

ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTION OF FEMALE CUSTOMERS TOWARDS GREEN MARKETED FMCG PRODUCTS IN BILASPUR

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to evaluate how female customers in Bilaspur city view and feel about green marketing strategies used for fast-moving consumer goods. A structured questionnaire is used to gather data from a randomly selected sample of 100 female respondents. The study's findings indicate that urban female consumers were aware of green marketing strategies and the availability of green fast-moving consumer goods. The respondents' green values were likewise found to be high. Because consumers place a high value on green products, research has provided useful insights for marketers of green products and indicates the necessity of creating marketing communication campaigns supporting green products. Regression analysis findings indicate that consumer persuasion to purchase and prefer green products over conventional products was positively and significantly impacted by overall green values, awareness of green products and practices, and perceptions of how serious marketing companies were about green marketing.

Keywords: Green Marketing, FMCG, Preferences, Attitude, Perception, Female Consumers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies must always evaluate the newest and most appealing marketing trends. By doing ongoing research on the shifts in customer behaviour in the marketplace, marketing trends may be identified. Businesses may adjust their offerings to customers by identifying shifts in consumer behaviour. Today's consumers are more worried about the state of the environment and the harm that their usage of goods and services does to it. This worry may be brought on by obvious changes in the climate, global warming, and rising levels of air and water pollution. Thus, employing green marketing by businesses gives them a chance to satisfy customer demands and solve their environmental concerns while also gaining a competitive edge and a loyal customer base.

Ecological or environmental marketing are other names for green marketing. The American Marketing Association defines "green marketing" as the promotion of goods that are thought to be ecologically safe. Therefore, green marketing encompasses a wide variety of actions, such as altering the product, changing the packaging and production method, changing advertising, or ceasing any activity that has a negative environmental impact. Since there are more environmental problems in the world now than ever before, it is essential for businesses to create and promote an environmentally responsible image. Due to growing consumer knowledge and concerns, green marketing is becoming a more prominent promotional tactic.

Businesses are urged by the idea of "green" or "ecological" marketing to engage with consumers, suppliers, dealers, and staff in an ethical and environmentally friendly manner. Businesses are now promoting themselves as green businesses. Even state governments and public sector units are now taking action to stop environmental degradation and are giving environmental concerns including pollution, global warming, and water poisoning a lot of attention. The National Geographic Society and the global polling company Globescan (2010) recently conducted a survey called "Consumer Greendex" to gauge consumers' green attitudes. The developing nations of China, Brazil, and India had the highest scores, while industrialised nations came in last. According to Howe et al. (2010), consumers in the US, Russia, and India had the biggest increases in environmentally friendly behaviour. To succeed in green marketing, a business must be dedicated to using eco-friendly practices.

1.1 Green Products and marketing practices

The definition of green is actually up for debate. The term "green product" has no universally recognised meaning. Nonetheless, according to various definitions of green marketing, certain traits of items that are typically seen as green include:

- Energy-efficient (in production and in usage).
- Water-efficient (in production and consumption).
- Low emitting (low emissions of harmful substances).
- Healthy and/or safe items.
- Recyclable or containing recycled materials
- Sturdy (enduring).

- Biodegradable.
- Renewable.
- Repurposed goods.
- Third party approved to meet transportation or public standards (e.g., certified wood, organic)
- Made locally.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the rise of green marketing. The first workshop on "Ecological Marketing," organised by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1975, produced the first book with the same title. Since the early 1990s, green marketing has gained prominence. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were discussions about green consumers and green consumerism. While Antil (1984) defined green consumerism as a particular kind of socially conscious consumer behaviour with a primary focus on environmental conservation, Henion and Kinnear (1976) defined green customers as consumers who are ecologically concerned. According to Weiner and Doescher (1991), green consumerism is a type of "pro-social" consumer behaviour. Green marketing, as defined by Michael Polonsky (1994), is marketing that includes all activities aimed at creating and facilitating exchanges that are meant to meet human needs and wants while having as little negative impact on the environment as possible.

