

A Study on Green PR- The Reality of Green Wash in India

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ABSTRACT

With Green Revolution being a prevalent phenomenon on the planet, concerns encompassing sustainable development are enhancing too gradually. In a 2015 investigation on purchaser conduct connecting with green products led by Wong Fui Yeng and Rashad Yazdanifard, it was laid out that shoppers need to connect with organisations and ingredients which are green consistent. As a matter of fact, they will follow through on a greater expense to secure a 'greener way of life'. The inspiration for purchasers in searching out green items is the possibilities of carrying on with a better existence, adding to protection of the climate or more all, setting aside time and money.

This frenzy towards green living has likewise introduced an equal an open door to the producers marketing an item founded on its 'green quotient'. Green PR is in right now-while this scenario has introduced a progressive thought, it has likewise widen the possibilities of deluding through wrong green claims called 'Greenwash' which has represented a new and exclusive danger to the overall spotlight on careful endeavors towards green revolution.

This paper points towards figuring out consumer experiences with purchasing and utilising green products and investigate those encounters to grasp; 1. Whether the idea of green living is being shown up at the purchasers and non-buyers the same, 2. Whether Green PR functions with similar philosophies as green living and sustainability. The research question of this study addresses this discourse in the simplest terms is Green PR really promoting sustainable development or it is just a brilliant marketing strategy? It is a quantitative exploration, led through both essential and optional information. The discoveries of the exploration demonstrate an eccentric encounter the shopper conduct towards green items keeps on being positive. However, the accessibility and genuineness of green products make significant hindrances for the ideologies of green revolution to be assimilated by the buyers at large.

Keywords: green wash, green PR, green products, green marketing

A. Introduction

The world is becoming worried about ecological issues as time passes. The mindfulness about natural issues and tending to them are turning out to be progressively famous both in the fields of scholastics and exploration as well as in the modern area. The makers are investing extraordinary amounts of energy to create climate agreeable merchandise to safeguard the environmental equilibrium. Such items are according to general agreement named as 'green products' despite the fact that there is no singular specific definition for this term (Air Quality Sciences, 2010).

Nonetheless, 'green product' has gained incredible popularity with the shoppers in light of the fact that as the cognizance about natural issues is rising through purchasing eco-accommodating items. This initiative has been considered the most unmistakable and prompt step for them to make their commitment to a superior world. The purchasers are likewise intrigued to follow through on a greater expense to lead a greener way of life (Wong Fui Yeng, 2015). As an outcome, 'green marketing' and 'green PR' have hit off enormous across the globe and are adjusting to publicising with green professes to focus on these customers. Green advertising has been observed as the best procedure to produce positive and significant market reaction and used for encouraging interest and demand of the market (AJI, 2014).

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The cognizance of the buyers has been shot up--they ensure and check the additives utilized in every one of the items that they are consuming. That is difficult for the inventive individuals associated with a brand as the need might arise to concoct a persuading story to console the development of green business that flourishes with the idea of manageability (Jeevan, 2014). To continue to contemplate over the possibility of a green living, green PR assumes a vital part for a business. Many organizations gloat through plugs of items that will help the climate. However, there is an immense discrepancy between the earnest ones to create some difference versus people standing there-to-generate gains only by selling-the idea of emergence of-green revolution. The enormous volume of green PR techniques makes it very hard for the buyers to recognize the genuine organisations which are not making green assertion only for getting it done. (Jeevan, 2014).

Green PR and Green Wash

Each business flourishes and develops exercises which include making and keeping up with positive brand image that targets steady and consistent correspondence with consumers. With the rising awareness about sustainable development and the green revolution, it is of pivotal significance for the vast majority of these organisations to clear this correspondence towards an excursion that welcomes climates.

Green PR additionally named as Green Marketing is by and large credited to the expanded consciousness of the purchasers about the exhaustion of the climate and summoning concerns regarding sustainability (Vaibhav Ramesh Bhalerao, 2015). Such manageability concerns can be brought up with regards to air contamination, clamor contamination, water contamination, or whatever other peculiarity that removes the natural assets from the climate welcoming disruption to the regular eco-framework.

Despite the fact that green PR has been taken a gander at as the main thrust for the familiarity with individuals about economical turn of events and reclamation of biological equilibrium, a portion of the green claims regarding specific items end up being not-really credible as the exercises energised by the commercialisation strategies which end up being developed as more climate well disposed than it truly is (Lippert, January 2011). This idea is famously known as Green Wash, a disparaging that focuses at the misrepresentation rehearsed by numerous corporate/organisations/associations guaranteeing specific items to be green items while truly they are not any more natural well disposed than the plastic cup that conveys your #1 espresso in the close by bistros. This peculiarity is empowering an ever increasing number of organisations to connect with value generation in light of unscrupulous practice.

