



GREENWASHING: A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND EFFECTIVENESS IN RAJASTHAN

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-----ABSTRACT-----

In today's era, it's being quite common to practice the false marketing technique to strengthen the growth of the products and businesses. This is the main cause of this research to analyze those false practices with the consumer point of view i.e. greenwashing. Greenwashing is the process of conveying a false impression or providing misleading information about how a company's products are more environmentally sound. For this research study all age groups individuals including students, professionals, housewives, businessmen etc. are studied. A total sample size of 100 individual is studied for this research, out of which 88 responses are received for the study. It is found that absence of proper regulations and policies are main cause for increasing greenwashing in Indian market.

KEYWORDS: Greenwashing, Consumer Behavior, False Claims, Environment etc.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“Greenwashing” refers to disseminating incomplete or false information by a company in order to project an ecologically responsible public image. It is not a new phenomenon; since the mid-1980s, the term “greenwashing” has garnered wide acceptance and recognition for describing the practice of making exaggerated or overblown claims of eco-friendliness or sustainability in an effort to capture market share. Jay westerveld discovered the term ‘Greenwashing’ in 1986. There are so many companies in every sector engaged in the practice of greenwashing from fashion to food everywhere greenwashing happens. Companies end up misleading consumers, claiming products and services to be green, falsely gaining trust of consumers. Due to these consumers pay extra for misrepresented and false products. More than half of 18,000 consumers surveyed in 2014 from all over the world stated that environmental performance was a source of worry for them (Globescan, 2014). Companies’ attempt to rapidly meet this increasing demand for green products has led to the rise of the term greenwashing, which has grown considerably over the past years and has become increasingly debatable. In this study, greenwashing is defined as deceptive or misleading ecological claims that are ambiguous, untrue, or omits vital information or a combination of these (Carlson, L., Grove, S. J., & Kangun, N., 1993).



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Harsh Mankodi (Nov, 2018) in the article titled as “Green marketing or greenwash” Green washing has negative effects on consumers and producers keeping in mind the environment. So, it is responsibility of everyone to take care of the environment and not misuse the power entrusted on us and act in a more mature way that can be beneficial for the long term.

Shamdasani, P. Ong Chon-Lin G.& Richmond D., (1993) Environmentally friendly products or green products can be defined as products which cause less harm to the environment as compared to its substitute products in terms of diminishing natural resources or contaminating environment.

Paço, A. M. F. & Reis, R., (2012) The growing prominence of green advertising has led to an increased confusion in the minds of the consumers about the green claims used in numerous advertisements. One of the key reasons for the confusion is the absence of commonly accepted definitions of usual claims used by advertisers such as environmentally friendly, biodegradable, natural, ozone friendly, etc.

Banerjee, S., Gulas, C.S., & Iyer, E., (1995) From consumer’s perspective, being green constitutes of a lifestyle of minimal impact on the environment, or in the best case, making choices that help and benefit the environment. In the pursuit of minimizing environmental damage, consumers are met with many decisions. Being green is about consistent efforts, whether large or small, to lessen the environmental impact.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is basically aims to increase the awareness in society and consumers relating to the greenwashing, which will result into benefiting by the attack of false, misleading environmental advertising tricks to the consumers and all the stakeholders related with this segment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are listed below:

1. To understand the concept of greenwashing through consumer point of view.
2. To identify the sectors especially in Rajasthan, adopting the tactics of greenwashing by consumer perspective.
3. To analyze the consumer behavior in relation with greenwashing towards green claiming products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this research consist the territory of Rajasthan State of India, which mainly covers the individuals from all age groups including students, housewives, professionals, businessmen etc.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research consist of collection of both primary and secondary data for the study. For sampling of data the convenience sampling is preferred . A sample size of 100 individuals was chosen for the study out of which 88 responses were received. This study took approximately 2 to 3 months for conducting a proper research. The respondents comprised of individuals across different age group and professions including housewives, businessmen, students etc. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain relevant primary data which was mailed to respondents and by the personal interview method. The questionnaire contained various aspects of greenwashing advertisement and the primary focus is the consumer’s perception of greenwashing and its communication. Personal interviews and observations were also made for further clarification. For collection of secondary data journals, websites, published articles of different authors are used. The data was also collected from the past studies of different scholars and other related literature.