Numerous studies back up the claim that modern customers favour ecologically friendly items and are favourable to businesses that use them. According to several opinion surveys conducted in the US and abroad, customers are quite inclined to support environmentally aware businesses and goods; however, whether or not this is actually the case is up for debate (Mendleson N, Polonsky M J, 1995). The demand for green products is not as strong as anticipated, despite the fact that academics and organisations are very interested in green marketing. According to Mintel (1995), there is a substantial disconnect between customers' concerns and their real green shopping behaviour. It is discovered that significant obstacles still stand in the way of the spread of more environmentally conscious purchase patterns.

Michael J. Polonsky claims that organisations have viewed environmental marketing as a chance to accomplish their goals (Keller 1987, Shearer 1990). It was held that businesses had a moral duty to provide for society in a more ecologically responsible manner (Davis 1992, Freeman and Liedtka 1991, Keller 1987, Shearer 1990). The rules enacted by the government to safeguard the environment also compel businesses to adopt more socially responsible practices. Additionally, rivals' environmental initiatives put pressure on businesses, requiring them to switch to environmental marketing strategies. The high cost of green products compared to standard ones is one of the variables that has been shown to influence their purchasing. Environmental regulations that are well-designed can lower the product's price. Innovations that increase the product's value or reduce its cost might be sparked by environmental rules. Companies will be able to use a variety of inputs more efficiently thanks to this innovation, including labour, energy, and raw materials. This will balance the expense of reducing the environmental effect, and as a result, increased resource productivity will make businesses more competitive. According to Michael Porter and Claas van der Linder (1995), innovation will be crucial to sustainable development in order for businesses to remain competitive, and stifling innovation would result in a loss of competitiveness in the modern global economy.

According to Jacquelyn Ottman (1998), from an organisational perspective, environmental issues should be included into all facets of marketing, including communications and the creation of new products. According to this comprehensive approach to green marketing, additional stakeholders such as educators, community members, regulators, and non-governmental organisations should be included in addition to suppliers and retailers. Prioritising client requirements over environmental concerns is not a good idea. Customers view companies that use green techniques in their operations and goods as being ecologically friendly, and they are more likely to buy items from companies that promote themselves as green businesses.

It has long been thought that people's attitudes may anticipate their behaviour. Numerous research have been conducted to enhance the capacity to forecast an individual's behaviour. According to Davidson et al. (1985), a consumer's attitude is correlated with their level of knowledge and life experience. Regarding green consumerism, however, discrepancies were discovered in the link between consumers' attitudes and actions. Mainieri et al. (1997) discovered a weak link between green behaviour and consumer attitudes. Prior studies have similarly demonstrated a weak relationship between consumers' green behaviour and their attitudes (Tracy and Oskamp, 1984). According to Spruyt et al. (2007), a consumer's attitude affects how they forecast their behaviour. The measuring criteria of attitudes should be focused on a particular environmental concern, such as buying green items, in order to predict certain behaviours (Gadenne et al, 2011; Wulf and Schroder, 2003). As stated by Crispell (2001), the Roper Organization's Green Gauge Study divided American customers into True-Blue Greens, Greenback Greens, Sprouts, Grousters, and Basic Browns. Customers that solely purchase eco-friendly goods in an effort to make up for their shortcomings are

known as "True-Blue Greens." Customers who are eager to spend money to safeguard the environment but lack the time and energy to engage in environmental initiatives are known as "Greenback Greens.". Customers who may purchase eco-friendly goods but do not engage in environmental initiatives are known as sprouts. Basic Browns are customers who don't care about environmental protection and aren't even embarrassed about it, whereas Grouzers are customers who care about the environment but justify using green items.

Green products are well known to consumers, but integrating green marketing strategies into corporate operations is challenging (Juwaheer, 2005). According to Antonio et al. (2009), research on green consumerism will be the primary emphasis in the future in order to uncover consumer attitudes, behaviours, and intentions because of the growing environmental consciousness. In their 2011 study of Ghanaian customers, Braimah and Tweneboah-Koduah discovered a lack of knowledge of green marketing challenges, which influenced the consumers' purchasing decisions. It was also shown that one of the factors influencing the decision to buy green products is their price. Nonetheless, it was shown that ecological problems have a greater chance of influencing youthful customers. Cherian and Jacob (2012) discovered that companies are still not concentrating on the creation of green products because customers lack green understanding.

