

Relevance of Green Marketing on Environmental Degradation: An Empirical Study of Consumers' of Green Products in Benin- City, Nigeria

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Abstract

Business organisations need to contribute significantly to healthily environment through the adoption of green marketing. The activities of some of this business may result to environmental pollution which makes the environment becomes inimical to human habitation. Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally preferable to others through product, process, packaging and advertising modification(s). Most times, products' remnants and packages pose serious danger to our environment. This paper examines the effect of green marketing on environmental degradation. Non-experimental descriptive research method was used and the data gathered were analysed. It was observed that the concept of green marketing is not popular among selected consumer in Benin metropolis of Nigeria and thus appropriate strategies for effective application of green marketing are lacking. Besides, adaptability, compatibility and relative advantage by consumers of green products remains the hiccups to the successful application of green marketing in Nigeria. Applicable recommendations were made for business enterprises to produce ecological products which not only must not pollute the environment but should protect it and even liquidate existing environmental damages.

Also, ecological packaging (i.e. reduce, reuse and recycle package) should be incorporated into the eco-design product process to minimize eco-harm.

Keywords: *Green Marketing, Business Enterprises, Environmental Degradation, Eco-marketing, Eco-harm*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues have become major concern for any organisations that want to succeed in the face of stiff competition. Over the last decade, environmentalism has emerged to be a vital business movement due to increasing issues related to acid rains, depletion of the ozone layer, and degradation of the land and many more pressing environmental issues (Dhiraj, 2014). One of the major sources of environmental degradation in Nigeria comes from manufacturing companies either in form of environmental pollution or waste from the product or product packages. For instance, the use of plastic bags to wrap customer purchases pose a serious danger to the environment as it takes about one thousand years for plastic bags to decompose (Fernando, 2014). Proliferation of plastic bags in landfills is capable of environmental degradation. Though, consumer attitude in term of improper disposal of product wastes also promotes environmental degradation, but the adoption of green marketing by business enterprises could play a major role in reducing product wastes (Kassey, 2001).

As growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants etc., both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for the switch into green products and services (Eriksson, 2004). Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. "Green Marketing" refers to holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing, consumption and disposal of products and services happen to be in a manner that is less detrimental to the environment. Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging changes, as well as modifying advertising. Other similar terms used are Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing (Chan, 2004).

The concept of green marketing is popular in the developed countries of the world while the concept would be of tremendous benefits to the developing nations by applying the three R's of environmentalism; **Reduce** the amount of waste you produce, **Reuse** old items; donate to the unfortunate, repair if broken

and **Recycle** as much as possible; buy recycled products to support recycling (Dhiraj, 2014).

The need for green marketing is on the increase due to issues like Global warming and depletion of ozone umbrella and the need for the healthy survival (Chan, 2004). Every person, rich or poor would be interested in quality life, full of health and vigour and so would the corporate class. Financial gain and economic profit is one of the main aims of any corporate business but harm to environment caused by most of these businesses across the globe is now realized. Developing nations are catching the need of green marketing from the developed countries but still there is a wide gap between their understanding and implementation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Green Marketing

Different scholars and associations have defined green marketing in different ways: According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), Green Marketing can be defined in three different ways: First, Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe (Retailing Definition). Second, Green Marketing is the development and marketing of products designed to minimize negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality (Social Marketing Definition). Third, Green Marketing is the efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package, and reclaim products in a manner that it is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns (Environmental Definition). This paper shared the view of green marketing definition in retailing, social marketing and environment as stated by AMA. Charter (1992), has defined green marketing as a holistic and responsible strategic management process that identifies, anticipates, satisfies and fulfils stakeholder needs, for a reasonable reward, that does not adversely affect human or natural environmental well-being.

Green marketing refers to the process of producing and selling products based on their environmental benefits and such products must be eco-friendly in nature. Marketing products that benefit the environment and the ecological properties of products are important in order that companies produce ecologically safer products, including recyclable and biodegradable packaging (Fernando, 2014).

Pride and Ferrell (1993) described Green marketing as environmental marketing and sustainable marketing. This refers to an organization's efforts at designing, promoting, pricing and distributing products that will not harm the environment. Polanski (1994), has defined green marketing as all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment According to Dono (2010), Better pollution controls and more energy-efficient production processes and product performance also form a part of green marketing. This concept has enabled for the re-marketing and packaging of existing products which already adhere to such guidelines.

