

Green Marketing Practices and Sustainable Consumer Buying Behaviour with Special Reference to Retail Customers in Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT

The increasing concern for environmental sustainability has had a significant impact on how businesses develop and implement their marketing strategies. Green marketing tactics, which emphasize eco-friendly products, sustainable packaging, eco-friendly production practices and open environmental information, have become increasingly important in order to meet customer expectations and encourage sustainable development. Simultaneously customers are increasingly considering social and environmental impacts when making purchasing decisions. Understanding the relationship between green marketing strategies and sustainable consumer purchasing behavior is critical for stores hoping to ensure long-term competitiveness and customer loyalty. The study uses a descriptive research design and a quantitative research methodology. A structured questionnaire will be used to gather primary data from retail customers who have been chosen using a suitable sampling technique. Consumer opinions of green marketing strategies, environmental consciousness, purchase intentions and sustainable purchasing practices are all measured by the questionnaire. To investigate the relationship between the study variables, SPSS will be utilized for descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, t-test and ANOVA analysis. By increasing environmental awareness, trust and preference for eco-friendly products, the study is anticipated to show how successful green marketing strategies favorably impact sustainable customer purchasing behavior. The results will help retailers, marketing experts, legislators and environmental organizations create strategies that support sustainable commerce and responsible consumption.

Keywords: Green Marketing Practices, Sustainable Consumer Buying Behaviour and Retail Customers

INTRODUCTION

Businesses and consumers' perceptions of production and consumption patterns have changed as a result of growing awareness of resource depletion, climate change and environmental damage. Businesses are gradually incorporating environmental sustainability into their marketing plans in order to lessen their ecological footprint while satisfying changing consumer demands. The creation, marketing, pricing and distribution of goods and services that reduce environmental damage and promote sustainable consumption are all included in this tactical strategy known as "green marketing" (Peattie, 1995). Green marketing has become a crucial economic tactic that helps companies gain a competitive edge and support environmental preservation (Polonsky, 1994).

Eco-friendly raw materials, recyclable packaging, energy-efficient manufacturing techniques, environmental certifications, green advertising and corporate sustainability programs are examples of green marketing strategies. These actions affect consumer views of product quality, brand credibility and corporate reputation in addition to demonstrating an organization's commitment to the environment (Ottman, Stafford & Hartman, 2006). In addition to more conventional considerations like cost, convenience and quality, customers are increasingly evaluating items based on their environmental features as environmental concerns gain prominence (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Because it establishes a direct line of communication between manufacturers and final consumers, the retail industry contributes significantly to the promotion of sustainable consumption. Through product assortment, eco-labeling, green promotions, pricing tactics and in-store sustainability activities, retailers have an impact on

consumer decisions. Customers may be persuaded to make more sustainable purchases by the availability of eco-friendly goods, transparent environmental information and ethical retailing methods (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Because of the growing effects of climate change, environmental degradation and unsustainable consumption patterns, environmental sustainability has become a major concern for corporations, governments and consumers. In response a number of retail businesses have implemented green marketing strategies to promote ethical consumer behavior, including eco-friendly packaging, products with environmental certification, green advertising and sustainable supply chain projects (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). However despite growing awareness of environmental issues, consumers' adoption of sustainable buying practices is still uneven because factors like price, product quality, availability, convenience, trust and the veracity of environmental claims continue to influence purchasing decisions (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Sharma, 2021). There is little empirical data on how much green marketing strategies affect sustainable consumer purchasing behavior in the Coimbatore District, where organized retailing and consumer awareness are growing quickly. Therefore this study tackles the need to assess how well green marketing campaigns work with retail consumers and determine whether they have a major impact on sustainable consumer behavior. The results are anticipated to close the current research gap and offer useful suggestions for merchants looking to include sustainability into their marketing plans. The ongoing need for context-specific empirical research on how well green marketing strategies influence consumer behavior is also highlighted by recent systematic reviews.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the respondents' demographic characteristics.
2. To evaluate the respondents' general level of sustainable consumer purchasing behavior and green marketing methods.
3. To examine the variations in the respondents' demographics, green marketing strategies and sustainable consumer purchasing habits.
4. To make suggestions for sustainable consumer purchasing habits and green marketing strategies.

