



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS OF GREEN MARKETING IN PONDICHERRY

Balananthini. B,

Ph.D. Research Scholar, PG and Research Deptt. of Commerce, Govt Arts college Dharmapuri-5
Nanthubala1987@gmail.com

Dr. P. Sumathi,

Assistant Professor, PG and Research Deptt. of Commerce, Govt Arts college Dharmapuri-5
dr.Sumavenkat@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

"Green marketing" is a strategy used to promote products or services that have a low impact on the environment. The usage of eco-friendly packaging, production methods, and materials will be discussed with customers. The purpose of this research is to determine the extent of consumer awareness of green marketing. The study was conducted empirically in Pondicherry and is descriptive. 250 sample respondents were chosen using a practical sampling technique. The research was carried out during January and February 2024. The interview schedule was used to gather the primary data. About seven assertions about green marketing, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure their level of awareness. The SPSS tool has been used to analyze the data. People who spend more money on environmentally friendly products are shown to be more knowledgeable about green marketing. Advertising products and services that are either environmentally friendly or have no adverse effects on the environment is the emphasis of green marketing. By employing environmentally friendly materials, sustainable production processes, and green packaging, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and educate customers about the benefits of their

products.

Introduction

Green marketing is a modern concept which evolved in recent years. But Marketing is the holistic approach towards identifying and satisfying the needs and wants of consumers and potential consumers. Green Marketing means manufacturing and marketing of products and services which are manufactured through green processes. According to the American Marketing Association, "Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe". Thus green marketing incorporates a wide range of activities such as modification of products, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising, etc. Green Marketing is also known as Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing. Thus Green Marketing is a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption, and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment with growing awareness. Green Marketing is not limited to adding a green theme to a brand name or making websites or product/packaging designs with green color. It is the overall efforts of a company to eliminate processes that are detrimental to the environment and use environmentally friendly processes and packaging for manufacturing and presenting the products. By doing this a firm may have to spend a few extra bucks initially but in the long run, this will pay in terms of increased sales. Recently due to changes in policies for corporate results compliance procedure by SEBI, all companies are using e-mail channels for reporting financial results which has saved a lot of paper and trees. The firms benefited in terms of reduced costs. Such innovative practices can reduce waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and costs.

Today we all face a lot of environmental problems, one of the reasons why green marketing emerged. Green marketing has now evolved as one of the major areas of interest for marketers as it may provide a competitive advantage. Green marketing will be successful only if the marketer understands consumer behavior. Hence it is essential to conduct a study on the attitude and awareness of customers towards green products and factors influencing the buying behaviour of customers. So this study is conducted to find out the attitude and awareness level of customers and their buying behaviour toward eco-friendly products.

Literature Review

The following is some literature that has been reviewed from the reputed journals of both National and International Journals about Green Marketing and its related issues. The literature has also been reviewed from Textbooks, Magazines, & Websites.

Charles W Lamb et al (2004) explained that —Green marketing has also become an important way for companies to build awareness and loyalty by promoting a popular issue. By positioning their brands as ecologically sound marketers can convey concern for the environment and society as a whole.

According to **Roger a Kerin et al** (2007), Green Marketing takes many forms. It comes from product development opportunities that emanate both from consumer research and its —Pollution Prevention Paysl program. This program solicits employee suggestions on how to reduce pollution and recycle materials.

According to **Vemuri Lakshmi Narayana & Dinesh Babu** (2008), clever marketers are one who not only convinces the consumer but also involves the consumer in marketing their product. Green marketing should not be considered as just one more approach to marketing but has to be pursued with much greater vigor, as it has an environmental and social dimension to it.

The study by **Meenakshi Honda** (2006) has indicated that Activist groups and the media have played a major role in enhancing the environmental awareness and consciousness of consumers in recent years. Most studies on the subject show that although the awareness and environmental behavior of consumers across countries, educational levels, age, and income groups may differ, environmental concerns are increasing worldwide

The study by **Jacquelyn A. Ottoman** (2006) explained that Green Marketing must satisfy two objectives: Improved Environmental Quality and Customer Satisfaction. Research indicates that many green products have failed because of green marketing myopia—marketers 'myopic focus on their products '—greennessl over the broader expectations of consumers or other market players (such as regulators or activists).

