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Management

A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS GREEN PRODUCTS IN ERODE DISTRICT

KEY WORDS: Customer Satisfaction, Green Products, Period of using

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ABSTRACT

Satisfaction towards green products as a comparison between expectation and what is truly obtained by customers. For this, the researcher was selected 100 customers who were using green products atleast six months in Erode district of Tamilnadu. A structured questionnaire was framed and collected their opinion towards satisfaction in using the green products by using convenience sampling method. The collected details were subduced into tables by using simple Percentage Analysis, Mean Score analysis and Chi-Square Test. The results found that middle aged (41-50) post graduate male business people have perceived high level of satisfaction towards green products in the study area. Further, it could be found from the analysis that majority of the respondents are satisfied with Available of the Green products in the market, Durability of the product and Offers and discounts of the green products.

Introduction

With the increase in the technologies there has been an increase in the industrial activities which has affected the environment adversely. The environment has been exploited extensively; this over exploitation of environment has resulted in climate change, global warming, pollution, depletion of the ozone layer etc. These issues have raised concerns to protect our environment which has led to the concept of going green. Government has introduced policies to save the environment from further degradation and so has the corporations opted for environmentally friendly practices. One of the earliest steps that were taken regarding this environmental concern was to introduce products that were supposed to environmental friendly and had utilitarian status for consumers. These products have positive effects on the environment as they are less toxic, biodegradable, recyclable, energy efficient, renewable due to which they are termed as 'Green Products'. Because of the negative effects on environment, green marketing activities have been a major tool that is utilized by various organizations, which have brought about a change in buyers' purchasing approach towards green items.

Green behavior is the choice made by the consumers whether to buy an eco-friendly product or not. A consumer concern towards a safe environment has been frequently increasing. Nowadays the market contains a wide variety of products that are environmentally safe. The purchase behavior of the consumers depends on the beliefs and the consciousness of the consumer towards environmental concerns. If a consumer opts for a green product it not only has personal benefits for the consumer but also many long term environmental benefits. The decision to purchase these products depends on the behavior which the consumer might adopt towards these products.

However, it is likely that many customers, who are environmentally conscious, are not routinely making these eco friendly purchases as the result of what has been called the 'value-action gap'. The value action gap is the disparity between the knowledge of consumer about the environment and the behavior he adopts towards such products. The process of selling products and/or services based on their environmental benefits is called Green marketing. A lot of companies promote their products by enhancing the consciousness of the consumers towards the environmental issues which makes a consumer move from a convectional product to a green product. This helps the firms to not only market their products but also increase the awareness of the consumers. Green lifestyle has become common in developed countries than in developing countries. Many firms have started green marketing and strategies for the development of green products to save the environment and to gain long term profits. Now-a-days, we have lot of green products in the market e.g. CFL bulbs, Electric home appliances, jute bags, rechargeable batteries, solar chargers.

Review of Literature

According to Roberts (1996), the awareness about the issues of

the environment can determine the behavior of the individuals towards environment. The awareness and attitude have a positive effect on the purchasing behavior of the consumers. Arcury (1990) discussed in his research that more the individual is aware about the environmental concerns, it could creates favorable behavior towards the same. The increased knowledge about the environmental issues creates positive attitudes. Laroche et al., (2001) noticed that the knowledge about the environment is correlated with the attitude and behavior towards the environment. The authors Schahn and Holzer (1990) found from their research that proper knowledge about environmental problems can make individuals more responsible towards the environment. Birgelen et al. (2009) noticed in their research that consumers who are more aware and conscious about the environment make more green choices. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1990) inferred that an individual's positive environmental behavior doesn't not necessarily guarantee his involvement or participation towards the environment. The individual involvement is very important, and the strength of motivation on the processing of information depends on one's degree of involvement. According to Oliver (1999), as the quality and the performance of the product are the major reasons for the customer to be satisfied with the product. A customer's satisfaction towards the particular product will influence the future purchase decisions of consumers and form customer loyalty but also spread a positive word of mouth about the product. Satisfaction is usually interpreted as a means of predicting customer's future purchase. Zeithaml et al., (1996) also found that a satisfied consumer is going to repeat his purchase in future. Further, the authors Reynolds and Arnold (2000) found that a satisfied consumer is more likely to recommend the preferred product to others. Based on these findings it can be assumed that the consumers who have knowledge about the environmental issues and are satisfaction towards using green products.

