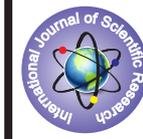


Green Initiative and Marketing Approach: Developing a Better Marketing Approach of Green Initiatives by a Apparel Brand



Marketing

KEYWORDS: environmentally friendly apparel, print advertisement, environmental concern, eco-label

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ABSTRACT

In this research study, we have studied the hypothetical apparel brand "Go-Green", which is taking the green initiative of selling the environmentally friendly apparel. In particular the objective of this study is to compare the four types of print advertisements of the brand "Go-Green" such as i) only eco-friendly fashion apparel ii) eco-friendly fashion apparel with eco-label iii) eco-friendly fashion apparel with the information and iv) eco-friendly apparel with both eco-label and information; in order to develop the better marketing approach. In addition, the moderating role of environmental concern in the evaluation of the four types of print advertisements was also studied. The evaluation of the print advertisement with eco-friendly apparel with both eco-label and information was highest amongst all the four print advertisements. In addition, the role of environmental concern as a moderating variable was found significant in the evaluation of the given four conditions of print advertisements.

Climate change has made this world to think and act for the environmental concerns. Everybody is willing to go green right from individual to society. In consideration to climate change, many companies and businesses are taking this issue as an opportunity. Many companies are now in the drive to make and deliver products, which keeps the environment healthy. This research study attempted to examine the role of environmental concern of the consumers affecting their purchase of the environmentally- friendly apparels. In particular, this study will answer the questions such as: i) Does the consumers concern for the environment make them purchase environmentally- friendly fashion apparels.

To get the answer of the above question, an online experiment was conducted. We have studied the hypothetical fashion apparel brand who has taken a green initiative of making their products eco-friendly. We have named this hypothetical brand as "Go-Green". By taking this hypothetical brand, we have studied about how this brand can achieve better marketing approach. In particular, we have studied the four types of print advertisements of this brand as follows : (i) only eco-friendly apparel (ii) eco-friendly apparel labelled with eco-label (iii) eco-friendly apparel along with information about the benefit of the featured apparel and (iv) eco-friendly apparel with both eco-label and information about the benefit of the featured apparel.

According to Barr & Gilg (2006), governments and other organizations have started taking consideration of the individual role on the environment issues. However, according to Moisander (2007), in spite of green awareness campaigns designed to encourage people's green behaviour, they are not putting it into action. In other words, we can say that, individual are aware about the environment issues, but somehow not able to show their concern about the environment in terms of their actual behaviour. This gap is identified as the "value-action" gap.

According to Blake (1999), environmental concern has become very widespread but very few people actually act for the betterment of the environment, which he describes as the "value-action" gap. Several factors are been identified for this gap which includes practicality, individuality and responsibility (Blake, 1999). Research has revealed that the "value-action gap" is a prevalent phenomenon, resulting in less regular adoption of environmental behaviours. According to Hobson's (2003) research, there are alternatives that might assist to link the gap between environmental concern and behaviour.

According to Rex & Baumann (2007), eco-labelling is the best practice for creating consumer awareness about the green products. However, according to Bonini & Oppenheim (2008) eco-label often create confusion in the consumers mind, as there are number of different labels that exist which make it difficult to identify how environmentally friendly a product is. In addition, some researchers' states that eco-labels can be treated as a heuristics, which reduces

the cognitive effort of a consumer to understand the benefits of the green products (Young et al., 2010).

It is very important to advertise the environmentally friendly products in a particular way that fits the consumers' needs (Rex & Baumann, 2007). According to Pickett-Baker & Ozaki (2008), product design and consumer's personal needs should be matched in order to make environmentally friendly product attractive to mainstream population rather than a niche market segment. Moreover, they also state that information about the benefits of the environmentally friendly product should be marketed proper to the consumers. Hence, in the say way, we can say eco-label along with the relevant information about the environmentally friendly product is compulsory for the marketers for marketing the green products.

Since, none of the studies has done the comparative analysis of the print advertisement consisting of only eco-label and print advertisement consisting of eco-label along with benefit information. Therefore, in this study we had studied the impact of eco-label and information about the benefits of the environmentally friendly fashion apparel on the purchase decision of the consumers.

Moreover, Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002) have studied the effect of individual's internal factors such as motivation, emotional involvement, values and attitude and environmental knowledge on the adoption of environmentally friendly purchase behaviour. Hence, we can propose that consumers' concern about the environment can affect the adoption behaviour of the environmentally friendly apparels. The following research questions are framed:

Research question 1: Will the print advertisement showing "only eco-friendly apparel" is evaluated more positively by the respondents?

