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NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSIONS

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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A STUDY ON CONSUMERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS GREEN PACKAGING INITIATIVES WITH REFERENCE TO CONSUMERS IN PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Mass marketing has occupied the centre stage in the era of globalization. Marketing policies, practices and prospects are at a new helm than ever before. On the other side the problems and side effects have also grown up in the same proportion. Today marketers are not only working to achieve a fat bottom line but they are also working towards ensuring the sustainability of the bottom line. This led to the development of new avenue of marketing called "The Green marketing". Among the 4P's of Green Marketing, green packaging assumes great significance. Various steps taken till date to ensure green packaging were very minimal, when compared to the magnitude of environmental threats faced. Also the manners in which people are accepting and reacting to this step are debatable. Paying sufficient attention to green packaging will pay rich dividend in ensuring the sustainability of the environment. The present study is undertaken to gauge the environmental awareness of the respondents, average number of non green packages used by them, the reason attributed for using, and to understand their perceptions about green packaging initiatives. Descriptive study was carried out by using a questionnaire and the collected data were analysed by using percentage analysis and Chi square test. The study reveals that reasons for using non green packages are easy availability, product protection and convenience. And it highlights that those who are having higher environmental awareness are appreciating the green packaging initiatives in the right sense.

KEYWORDS

Green Marketing, Green Packaging, Green Packaging Initiatives, Green Packaging Strategies, Non-Green Packages.

INTRODUCTION

In the last three decades the world of marketing has witnessed phenomenal change. It is no longer confined to smaller territories. Today economies of large scale are no longer an option, but it is a compulsion. Mass marketing has occupied the centre stage in the era of globalization. Sachet marketing has paved the way to make inroads into unexplored rural markets. Micro marketing has redefined the working dimensions and individualistic appeals of modern marketers. Internet marketing, social media marketing and search engine optimization enhanced the marketer's ability to go boundary less.

Aptly supported by the changed dimensions of global trade, policies and politics, attributable to globalization, and strengthened by the new wave of advances made in technology, today marketing policies, practices and prospects are at a new helm than ever before. On the other side of this growth story, the problems and side effects have also grown up in the same proportion as the prospects.

Every year medical practitioners are encountering the birth of new unnamed diseases. Environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources are growing as the single most challenge for the mankind for his survival on the earth. These issues are attracting the attention of all stake holders of the planet, and marketers cannot be alien to it.

Today marketers are not only working to achieve a fat bottom line but they are also working towards ensuring the sustainability of the bottom line. This led to the development of new avenue of marketing called "The Green marketing"

GREEN MARKETING

According to Polonsky (1994), "Green or environmental marketing consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment". Today, consumers are paying more attention to the environmental efforts of businesses and support companies that excel with their green marketing.

GREEN PACKAGING

Among the 4P's of Green Marketing, green packaging assumes great significance because, once when some products are put to use, the packages will be thrown out as environmental waste and thereby it pollutes the environment. Hence paying sufficient attention to green packaging will pay rich dividend in ensuring the sustainability of the environment.

The Sustainable Packaging Coalition® (SPC), is a project of GreenBlue, It envisions a world where all packaging is sourced responsibly, designed to be effective and safe throughout its life cycle, meets market criteria for performance and cost, is made entirely using renewable energy, and once used, is recycled efficiently to provide a valuable resource for subsequent generations

Accordingly, Sustainable packaging:

- A. Is beneficial, safe & healthy for individuals and communities throughout its life cycle
- B. Meets market criteria for performance and cost
- C. Is sourced, manufactured, transported, and recycled using renewable energy
- D. Optimizes the use of renewable or recycled source materials
- E. Is manufactured using clean production technologies and best practices
- F. Is made from materials healthy throughout the life cycle
- G. Is physically designed to optimize materials and energy
- H. Is effectively recovered and utilized in biological and/or industrial closed loop cycles

These criteria outline a framework for specific actions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In India, the share of plastic waste in total solid waste has risen from 0.6% in 1996 to 9.2% in 2005 (World Bank, 2008). Over 50% of this waste comprises used plastic bags and packaging (TERI, 2002). In the recent past, several efforts are taken by various entities like, the government, NGO's, environmental groups, manufacturers and retailers to promote green packaging.

In 2007 Nokia has launched a new phone, the 3110 Evolve, which the company says has "bio-covers" made from more than 50 percent renewable material. The device comes in new packaging made of 60 percent recycled content. Now many mobile manufacturers introduced green mobile packaging. They reduced the size of the carton.

The Government of Goa has enacted Goa Non- Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act, 1996 and amended it in 2003. They banned varying, use and sale of non-biodegradable PET bottles and plastic carry bags in wildlife sanctuaries, beaches and heritage monuments.