Arun Kumar & N. Meenakshi (2009): Consumers have to play an important role if companies have to be made responsible for the preservation of the environment. They should stop buying products from companies that are polluting the environment. Apart from companies, NGOs also have very important roles to play. NGOs should carry out research and tell the companies how they can make their process more environmentally friendly.

Biji P Thomas & H NanjeGowda (2010) highlighted that environmentally friendly buildings are also known as Green Buildings. Some of the visible —greenl features, such as exterior window shading, good daylighting, green (landscaped) roofs, and natural ventilation chimneys are often considered as the signals of being green.

Sergio (2014) examined how environmental concerns affect green products. When buying something in a store, the customer cannot always make the decision he wants to make. The consumer can usually

make the best decision given the conditions and available options. Consumers don't understand how crucial it is to modify their consumption behaviors, therefore they continue to make their shopping lists based on past experiences. Consumers may be interested in organic and environmentally friendly items, but it appears that their choices are still limited by price and consumption habits.

Research Gap

Although there have been many studies on green marketing conducted around the world, there have been very few academic studies on the perceptions and preferences of Indian consumers. The main objective of this study project is to comprehend the factors that influence Indian consumers' decisions to purchase green products. It tries to quickly summarise consumers' understanding of environmental issues, green and greenbehaviours.

Awareness about green marketing: An overview

According to the report, Indian manufacturers must pay more attention to green marketing as a part of their marketing mix to break this vicious cycle since they still do not have access to the intended market for their green products. 2014 (Agyeman). (Saini, 2013) According to the findings of the researcher's study, green marketing cannot ignore the economic aspect of marketing. The effects of green marketing must be understood by every marketer. According to the study, marketers should re-evaluate their presumptions if they think that customers are worried about their products' effects on the environment and won't be willing to pay extra for them. Before asking for a higher price, every marketer should concentrate on enhancing the **performance of the product and encouraging customer loyalty**.

1. Eco-Friendly Products: The primary objective of green marketing is to promote products that are recyclable, biodegradable, or environmentally friendly. Businesses might employ materials that are regenerative, organic, or devoid of hazardous substances to create their products. If a product uses sustainable resources, has little impact on the environment, and can be recycled or disposed of without harming the environment, it is said to be eco-friendly. Since they commonly use recycled or renewable materials in their creation, these products are designed to produce less waste during their production, use, and disposal. Some examples of eco-friendly products are reusable shopping bags, biodegradable cleaning products, water-saving showerheads, energy-efficient appliances, bamboo or recycled paper products, and organically raised or organic food items. Utilizing environmentally friendly products may help reduce waste generation, preserve resources, and mitigate negative environmental effects.

2. Sustainable Production Processes: Employing energy-efficient production methods, reducing their carbon footprint, and cutting waste are all ways that businesses may show their dedication to sustainability. Ecologically sustainable products can be hard to describe. Since everything we purchase,

acquire, use, and discard in our daily lives hurts the environment, there isn't such a thing as an organic or green good in the literal sense. Nevertheless, some product classifications can be based on size and a standard of quality. If a product or service has little impact on the environment, it is considered to be environmentally sustainable.

3. Green Packaging: Another component of green marketing is promoting the use of environmentally friendly packaging, such as biodegradable plastics, recycled paper, or reusable containers. The average consumer has less potential to be environmentally friendly than a mainstream product unless he or she is particularly interested in learning more about the green product because manufacturers of environmentally enhanced products frequently provide very little or no sustainability statements in advertising. The comparison classes for associative and aspirational have a big impact on usage in general. According to researchers, spreading awareness of environmental issues does not always promote the pro-environmental viewpoint. Since consumers usually concentrate on tiny, sustainable levels of spending, they may lack the requisite knowledge in their internal analysis. It takes a lot of time to complete another mission when it is required.