B. Research Objective

This paper discusses about;

How green PR has been more advantageous at innovative product marketing when contrasted with making real commitment towards sustainable development.

How green marketing has offered more towards getting an insurgency the field of PR instead of helping up the reasons for green transformation. The objectives of the paper are:

- To study consumer awareness about green marketing.
- To find consumers' willingness to increase cost burden for green items.
- To figure out customers' mindfulness about green wash.
- To analyse the shoppers' conduct to understand the authenticity of green marketing towards sustainable development.

C. Hypothesis

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1. Consumers have awareness of green marketing, but not green wash.
2. Ignorance about green wash is contributing effectively towards PR strategies, but not so much in the green revolution.

D. Research Methodology

Two methods have been chosen by the researcher for conducting this study. One is Survey method and another is Qualitative Content Analysis. While conducting the survey, the researchers have chosen Simple Random Sampling technique. A questionnaire containing ten questions was asked to each respondent. The total number of one thousand responses has been collected as samples. The major criteria for choosing the sample were;

- a. The respondent must be aware about the idea of Green Marketing
- b. The age of the respondent must be between twenty to sixty years old

In terms of Qualitative Content Analysis the researchers have taken the data from numerous sources which include various published books, articles, journals, internet websites etc.

E. Result and Analysis

The study was directed among individuals of diversified age-group with various ethnicities (India, Bangladesh, Germany, USA and UK) and the number of respondents who took part in this exploration was 1000 roughly. A set of 10 questions was asked to each one of the respondents. The discoveries were:

Q1) The first question enquired about whether the respondent was aware about the concept of Green Marketing or not. It was observed that all of the respondents knew about Green Marketing. The scenario depicts the awareness about the concept of Green Marketing is already there among the consumers.

Q2) Second question enquired about whether the respondents could recognise or perceive the term 'green wash' or not. The data showed that 47% respondents could recognise the term 'green wash' and 30% respondents perceived what it truly is. It clearly reflects although the majority of the respondents could recognize the term but it also shows that they are not confident enough about the same. In that aspect only a few respondents could perceive what 'green wash' truly is. It suggests that generating more awareness regarding the same issue is required among the buyers.

Q3) This question enquired about whether the respondents would be ready to pay more than usual to buy any 'green product'. As per the data collected, 88% of the respondents are willing to pay higher price for a 'green product'. The data depicts the consumers' willingness to achieve the goals of sustainability. It shows how eager they are to maintain the ecological balance which is really good in today's world.

Q4) This question was asked to know whether the respondents feel that they contribute towards sustainable development while buying green products or not. 78.6% respondents figured out that they are contributing considerably towards economical improvement by purchasing 'green products'. Again the data depicts the consumers' willingness and confidence as well to achieve the goals of sustainability. It again shows how eager they are to maintain the ecological balance which is really good point to observe. But again feedbacks from these two consecutive questions indicate that the entire business is getting focused on money only and the major focus of attaining sustainability is somewhere lacking. It can be stated safely now, the conglomerates or producers are actually monetising this sense of awareness of the consumers in terms of contributing more towards a greener world which is definitely a matter of concern and to be taken care of.

Q5) The fifth question enquired about whether the respondents buy 'green products' willingly or due to peer pressure. 77% of the respondents agreed that they buy 'green products' willingly. Only 23% individuals

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purchase green items on account of the peer pressure-since ‘green products’ are trendy. Interestingly, the data again depicts consumers’ initiatives in terms of contributing more towards a greener world. However, a percentage is also there who just do the same significantly due to peer pressure which may be due to two major reasons; **a.** Eco friendly products are costlier comparatively or **b.** They are not bothered about attaining sustainability at least by buying green products only. This is an area which should be focused and raises a matter of concern as well, even though the percentage is less.

Q6) This question enquired about how the respondents would select and consider any ‘green products’ worthy for buying. Data shows that 37% of the respondents would only buy green products if their green claim is presented with a certificate provided by any reputed organisation. Only 6% among them will do a research to find out whether the organization is reputed/ authentic. Rest actually does not bother about the same and they just go and buy the products only with the confirmation that the same product which they are about to buy is a green product. It depicts that the majority of the literate and eco conscious consumers consider the certification as a major object of importance. But as a matter of fact, in today’s world where a lot of ways are available easily to dupe consumers by providing false or less effective or less valued certificates, it’s a matter of real concern that only a few consumers research and check and evaluate that certification before buying these products. The awareness of the consumers on the same aspect is required to be increased.