Statement of the Problem

Customers are integrating their concern for the environment into their purchasing behaviour in a variety of ways. There is a growing amount of evidence indicating that customers are choosing products or avoiding others based on their impact on the natural environment. Customers not only desire to purchase products that are less environmentally harmful but are willing to pay more to do so. This increasing concern for the environment has not been overlooked by manufacturers and dealers. Unfortunately, some organizations exploiting customers increased environmentally awareness. So, the customers' satisfaction towards green products may vary. Hence, a research emerged that has to examine the satisfaction of the customers towards green products in Erode district.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the demographic profile of the respondents who are using green products in Erode district.
- To evaluate the satisfaction level of the respondents towards

green products in the study area.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research study has been used in this research. For examining the satisfaction of the customers towards green products in Erode, the researcher has taken 100 customers who have utilizing the green products atleast six months. A well structured questionnaire was framed and collected the customers' opinion towards green products. The details are subduced into percentage analysis, mean score analysis, chi-square analysis and Henry Garrett Ranking Technique have been used for this study.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the customers

The profile of the sample customers and their satisfaction is discussed in the following tables.

Table 1 : Profile of the respondents and their Satisfaction

S.No.	Factors	No. of Respondents	%	Satisfaction Mean Score
Age				
1.	Upto 30 years	6	6	3.8
2.	31 - 40 years	13	13	3.7
3.	41 - 50 years	63	63	4.3
4.	Above 50 years	18	18	4.0
	Total	100	100	
Gender				
1	Male	66	66	4.2
2	Female	34	34	3.9
	Total	100	100	
Educational Qualification				
1	Illiterate	27	27	3.6
2	School Level	35	35	3.8
3	Graduate	12	12	4.0
4	Post Graduate	14	14	4.2
5	Professional	12	12	3.9
	Total	100	100	
Occupation				
1	Govt. employee	11	11	3.8
2	Private employee	24	24	4.1
3	Professional	9	9	3.9
4	Farmer	26	26	3.7
5	Business	11	11	4.3
6	Housewife	9	9	3.8
7	Others	10	10	3.5
	Total	100	100	
Monthly income				
1	Upto Rs.15,000	18	18	3.7
2	Rs.15,001 - 25,000	23	23	3.9
3	Rs.25,001 - 35,000	18	18	4.2
4	Above Rs.35,000	41	41	3.9
	Total	100	100	
Period of using the Green Products				
1	Upto 3 years	48	48	3.9
2	4-5 years	24	24	4.2
3	Above 5 years	28	28	3.7
	Total	100	100	
Using Green Products				
1	Organic vegetables	10	10	3.9
2	Food Products	19	19	3.7
3	Cosmetics (Herbal)	18	18	3.8
4	Toiletries	11	11	3.9
5	Fabrics	4	4	3.4
6	Any Two	22	22	4.1
7	Any Three	16	16	4.0

It is noted from the above table that among the four categories of the age of the sample respondents, majority (63.0%) of the respondents with the age group of 41 - 50 years. While in gender based study, it is found that majority (66.0%) of the respondents are male. In the case of educational qualification, majority (35.0%) of the respondents are having school level education. Of the 7 category of occupational status of the respondents, majority (26.0%) of the respondents are farmer. It is noted from the analysis that majority (41%) of the respondents earn above Rs.35,000. It is noted from the above analysis that majority (48%) of the respondents are using green products for upto 3 years. Further, it is noted that majority (22%) of the respondents are using two green products in their life.

It could be found from the satisfaction score analysis that maximum of the respondents have perceived high level of satisfaction towards using green products in Erode who belongs to 41-50 years aged, male, post graduates, business people, earn monthly from Rs.25001 to 35000, using the green products for 4-5 years and they are using two green products in their life.

