GREEN MARKETING MASTERY: UNVEILING STRATEGIES THAT PROPEL RETAILERS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the transformative impact of green marketing strategies on retailers, exploring how these initiatives drive awareness and implementation of sustainable practices within the retail sector. As consumers increasingly prioritize eco-conscious choices, retailers find themselves at the forefront of a sustainability revolution. The study employs a comprehensive analysis, including Kendall's W test and Neural Network modeling, to unravel the strategies that significantly influence retailers' awareness. Key variables such as knowledge about green products/brands, awareness of purchasing and selling, contribution to sustainability, and product range availability are scrutinized. Results indicate a significant difference in mean ranks, highlighting the pivotal role of informed knowledge in shaping retailers' perceptions. Furthermore, the Neural Network analysis unveils the nuanced factors contributing to the overall success of green marketing. The article provides valuable insights for retailers aiming to navigate the evolving landscape of green marketing, fostering not only heightened awareness but also seamless integration of sustainable practices into their operational frameworks.

Keywords: Green marketing, Sustainable practices, Awareness, Implementation, Strategic sustainability, Marketing strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary business, the intersection of commerce and environmental responsibility has given rise to the phenomenon of green marketing. The global community's increasing awareness of the ecological impact of consumerism places retailers at the forefront of a pivotal shift towards sustainability. This paradigm change requires a profound understanding of strategies that not only elevate awareness but also drive the implementation of sustainable practices within the retail sector. This exploration delves into the realms of 'Green Marketing Mastery,' unraveling the intricacies of strategies that propel retailers towards heightened awareness and seamless integration of sustainable practices. From innovative communication approaches to impactful consumer engagement tactics, the journey towards a greener retail landscape demands a strategic mastery that goes beyond rhetoric. This exploration navigates

through the evolving terrain of green marketing, deciphering the blueprints for success that empower retailers to embrace and champion sustainable practices in their operations.

Against the backdrop of heightened environmental consciousness, retailers are increasingly recognizing the imperative to align their strategies with sustainable practices. The call for environmental responsibility is not merely a trend but a fundamental shift in consumer expectations. As consumers become more discerning, they are inclined to support brands and retailers that demonstrate a genuine commitment to green initiatives. In response to this shift, retailers are compelled to adopt strategies that not only showcase their dedication to sustainability but also foster a deeper connection with their eco-conscious clientele. One key facet of 'Green Marketing Mastery' lies in the innovative communication approaches employed by retailers. Clear and transparent messaging about sustainable practices not only educates consumers but also builds trust. Effective communication helps bridge the gap between retailers and environmentally conscious consumers, creating a narrative that extends beyond product offerings to encompass a shared commitment to a greener future.

Consumer engagement emerges as a critical aspect of successful green marketing strategies. Retailers are finding value in actively involving their customers in sustainability initiatives. This engagement can take various forms, from soliciting feedback on eco-friendly product lines to encouraging participation in recycling programs. By making consumers active participants in the sustainability journey, retailers foster a sense of shared responsibility and create brand advocates who are not just customers but champions of the green cause. Furthermore, the implementation of sustainable practices within the operational framework of retail entities is paramount. From supply chain management to packaging choices, every aspect of the retail ecosystem offers an opportunity for environmentally conscious decision-making. 'Green Marketing Mastery' involves a comprehensive evaluation of these operational facets, identifying areas where sustainable practices can be seamlessly integrated without compromising efficiency or profitability. The exploration of strategies driving retailers towards sustainable practices is a journey into a new era of conscientious commerce. As retailers navigate this landscape, mastering green marketing is not merely a competitive advantage but a prerequisite for long-term success and relevance in a world that increasingly values environmental stewardship.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The connection between consumer behavior, marketing and nature has risen as another pattern in business which has prompted increment in public awareness about environmental angles just as an expansion in the confirmations of environmental duty in the marketing exercises (Gupta and Ogden, 2009; do Paco and Raposo, 2009). This has roused advertisers to concentrate on environmental element of their products, bundling and procedures (Hur et al., 2004) and incorporate green activities in their marketing strategies and publicizing also (Jansson et al., 2010).