Additionally, the development of green marketing has opened the door of opportunity for companies to co-brand their products into separate line, lauding the green-friendliness of some while ignoring that of others. As a result of this, businesses have increased their rate of targeting consumers who are concerned about the environment (Ayesha, 2011). The consumers through their concern are interested in integrating environmental issues into their purchasing decisions (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

Evolution of Green Marketing

The term Green Marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The green marketing has evolved over this period of time. The evolution of green marketing had three phases. The first phase was termed as "Ecological" green marketing, and during this period all marketing activities were concerned to help environment problems and provide remedies for environmental problems. (Jaspreet, Jatin, Jogesh & Jupinder, 2012)

Second phase was "Environmental" green marketing and the focus shifted on clean technology that involved designing of innovative new products, which take care of pollution and waste issues.

The third phase was "Sustainable" green marketing. It came into prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000. This was the result of the term sustainable development which is defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Jaspreet, Jatin, Jogesh & Jupinder, 2012).

Concept of Green Products

Products which are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable in nature are referred to as green products. It is produce with natural ingredients and containing recycled contents, non toxic chemical. Green products are originally grown and manufactured under the approved chemical. They do not harm or pollute the environment. That is why they are referred to as environmental friendly (Mutharasu, 2014).

According to Lee (2009) Green products are those products whose functions or ideas deal with the process of material retrieval, production, sales, utilization and waste treatment available for recycling, reduced pollution and energy saving. In the opinion of Chan (2012) Green product development addresses environmental issues through product design and innovation. Green products have also been described as products that claim to offer an environmental benefit (TerraChoice, 2010). Examples of these products are building materials, furnishings, consumer products, electronics, washing machines, air conditioner, fridge, health care products, organic and green foods (Timon, 2009; Wikipedia, 2015).

Durif (2010) also argued that green products can be referred to as environmental products or ecological products. Polonsky (2011) view green products as products with an alternative design such that less physical resources are required during its life cycle. That is, products that are manufactured through green technology and caused no environmental hazards. Promotion of green technology

and green products is necessary for conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. (Srivastava, 2014)

Green Marketing Mix:-

The 4 P's of green marketing are that of a conventional marketing but the challenge before marketers is to use 4 P's in an innovative manner (Jaspreet, Jatin, Jogesh & Jupinder, 2012)

- **Product:** A producer should offer ecological products which would not harm the environment but should protect it. The ecological objectives in planning products are to reduce resource consumption and pollution and to increase conservation of scarce resources. The marketer's role in product management includes providing product designers with market-driven trends and customer requests for green product attributes such as energy saving, organic, green chemicals, local sourcing, etc.,
- **Price:** Prices for such products are little higher as compared to other products. Price is a critical and important factor of green marketing mix. Most consumers will only be prepared to pay additional value if there is a perception of extra product value. This value may be improved performance, function, design, visual appeal, or taste. Green marketing should take all these facts into consideration while charging a premium price.
- **Place:** A distribution logistics is of crucial importance; main focus is on ecological packaging. Green products should be marketed to local as well as national markets. The choice of where and when to make a product available will have significant impact on the customers because very few customers will go out of their way to buy green products.
- **Promotion:** A communication with the market should put stress on environmental aspects and promotion of the products should also be done in a greener way (Panghal *et al*, 2013). There are three types of green advertising: -

- Ads that address a relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment
- Those that promote a green lifestyle by highlighting a product or service
- Ads that present a corporate image of environmental responsibility

EXAMPLES OF CASES WHERE GREEN MARKETING CAN BE USED TO ADDRESS PROBLEMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

The major concern and worry of organisational psychologists is the grotesque over-packaging of products. A little wonder, if such products really deserve those packages. More often than not, the non-biodegradable waste ends up in a landfill or under the sea.

These are some of the examples of eco-offences and how they are corrected.

Plastic-sealed magazines: In Nigeria, magazines are often individually sealed in plastic to prevent fingers from flipping through the pages.

The eco alternative: Magazines can be tied with reusable string and give loiterers the evil eye.

Bottled/Plastic drinks: Bottled/Plastic drinks are common and available in stores and supermarkets. Most of which are non-biodegradable. The worst scenario are some of the bottled wine that still package with net cover zeal and put in a carton. All the packaging will be dumped in refuse contributing to eco-harm.

The eco alternative: Such products can simply be put in one container instead of over packaging to reduce waste.