Need of the Study

The relevance of sustainable corporate practices and responsible consumer behavior has increased due to the growing environmental issues brought on by pollution, over consumerism and the depletion of natural resources. In order to satisfy the demands of environmentally conscious consumers, green marketing has become a strategic approach used by businesses to promote eco-friendly products, sustainable packaging and eco-conscious production methods (Polonsky, 1994; Peattie, 1995). Despite growing knowledge of environmental issues, many customers still struggle with the attitude-behavior gap, which occurs when favorable environmental attitudes do not always convert into sustainable purchase decisions (Young et al., 2010; Sharma, 2021). Understanding how green marketing strategies affect sustainable purchasing behavior is crucial in quickly growing retail marketplaces like Coimbatore District, where customers are exposed to both conventional and eco-friendly products. Therefore the current study is necessary to support retailers in creating strategies that promote environmentally conscious consumption and long-term sustainability as well as to give empirical evidence on the efficacy of green marketing campaigns among retail customers. In order to explain how green marketing influences consumer behavior in various situations, more region-specific empirical research is needed, according to recent evaluations.

Importance of the Study

By analyzing the connection between green marketing strategies and sustainable consumer purchasing behavior, this study contributes to academia, corporate organizations, legislators and society. Retailers will be able to create successful green marketing strategies that improve customer satisfaction, brand loyalty and competitive advantage by using the findings to better understand consumers' environmental expectations, purchasing preferences and decision-making patterns (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Ottman, Stafford & Hartman, 2006). Additionally the study will give policymakers important information about how to encourage sustainable consumption through environmental awareness campaigns and legal frameworks that support it. From an academic standpoint, the study adds to the body of knowledge by providing actual data from the Coimbatore District, where there are still very few studies on green marketing. Additionally, by promoting ethical manufacturing and consumption methods and emphasizing the part retail companies play in environmental preservation, the study advances the more general goals of sustainable development. According to recent research, trustworthy and open green marketing strategies are becoming more and more crucial for fostering customer confidence and influencing sustainable purchase choices.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Skackauskiene and Vilkaite-Vaitone (2023) carried out a thorough literature study. The study examined 221 peer-reviewed research papers that were published between 1991 and 2022 in prestigious international publications. Since it was a review study no primary sample was chosen; instead, papers were found using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria in a methodical database search. To compile the available data, the researchers used bibliometric analysis and the PRISMA-based systematic literature review approach. According to the review, eco-labeling, environmental advertising, sustainable packaging and corporate environmental responsibility are examples of green marketing strategies that have a beneficial impact on customer purchasing decisions. However the study also noted enduring issues like consumer skepticism, green washing and the attitude-behavior gap, and it suggested more empirical research in particular local contexts.

Oliva, Sánchez-Torres, Arroyo-Cañada, Argila-Irurita, Gil-La Fuente and Palacio-López (2024) created and evaluated an integrated model of consumer green purchasing behavior. Using a structured questionnaire and non-probability convenience sampling, the study gathered information from 512 customers. To investigate the connections between environmental concern, green trust, attitude, purchase intention and green buying behavior, a quantitative study methodology was used and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that consumer trust and environmental concern greatly increased the desire to make green purchases, which in turn had a favorable impact on actual green purchasing behavior. The study came to the conclusion that enhancing sustainable consumer purchasing decisions requires transparent green marketing tactics and reliable environmental promises.

Prakash et al. (2024) examined the connection between environmentally conscious consumers' intentions to make green purchases and their zero-waste purchasing practices in the retail cosmetics industry. Using purposive sampling the researchers collected responses from 428 consumers who actively bought eco-friendly cosmetics and followed social media posts about sustainability. In order to assess the suggested research model, the study used a quantitative research design using PLS-SEM data analysis. The findings showed that while environmental awareness, social influence and perceived consumer effectiveness reinforced sustainable shopping patterns, green purchase intention had a substantial impact on zero-waste purchasing behavior. In order to promote long-term environmentally conscious consumer behavior, the authors stressed that merchants should adopt genuine green marketing campaigns and open sustainability communication.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

The current study uses a descriptive research approach to investigate how green marketing strategies affect retail customers in the Coimbatore District's sustainable purchasing habits. To gather quantifiable information about consumers' attitudes, purchasing patterns and impressions of environmentally friendly items, a quantitative research approach is used. Because it allows the researcher to methodically explain the traits of the respondents

and analyze the connection between green marketing strategies and sustainable consumer purchasing behavior without changing any study variables, the descriptive design is thought to be acceptable.

