

# AN APPRAISAL OF PROMINENT GREEN MARKETING COMMUNICATION THEMES AS PART OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

The present research is an attempt to understand the role of “green” in the context of green marketing communications that can influence the green buying decisions of people. The existing research in this area has been examined to identify the major thrust areas that the firms adhering to green marketing strategies are emphasizing to influence their customers. An investigative framework comprising of prime theme of advertisements of such firms is created that identifies and classifies various stakeholders, potentially impacted through the environmentally friendly effort of a firm. It was observed that the customers that are sensitised to the green buying in the area of Prayagraj, do notice the message of the advertisement and carry difference in opinions on the impact of such green marketing communications but the reflection in their buying preferences are not consistent with their opinions.

**Keywords:** Green Marketing, Marketing Communications, Green Buying Behaviour.

## INTRODUCTIONS

The deterioration of the environment and the ecosystem in the modern era can be hugely attributed to the growth of the global economy. The indiscriminate consumption and overutilization of natural resources has deteriorated the delicate equilibrium of our environment which has led to several undesirable consequences for us alike. For instance, the greenhouse effect induced by humans by burning fossil fuels has posed a great health hazard around the world (Krause, 1993; Easterling et al., 1996) and humans are now getting more and more concerned about the environment like never before.

The consumers are getting increasingly worried about the impact of their demands and consumption on the environment. An exemplar swing in the awareness and attitude of consumers towards the greenness has put the pressure back on the businesses to embrace more sustainable and green practices (Singh, 2013), (Dzung et al., 2013). It has been observed that a sizeable number of customers actually like to avoid the

produce from those companies that pollute the environment. The shareholders, employees, partners and governments (regulations) have also prompted the companies towards adopting greener means.

What started as compulsions and pressures initially has soon become the positioning strategy for many firms. Management of the business houses was internally motivated to adopt the manufacturing process and products that were environmentally sustainable and compatible and projected themselves as the champions for the cause (Sachdev & Mahna, 2014). Especially in India, larger corporates like Suzlon, Tata, Amul, ITC, Hero Honda, Wipro, Infosys, Dabur India, HUL, Maruthi, Godrej, BSA, LG Electronics and many more corporates now realize that they have to capture going green new market. They deliver environmentally friend products that are superior in some way to their conventional counterparts. They have analyzed the unique segment of people who were conscious of their environment and started targeting them with their greener strategies and products.

To qualify as a green product, a product or service has to be environment-friendly in itself or produced and/or packaged in an environmentally-friendly way (Singh, 2013). The marketing efforts associated with such product and process can be summed up as green marketing process. According to Shamdasami et al., (1993), the green product will not pollute the earth, or deplore scarce resources; they will be recycled or conserved. "Eco-friendly" refers to any product or service that is not harmful to the atmosphere or surroundings.

Barring a few cases, like Recron India Pvt Ltd. (a company that produces products from recycled

plastic waste and claims that their produce, a synthetic yarn is not only qualitatively better than its competitors but also gives them a cost advantage), it is often believed that subscribing to a green marketing effort or adopting such strategies is a critical financial decision for a firm. In many cases operational cost increases which need to be covered up by the willingness of the customers to pay. Therefore the marketer needs to heavily bank upon the market research to understand what factors would govern the awareness, attitude and the willingness of customers to pay for greener products and to what extent they would stretch to pay more so that they may design their marketing efforts effectively. This study will primarily explore the extent to which marketing communication can fetch the attention of a customer and elicit a favourable buying behaviour.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Though, the American Marketing Association (AMA) held its first Workshop on Ecological Marketing as early as in 1975 but the tangible milestone that appeared for the first time in the subject were in the form of two books on Green Marketing, the first by Ken Peattie (1992) and the other one by Jacquelyn Ottman (1993). Following the work of these authors, many papers frequently started coming up in several journals. Researchers have contributed to the literature on different aspects of the green marketing. Some were focused on the Consumers preferences and behaviour while others were on devising appropriate green marketing strategies.

Roome & Hinnells (2007) provided a study that companies are required to provide the extensive

details to prove its existence and the merits of green products which are to be consumed by the buyers with various methods and tools as well for combined marketing conversation because the concept and information of the advertisement of the product differs from usual advertisement. Marketing of green products with adaptation of novel and innovative ways to maintain and long standing the existence of the companies is significant from the viewpoint of sustaining the development. Ascending concern towards the down fall of environment has been exhibited by the companies and this caused product development management to remain attentive and focused towards it. The high concern for the environment left an effective impression on the corporate guild.