4. Consumer Education: Companies can educate the general public on the importance of sustainable practices and let them know how much better their products are for the environment. Researchers concluded that consumers' values and beliefs must be taken into account when identifying the factors influencing buying decisions. Values are engrained presumptions that a certain activity is good or appropriate and call for taking the environment into account. Because ideas affect attitudes and personal standards, which in turn affect moral expectations and consumer pro environmental action, environmental principles have a significant impact on pro-environmental behavior.

Need for the Study

Green marketing has become one of the main areas of interest for businesses as a way to meet customer expectations, address multiple environmental issues, and acquire a competitive edge in today's fast-paced environment. This is due to consumers' growing awareness of how their purchase decisions contribute to the acceleration of environmental destruction. Many Indian companies are now positioning themselves as eco-friendly firms as a result of new rules and changing consumer preferences. However, there are still many unanswered questions regarding Indian customers' acquaintance with eco-friendly products and attitudes towards the topic. This study's main goal is to shed light on the research issue of figuring out what drives people to purchase environmentally friendly goods and services.

Research Objectives

The effectiveness of green marketing has been the subject of research. The following goals guided the study's execution.

1. To examine the socio-economic makeup of consumers that favor eco-friendly products
2. To evaluate the degree of customer knowledge of green marketing.
3. To determine what motivates consumers to purchase eco-friendly goods.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Nilambur Municipality and is descriptive. 250 sample respondents were chosen using a practical sampling technique. The research was carried out during January and February 2023. The interview schedule was used to gather the primary data. About seven assertions about green marketing, a 5-point Likert scale was used to gauge their level of awareness. The SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

Findings and Discussion

The public's increased understanding of green marketing will benefit society in terms of the environment. With the use of 7 assertions, such as eco-friendly items, environmental activities, and processes, the level of awareness of them has been examined. The outcome is provided below.

Table No. 1
Awareness about Green Marketing

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Rank
Packing with recycled products	2.34	1.124	3.76	VI
Sustainable business model	1.96	1.054	2.92	VII
Promotion of eco-friendly products	2.99	1.169	4.71	I
It is an expensive method	2.54	1.249	4.01	V
Communicating environmental benefit of the products	2.74	1.293	4.29	II
Production process with zero emission	2.62	1.282	4.20	III
Investing profits in renewable energy	2.54	1.112	4.11	IV

Source: Computed data

According to the results in the table above, people are quite aware of the promotion of environmentally friendly products (4.71); green marketing is a kind of communication that emphasises the advantages of the environment (4.29). The marketing of products created with no emissions is also favourably received by the public (4.20). The respondents are also quite conscious of the investment of the profit in renewable energy (4.11), the pricey way of production (4.01), and packing with recycled materials (3.76). Below is a test of the rank's importance.

Table No. 2
Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

N	250
Kendall's W	0.122
Chi-Square	183.063
Degree of freedom	6
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

Source: Computed data

At the 1% level, the Chi-Square value for the degree of freedom 6 is (183.063), which is highly significant. It demonstrates how dramatically different people's levels of awareness of the various parts are. The criteria received a noticeably high ranking.

Relationship between respondents' characteristics and level of awareness Based on their degree of age, gender, education, employment, income, and amount of expenditure on green products, people's awareness of green marketing may differ. They are discussed as follows.

Table No. 3
Difference in the Awareness Level according to their Age

Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Young	131	17.2672	6.15795	4.549	0.011



Middle	100	17.5300	6.53422		
Old	19	21.8947	6.05433		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

The older respondents (those over 45 years old) have higher awareness (21.8947) than the younger (those under 30 years old) and middle-aged (those between 30 and 45 years old) respondents. According to the ANOVA's findings, there is a significant difference in awareness level (F=4.549; P 0.011). It is concluded that older consumers are knowledgeable about green marketing.

Table No. 4

Difference in the awareness level according to gender

Gender.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	Sig
Male	130	17.8846	6.32533	0.413	0.680
Female	120	17.5500	6.48832		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

According to Table 4, men respondents (17.8846) had a higher level of awareness than female respondents (17.5500). According to the Z test results, the difference in awareness level is not substantial. The Z value is smaller than 1.96 at 0.41. As a result, both male and female customers are seen to be aware of green marketing.