Universe of the Study

The study's universe consists of Coimbatore District residents who buy at organized retail establishments such as supermarkets, hypermarkets, department stores, grocery stores and specialty shops. Customers from a variety of age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, professions and income levels are among the responders. A thorough grasp of consumer attitudes on green marketing strategies and their impact on sustainable purchasing behavior can be obtained by choosing a broad demographic.

Sample Size

For the study a sample size of 300 retail clients has been chosen. The sample size is thought to be sufficient for quantitative research and offers enough statistical power to perform both inferential and descriptive analysis. By covering various demographic groups of retail customers in the Coimbatore District, a sample of 300 respondents also improves the findings' dependability and generalizability.

Methods of Sampling

Convenience sampling a non-probability sample methodology is used in the study to choose respondents who are easily accessible at different retail locations around the Coimbatore District. This approach is suitable since it makes it easier to get data from customers who have previously bought retail goods, including eco-friendly goods. To gather a range of consumer perspectives on green marketing strategies, respondents are contacted at department shops, supermarkets, shopping centers and nearby retail establishments.

Data Gathering Instruments

The primary data used in the study was gathered through the use of a standardized questionnaire. The Green Marketing Practices Scale was created by Papadas, Avlonitis and Carrigan (2017). Secondary data is gathered from books, peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, government reports and reliable online databases to support the theoretical framework and literature review. The first section of the questionnaire collects demographic information such as age, gender, education, occupation, monthly income and shopping frequency. The second section uses a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

Tools for Statistical Analysis

The study variables will be summarized and the respondents' demographic features will be described using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, Chi-square, mean and standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA. The measurement scales' internal consistency and dependability will be evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha 0.87. The association between sustainable customer purchasing behavior and green marketing strategies will be investigated using Pearson's Correlation Analysis. The five percent significance level ($p < 0.05$) will be used to test for statistical significance.

Research Gap

Few empirical studies have specifically examined the impact of green marketing strategies on sustainable consumer purchasing behavior among retail customers in the Coimbatore District, despite the fact that many studies have looked at green marketing and sustainable consumer behavior in national and international contexts. Retail consumers in rising urban markets have received relatively less attention in previous research, which have mostly concentrated on metropolitan areas, certain product categories or overall environmental awareness. Additionally very few studies have looked at how consumers perceive green marketing strategies and how they actually make sustainable purchases in local retail settings at the same time. By offering context-specific empirical data that can help retailers, marketers and legislators create successful green marketing strategies; this study aims to close this gap.

FINDINGS & RESULTS

Table-1 Personal Factors

S.No	Personal Variables	Frequency	Respondents	Percentage %
1	Age	25yrs - 35yrs	255	85%
2	Gender	Female	250	83%
3	Educational Qualification	UG	201	67%
4	Occupation	Professionals, IT and Software Professional	242	80%
5	Type of family	Nuclear Family	238	79%
6	Mostly buying products	Organic fruits and vegetables	245	81%
7	Monthly Income	Rs .35,000 to Rs.45,000	220	73%
8	Shopping frequency	Daily using	260	86%
9	Place of Residence	Semi-urban	240	80%

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents indicates that the majority (85%) were aged between 25 and 35 years, while females constituted 83% of the respondents. More than two-thirds (67%) had completed an undergraduate degree and 80% were employed as professionals, particularly in the IT and software sectors. A substantial proportion (79%) belonged to nuclear families and 81% reported that organic fruits and vegetables were the products they purchased most frequently. Additionally 73% of the respondents had a monthly income ranging from Rs. 25,000 to Rs.35,000, 86% accessed social media on a daily basis and 80% resided in semi-urban areas, reflecting the predominant characteristics of the study population.

Table – 2: Distribution of the Respondents According to their Level of Green Marketing Practices

Green Marketing Practices	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High	147	49
Moderate	102	37
Low	51	17
Total	300	100

Interpretation

According to the table-2, 49% of respondents engage in green marketing techniques at a high level, 37% at a moderate level and the remaining 17% at a low level.