Chamorro & Benegil (2006) went across the perusal about the firms in Spain to distinguish whether the firms have truly committed towards the protection of environment and comprehended the green marketing to be an activity or philosophy. Another study in its sequence was also carried out whether Eco-labels are utilized only as tools to target the sales to the consumers or real environmental firm is in still use. They lastly found that the firms were right in their commitment. This renders help to the consumers to inculcate a good faith and will for the firms involved in ecolabeling for promotion of the green products.

Baynte et al. (2010) processed an investigation on the profile of consumer of green eco friendly food products in the market of Lithuania and this showed environmental issues being practiced by more educated consumers along with paying more for the eco friendly products. Government and industry are putting efforts for the protection of the environment.

Implementation of Environment Protection Act in India was ensued in 1986 and it was audited in 1992. Capital of India, New Delhi was declared to be the most polluted place before the intervention of Supreme court in this direction to emphasize on using alternative fuel such as CNG in all public transport system to bring fall in pollution in 2002. Interesting area in green consumer behaviour came in light as post purchase behaviour in disposing of the product. A recycle program of the green initiatives to dispose off the waste electronic items such as phones was launched by Nokia with a view of protection of environment. True value car market concept was started first by Maruti car manufacturer and then onwards, the same concept was followed by other manufacturers. Welling and Chavan (2010) reported a survey in which Air Jordan shoes were launched first time under the theme of green marketing by Nike being one of the most popular shoe companies claiming the reduction of the use of harmful glue adhesive.

Production of Green IT products by Dell was focused under the policy of "Go Green with Dell" and Eco friendly packaging inclusive of a system recycling kit. Dell also drove its attention on green innovations from data centre efficiency to the eco-friendly material usage for every part from the design to the packaging of the product. Porter and Linde (1995) put forth a claim for the profitability to be fetched by usage of the green products and policy. Green organizations can be assisted to enjoy the benefits of being first mover in green marketing sector. Green marketing can be expected to be fruitful from the distant vision point of view. A premium for green products affecting the sales of company seems very difficult to be paid. In such a situation,

the company may ponder over to leave aside the green marketing concept or opt to follow an unfair practice to cut short the cost so as to stand in competition and the whole idea of going green is diminished. Co-operation and belief to be infused in stakeholders by convincing the practice of green marketing by firms as it seems difficult task since awareness falls short in the way of achieving it. Environmental responsibility as part and parcel of quality attributes of products of the firm must be the priority to be emphasized.

Polonsky et al. (1998) put forth about consideration of utilization of misleading environmental marketing claims as one of the big issues for consumers, policy makers and academics too. Australian market was put under study for carrying out analysis of the contents to extract the environmental information printed on the product packaging of dishwashing liquid made available on the grocery stores. Evaluation criteria for identification of the extent to which information may be considered to be misleading were founded. The analysis disclosed the majority of information to have been inaccurate. Hussain (2000) proposed the green marketing to charter the consumer pattern and their likings so as to target the product offering for the consumers signalling their environmental issues for buying green products. Advertisements found lack of proper communication may result in to the marketing campaign to be misleading and resulting in green washing ultimately.

Sammer & Wustenhagen (2006) surveyed and placed their views that the marketers communicate the information through the eco-label to the consumers. In the process, the eco-label imbibes a significant value for marketing. Hartmann & Apaolaza (2008) strived for

distinguishing the dependence of environmental advertisement with the impact on consumer purchasing behaviour and they extracted the information that nature of green advertisement and its components driving the emotions of consumers lead to the green consumption.

