated that awareness towards green marketing and green products are very less although male respondents are particularly more aware than the female respondents and the percentage of awareness is more in the age group of 31-45 years which is close to 48 percent.

**Figure 1: Awareness towards Green marketing & Green Products (Gender Perspective)**
H0a: Purchase decision is influenced by the green marketing activities undertaken by marketers

Table 2: T – test (One sample statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Standard Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green marketing</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.0166</td>
<td>0.10166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Advertisements</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.9817</td>
<td>0.09817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: One sample statistics (Test value = 0)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t Lower</th>
<th>df Upper</th>
<th>Sig 2- tailed Lower</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>95% confidence interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green marketing activities</td>
<td>14.672</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.70658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Advertisements</td>
<td>22.854</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.21364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation

The table above (table 3) highlights that test signifies a p value which is less than 0.05 at the given level of significance. So the chance of accepting the null hypothesis is low from the obtained results and hence under this situation we are accepting the alternative hypothesis and justify our findings as that purchase decision of consumer regarding purchase of green products is not influenced by any of advertising or green marketing initiatives undertaken by the marketers.

Conclusion

Green marketing is a very new concept adopted world-wide and a very new initiative in India. Through this research it is quite evident and clear that this concept and the different approaches adopted by marketers to sensitize the consumers are still not fruitful. Some of the consumers are aware of the concept but never tried or given much importance to green products. Few of them are aware of the products as well as green marketing concept but never shown eagerness toward the same. However each of these consumers is emphasize on the fact that companies should abide by the environmental laws set by the country. Majority of the consumers are willing to pay an extra high price for the green products if it adds value, but few of them are not much eager in paying high price. Lastly the research clearly highlighted the fact that the marketers’ activities and advertisements don’t influence the consumer to make purchase decision regarding purchase of green product. So somehow, the awareness and the sensitization of the marketers are lacking the effectiveness and thus the concept has not been able to evolve. The research will further suggest or recommend the marketers to promote and portray the green products in an more effective manner with cost effectiveness so that consumer get influenced and think of purchase and re-purchase which will benefit them and will be less detrimental for the environment.

References