Use of Plastic bags: Wrapping customer's items with cellophane or plastic bag is very rampant. This contributes significantly to environmental degradation

knowing very well that nylon takes time to decompose because all these will still end up in landfill.

The eco alternative: Encourage and educate people on the need to visit stores with their basket.

Over-stuffed shoeboxes: When you buy shoes, you also take home an unwieldy bag and a shoebox stuffed with paper and plastic.

The eco alternative: Shoes can come in a reusable bag and single sheet of ink-free recycled cardboard. This would lower manufacturing waste.

Excessively packaged pills/drugs: Most pills and drugs are all individually packaged in the blister packs. All these excessive package are waste.

The eco alternative: It would make sense to put the pills/drugs in a little jar. But pharmaceutical companies would like consumers to think they've paid for more...

Giant boxes for shipping tiny products: The Internet abounds with examples of “shipment fail” where tiny gizmos such as USB sticks, SD cards arrive in cardboard boxes large enough for a computer.

The eco alternative: Small item, small package. Simple!

Pictures of environmental degradation caused by unfriendly products (Benin City, Edo State, 2014)



3. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data are collected through pretested structured questionnaires from Benin Metropolis of Nigeria. Benin City is the Edo State capital of Nigeria with well above population of 1,147,188 (2006 est. Pop.). A convenience sample of 110 respondents was selected to achieve the research objectives. Educational qualifications, Occupation, causes of environmental degradation, manufacturers' perceptions and consumers' perceptions about green marketing are sought and analysed.

The frequency and percentage analyses were carried out to understand the socio-economic characteristics of respondents. In order to examine the effect of green marketing on environmental degradation, the collected data were analysed using likert scale of 3 points (i.e. Agreed – 3, Undecided – 2 and Disagreed - 1). The results were discussed and formulated hypotheses were analysed by Pearson Chi-square test. The following hypotheses are raised for the study

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between green products and its effect on environmental degradation.

Hypothesis 2: The respondents' occupation and education level did not significantly influence their contribution towards environmental degradation

4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides information on the social demographic characteristics of the respondents. It was revealed that the majority of the respondents have the basic educational requirement to read and write. This means that the concept of green marketing is clear to them. Also, the largest percentage of the respondents engages in one activities or the other except for 32.7% who are either unemployed or retired from active service. Besides, it was revealed that the concept of Green Marketing is not popular in Nigeria. This result is in line with the work of Jacob (2011) who believes that green marketing concept is not popular in developing countries but the concept is gaining prominence in some of these countries.

Table 1: Social and Demographic characteristics

		F	%
Educational Qualifications	FSLC	30	27.3
	SSCE	28	25.5
	Graduate	32	29.1
	PG	14	12.7
	Others	6	5.5
Occupation	Unorganised	30	27.3
	Unemployed	24	21.8
	Self Employed	29	26.4
	Organised	15	13.6
	Retired	12	10.9
Are you aware of the concept of Green Marketing?	Yes	19	17.3
	No	91	82.7

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2014

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents are in support that products which are recyclable, reusable, biodegradable, products with natural ingredients with green technology, produce with approved chemical which do not harm or pollute environment caused no environmental hazards and do not posed dangers to the environment. With this, it shows that green marketing is crucial in preventing eco-harm and environmental degradation.

Bleda (2008) also shared the same opinion with this result that green products are demand oriented approach to reduce pollution which in turn reduce the effect of unfriendly product on eco-harm.

Table 2: Green Products

		F	%
Products which are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable in nature reduces environmental pollution	Agreed	68	61.8
	Undecided	21	19.1
	Disagreed	21	19.1
Products with natural ingredients are environmental friendly	Agreed	64	58.2
	Undecided	11	10.0
	Disagreed	35	31.8
Products contents under approved chemical does not posed danger to the environment	Agreed	64	58.2
	Undecided	16	14.5
	Disagreed	30	27.3
Products that do not harm or pollute the environment are environmental friendly	Agreed	68	61.8
	Undecided	11	10.0
	Disagreed	31	28.2
The products that are manufactured through green technology and caused no environmental hazards promote green environment	Agreed	69	62.7
	Undecided	13	11.8
	Disagreed	28	25.5

