

Marketing Sustainable Innovations: A Study on Energy Efficient Durables

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Abstract


Green awareness has received rising attention across globe. Consumers know what green products are and what all range of offerings the marketers have for them. Review of relevant literature supports the fact that consumers are aware but they fail to translate this awareness into actual purchase. Literature revealed a very interesting insight of subjective green product knowledge acting as a moderating variable between perceived green behaviour and green purchase intentions. Green consumption calls for set of sustainable tangible and intangible benefits that consumers expect from the marketed product. Slightest change in the core product features creates space for critical analysis by the buyer/consumer. Energy efficient technology being a recent addition for the Indian durable sector desires strategic marketing efforts. It calls for sustainable segmenting, targeting and positioning (STP) activities. Positioning energy efficient products successfully amongst Indian consumers is all the way more important because of the rising energy poverty. Green consumption behaviour is influenced by various attitudinal and perceptual transformations that an individual goes through before the final consumption, which in turn are guided by the way marketers' position their products. Advertised contents play significant role in formation of likeability or rejection behaviour towards the product. Energy efficient durable goods involve higher initial investment hence they render consumer into greater scrutiny behaviour than the products that require low investment. The purpose

of this empirical study was to identify what content in the green advertisements capture consumer's attention. Consumers were asked to respond to a five point scale questionnaire for four set of adverts. The adverts considered for the study were rational, positive emotions, negative emotions and mixed (rational and emotional).

Keywords: Rational Adverts, Emotional Content, Green Positioning, Energy Efficient Durable Goods, Energy Star Rating.

1. Introduction

Empirical studies have revealed that energy and economic growth are complementary. India is facing huge challenge in sustaining this high economic growth due to energy supply constraint. Finite energy sources mainly require huge capital investment, technologically advance measures. Building sustainable economy requires a broader focus on energy efficiency and greater use of renewable sources of energy. Therefore it is of utmost importance to conserve available energy. Indian citizens although are aware about the energy efficient technology but greater efforts are desired to bring about behavioural change inclined towards green product purchase. Energy supply and energy usage patterns determine the success of energy sustainability efforts. Energy efficient technology usage would render cost saving to consumers in the long run. The government of India very well understands that economic development is hindered due to energy poverty. Energy poverty is the threshold point at which energy consumption begins to rise with increases in household income. Informing consumers about the energy efficient products/technology is important for successful management of demand side of the energy. Keeping in view the need for energy saving and efficiency, government kept Energy Efficiency as a major aim during XI Five Year Plan.



Energy Conservation Act 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote energy efficiency across various sectors of the economy • Establishment of BEE for energy efficient certification
NMEE (National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains National Missions with respect to Solar Mission, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Green India, and Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change.
Electricity Act 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages renewable energy sources • Stand alone systems to be used for Rural electrification

Fig. 1: Indian Government's Major Energy Efficiency Initiatives.

The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** established on *March, 1st, 2002* under The Government of India, aimed to promote the efficient use of energy and its conservation. Bureau has initiated a wide range of energy efficiency initiatives via launching energy labelling scheme for appliances (energy star labels).

2. Literature Review

Green advertisements have greater impact when consumer's involvement and attitude have a positive relation with each other. Literature reviews have brought about some interesting insights as to the requisites for effective green marketing. **John Swati et al. (2013)**¹ concluded in their study that for firms to succeed in their green initiatives, appropriate communication strategy is important in content and in legitimacy. The green claims should be visible to the consumers in actions, such that any failure to comply with the communicated ethical and socially responsible behaviour will lead to dissatisfaction among them. **Boztepe Aysel (2012)**² in an attempt to study the impact of green marketing upon consumer buying behaviour found that green purchase behaviour showed a positive relation with the price for green products. Environmentally aware consumers developed positive green attitude through promotional activities undertaken by the firms irrespective of premium price asked for such products. **Melody E. Schuhwerk and Roxanne L. Hagus (1995)**³ through their study revealed very interesting findings that consumers with high degree of environment involvement showed least willingness and persuasion when targeted with green appeal messages as opposed to lesser involved consumers. Further consumer's involvement with green messages is essential for lasting and positive impact of environmental messages **Mohammed Sohel Islam, et. al. 2011**⁴. Further diagnostic emotional appeal messages create stronger positive purchase intentions due to their greater impact upon the conscious or explicit memory. The careful selection of emotional set by the marketers is essential due to varied perceived diagnosticity of consumers (**Patti Williams 2000**)⁵. Therefore, Green product positioning is important for marketers to influence consumer purchase behaviour. Also green purchase behaviour is affected by the positioning contents but what green contents were more effective was a question of research. Therefore the objectives of this study were arrived at.

3. Objective

The main objective of this study was to analyse the impact of green positioning strategies upon green attitude for the energy efficient durable goods adverts.

4. Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study data were collected through primary survey with the help of structured questionnaire. A five point Likert scale was designed which varied from no association at all (1) to strongly associated (5) which was administered to 76 respondents of Kurukshetra region.

5. Test Result and Interpretation

For the purpose of analysis respondents were asked to rate on a five-point attribute association scale ranging from no association at all (1) to very much associated (5) against construct that represented different positioning association attributes. For the analysis of the data, One- Way Anova was used to study the impact of green positioning upon green awareness.

Table 1: ONE WAY ANOVA of Green Adverts.

Dependent Variable	Statistics F Sig.
Green Between Groups	6.163 .000
Adverts Within Groups	
Total	

It can be inferred from the above One- way Anova table (Table 1) that green adverts showed significant differences for rational, negative, positive and mixed green associational attributes with F-value of 6.163 and Sig. value (p) - 0.000

One Way ANOVA value confirmed that there are significant differences between the attributes on a whole. The post hoc test for differences in means through Tukey's method was used to examine which group of green association attributes differed from each other. The Post Hoc results are explained below:

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2: The Post Hoc Test For Difference in Means of Green Associational Attributes Tukey HSD Green Adverts

(I) positioning	(J) positioning	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
rational attributes	negative attributes	.707*	.166	.000	.28	1.14
	positive attributes	.381	.166	.102	-.05	.81
	Mixed attributes	.295	.166	.285	-.13	.72
negative attributes	rational attributes	-.707*	.166	.000	-1.14	-.28
	positive attributes	-.326	.166	.203	-.75	.10
	mixed attributes	-.412	.166	.065	-.84	.02

positive attributes	rational attributes	-.381	.166	.102	-.81	.05
	negative attributes	.326	.166	.203	-.10	.75
	mixed attributes	-.086	.166	.955	-.51	.34
mixed attributes	rational attributes	-.295	.166	.285	-.72	.13
	negative attributes	.412	.166	.065	-.02	.84
	positive attributes	.086	.166	.955	-.34	.51
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

As is clear from the post hoc output (Table 2), the differences in means of green associational attributes was found to be significant only between negative and rational attributes (Sig. value 0.000). No other significant difference was observed amongst set of attributes. Thus it is quite evident from the results that respondents were able to distinguish and identify only negative content.

6. Discussion & Suggestions

Clearly the results of the study depicted the acceptance of only negative green content by the consumers. Hence marketers should emphasize on advertising negative impact of products on the environment. Fear appeal, shortage of electricity, darkness appeals were the ones that were most sorted by the respondents. Therefore, companies/brands must invest in their brand positioning and market communication strategies to convert this negativity into an opportunity. Consumers are emotionally (negative emotions) charged, but not analytically in response to environmental advertisements. Regular reinforcement of advertisements is very much needed. Government should regulate as to what kind of environmental claims companies can have. Legislative assurance /certification should be enhanced so as to eliminate green washing.

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