Table-3 : Distribution of The Respondents According to Their Level of Sustainable Consumer Buying Behaviour

Sustainable Consumer Buying Behaviour	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Good	162	54
Moderate	87	29
Poor	51	17
Total	300	100

Interpretation

According to the above table-3, 54% of respondents have a good level of sustainable consumer buying behaviour, 29% have a moderately high level and the remaining 17% have a bad level of sustainable consumer buying behavior.

Table-4: Difference between of personal profile and level of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behavior

Variables	Statistical Tool	Value	Result
Age and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	Chi-square	6.105(a) (P = .001 < .005)	Significant
Occupation and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	Chi-square	5.054(a) (P = .000 > .106)	Not Significant
Age and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = 13.365; P < 0.05	Significant
Gender and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	t-test	t = .325; P > 0.05	Not Significant
Education qualification and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = .635; P > 0.05	Not Significant
Occupation and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = 14.644; P < 0.05	Significant
Type of family and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	t-test	t = 5.840; P < 0.05	Significant
Mostly buying products and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = .158; P > 0.05	Not Significant
Monthly Income and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = 9.868; P < 0.05	Significant
Shopping frequency and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = .348; P > 0.05	Not Significant
Place of residency and green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour of the respondents	ANOVA	F = 17.113; P < 0.05	Significant

Chi-square

The findings indicate that respondents' age has a statistically significant association with their level of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour, suggesting that purchasing decisions and environmental awareness differ across age groups. Conversely no statistically significant association was observed between respondents' occupation and their level of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour, indicating that occupational status does not substantially influence the adoption of environmentally responsible purchasing practices.

T-test

The analysis reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between the gender of the respondents and their perceptions of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour, indicating that males and females exhibit comparable views and purchasing patterns. In contrast a statistically significant difference is evident based on the respondents' type of family, suggesting that family structure plays an important role in influencing green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour.

ANOVA

The findings reveal that respondents' perceptions of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour vary significantly with respect to age, occupation, monthly income and place of residence, indicating that these demographic characteristics play an important role in shaping environmentally responsible purchasing behaviour. In contrast no statistically significant differences are observed based on educational qualification, the most frequently purchased product category or shopping frequency, suggesting that these factors do not substantially influence respondents' perceptions of green marketing practices and sustainable consumer buying behaviour.

Suggestions

- To give customers more options for green purchases, retailers should increase the availability of certified sustainable and eco-friendly items.
- To improve consumer confidence and lessen their influence on the environment, businesses should use minimal, recyclable and biodegradable packaging.
- To reduce customer skepticism and increase brand trust, retail companies should launch clear green marketing initiatives backed by reliable environmental certifications.
- To increase consumers' understanding of the advantages of sustainable products, frequent environmental awareness programs and in-store educational campaigns should be carried out.
- Retailers should provide customers who buy eco-friendly products or utilize reusable shopping bags with enticing promotional offers, discounts and loyalty benefits.
- In order to make sustainable purchasing feasible for customers of all income levels, manufacturers and merchants should guarantee competitive pricing of green products.
- The environmental advantages, product certifications and sustainability initiatives of green products should be properly communicated through digital platforms and social media.
- To monitor environmental claims, promote responsible green marketing practices and develop eco-labelling regulations, government agencies and retail associations should work together.
- To strengthen their environmental commitment and enhance their corporate image, retail organizations could incorporate energy-efficient operations, waste reduction strategies and sustainable supply chain management.
- To obtain a more thorough knowledge of sustainable consumer purchasing behavior across various locations, future study should look at additional elements such environmental awareness, green trust, perceived value, social impact and demographic features.

CONCLUSION

The current study concludes that by raising environmental awareness, bolstering consumer trust and promoting the purchase of eco-friendly goods, successful green marketing strategies have the potential to favorably impact sustainable consumer purchasing behavior among retail customers in Coimbatore District. Retailers are more likely to win over customers' trust and cultivate enduring loyalty if they implement ethical marketing strategies, such as sustainable packaging, reliable eco-labels, open environmental communication and ecologically conscious corporate practices. In order to develop strategies that support sustainable consumption and ethical retailing, retailers, marketers, policymakers and researchers should find great value in the study's conclusions. Additionally, by providing empirical data from the Coimbatore District's retail industry, the study adds to the body of knowledge already in existence and emphasizes the significance of incorporating sustainability into marketing strategies in order to achieve long-term economic growth, environmental protection and consumer well-being.

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