The Tamilnadu State government has imposed a ban on the use of plastic carry bags made of virgin plastics or recycled plastics of less than 60 micron thickness and 8x12 inches size. While the bags of 8x12 inches size and 40 micron thickness would cost Rs.1.35, those of 60 micron thickness would cost nearly Rs.2.10.

Government of India banned the plastics packaging for gutka and tobacco products in the year 2009. The Supreme Court finalized the rules and fixed December 2010 as deadline to impose this ban. This was a ban on primary packaging.

But all these steps are very minimal, when compared to the environmental threats in front of us. Also all these efforts are tip of the ice berg. Regulations banning distribution of carry bags are surpassed by retailers using various means. Primary packaging, secondary packaging and shipping packaging are using non green materials. There are no restrictions to this effect. Also the manners in which people are accepting and reacting to this step are debatable.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the level of environmental awareness among the respondents
- To analyse the average number of non green packages used by the respondents
- To study the reason for using non-green packages
- To study the respondents perception towards green packaging initiatives taken in Tamilnadu
- To study the respondents perception about who holds primary responsibility for green packaging activity
- To study the preferred method of green packaging strategy

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Renee Wever (2009)- "Thinking about the Box – A holistic approach to a sustainable design engineering of packing for Durable consumer goods " has presented the holistic way in which the total packing cost and its environmental impacts can be minimized.

Ina landau (2008) Studied about Gaining Competitive Advantage through Customer Satisfaction, Trust and Confidence in Consideration of the Influence of Green Marketing – The study indicated the relationship between eco orientation and companies performance. Accordingly, trust and confidence are important concepts in green marketing.

Tan Shwu Shyan (2010) studied the factors influencing Green purchase behaviour. The study reveals that social influence, environmental concern, green product knowledge (one dimension in environmental knowledge), specific environmental knowledge (one dimension in environmental knowledge), environmental label and income level are having significant impact to green purchase behaviour of green volunteers, in terms of their ranking of importance.

Soren Bohne and Rikke Thomson (2011) – Influencing consumer perception of and attitudes towards CO2 neutral and biodegradable carrier bags – has found that The general attitude towards environmentally labelled carrier bags is positive. Labelled plastic carrier bags are preferred to non-labelled, and Biodegradable bags are preferred to CO2 neutral.

Xiufeng Xing (2009), studied the ban on free plastic bags in China, and reported that Public awareness of environmental protection has been somewhat improved than before, customers or consumers come to accept the charge on plastic bags and bring their own carrying bags with them when shopping. But the market is the most difficult place to carry out the policy. Traders often have 2 kinds of plastic bag, one of which meets the national standard and is only used to cope with the inspection, while the other is thinner than 0.025 millimeters which should have been prohibited from providing to consumers. Compared with the supermarkets which offer standard plastic bags, it is the markets that provide consumers free Ultra-thin plastic bags that become the body of the "white pollution"

Subramanian Senthilkannan Muthu¹, et.al. (2012), Studied the eco impact of plastic and paper shopping bags in China, India and Hong Kong. Accordingly, among different phases of a product's life cycle, disposal phase assumes greater significance as far as the eco-impact is concerned. They concluded that a higher percentage of reuse could significantly trim down the eco-impact of plastic and paper bags. Consumers' perceptions and usage behaviors in connection with respective government's policies and implementation of recycling systems could be highly decisive in reducing the eco-impact of plastic and paper shopping bags.

Kanupriya Gupta and Rohini Somanathan, (2011) studied the appropriate policies that could help control the use of plastic bags in Delhi. Their results showed a dilution in the efficacy of the ban on plastic bags imposed by Delhi Government within one year, due to widespread lack of enforcement. They concluded that in developing countries with little enforcement capacity, a blanket ban may not be the best possible solution. Instead, low cost information interventions, availability of substitutes to plastic bags, and subsidies (taxes) on the use of reusable bags (plastic bags) could constitute an important policy-mix.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The study is descriptive in nature. The researcher used questionnaire schedule to collect data from the samples. Questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part contains questions related to demographic profile of the respondents. The second part is concerned with environmental awareness of the respondents and the last part discusses the respondents perception about green packaging initiatives..

