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IMPACT OF GREEN BRAND AWARENESS AND GREEN BRAND TRUST ON GREEN BRAND PREFERENCE AMONG TEENAGERS IN ERNAKULAM

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ABSTRACT

The awareness about the environmental stresses that are placed on the planet is spreading globe wide, this has implications on various activity spheres of the human life. The world of marketing is also turning green and the number of advertisers attempting to present an eco-friendly green image has increased over the years. India is considered to be one among the green friendly countries of the world. The consumers are now showing a greater concern for environmental conservation and hence are more interested in green products. The study aims at understanding the impact of green brand awareness and green brand trust on green brand preference among teenagers. The study is conducted with special reference to the FMCGs. The Impact of Green brand awareness on green brand preferences studied with the mediating effect of green brand trust.

KEYWORDS

Green Brand Awareness, Green Brand Preference, Green Brand Trust

INTRODUCTION

The increasing concern for environmental issues among the customers and the marketers has driven the market into a 'Go Green Concept'. The society has become more conscious of environmental issues and this imposes a major challenge before the modern marketers. The consumers are now more ecologically conscious and hence prefer 'Green brands.' Green friendly consumers are receptive towards green advertisements and Green products. Green marketing is often attributed to concepts like reusable, degradable, Zero CFC, Zero carbon and so on.

Green marketing refers marketing of products that are environmentally preferable to the consumers as well as the society. It includes a wide range of activities including modification of the product, product process, developing a package design that is environment friendly and modification of the advertising pattern of the product. The concept of green marketing was evolved during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The American Marketing Association conducted a workshop on 'Ecological Marketing' which resulted in the publication of the first book on green marketing, "Ecological Marketing" (Henion and Kinnear 1976).

The concept of Green marketing is yet to be comprehensively defined however, it can be defined as "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." (Polonsky, 1994)

The study focuses on the customer awareness on Green Brands and its impact on Green Brand Trust, as the customers who have more awareness on Green brands are likely to have a greater Brand Trust. This relation is also studied with the mediation effect on Brand Preference of the customer. The study is conducted among teenagers in order to analyze the environment consciousness of the teenage group.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumers who exhibit positive attitude toward green advertisements also impose trust in the firm's products, further the extent to which consumers feel that green advertising is valuable to the society and is a good business practice; the more positive is their response to such companies' products. (Nagar, 2013). Many customers may not be willing to pay a premium for green products which may affect the sales of the company. It requires the companies to extensively communicate the presence and benefits of green marketing to the customers by means of various tools available for integrated marketing communication. Eco-labeling could be a good way to convince the customers regarding green products. Consumers might be willing to pay premium price if they see additional benefit (such as quality, environmentally safe product, fuel-efficient vehicles, and non-hazardous products) attached with the product (Bhatia and Jain, 2013)

There is a strong positive relationship between green advertisement and green brand awareness. The reason behind this relationship is that if companies use true environmental friendly and green claims in their advertisements and devise their marketing and advertising strategies in environmental concern then it will persuade the existing and potential customers to purchase the environmental friendly products. Green brand awareness has a positive impact on purchasing green products. If companies create brand awareness regarding their green brands, products and corporate image through brand equity then it will create knowledge for customers to get aware about the company offering which will result in final purchase (Zubair, 2015)

Youth have a positive attitude towards green marketing and favorable purchase intentions for green products. This stratum of society is going to play a vital role in future as more than half of the consumers are in this age group in our country. Marketers can reap benefits by understanding the psyche of this group and the future of green marketing appears to be promising in India. (Dubey, Malik, 2014). Price of green products was also found to be one of the factor that influence the purchase of green products. However, it was found that young consumers are more likely to be influenced by green issues (Cherian and Jacob, 2012)

GREEN BRAND AWARENESS

Brand awareness is defined as the likelihood to recognize and recall the environmental features of the brand. (Keller, 1993). From this definition we derive that green brand awareness is the ability of the consumers to recognize the green policies and practices of a brand. Consumer's perception of the brand will affect their choice (Gunasti and Ross, 2010).

This study intends to test the relationship between the Green Brand awareness and Green Brand Trust assuming that the Green Brand Awareness of the consumer increases the green Brand trust.

GREEN BRAND TRUST

Green Brand trust is a willingness to depend on a product or service based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence, and ability about environmental performance (Chen, 2010). We refer to Chen (2010) to measure green trust and its measurement includes five items:

1. You believe that this product's environmental image is generally reliable.
2. You think that this product's environmental functionality is generally dependable.
3. Overall, you believe that this product's environmental claims are trustworthy.
4. This product's environmental performance meets your expectations.
5. This product keeps promises for environmental improvement.

Green Brand Trust is assumed to have a mediating influence on Green Brand preference, where the higher the level of Green Brand Awareness of the customer, the higher the Green Brand Trust is and this in turn influences to increase the Green Brand preference.

GREEN BRAND PREFERENCE

Brand preference is important for diffusion of innovation in any context as it provides a lot of benefits such as having strong competitive power and unique position in the market (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2005). The Consumer's perception of the brand will affect their choice (Gunasti and Ross, 2010). This study assumes a positive influence of Green Brand Awareness and Green Brand Trust on Green Brand Preference.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is a global tendency to shift towards green marketing. The consumers and manufacturers have begun to adapt a green concept, though the factors that drive them towards such initiatives may vary. It is evident that there is a competitive advantage that a marketer can gain by going green.