Advertisers presently comprehend green marketing practically to create strategies meant to address the green consumers' issues (D'Souza, 2004). Various organizations have been executing various green marketing strategies to fulfill the need of environmentally cognizant consumers. For example, various organizations are putting resources into innovative work for creating green technologies and green products.

Reusing programs, cleaner creation, environmental administration frameworks and eco effectiveness, environmental accreditations, water/squander decrease programs, bundling material and its structure, environmentally-friendly buying, and bringing down greenhouse gas emission have risen as principle environmentally friendly practices (Zhu et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2005; Mandaraka and Kormentza, 2000). With such strategies, they likewise build up themselves in a specialty for consumers with environmental concerns (Essoussi and Linton, 2010; Schubert et al., 2010).

Green marketing is certainly not a basic idea however it is a finished and thorough methodology towards the advertisement that revels the item advancement, change in the creation gauges and even in bundling of the products that likewise for the consumers that are in the retail sector or in the modern too (Tiwari et al, 2011).

Prashant Kumar and Bhimrao Ghodeswar (2015) states that exploring and creating green retail blend may deliver intriguing outcomes to clarify endeavors making awareness of green products, offering rehashed green item presentation in retail stores to empower consumers to recognize and review green products, and improving their nature with green products. Likewise, the job of retailers as driving actors in green marketing ought to be explored to see how they proactively share the obligations of giving offices to consumers to make preliminaries of green products planned to give individual item related encounters, to put forth predictable attempts to assemble long haul associations with consumers, and to develop solid market position for green products.

Promotional works on empowering consumers to comprehend their necessities and to contrast their requirements and products accessible in retail stores for settling on appropriate selection of products are worth exploring. This may have important ramifications in creating connections between the clients and green products, between the clients and the organizations, between the clients and the green item being used, and among individual clients. There will build up a comprehension of connections among organization and consumers in the market that not just reinforces the connection among consumers and green advertisers yet additionally significantly expands the job of consumers in adding to item related advancements. Further, coordinating a locus-based point of view of green consumer behavior (Kalamas et al., 2014) with promotion blend components may create intriguing ramifications.

Brand is being examined as the image, sing, trademark, color, structure and different highlights that build up a perception in the psyche of the consumers that isolate the item from the others in the market (Alkhawaldeh and Eneizan, 2018; Alkhawaldeh et al, 2017). The brand is being related that isn't harm the earth is recommended as the eco-brand. Green marketing, also known as eco-marketing or environmental marketing, is the practice of promoting products or services that are environmentally friendly or have a positive impact on the planet. It plays a crucial role in modern businesses by helping companies align their practices with sustainable goals and attract an environmentally conscious consumer base (Ramachandran, 2023)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed a multifaceted approach to assess the impact of green marketing on retailers' awareness. Utilizing Kendall's W test, the study rigorously tested the hypothesis of significant differences in mean ranks across various dimensions of retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices. The statistical results unequivocally rejected the null hypothesis, signifying a substantial divergence in mean ranks. Further, a Neural Network analysis was conducted, unveiling a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness. Notably, the variable "Knowledge about green products/brands" emerged as the paramount contributor, holding the highest importance in determining the success of green marketing initiatives. The combined methodologies provide a robust foundation for comprehending the intricate dynamics shaping retailers' awareness and emphasize the pivotal role of informed knowledge in steering the success of sustainable marketing practices.

Research Design

The conceptual structure should be prepared by the researcher which will require a research design. The preparation of research design facilitates the research to fetch adequate information yielding reliable findings. The *research design* denotes the substantiated process chosen to integrate the different dimensions of the research in an aesthetical and consistent way, ensuring effective diagnosis of the *research* problem. The undergone research work choose the descriptive research design as the study describes the retailers and consumers knowledge on the green marketing, the barriers and prospective factors of green marketing, identifying the green marketing practices implemented by the present retailers and investigating the influencing factors of green products that drive consumers to purchase them. Before undertaking the study in complete scale, a pilot study was held in various places in order to know the scope and problems involved in the present study.