Table -1 : Composition of Respondents Sample for the Study

	Sample Size	Responses Received
Males	68	61
Females	32	27
Total	100	88

By the below bar chart and table composition, it is quite clear that out of the Total number of respondents of 88, 69.32% i.e. 61 out of 88 are male respondents and 30.68% i.e. 27 out of 88 are female respondents.

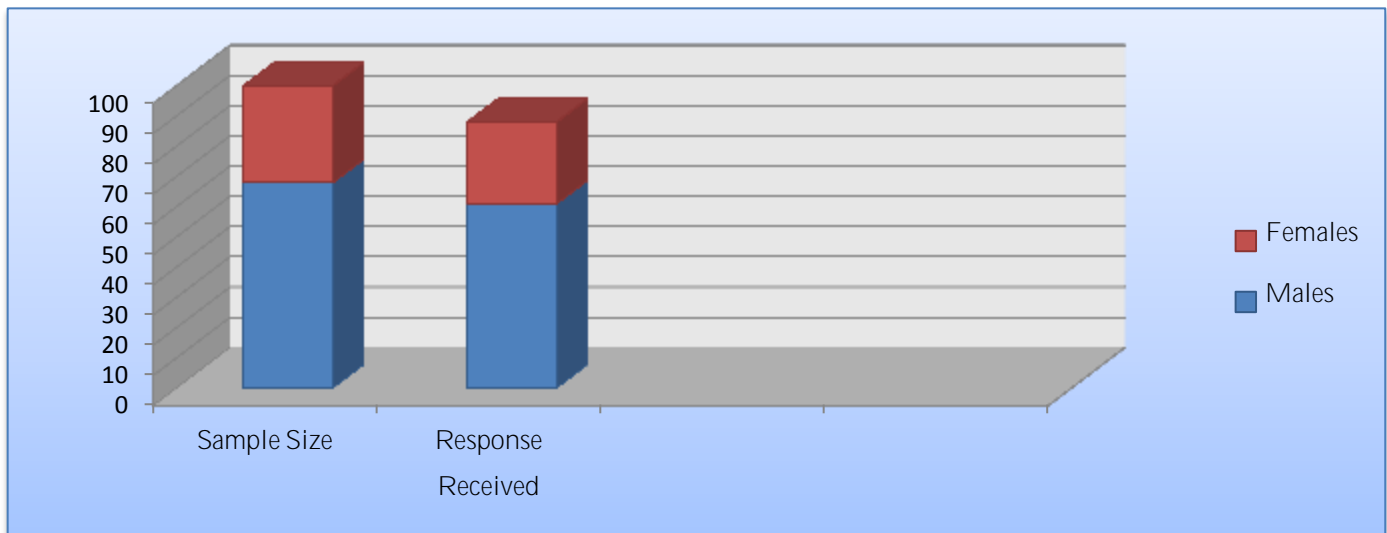


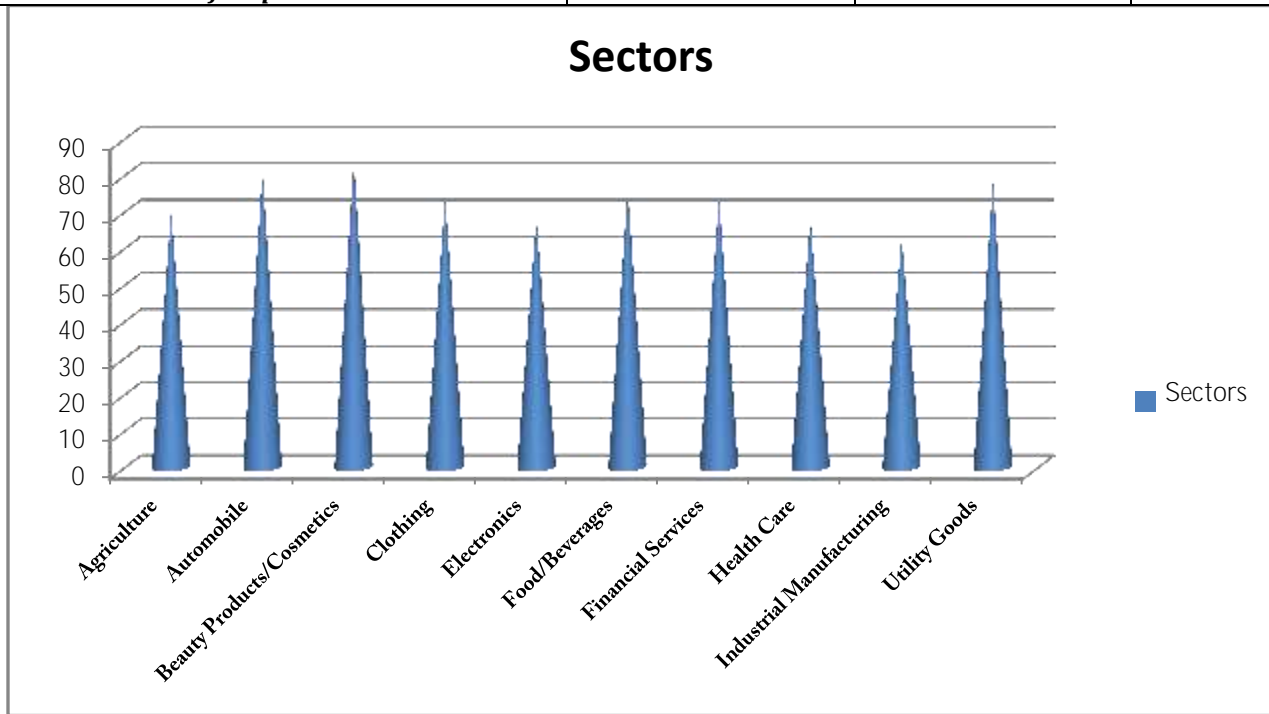
Table-2: Reason for Buying Green Products

Attributes	Category		Total (88)
	Male (61)	Females (27)	
Green Products satisfies your shopping needs?	52	22	74
Are you aware about the green products?	59	25	84
Green Products are easily available to you?	45	21	66
Green Products have large number of variety?	48	20	68
Do you believe that Green Products have Superior quality in it?	49	19	68
Green Products are fit in your pocket?	53	23	76
Are Green Products giving you healthy lifestyle?	57	24	81
No of respondents	61	27	88



Table-3: Most Uncontrollable sector of Greenwashing according to Consumer

Attributes	Category		Total (88)
	Male (61)	Females (27)	
Agriculture	52	18	70
Automobile	59	22	81
Beauty Products/Cosmetics	55	29	84
Clothing	51	23	74
Electronics	49	19	68
Food/Beverages	53	23	76
Financial Services	57	17	74
Health Care	52	16	68
Industrial Manufacturing	51	12	63
Utility Goods	57	21	78
No of respondents	61	27	88



FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Findings of the study are as under:

This study took approx two month for collection (including preparation of questionnaire) and analyzing of the data. Although, the respondents percentage is 88% i.e. 88 out of 100.

By analyzing the Table-2, we found that what are the reasons of buying green products with consumer perspective.

The analysis of the above data given in “Table-3 Most Uncontrollable sector of Greenwashing according to Consumer” shows that most uncontrollable or most rampant sector in the Greenwashing is Beauty Products/Cosmetics with maximum number of respondents i. 84 out of 88. After this (Beauty Products/Cosmetics), automobiles sector is most rampant with the 81 number of respondents.



CONCLUDING NOTE

From the study conducted, it is inferred that consumers do have an understanding of greenwashing tactics used by the firms such as the use of words like herbal, organic and natural but when it comes to their buying behavior, they often do not make informed choices and end up being greenwashed. Green suggestive labels, pictures, words, and packaging seem attractive to the new age consumer who is inclined to buy the product.

By the above findings of the study, it is much needed to aware the people about the greenwashing of the products. This can be done through several platforms like Social Campaign, Meetings, Seminar, Conferences, and electronic media. This will result in proper wellbeing of the society as well as the nation. Awareness about the Greenwashing and its misrepresentation tactics will effect in benefiting the eco system and economy both.

Future Scope of the Study

This study is taken place into the region of Rajasthan (India) only, which can be studies further into the different areas and region of the country according to the availability of the sources to collect the data. In addition to the above the study can also be done on the different groups of the society, institutions etc. which are connected with this topic.

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