India is considered to be the third largest economy by the year 2030. The Indian market is looked upon by investors as one of the most promising markets of the world. The country also has an advantage of having a majority of its population in the age group of 15 – 45. It is in this context that a study is conducted to understand the level of green brand awareness among teenagers and also to analyse the relationship between green brand awareness, green brand trust and green brand preference. It helps the manufacturers to understand the green brand awareness level of teenagers and also to understand the significance of creating green brand awareness among consumers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Impact of green brand awareness and green brand trust on green brand preference among teenagers. The study is conducted with special reference to the FMCGs. The Impact of Green brand awareness on green brand preference is studied with the mediating effect of green brand trust.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the direct relationship between green brand awareness and green brand preference.
2. To analyze the mediating effect of green brand trust on green brand preference.
3. To understand the significance of creating green brand awareness among teenagers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The relationship between green brand awareness, green brand trust is tested through a survey conducted among teenagers in Ernakulam district.

The population of the study was the teenagers in Ernakulam District and the study mainly focused on FMCGs. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was distributed in different shopping malls to 100 respondents based on convenience sampling technique.

The three constraints, Brand Awareness, Brand Trust and Brand Preference were measured using Five Point Likert Scale.

The data was analyzed using R software for statistical computing and graphics. Correlation Analysis was done to understand the degree of relationship between the three variables. The technique of Boot Strapping, which is a technique of re-sampling was used to enhance the reliability of the study. The mediating effect of Green Brand Trust on Green Brand Preference was analyzed using Bootstrapping.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There is a positive correlation between Green Brand Awareness and Green Brand Trust($r=.65$) and also between Green Brand Trust and Green Brand Preference($r=.66$). It is also found that the correlation between Green Brand Awareness and Green Brand Preference is positive ($r=.65$), as can be seen in Table 1.1. This indicates that there is a positive influence of Green Brand Awareness and Green Brand Trust on /green Brand Preference.

From a simple mediation analysis conducted using ordinary least squares path analysis, Green Brand Awareness has an influence on the Green Brand Preference of the customers. Green Brand Trust is influenced by Green Brand Awareness. As can be seen in Table 1.2, Respondents who have a higher level of Green Brand Awareness have a higher level of Green Brand Trust ($a = 0.794$), and those who have a higher level of Green Brand Trust have a higher level of Green Brand Preference ($b = 0.419$). A bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect ($ab = 0.332$) based on 5,000 bootstrap samples was entirely above zero (0.212 to 0.469), at confidence level of 95. There is evidence that the Green Brand Awareness Influences Green Brand Preference directly.

($c' = 0.478$), there is also a mediating effect of Green Brand Trust.

It is evident from the study that the Green Brand Awareness among teenagers in Ernakulam has an influence on the Green Brand Trust. Green Brand Trust of the customers leads to greater Green Brand Preference among teenagers. Hence it can be concluded that there is a partial mediation of Green Brand Preference in the influence of Green Brand Awareness on Green Brand Preference for FMCG's.

TABLE 1.1: CORRELATION ANALYSIS

	Green Brand Awareness	Green Brand Trust	Green Brand Preference
Green Brand Awareness	1.0	.654	.653
Green Brand Trust	.654	1.0	.662
Green Brand Preference	.653	.662	1.0

TABLE 1.2: EFFECT ON GREEN BRAND PREFERENCE

Variable	Coefficient
Green Brand Trust	0.419
Green Brand Awareness	0.478

SUGGESTIONS

1. The FMCG's can gain better trust from the consumers belonging to the teenage group by improving the level of awareness among them.
2. A greater emphasis on the creation of awareness of the green policies and concepts of the brand will help to improve the Green Brand Trust and thereby Green Brand preference of the customers.
3. As there is a global trend of going back to the nature, the consumers are also following the trend in their buying behavior. There is a growing need to cater to the environment friendly preferences of the consumers.
4. As the age group of 13 – 19 is a significant majority of the Indian Market, It is significant to note that there is preference for environment friendly concepts among teenagers.
5. Brand Preference of customers can be enhanced by increasing the level of awareness among the consumers of the teenage group.

CONCLUSION

It can be thus concluded that there is a positive relationship between Green Brand Awareness, Green Brand Trust and Green Brand Preferences of Teenagers in Ernakulam District, with special reference to FMCGs

There is a direct influence of Green Brand Awareness on Green Brand Preference with respect to FMCG's. A mediating effect of Green Brand Trust on Green Brand Preference is also proven from the study.

It can be thus derived that it is important for the marketers to create an awareness about the Green Practices that they are initiating, which will in turn improve the Green Brand Trust and thereby the Green Brand Preference of the customers.

LIMITATION

All possible measures were taken in order to ensure the reliability of the study; the study however has few limitations which are;

1. The study is conducted on a limited sample of the population.
2. The study does not consider the significance of factors such as gender and educational qualification

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is scope for further research in the area of Green Brand Awareness among the adults, considering the age and educational background which are factors likely to influence the Green Brand Preferences among adults.

The difference in the Green Brand awareness and Green Brand Trust with respect to gender is to be further explored.

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