Research question 2: Will the print advertisement showing "only eco-friendly apparel labelled with eco-label" is evaluated more positively by the respondents?

Research question 3: Will the print advertisement showing "eco-friendly apparel along with information about the benefit of the featured apparel" is evaluated more positively by the respondents?

Research question 4: Will the print advertisement showing "eco-friendly apparel with both eco-label and information about the benefit of the featured apparel" is evaluated more positively by the respondents?

Research question 5: Will the evaluation of the print advertisements showing "eco-friendly apparel" affected by any moderating variables such as the environmental concern?

Methodology

Experimental method used to test the result. Four different experimental conditions were created in terms of images of print advertisements such as i) only eco-friendly fashion apparel ii) eco-friendly fashion apparel with eco-label iii) eco-friendly fashion apparel with the information and iv) eco-friendly fashion apparel with both eco-label and information.

Sample

Sample size for this study is 160 respondents. Forty respondents were sent the online link via email for each of the four experimental conditions. The link contained the image of one of the print advertisement showing the eco-friendly apparel. Based on the image seen, respondents were asked to answer a series of questions for evaluation of the print advertisement.

Data collection Procedure

The data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Out of 160 respondents, 55 were male and 105 were female. The age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 45, with an average age of 35.2 years old. The education level ranged from high school to postgraduate degree, with the median having completed graduate level college. The median annual household income was Rs. 1, 20,000 to Rs. 3, 20,000.

Measures

1. Dependent variables: Three measurements were assessed i. Likeability, ii. Favorability and iii. Purchase Intention which are the dependents variable in this study. All the three scale demonstrated the high reliability scale ($\alpha = .798$).
2. Moderating variable: Environmental concern scale of Ellis and Thompson (1997) was used. This scale demonstrated the high reliability scale ($\alpha = .890$).

Data Analysis

1. Experimental condition and image evaluation: In order to find the differences in the evaluation of the eco-friendly fashion apparel across four experimental conditions, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The ANOVA results show a significant overall effect of the experimental condition on the respondents' evaluation of the print advertisement, $F(3, 160) = 107.79, p < .001$. Hence, we can say that the evaluation of the eco-friendly fashion apparel is significantly different across the four experimental conditions.

In addition, we can see that the mean for the experimental condition of Eco-label and Text ie. Image of the print advertisement exhibiting eco-friendly fashion apparel with eco-label and information shows the highest mean of 4.800; and Image of the print advertisement exhibiting only eco-friendly fashion apparel shows the lowest mean of 2.291. In other words, we can say that respondents evaluated the image of the print advertisement of eco-friendly fashion apparel with eco-label and information more positive followed by the image of the print advertisement of eco-friendly fashion apparel with eco-label.

2. Effects of Environmental Concern on Image Evaluation: The ANOVA results again verify a significant main effect of the experimental condition on the evaluation of the images of print advertisements, $F(3, 152) = 235.19, p < .001$. The main effect of Environmental Concern (EC) score found significant, $F(1, 152) = 2.615, p = .10$.

Table 1: Mean Image evaluation by experimental condition and Environmental concern

Condition	Environmental Concern Score (EC)	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Only apparel	Low EC	2.190	0.210
2. Eco-label	High EC	2.208	0.181
	Low EC	2.703	0.187

3. Information	High EC	3.488	0.225
	Low EC	3.010	0.199
4.Eco-label and Information	High EC	3.110	0.166
	Low EC	3.225	0.198
	High EC	3.752	0.201

It can be seen from the Table 1 that generally those with higher levels of Environmental concern score were more likely to positively evaluate the images of the print advertisements of the environmentally friendly fashion apparel in all the four experimental conditions.

In addition, the interaction between environmental concern and experimental condition was found significant, $F(3, 152) = 1.877, p = .129$. Moreover, the above means table suggests that the experimental condition of Eco-label and information bears the highest means for the evaluation of the image of the print advertisement for those with higher level of environmental concern. Whereas in the experimental condition of Only apparel the means for the evaluation of the image of the print advertisement was found the least with the individuals with lower level of environmental concern scores.

Discussion

This research took a substantial first step in better considering consumer purchasing decisions related to environmentally friendly fashion apparels and the extent that environmental concern influences those decisions. While the results clearly the connection between environmental concern and evaluation of the environmentally friendly fashion apparels. The research also uncovered possible reasons for the evaluation of the environmentally friendly fashion apparels, in which lack of information was found the most important factor for less positive evaluation. Also this research provide a very important guideline to the marketers for marketing environmentally friendly fashion apparels, in which it was said that eco-label with reputed organization and enough and relevant information about the environmentally friendly apparel should be given in the advertisement and other marketing campaigns.

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