Q7) This question enquired about whether the respondents would be ready to ask only for ‘green products’ at store. The figure generated from the survey shows that only 13% of the respondents request only ‘green products’ while purchasing something at the store. It can safely be quoted from the data that even after the ‘green products’ have become very trendy and popular nowadays, yet it requires some more times to be registered as the first choice among consumers’ mind. The awareness is there among the mass but for majority but it does not carry that amount of priority which is really required at contemporary world.

Q8) This question asked the respondents whether they would be ready to discard their regular brand if they find a green product, even at a higher price. The data says that 67% of the respondents would be ready to ditch their regular brand if they find a green product, even at a higher price. The data again reflects the earnestness of the majority of the consumers to maintain the ecological balance.

Q9) The ninth question enquired about whether the Govt. should make it mandatory for the citizens to buy only ‘green products’. The data reflects that 53% of the respondents feel that it is important for the Govt. to encourage, and/ or make it mandatory for the citizens to buy green products only in order to promote sustainability. The data depicts that the person agreeing with the fact and the people who are not sure or showing disagreement to the proposal are somewhat very close in number. It indicates that may be a group of people are eager enough to buy green products paying more than the usual ones available, a majority is also there who think about the price and their capability to afford the same is a major concern. It is observed majority of the green products available in the market are bit costlier than the usual one. The Govt. must think about the same and the concern of these people needs to be taken care of or the price of green products needs to be curtailed down or fixed by the authority. Only then the real achievement of sustainability through marketing can be attained.

Q10) The concluding question enquired about whether the respondents would like to have celebrity endorsement for promoting ‘green products’. As per the data, only 4% of the respondents would respect a celebrity more if they endorse a green product. The scenario depicts the fact that at least on behalf of this

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aspect, majority of the people is not ready to give some extra importance or credit to the endorser. This reflects that green products are not sold only due to the celebrity endorsement. The entire thing has been connected to the belief system of the mass that they are contributing towards achieving the goals of sustainability and reflects their concern to maintain ecological balance.

The outcomes plainly demonstrate that the purchasing conduct of standard shoppers is affected by the advertising procedure of the organisations. The purchasers frequently esteem the ethical fulfillment of purchasing an eco-accommodating item and adding to a greener world over the fulfillment of utilising the item.

These sets of consumer behaviors compel them to buy any product that come with certain green claims, without even pausing to check whether the claims are real. Green marketing has successfully taken a hit at the particular point of motivation that channelizes consumer behavior at large.

F. Conclusion

Guaranteeing a manageable development is just conceivable when the community can support a harmonious relationship with the climate by thinking of green products and green administrations. The purchasers across the globe concur with this view direct overall and show their eagerness toward and act appropriately to guarantee that the green revolution accomplish its definitive objectives.

Simultaneously, the buyer conduct is unconventionally disposed towards doing only that, what is sufficient to bring mental fulfillment, purchasing green items being one of them, as opposed to ensuring that their activities are having quantifiable outcomes as well as gathering resulting reports as a proof of their activities being responsible to positive changes.

Then again, this presents a magnificent opportunity before marketing and PR-as innovative fields as they are- to thought of standards and practices which gloat of climate well disposed merchandise instead of genuine climate cordial exercises. As a steadily developing field, green marketing has introduced a paved avenue before PR to make a stride towards advancement where a positive marketing isn't just ensuring that the customers purchase a specific item, yet in addition it is elevating the brand value in the radiance of the most contemporary worry of the world-meeting the requirement of sustainable development.

While the objective of humankind is to foster a cleaner and more reasonable world to live in and many organizations are investing hard amounts of energy to foster new foundation of green products for the ages to come, an extensive level of producers are making green claims simply because green promoting has become a trend.

The phenomenon like 'green wash' is the side-effect of public sensibilities towards ecological issues. It is additionally hard to keep away from peculiarities like green wash in a market enduring relentless rivalry. Monetary interest of specific business firms frequently becomes more prominent than the beliefs of green transformation and it is normal for those organisations to exploit the shopper's eagerness to purchase a green item even against greater cost. Green wash being a pejorative has a positive importance in the realms of PR- despite the fact that it isn't contributing much to the standards of green upset; it opens the entryway for imaginative PR strategies to immerge encompassing the peculiarity of green PR.

It is to be noted that green PR is a positive peculiarity that ensured that a large number of customers by any stretch of the imagination direct their tendencies towards purchasing green items by any means. Subsequently, while we censure green wash, green PR ought to be extended towards another skyline where there will be a degree to teach shoppers more about 'green products' and 'green wash' to empower them to pick the right item from here on out.

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