SAMPLING DESIGN AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

The study was confined to Pudukkottai District in Tamilnadu. The sample consists of 100 consumers Convenience sampling was used. The study was conducted during the month of July 2012. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed by using percentage, and chi square test.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the respondents were systematically analyzed and presented under the following heads

- Section A: Deals with analysis of the data relating to respondents by using percentage analysis
- Section B: Collected data were analysed through Chi square test and Hypothesis tested

SECTION A

TABLE 1: RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender	Percentage	Environmental Awareness	Percentage
Male	56	Very High	8
Female	44	High	33
Age	Percentage	Neutral	38
Less than 20 years	18	Low	20
21-40 yrs	34	Very low	1
41-60 yrs	28		
61 yrs and above	20		
Education	Percentage	Economic Status	Percentage
Plus 2 and below	16	Normal	26
UG or PG	61	Middle	48
Professional	23	Elite	26

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

Majority (56%) of the respondents were male Majority (34%) of the respondents are in the age group of 21-40years. Majority (61%) of the respondents are having UG or PG education. Majority (48%) of the respondents are from the middle class. And majority of respondents (38%) are having neutral level of environmental awareness.

TABLE 2: RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION ABOUT GREEN PACKAGING INITIATIVES

Avg. no. of Non green packages used in a month	Percentage	Perception towards Green Packaging initiatives	Percentage
Less Than 5	4	Dissatisfied	14
6 to 15	42	Satisfied	30
16-30	40	Satisfied, but insufficient	56
More than 30	14		
Reason for using Non green packages	Percentage	Responsible Person	Percentage
Cheap	15	Government	8
Easy Availability	34	Environmental Organisations and NGO's	5
Protects the product	21	Manufacturers	41
Attractive	7	Distributors and Retailers	35
Convenient	23	Consumers	11
		Preferred Green Packaging Strategy	Percentage
		Reducing packages	9
		Reusing used packages	42
		Recycling packages	34
		Restricting Non green packages	15

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION

Majority (42%) of the respondents are using average of 6 to 15 non green packages in a month. Majority (34%) of the respondents are using the non green packages because they are easily available. Majority (56%) of the respondents are saying that they are satisfied to a limited extend with the steps taken. Majority (41%) of the respondents fix manufacturers as the primary person responsible for initiating green marketing activity. And majority of respondents (42%) are preferring the reuse strategy.

SECTION B

NULL HYPOTHESIS 1: (H_01)

The demographic factors of the respondent have no significant influence over the average number of non green packages used in a month.

TABLE 3: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF NON-GREEN PACKAGES USED IN A MONTH

Demographic Variable	Pearson Chi-Square value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Inference	Result
Gender	8.584	3	.035	$P < 0.05$	Significant
Age	4.328	9	.889	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant
Education	10.257	6	.114	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant
Economic status	2.199	6	.900	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant
Environmental awareness	19.019	12	.088	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION

Table 3 shows that Age, Education, Economic Status and Environmental awareness have no significant influence in over the average number of non green packages used in a month while gender of the respondent has significant influence over the average number of green packages used in a month. Hence the first hypothesis is partially accepted.

NULL HYPOTHESIS 2: (H_02)

The demographic factors of the respondent have no significant influence over the reason for using non green packages.

TABLE 4: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND REASON FOR USING NON-GREEN PACKAGES

Demographic Variable	Pearson Chi-Square value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Inference	Result
Gender	10.700	4	.030	$P < 0.05$	Significant
Age	15.575	12	.211	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant
Education	8.136	8	.420	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant
Economic status	16.528	8	.035	$P < 0.05$	Significant
Environmental awareness	19.565	16	.240	$P > 0.05$	Not Significant

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION

Table 4 shows that Age, Education, and Environmental awareness have no significant influence over the reason for using non green packages while Gender and Economic Status of the respondent has significant influence over the reason for using non green packages. Hence the second hypothesis is partially accepted.

NULL HYPOTHESIS 3: (H₀₃)

The demographic factors of the respondent have no significant influence over the perception towards green packaging initiatives.

TABLE 5: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND PERCEPTION TOWARDS GREEN PACKAGING INITIATIVES

Demographic Variable	Pearson Chi-Square value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Inference	Result
Gender	.486	2	.784	P>0.05	Not Significant
Age	1.525	6	.958	P>0.05	Not Significant
Education	7.637	4	.106	P>0.05	Not Significant
Economic status	1.358	4	.851	P>0.05	Not Significant
Environmental awareness	32.905	8	.000	P<0.05	Significant

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION

Table 5 shows that Gender, Age, Education, and Economic Status have no significant influence over the respondent's perception towards green packaging initiatives while Environmental awareness of the respondent has significant influence over the respondent's perception towards green packaging initiatives. Hence the third hypothesis is partially accepted.

NULL HYPOTHESIS 4: (H₀₄)

The demographic factors of the respondent have no significant influence over the perception towards person responsible for green packaging initiatives.