Nik Abdul Rashid (2009) obtained a strong dependence between eco label and its effect on purchase decisions of consumers. The customers are not in condition to pay the premium due to higher cost of the green products and marketing promotions to accept the product by the consumers are required to be invested with large amounts of money. Pro-environment actions performed by the consumers towards green purchasing have grown a little more due to the level of awareness about the green product as an indispensable factor as the perusal and review of the literature revealed by Davidson et al., (1985). Peattie K (1992), Ottman J. (1992 a) and Ottman J. (1992 b)) came to conclusion about the consumer intention toward green product demand and pre-occupied concept to be uneven. Balderjahn (1988) persecuted a perusal and demonstrated the behaviour of purchasing green products to have been random owing to the distinct factors present in culture, traditions, rituals and demography. The demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, personality and attitudinal variables were used to estimate five distinguished patterns. It was also exhibited that the higher class of societal status consumers possess an attitude of protection of the environment and consuming the green products. Hassan & Valenzuela (2016) placed a study about the intentions of consumers to purchase green products to get low affected by the advertisements and the consumers think the green products to be modern day hype

and attention toward it not to be essential. The advertisement of awareness of co green products could generate a little faith since the consumers were detected to be sceptic toward the advertisement not being done so as to grow required level of trust and the advertisements claiming the green consumption to be healthy were assumed to be fabricated and falsified. The consequence of the tool was less effective toward green product purchase.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is an empirical study comprising of factor that are the principal focus area of any green marketing communication. These principal focus areas were arrived at by thorough literature review. Once these components of an advertisement campaign is decided, the first step is to analyse the nature of interrelationships or existence of underlying dimensions, if any, among these components of advertisement campaign. These components would be analysed from the perspective of respondents who have been subscribers of green products and carry some sensitisation towards the green marketing practices. A purposive or Judgmental sampling method will be adopted to fulfil the basic assumption that the respondents are subscribers of green product. A sample size of ten to fifteen times the observable variables in the components of the advertisement would be chosen so as to sufficiently cover up the requirements of factor analysis.

The Principal exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation tool would then be employed to assess the interrelationships or existence of underlying dimensions in the components of advertisements of green products and to extract principal factors out of observable constructs

employed in the questionnaire to suggest a model comprising of latent variables (extracted factors) and the outcome variables.

The factor scores of factors with Eigen values greater than 1, out of all the extracted factors would then be employed to study the difference in group means of various categorical variables depicting the associated consumer behaviour. The factor scores will then be treated as a continuous variable (Sharma, 1996) as executed in (Pathak, 2019). Following factor analysis the respondents will be classified into groups using hierarchical cluster analysis. These groups will then form a basis to study the behaviour of the people on different aspects of green purchase. Some other non parametric statistical tools will also be employed to study the interrelationships among categorical and ordinal variables.

## DATA ANALYSIS

A questionnaire was served on 159 participants and responses were collated from all of them. Some of the responses were incomplete, whereas some of the respondents were found not using green products therefore their responses were excluded from the analysis. In all a total of 51 fully filled qualified responses were received. The five different perspectives that have been used by various manufacturers of green products to communicate with their customers are depicted here as Adv\_Green\_Themes, Adv\_Health, Adv\_Product\_Label, Adv\_Edu\_Message and Adv\_Negative. These variables were used in the factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.85; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant, indicating that the sample size was good enough to proceed with the factor analysis.

**Table 1: Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.611	72.214	72.214	3.611	72.214	72.214
2	.671	13.417	85.631			
3	.334	6.688	92.320			
4	.242	4.843	97.163			
5	.142	2.837	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**Table 2: Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component 1
Adv_Green_Themes	.892
Adv_Health	.919
Adv_Product_Label	.871
Adv_Edu_Message	.892
Adv_Negative	.646

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The Factor analysis revealed only one latent dimension of green marketing communication on which all the five observable variables were highly correlated. The extracted principal factor was able to explain 72% variation in the respondent's data. Since all the above five variable sound similar to the respondents and there exist no different dimension to it, all can be collectively summed as a green marketing advertisement.

The factor scores so produced were then employed in k-means hierarchical cluster analysis which yielded only two clusters. 18 cases of respondents were classified in group1 and rest 33 cases were relegated to group2.

**Table 3: Final Cluster Centres**

REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	Cluster	
	1	2
	-1.17084	.63864

**Table 4: Number of Cases in each Cluster**

Cluster	1	18.000
	2	33.000
Valid Missing		51.000
		.000

If more than one factor was available to classify cases then we would have looked into internal weightings or impact of different factors in different groups but, here only one factor was used to classify people it can not reveal much as to which sub-factor was prominent in which group's identification.

To demarcate the differences among group1 and group2 a comparison with the demographics was done, this would help identify the composition of these groups and understand how people with different demographic profile are influenced by the derived principal factor.