Table No. 5

Difference in the Awareness Level according to their Education

Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
School level	40	15.8250	6.10963	2.262	0.106
UG	205	18.1220	6.38854		

PG	5	16.6000	7.30068		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

The aforementioned data demonstrates that respondents with undergraduate degrees (18.1220) are more knowledgeable about green marketing than other respondents. The ANOVA test result reveals that the computed F value (2.262) is below the threshold value and was judged to be significant. at 10.6%. It demonstrates that there is no discernible difference in awareness levels according to educational attainment.

Table No. 6
Difference in the Awareness Level according to their Occupation

Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Employee	200	17.7000	6.46133	1.372	0.252
Housewives	16	15.3125	5.67707		
Business	29	18.6897	6.50880		
Others	5	20.8000	2.86356		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

According to Table 6, respondents from the other category (20.8000) have a higher level of knowledge than respondents who fall into the employee, housewife, or company categories. But since the F value (1.372) is lower than the CV, the difference is not significant. Probability is equal to 0.252. Thus, it may be said that there are no appreciable differences in awareness among respondents' occupations.

Table No. 7
Difference in the Awareness Level according to their Level of Income

Level of income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
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Low	79	19.1392	7.27612	7.027	0.001
Middle	148	16.5338	5.78694		
High	23	20.5217	5.12454		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

According to the income-based measure of awareness, respondents with high incomes (annual incomes over Rs. 10 lakhs) are more aware of green marketing (20.5217) than respondents in the low income and middle-income groups (annual incomes between Rs. 5 lakhs and Rs. 210 lakhs). ANOVA results indicate a substantial difference. The F value is 7.027, and at the 1% level, it is significant. The outcome indicates that consumers in the high-income category are highly informed about green marketing.

Table No. 8

Difference in the awareness level according to their level of spending

Level of spending	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Less	69	17.6957	6.57604	10.697	0.000
Moderate	127	16.3543	5.90605		
More	54	20.9815	6.19035		
Total	250	17.7240	6.39338		

Source: Computed data

The amount spent on environmentally friendly or green products reflects the respondents' level of interest and financial situation. The respondents who spend more on eco-friendly products—more than Rs. 2 lakhs annually—are more knowledgeable about them (20.9815) than those who spend less—less than Rs. 1 lakh annually and moderately—between Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakhs annually. The ANOVA test result indicates that the Difference is significant. At a 1% level, the F value (10.697) is substantial. People who spend more money on environmentally friendly products are shown to be more

knowledgeable about green marketing.

Discussion and Implications

The main objective of the study was to establish how green marketing affected consumer purchase behaviour. As a result of the changing times and the numerous environmental difficulties and problems that exist today, green marketing tactics have become more crucial for every business. Marketing is therefore essential for increasing consumer awareness of any goods or services. The results of our poll show that consumers like green items above others, yet they were unable to name more than two green product makers. The study highlights the inadequacies of green marketers' attempts to persuade consumers to purchase their goods. The study also showed how strongly consumer environmental concerns and preferences affect how well green products do. According to the results of the survey, customers' awareness of the nation's environmental issues and their concern for their health were what drove them to buy green products. According to the producers, the expensive nature of the product is to blame for the low rate of repeat purchases of green products. Green marketing is unquestionably crucial for promoting social responsibility among clients and customers as well as environmental conservation efforts. According to the author, respondents firmly feel that green marketing is important for tackling environmental problems. This came about as a result of the companies' dedication to creating eco-friendly products and their use of eco-friendly pricing and marketing techniques.

Conclusion

In summary, green marketing focuses on promoting goods and services that are either eco friendly or have no negative environmental effects. Businesses can show their dedication to sustainability and inform clients about the advantages of their products by utilising eco-friendly materials, sustainable production techniques, and green packaging. Rajendran and Rather (2014). In the Indian context, using marketing cues to operationalize green purchasing behaviours is still uncommon. Given the expanding market, the knowledge gained from this study contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of green consumer psychology. The study comes to the conclusion that marketing, like other functional aspects of a firm, has a big impact on the environmental problems that are plaguing the world right now. (2014) Anvar and Venter. Because they are environmentally conscious, today's consumers greatly support environmental protection efforts.

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