Sources of Data Used

The sample collected from the consumers and retailers of the Trichy and Thanjavur districts of Tamil Nadu are the primary data considered. The data retrieved from the web sites, journals, text books and other secondary sources are used as the secondary data for the study.

Sampling Technique

Use of different sampling techniques is adopted by the researchers in situations where there are large populations. Testing the entire population is practically impossible in most cases. Hence the researchers use convenience sampling in place where extra inputs are not required for the conceptual research study. No criteria is required to be a part of a sample. Every segments of the community are eligible and dependent on the researcher's proximity to participate in the sample. Convenience sampling is a practise inculcated by researcher through which they collect market research information from the group of respondents conveniently available to reach. It is the predominantly used sampling technique and it is reliable and economical technique. This technique helps to observe the habits, opinions, and viewpoints of the respondents easily. This sampling technique was adopted for the present study. This method is used in descriptive research where the researcher is interested in getting an inexpensive approximation of the truth.

Sampling Size

Sample size refers to the number of items to be selected from the universe to constitute a sample. It has a direct bearing on how accurate the findings are relative to the true values in the population. Therefore, determining an appropriate sample size for this research was considered to be a paramount importance. The sampling frame comprises the retailers of the selected Taluks from the chosen districts of Tamil Nadu. The retail respondents are randomly chosen according to the convenience of the researcher and depending upon the response of the sales personnel among the five product categories such as Cosmetic outlets, Apparels outlet and All in one outlets. The total retail sample respondents obtained were 300 sample response and therefore it was considered as the final sample size for analysis. The sample size of the retailers from the selected category of outlets obtained randomly based on convenience sampling technique among the five product category outlets of the chosen three districts.

Questionnaire

Structured questionnaires were constructed to get the primary data from the retail respondents. The questionnaire consists of questions which explain about the demographic profile like age, marital status, educational qualification, dependents etc., as well as retail profile of the respondents and all the other questions related to the study. After pre testing with 50 consumers and 10 retailers' appropriate modifications were made in the questionnaire.

Measurement Scale

The dimensions taken for the research analysis such as towards green marketing practices, Retailers awareness towards green marketing, Opportunities and Challenges towards green marketing practices, success factors of green marketing Consumer attitude towards green marketing and Consumer Buying Behaviour towards green marketing towards green marketing practices are measured with the help of 5 point scale such as, 'strongly disagree, disagree, neither

agree nor disagree, agree and strongly agree. Likewise, the demographic profile of the consumers is studied with the help of nominal scaling or the categorical type. Consumer satisfaction towards green marketing practices is measured by means of 5 point scale such as extremely dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither satisfied not dissatisfied, satisfied and extremely satisfied.

4. KENDALL'S W TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN RANKS OF RETAILERS' AWARENESS TOWARDS GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between mean ranks of the retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between mean ranks of the retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices.

Table – 1

Kendall's w test for significant difference between mean ranks of the retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices

| Retailers awareness towards green marketing practices	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	Degrees of freedom	Asymp. Significant
Knowledge about green products/brands	2.56			
Aware of purchasing and selling	2.45			
Contribute to the sustainable	2.49	2.260	3	.000
Product range availability	2.50			

Source: Output generated from SPSS 21

The application of Kendall's W test in assessing retailers' awareness towards various dimensions of green marketing practices revealed insightful results. The variable "Knowledge about green products/brands" emerged with the highest mean rank of 2.56, indicating its prominence in influencing retailers' awareness. The associated Chi-Square value of 2.260, with 3 degrees of freedom and an exceptionally low asymptotic significance (p-value of .000), decisively rejects the null hypothesis. This implies a significant difference in mean ranks among the considered variables, emphasizing the distinct impact of factors such as awareness of purchasing and selling, contribution to sustainability, and product range availability on retailers' overall awareness towards green marketing practices. These findings underscore the nuanced nature of retailers' perceptions, shedding light on key areas that demand attention for effective implementation of sustainable practices within the retail sector. The test results imply that the null hypothesis, which assumes no significant difference in mean ranks of retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices, is rejected. The variables related to knowledge about green products/brands, awareness of purchasing and selling, contribution to sustainability, and product range availability all exhibit statistically significant differences in mean ranks. This underscores that these aspects play a distinctive role in influencing retailers' awareness and are not likely to be the same across the board.