The first comparison was done with the gender to see if there was an gender differences:

- **Hnull- GroupMembership\_Gender:** There is no association between the Group membership and Gender of the respondents.
- **Halternate- GroupMembership\_Gender:** There is a significant association between the Group membership and Gender of the respondents.

**Table 5: Cluster Number of Case \* Gender Cross-tabulation (Chi-Square Test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	2.375 <sup>a</sup>	2	.305
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	2.646	2	.266
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	51		

2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .35.

The chi-square value for cluster number of case and gender Cross-tabulation was not significant at (p-value=0.30). The Pearson chi-square test allows us to test the independence of two categorical variables since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, i.e, both the variable are independent of each other. Each group has significant mix of both genders.

The second comparison was done on the age parameter to see if age of the respondents has got to do something with the advertisement message themes i.e if there was any association with the age of the respondent and their group membership.

- **Hnull- GroupMembership\_Age:** There is no association between the Group membership and Age of the respondents.
- **Halternate- GroupMembership\_Age:** There is a significant association between the Group membership and Age of the respondents.

**Table 6: Cluster Number of Case \* Age Cross-tabulation (Chi-Square Test)**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<b>Pearson Chi-Square</b>	2.935	2	.412
<b>Likelihood Ratio</b>	3.047	2	.353
<b>N of Valid Cases</b>	51		

2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .35.

The chi-square value for Cluster number of case and Age cross-tabulation also revealed a non significant p-value (p-value=0.41). Therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, i.e, both the variable are independent of each other.

The above two analysis reveals that the selected demographic variables do not have any significant association with the group membership based on the extracted principal factor from advertising messages themes.

The next obvious and logical step in this study is to check if the extracted principal factor was able to carve out groups of utility to green marketers that can show some differentiation in the consumer behaviour.

The variables namely, Sense of satisfaction in purchasing green products and the Willingness to pay extra for greener products were put to non parametric kruskal wallis test (being ordinal variables) to check in the group members differs in their behaviors. The null hypothesis of the kruskal wallis test is that the mean ranks of the groups are the same or that the samples/groups are from identical populations.

- **Hnull:** The samples (groups) are from identical populations.
- **Halternate:** At least one of the samples (groups) comes from a different population than the others.

**Table 7: Sense of satisfaction**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
-2	5	12.5	-7.5
-1	5	12.5	-7.5
1	32	12.5	19.5
2	8	12.5	-4.5
Total	50		

**Table 8: Test Statistics-1**

	Cluster Number of Case	sense of satisfaction
Chi-Square	4.083a	41.040b
Df	1	3
Asymp. Sig	.043	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5.

**Table 9: Agree to pay extra price**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
-1	4	16.7	-12.7
0	8	16.7	-8.7
1	38	16.7	21.3
Total	50		

**Table 10: Test Statistics**

	Cluster Number of Case	Agree to pay extra price
Chi-Square	4.083a	41.440b
Df	1	2
Asymp. Sig	.043	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5.

In both cases the p-values are less than 0.05 therefore the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. This means the groups that are created by factor scores or the combination of five sub variables Adv\_Green\_Themes, Adv\_Health, Adv\_Product\_Label, Adv\_Edu\_Message and Adv\_Negative have a similar response on the behaviour aspects.

## CONCLUSION

For a conscious and aware customer of green marketing, the different perspectives that have been used by various manufacturers of green products to communicate with their customers are perceived as similar stimuli without any underlying dimensions. These communication messages do not have any explicit association with demographic variables, i.e, the people from different demographic profile cannot be differentiated on their responses to different communication themes used by green marketers. Also when the group membership was pitched against the two variables namely the Sense of satisfaction in using a green product and the Willingness to pay more for the green product it was observed the group members do not differ significantly in their responses.

This does not necessarily mean that the green advertisement messages on the said themes are ineffective. The green messages are effective as they are able to classify the respondents into two distinct groups or clusters. But the reason as to why the respondents in different groups have similar choices could well be traced in their level of education and awareness about the potential dangers of environmental degradation in unsustainable marketing practices. It must be kept in mind that all the respondents were at least pursuing graduation or have higher qualifications and that they are already consuming green products. A further study is required to check how the groups behave on other aspects of buying behaviour pertaining to green product's consumption.

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