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2014

In Table 3, It was shown that product package such as cans, tins, cellophane etc are disposed by consumers which contribute to environmental degrading. It was also revealed that most production process caused environmental pollution while most of the products manufactured without natural ingredients are not easily decomposed. The results indicate that it is obvious that majority of the products produced in the study area contribute to environmental degradation. Thus, green products are environmental friendly. This result was in agreement with the work of Mintel and Stamatious (2006) that green products is a solution to the urban challenges of green space, air pollution, flooding and energy conservation

Table 3: Environmental Degradation

		F	%
Products package such as cans, cellophane, non-recyclable, non- reusable are dump on refuse or anywhere which causes flooding and the likes	Agreed	82	74.5
	Undecided	12	10.9
	Disagreed	16	14.5
Products that are not manufactured with natural ingredients are not easily decomposed	Agreed	43	39.1
	Undecided	34	30.9
	Disagreed	33	30.0
Most production process harm or pollute the environment	Agreed	56	50.9
	Undecided	24	21.8
	Disagreed	30	27.3

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2014

Table 4 shows the perspective of manufacturers towards green marketing. It was agreed that, green products are costly to produce because it requires renewable and recyclable materials which are costly.

Also, new technology may be required which may lead to increase in research and development cost. Green marketing though builds customers loyalty and brand recognition but the manufacturers are of the opinion that customer may not be willing to pay high price for environmental friendly products. In the result above, it is obvious that manufacturers are willing to shift ground and embrace green products for them to be relevant in business and survive in the face of stiff competition (Eco-Competition). Aparna and Samir (2013) also opine that any competitive business organisation with survival and continuity as their objective must be dynamic and flow with the direction and dictate of their customers and the environment where they operate business. This implies that green products must be embrace by any organisation that wants to remain competitive in the market.

Table 4: Manufacturers Perceptions of Green Products

		F	%
The cost of manufacturing green product is high (i.e. Green products require renewable and recyclable material, which is costly)	Agreed	71	64.5
	Undecided	17	15.5
	Disagreed	22	20
Green marketing builds customer loyalty and brand recognition (i.e. boost the company image and differentiates a company among its competitors)	Agreed	83	75.5
	Undecided	14	12.7
	Disagreed	13	11.8
Majority of the consumers are not willing to pay a premium for green products (i.e. Majority of the people are not aware of green products and their uses)	Agreed	58	52.7
	Undecided	20	18.2
	Disagreed	32	29.1

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2014

The results in the table 5 revealed that end-users are willing to patronize environmental friendly products because of its effect on the environment. This shows that the final consumers now prefer recyclable, reusable and biodegradable products and they are even willing to pay a relative high price for eco-friendly products. Therefore, it shows that with combine effort from the regulatory authority and awareness campaign from the manufacturers, green products will gain popularity among the populace and eco-harm can be prevented through green products. This assertion is supported by Chan (2004), Bhattacharya (2011) and Gadenne (2011) that consumers are ready to shift brand and patronize green products to achieve a green environment. This brand switching may be as a result of the health and environmental implications on them.

Table 5: Consumers Perceptions of Green Products

		F	%
Products package that are recyclable, reusable and easily decomposed are appreciated by the final consumer	Agreed	62	56.4
	Undecided	22	20
	Disagreed	26	23.6
Customers are willing to patronize green products against the conventional products (i.e. non eco-friendly products)	Agreed	56	50.9
	Undecided	21	19.1
	Disagreed	33	30.0
End-users are ready to pay more for environmental friendly products	Agreed	60	54.6
	Undecided	20	18.2
	Disagreed	30	27.2

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2014

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1, test the significance relationship between green products and its effect on environmental degradation.

In the results above, it was revealed that the Calculated Pearson Chi-Square (179.690) is greater than the critical value (53.80). Also, since the p – value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis should be rejected while alternative should be accepted. This means significant relationship exists between green products and environmental degradation. This result is also backed up with positive relationship of both Pearson and Spearman correlation analysis of 56.5% and 64.5% respectively. Dono (2010) believes in his work that there is a strong relationship between environmental activism, pro-environmental behaviour and social identity through the adoption of green marketing to reduce environmental degradation. In this regard, green marketing is capable of reducing environmental degradation and prevention of eco-harm through the adoption of environmental friendly products i.e. green product.