5. ANALYSIS OF OVERALL SUCCESS OF GREEN MARKETING ON RETAILERS AWARENESS TOWARDS GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES BY USING THE NEURAL NETWORK (NN) METHOD

The architecture which provides the best fit for the data is the network with six input layers, four covariate variables and one hidden layers and one output layer, as shown in figure 1.

Figure – 1

Basic Neuron Model for overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices
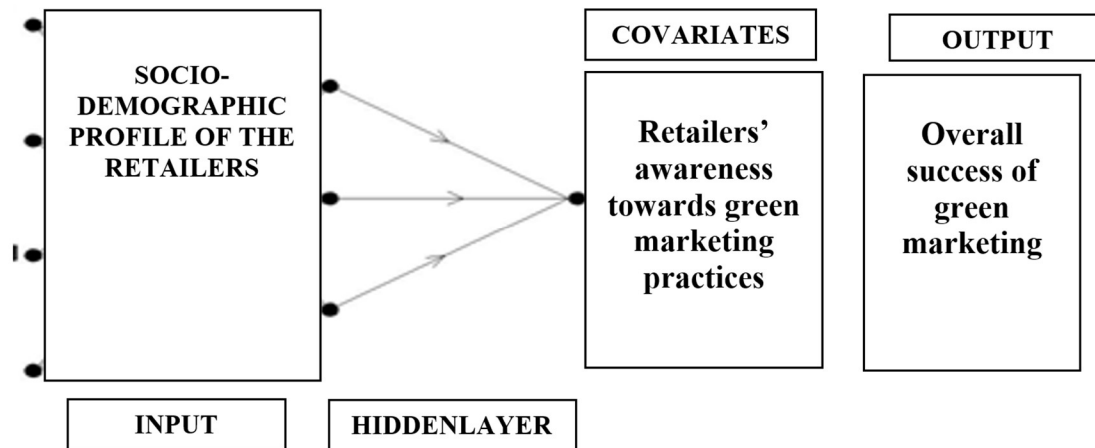
The model used in this work is the Feed Forward Multilayer perception, using the Back Propagation Algorithm. Where (4-3-1)

    6-Input layers
    4-Covariates layers
    1-Hidden layers
    1-Output layer

All inputs are analyzed in the experimental validation part, with appropriate output results by the illustration of graphs so that the influences of the parameters of tensile strength are taken into consideration. The network information is presented in the table. The validation of the estimated NN and Experimental value illustrations is shown in Figure.

Table - 2

Model Summary for Neural Network Model for retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices

Training	Sum of Squares Error	96.336
	Relative Error	.983
	Stopping Rule Used	1 consecutive step(s) with no decrease in error[a]

	Training Time	0:00:00.16
Testing	Sum of Squares Error	43.655
	Relative Error	.984
Dependent Variable: Overall success of green marketing		
a. Error computations are based on the testing sample.		

Source: Output generated from SPSS 20

Table – 3

Neural Network Model for overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices

Input Layer	Factors	1	Annual Sales
		2	Years of experience
		3	Product Range
		4	Nature of products covered
		5	Nature of ownership
		6	Number of outlets owned
	Covariates	1	Knowledge about green products/brands
		2	Aware of purchasing and selling
		3	Contribute to the sustainable
		4	Product range availability
	Number of Units[a]		27
	Rescaling Method for Covariates		Standardized
Hidden Layer(s)	Number of Hidden Layers		1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer 1[a]		2
	Activation Function		Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	1	Overall success of green marketing
	Number of Units		1
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents		Standardized
	Activation Function		Identity
	Error Function		Sum of Squares
a. Excluding the bias unit			

Source: Output generated form SPSS 20.