Satisfaction level of the customers

Satisfaction Indicators

An attempt has been made to know the satisfaction score towards green products of the respondents. The details are furnished in the following table.

Table 2 : Satisfaction Factors towards Green Products

S.No.	Particulars	Mean Score
1.	Available of the Green products in the market	4.3
2.	Variety of Green Product	4.1
3.	Creativity / Innovation Features	4.0
4.	Product Design According to Usage	4.2
5.	Product Segmentation	3.9
6.	Quality of the Product	4.2
7.	Durability of the product	4.3
8.	Price of the product	4.2
9.	Offers and discounts	4.3

From the above table, it is found that satisfaction score of the customers towards available of the Green products in the market as 4.3, Variety of Green Product as 4.1, Creativity / Innovation Features as 4.0, Product Design According to Usage as 4.2, Product Segmentation as 3.9, Quality of the Product as 4.2, Durability of the product as 4.3, Price of the product as 4.2 and Offers and discounts as 4.3. It is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents are satisfied with Available of the Green products in the market, Durability of the product and Offers and discounts of the green products.

In order to find the relationship between the selected independent variables of the respondents and their level of satisfaction towards green products, the following hypothesis was framed and tested with the help of Chi-square test and the result is shown in the following table.

H0: There is no significant relationship between selected independent variables of the respondents and their level of satisfaction towards green products.

Table 3 : Relationship between selected independent variables and Satisfaction

Factor	Calculated 2 Value	Table Value	D.F	Remarks
Gender	29.366	9.210	2	Sig. at 1% level
Age	24.880	20.090	8	Sig. at 1% level
Educational Qualification	33.561	20.090	8	Sig. at 1% level
Occupation	52.568	26.217	12	Sig. at 1% level
Monthly Income	20.239	16.811	6	Sig. at 1% level
Period of using	19.100	13.276	4	Sig. at 1% level
Using Products	100.609	26.217	12	Sig. at 1% level

From the above analysis, it is found that all the hypotheses of the selected independent variables are rejected due to significant results at 1 percent level of significance. Hence, it is noted that there is a significant relationship between selected independent variables like Gender, Age, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Monthly Income, Period of using, Using Products and level of satisfaction towards green products.

Findings and Suggestions

- It could be found from the satisfaction score analysis that maximum of the respondents have perceived high level of satisfaction towards using green products in Erode who belongs to 41-50 years aged, male, post graduates, business people, earn monthly from Rs.25001 to 35000, using the green products for 4-5 years and they are using two green products in their life.
- It is found from the analysis that majority of the respondents are satisfied with Available of the Green products in the market, Durability of the product and Offers and discounts of the green products.
- It is found that all the hypotheses of the selected independent variables are rejected due to significant results at 1 percent level of significance. Hence, it is noted that there is a significant relationship between selected independent variables like Gender, Age, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Monthly Income, Period of using, Using Products and level of satisfaction towards green products.
- From the study, the customers who does not belongs to 41-50 years aged have not perceived high level of satisfaction towards green products. So, the retailers and manufacturers may check the dissatisfaction factors and take remedial actions that lead to increase the satisfaction of the customers towards green products.
- Price is the attribute that consumers reflect on when making a green product purchasing decision. Customers are less likely to purchase green products if they are more expensive. So it is recommended to the retailers and manufacturers that they should take necessary steps to competitive price that favourable to purchase middle and low level income category customers also.

Conclusion

This study mainly focused on customers' satisfaction towards green products in Erode district. For this, 100 customers have selected to examining the satisfaction towards green products both ends. It is the right time to need for shifting the consumers to green products and their attitude should need to change to utilize the green products owing to less environment pollution. In today's scenario, customers are beginning to realize their role and responsibilities towards the friendly nature environment. In this polluted environment, it is not happening suddenly, but it has to be happening. From the study, most of the respondents are satisfied with Available of the Green products in the market, Durability of the product and Offers and discounts of the green products.

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