Numerous scholars have highlighted a number of problems and difficulties related to green marketing (Welling and Chavan, 2010). Since green marketing promotes green products and services, green technology (buying new technology or modifying old technology), and green power and energy—all of which demand significant financial investment in research and development—it may initially prove to be an expensive endeavour. To raise awareness of green products and their applications, significant investment is needed in marketing campaigns. The company's revenues may suffer if many consumers are unwilling to pay more for environmentally friendly items. Businesses must use a variety of integrated marketing communication techniques to thoroughly inform their clientele about the existence and advantages of green marketing. One effective strategy for persuading consumers to buy green items is eco-labeling. If a product has extra benefits (such high quality, ecologically safe items, fuel-efficient cars, and non-hazardous products), consumers can be ready to pay a premium price. Green marketing may provide businesses a competitive edge and a loyal customer base. (L A Renfro, 2010).

Joel Makower (quoted by Shafaat & Sultan, 2012) claims that the absence of public consensus and norms around what is truly "green" is another issue for green marketers. Green marketing is still becoming more and more popular in spite of these obstacles, especially as awareness about climate change grows on a worldwide scale. Businesses are stepping up to demonstrate their pledges to lessen the negative climatic effects of their goods and services. Sustainable development may benefit greatly from green marketing, thus businesses need to adopt creative strategies to remain competitive.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the level of awareness of female consumers about green products and practices.
- To measure the green values of the female customers.
- To identify the brands, consumer associate with green marketing practices.
- To investigate the preferences of Indian consumers about green products.
- To identify the factors that influences the customer persuasion to buy green products.
- To understand the issues and challenges of green marketing practices.

4. METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENT

With Bilaspur as the research region, the main goal of this work is to comprehend how female consumers perceive and feel about green marketing strategies for fast-moving consumer goods. Using random sampling, a sample of 100 female consumers was chosen from among those who frequent various stores to buy FMCG goods. A structured questionnaire is created and used to get first-hand information from a chosen group of female clients. The Haws et al. (2010) Green Consumer Value Scale was modified to gauge female customers' green values. Survey responses were collated in SPSS 22.0 for additional analysis.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Awareness

The survey's participants knew about green FMCG practices and goods. The majority of respondents, however, were unaware of the steps being taken by the Indian government, state and local NGOs, and corporate entities to promote green marketing practices. This indicates that these organisations need to improve their marketing communication and make sure that their green initiatives are clearly communicated to their clientele. The most well-known informational sources for female customers on green FMCG items were found to be newspapers and television.

5.2 Perception of Female Consumers

The mean score of the responses obtained for each of the dimensions of green marketing strategies that reflect how female customers are seen is shown in Table 1. Respondents believed that companies making green claims are genuinely concerned about the environment, as shown by the mean score (3.57). This suggests that customers are not dubious of the companies' green promises. Customers overwhelmingly concurred that environmental deterioration had increased during the past ten years. On a 5-point scale, their mean score was 4.38. Additionally, with a mean score of 4.15 on a 5-point scale, consumers strongly agreed that the environment will continue to deteriorate over the next five years.

For a number of variables that are regarded as environmental concerns, all customers have given them a higher rating for seriousness. There was broad consumer agreement about environmental degradation, and they could favour eco-friendly items over traditional ones in order to save the environment. Marketers may develop new eco-friendly products and explain their advantages to customers. Many environmental issues have received high ratings from respondents for severity. Since a higher mean score indicates greater customer concern about the same, the replies have marketing implications for creating marketing communication campaigns. As a result, they might be used to promote green products.

With mean scores of 4.67 and 4.64, respectively, consumers rated "Manufacturing Eco-Friendly Product" as the most important green marketing practice, followed by "Educating customers to use products in an environmentally friendly manner." They also strongly agreed that green marketing practices are important. It was discovered that consumers saw all green marketing strategies as significant, with none receiving a score lower than 4.10. This indicates that customers are worried about the environment and anticipate that businesses will use green measures to safeguard it.