The Neural Network model, configured with six input factors, four covariates, one hidden layer, and one output layer, offers a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing the overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices. With a hidden layer

employing hyperbolic tangent activation, the model adeptly captures complex relationships within the data. The covariates, including knowledge about green products/brands, awareness of purchasing and selling, contribution to sustainability, and product range availability, are standardized to ensure uniform impact assessment. The output layer, focusing on the dependent variable "Overall success of green marketing," utilizes an identity activation function. The result, as evidenced by the model summary and variable importance analysis, emphasizes the pivotal role of specific factors. Notably, the covariate "Knowledge about green products/brands" emerges as the most influential, contributing 100% to the overall success. This underscores the significance of informed knowledge in driving the success of green marketing strategies, providing valuable insights for retailers seeking effective ways to enhance awareness and implementation of sustainable practices.
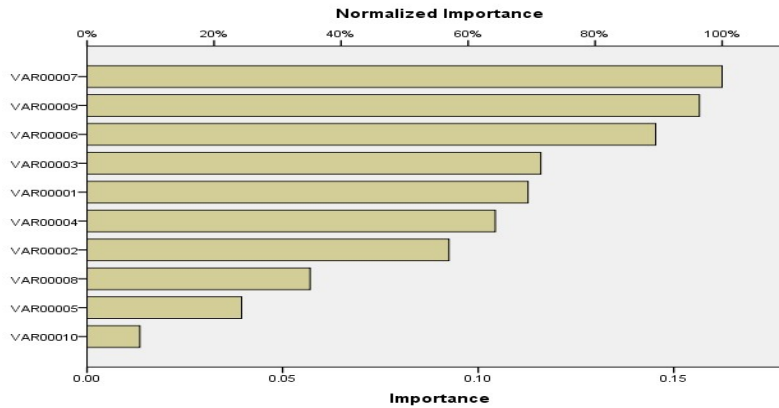
Table – 4

Independent Variable importance for Neural Network Model for the overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices

Independent Variable Importance	Importance	Normalized Importance
Annual Sales	.113	69.4%
Years of experience	.093	57.0%
Product Range	.116	71.5%
Nature of products covered	.104	64.3%
Nature of ownership	.040	24.3%
Number of outlets owned	.145	89.5%
Knowledge about green products/brands	.162	100.0%
Aware of purchasing and selling	.057	35.1%
Contribute to the sustainable	.157	96.4%
Product range availability	.013	8.3%

Source: Output generated form SPSS 20.

Figure –2

Normalized importance for the overall success of green marketing on retailers awareness towards green marketing practices

The analysis of independent variable importance in the Neural Network model for assessing the overall success of green marketing on retailers' awareness reveals crucial insights into the factors driving this success. Notably, "Knowledge about Green Products/Brands" emerges as the most influential variable, contributing 100% to the overall importance. This underscores the paramount significance of retailers' informed understanding of eco-friendly products and brands in determining the success of green marketing initiatives. Additionally, variables such as the number of outlets owned and contribution to sustainability hold substantial importance, emphasizing the role of widespread retail presence and commitment to sustainable practices. The results provide a nuanced perspective on the hierarchy of factors shaping the success of green marketing within the retail sector, offering strategic guidance for retailers seeking to enhance awareness and implementation of sustainable practices.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study employing Kendall's W test and Neural Network analysis illuminate key facets of retailers' awareness towards green marketing practices. Kendall's W test revealed a statistically significant difference in mean ranks across various dimensions of awareness, emphasizing the unique impact of factors such as knowledge about green products/brands, awareness of purchasing and selling, contribution to sustainability, and product range availability. The Neural Network model further delved into the predictors of overall success, with "Knowledge about Green Products/Brands" emerging as the predominant influencer, contributing 100% to the model's importance. Other variables, including the number of outlets owned and contribution to sustainability, also played substantial roles in shaping the success of green marketing strategies.

7. CONCLUSION

The study underscores the critical importance of informed knowledge about green products and brands in driving the success of green marketing initiatives among retailers. The comprehensive analysis, combining statistical tests and advanced modeling techniques, provides nuanced insights

for retailers seeking to enhance their awareness and implementation of sustainable practices. The identified factors not only shed light on the current landscape but also serve as strategic guideposts for retailers navigating the evolving terrain of green marketing. As retailers increasingly recognize the importance of environmental responsibility, these findings offer actionable intelligence to cultivate a more sustainable and eco-conscious retail sector.

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6211