TABLE 6: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSON FOR GREEN PACKAGING INITIATIVES

Demographic Variable	Pearson Chi-Square value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Inference	Result
Gender	.727	4	.948	P>0.05	Not Significant
Age	3.911	12	.985	P>0.05	Not Significant
Education	6.141	8	.631	P>0.05	Not Significant
Economic status	6.813	8	.557	P>0.05	Not Significant
Environmental awareness	27.829	16	.033	P<0.05	Significant

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION

Table 6 shows that Gender, Age, Education, and Economic Status have no significant influence over the respondent's perception towards person responsible for green packaging initiatives while Environmental awareness of the respondent has significant influence over the respondent's perception towards person responsible for green packaging initiatives. Hence the fourth hypothesis is partially accepted.

NULL HYPOTHESIS 5: (H₀₅)

The demographic factors of the respondent have no significant influence over the strategy preferred for green packaging.

TABLE 7: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND GREEN PACKAGING STRATEGY PREFERRED

Demographic Variable	Pearson Chi-Square value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Inference	Result
Gender	.249	3	.969	P>0.05	Not Significant
Age	14.350	9	.110	P>0.05	Not Significant
Education	7.716	6	.260	P>0.05	Not Significant
Economic status	7.346	6	.290	P>0.05	Not Significant
Environmental awareness	7.868	12	.795	P>0.05	Not Significant

Source: Computed data

INTERPRETATION

Table 7 shows that Gender, Age, Education, Economic Status and Environmental awareness have no significant influence over the strategy preferred by the respondents for green packaging. Hence the fifth hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS

- ✓ Majority of respondents (38%) are having neutral level of environmental awareness. Only 1% of respondent are having very low environmental awareness and only 8% of respondents are having very high level of environmental awareness.
- ✓ Majority (34%) of the respondents are using the non green packages because they are easily available, it is followed by 23% of respondents who use it for convenience and another 21% of respondents are using it, since it protects the products quality.
- ✓ The average number of non green packages used in a month is significantly influenced by the gender of the respondent
- ✓ The reason attributed for using non green packages is significantly influenced by the gender and economic status of the respondents
- ✓ Perception about green packaging initiatives taken is varying significantly only on the basis of level of environmental awareness
- ✓ Perception about the responsibility for initiating green packaging initiative is also varying significantly only on the basis of level of environmental awareness
- ✓ Preference towards various green packaging strategies is not varying significantly on the basis of any of the demographic factors.

SUGGESTIONS

- Governments, Environmental organizations and NGO's should take sufficient steps to increase the level of environmental awareness among consumers. Consumes with higher level of environmental awareness are appreciating the problems and the steps taken in the right sense.
- Easy availability of non green packages should be curbed. Instead of pricing the non green packages at the retailers end, steps should be taken to reduce the manufacturing and distribution of non green packages on the whole.
- Import restrictions for non green raw materials, Excise duties and Quantity restrictions for manufacturing non green packages, Environmental tax for selling non green packages etc could be levied to restrict the import, manufacturing and distribution of non green packages.
- Suitable subsidies and assistance could be provided for manufacturing green packages.
- Ban on non green shopping packages should be strictly enforced. It should also be enlarged to include ban on primary and secondary non green packages.
- Manufacturers of retail goods, especially from FMCG segment should devote sufficient attention to R&D activities for replacing non green primary and secondary packages with green packages. New green packages should provide all the benefits available in non green packages like product protection, convenience etc.
- Till finding out suitable green alternatives, non green packages could not be eliminated completely. Hence all the green packaging strategies like recycling, reusing etc., should be used depending upon the situation.
- Consumers should be motivated to reuse used packages. Recycling should be carried out in large scale. When non green packages could not be eliminated immediately, reusing and recycling strategy will result in better environmental waste management.
- Whenever restriction on non green packaging and reduction of use of environmental resources for packaging are possible, it should be implemented. Restriction and reduction strategy should be implemented on various stages in a time bound manner.

CONCLUSION

Each and every economic activity is consuming sizeable amount of environmental resource. And now the time has ripened for giving back or at the least to stop exploiting the available natural resources which are scarce and which cannot be easily regenerated. Marketing starts and ends with the consumers. In the long run marketers can ensure the sustainability of profits only by ensuring the well being of the consumers and their environment.

Green marketing in general and green packaging in particular should not be viewed as a fashion statement given to fulfil Corporate Social Responsibility. Marketers should stop hiding behind the practice of green washing. Green packaging is the need of the hour to ensure sustainability of the earth and its ecosystem. Green marketers should understand the essence of green packaging in sum and substance and should implement it in its true spirit. Consumers, retailers, regulators, scientific community and environmental education groups should provide the necessary support for reviving, maintaining and safeguarding the earth's eco system.

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