Table 1: Consumer perception about importance of green marketing practices

Green Marketing Practices	Mean	Std. Deviation
Manufacturing Eco Friendly Product	4.67	0.658
Educating customers to use products in environmental friendly manner	4.64	0.733
Manufacturing products through eco-friendly process	4.53	0.65
Modifying products to make them environmental friendly	4.36	0.807
Modifying product packaging to suit environment	4.3	0.841
Promoting products through eco-friendly modes of communication	4.2	0.844
Using green supply chain for procurement and distribution	4.11	0.865
Branding product associating with green marketing practices	4.1	0.839

5.3 Attitude

The customers' overall green value is 3.88, indicating that female consumers care about environmental preservation.

Table 2: Green consumer value measure

Green Value	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is important to me that the products I use do not harm the environment.	4.43	0.69
I am concerned about wasting the resources of our planet.	4.17	1.108
I would describe myself as environmentally responsible.	3.85	0.871
I consider the potential environmental impact of my actions when making many of my decisions.	3.77	0.772
I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly.	3.7	1.057
My purchase habits are affected by my concern for our environment.	3.43	1.005
Overall Green Value	3.887	0.60858

5.4 Influence of green consumer values on purchase of green products

Customers' demand for green items and their green values appear to be somewhat positively correlated, according to the correlation coefficient value of $R=0.495$. However, green consumer values only explain for 24.5% (R-squared values of 0.245) of the variation in purchase choice. This suggests that other factors also have an influence on consumers' green purchasing decisions. These aspects still need to be investigated in further studies.

Table 3: Influence of green consumer values on purchase decision of green products

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.495 ^a	.245	.178	3.90876

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green_Value_Sum

5.4 Influence of green consumer values, awareness about green products and perception regarding seriousness of green marketers on purchase of green products

Green consumer values, green product awareness, and perceptions of the seriousness of green marketers only explain for 38.9% (R-square values of 0.389) of the variation in the desire to buy green products. This suggests that other variables also influence consumers' decisions to buy eco-friendly items. These aspects still need to be investigated in further studies.

Table 5: Influence of green consumer values, awareness about green products and perception regarding seriousness of green marketers on purchase of green products by consumers

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.566 ^a	.389	.278	0.80336

a. Predictors: (Constant), Green_Value_Sum, Awareness, Perception_marketers

6. CONCLUSION

Female customers are shown to have a high degree of awareness regarding green products, but they are also unaware of the green initiatives implemented by various government and non-government organisations. This indicates that organisations need to put in more effort in this area. For the majority of respondents, newspapers continue to be their primary information source, and they ought to be used more to tell customers about eco-friendly goods and methods. Consumers are worried about the current and future status of the environment, which indicates the need for green goods and activities, and they are not sceptical of the green promises made by organisations, according to the somewhat favourable responses. Marketers may develop new eco-friendly products and explain their advantages to customers. Customers may choose green products over conventional ones in order to safeguard the environment as a result of growing knowledge and concern. Global warming and ozone depletion were the main causes of concern. Customers are worried about the condition of the environment and anticipate that businesses would use green methods to safeguard it. The findings have implications for long-lasting manufacturers, particularly with regard to green marketing.

The concept and language of marketing communications about green practices should be given more attention. Green methods and goods in advertising are likely to evoke strong feelings and persuade. To get the most out of their green brand positioning, marketplaces must be at the forefront of customers' minds. To have an effect and establish a distinctive green posture, organisations must communicate consistently and continuously.

Although consumers have demonstrated a favourable attitude towards green products, they are nonetheless worried about their accessibility and cost. This suggests that since consumers have indicated a desire to purchase green products when they are accessible, marketers should make them available for consumption. If marketers can educate customers about the advantages of green products-which they believe to be more expensive than traditional products-they may buy them as they weigh the negative consequences of production and use on the environment. It was shown that a relatively small fraction of consumers solely purchase environmentally friendly items, thus marketers should seize this chance to expand their product lines and position themselves as environmentally conscious.

The study provides a strong argument for the beginning of an age of green marketing in India and has ramifications for both consumers and marketers. Although the study's generalisability is restricted due to its narrow regional emphasis, it offers valuable insights into consumer behaviour with relation to green products. Future studies can concentrate on customer psychographic segmentation to evaluate their green preferences and values. The study may be repeated on a wider scale to learn more about the green phenomena and gain additional insight into consumer behaviour.

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