Table 6.1: Cross tabulation of Effects of Green_Products on Environmetal_Degradation

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	179.690 ^a	45	.000
Likelihood Ratio	160.789	45	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.801	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 54 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Table 6.2

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig. ^c
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.565	.054	7.117	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.645	.060	8.774	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		110			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

In Hypothesis 2, we test if respondents' occupation and educational level influence their contribution towards environmental degradation. The results in tables 7.1 – 7.4 revealed that the Calculated Pearson Chi-Square (15.218 and 16.764) for education and occupation respectively is less than the critical value (53.80). Also, since the p – value is greater than 0.05 in both ways, the alternative hypothesis should be rejected while null should be accepted which means no significant relationship exist between the respondents' contribution towards environmental degradation and their occupation and education level. In this regard, the result shows that the level of education and occupation of the sampled respondents has nothing whatsoever to do with the way they dispose their waste products which are capable of contributing to eco-harm. The same way the uneducated and semi- illiterate citizen dispose off their waste is the same way the so called educated sampled respondents do. It is sadden to see people throwing

nylons and plastic packages out of their car on the highway while travelling. All these contribute significantly to the environmental degradation.

This result is also backed up with both Pearson and Spearman correlation analysis of -14.8% and -11.8% respectively for educational level of the respondents and -6.9% and -2.8% respectively for the selected respondents occupation. Thus, irrespective of end-users occupation and educational level, Products that are non-recyclable and non- reusable are dump on refuse or anywhere which causes environmental degradation. Therefore, eco-friendly products should be embraced to minimize eco-harm.

Table 7.1 Effects of Environmental degradation on End user educational background

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.218 ^a	20	.743
Likelihood Ratio	113.269	20	.432
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.401	1	.121
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 23 cells (76.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .33.

Table 7.2

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig. ^c
Interval by Interval Pearson's R	-.148	.089	-1.560	.122 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation	-.118	.104	-1.236	.219 ^c
N of Valid Cases	110			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Table 7.3: Effects of Environmental degradation on Respondents' occupation

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.764 ^a	20	.698
Likelihood Ratio	67.497	20	.643
Linear-by-Linear Association	.512	1	.474
N of Valid Cases	110		

a. 23 cells (76.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .65.

Table 7.4

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.069	.088	-.714	.477 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	-.028	.095	-.292	.771 ^c
N of Valid Cases		110			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Strategic and Policy implication:

Based on the results obtained from our analyses, a major policy implication of this paper is that business organisations should be pro-active in developing strategies that will cater for customers' satisfaction. Also, organisations at the same time should focus on healthy environment through adoption of green products, as eco-harm and environmental degradable products may soon be phased out of the market. Profit maximization objective should not only be the focus of the business organisation rather they should embrace societal philosophy of marketing to sustain their profit at the long run. Besides, public enlightenment and direction on the proper disposal of packages should be boldly written on the product packages to minimize illicit disposal of waste in developing nations like

Nigeria. Presently, there are companies that are trying to adopt the green marketing policy in their operations in Nigeria. These companies put up such notices like “be environmental friendly, keep the surrounding clean” and “Protect your environment, avoid pollution” in their factory premises. This effort suggests that not very long green marketing will be embraced by all.

5. CONCLUSION

Green marketing is an aspect of marketing which is very important from the social, economic and ethical point of view as it has motive of spreading awareness among people about environmental issues. This helps to make the environment clean and green by producing eco-friendly products.

The time has come for the adoption of “Green Marketing” globally. This is capable of causing drastic change in the world of business if strict attention is given to green marketing because it is essential to save the world from pollution. In green marketing, if consumers are properly informed, they will be willing to pay more to maintain a cleaner and greener environment.

Consumers, industrial buyers and suppliers need to minimize the negative effects on the environment. Recycling of papers, metals, plastics, etc., in a safe and environmentally harmless manner should become much more systematized and universal. Green marketing should therefore, assume more importance and relevance in developing countries like Nigeria. Finally, creating and implementing a green marketing strategy is not straight forward because it is not only complex, but also a relative concept that continuously varies over time.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Green marketing is a continuous process that requires constant inputs from the suppliers, government legislations and the people. This is required so that the green marketing strategy can be aligned to the target markets and gain a sustainable competitive advantage. The paper therefore proffers the following recommendations;

- i. Strategies and policies in relation to green products should be developed and implemented so as to guide and help the retailers and customers towards a green change.
- ii. Businesses should concentrate on developing green products that would be demanded by the general public and also aligns to the company's core positioning.
- iii. Businesses should also present efforts in a manner that reduces the risk related to costs, though, while the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous, cost-wise too, in the long run.
- iv. Also, ecological packaging, life-cycle analysis should be incorporated in to the eco-design process to minimise eco-harm.

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