Influence of the Green Marketing Mix on Customers' Purchase Intentions for Sustainable Eco-Friendly Fashion Products

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Abstract

Customers across the globe are becoming conscious of what they buy, use, and consume in their daily lives in terms of their impact on the environment. The buying behavior of customers in today's times is not only driven by the look and feel of the product but is also driven by the impact of the "process of making the product" on the environment, the impact of "product usage" on the environment, and the impact of "post-usage and discarding of the product" on the environment. This has led manufacturers and retailers to conceptualize, create, communicate, and deliver products and services in such a manner that no stage of this marketing process causes any ill effect on the environment. This research study focuses on the concept of the green marketing mix, its elements, and their influence on customers purchase intentions of eco-friendly sustainable fashion products in India. The researchers came across a large number of research studies done in the past on the concept of green marketing and its relationship to the purchase behavior of customers of eco-friendly products. The study further explores the concept of green marketing from the perspective of fashion products in India. The article discusses the influence of the four traditional marketing mix elements (product, price, place, and promotion), customer satisfaction, and word of mouth on the customers' purchase intention of eco-friendly sustainable fashion products based on interviews with 279 Indian respondents in 2022. Based on data analysis using correlation and regression analysis, it was concluded that word of mouth, advertising, premium price, and satisfaction have been found to have significantly influenced the purchase intention of the respondents to the study, but factors like product quality and place of sale do not seem to have a significant influence on the purchase intention of the respondents.

Keywords: Green marketing mix, customer satisfaction, word of mouth, eco friendly, sustainable, purchase intention

Introduction

Sustainable eco-friendly fashion products are clothing, accessories, and other fashion items that are designed and produced using materials, methods, and practices that minimize their negative impact on the environment and society while promoting ethical and responsible consumption.

Some characteristics of sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products may include the use of environmentally friendly materials, ethical production practices, minimal environmental impact, durability and longevity, and appropriate end-of-life disposal. Sustainable fashion products are made from organic, recycled, or upcycled materials that reduce waste and minimize the use of non-renewable resources such as petroleum. These products are produced using ethical and socially responsible manufacturing practices, such as fair labor standards, worker safety, and waste reduction. Sustainable products are designed with minimal environmental impact in mind, using processes that reduce water and energy use, pollution, and waste. The products are designed to be durable and long-lasting, reducing the need for frequent replacements and thus minimizing waste. Lastly, sustainable fashion products are designed to be easily recycled, composted, or biodegraded at the end of their useful lives, reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfills. Overall, sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products promote a more sustainable and ethical fashion industry by reducing waste, promoting responsible consumption, and minimizing environmental and social harm.

According to a study by Paiva (2021), businesses and consumers all over the world are becoming increasingly concerned about the environment, which has led to the development of green products. According to Szabo and Webster (2021), advertising companies have started promoting green products as eco-friendly and sustainable in a big way. Shabbir, et al. (2020) raise in their study that the marketing forces for sustainable products are so strong that even government policies are changing in favor of green marketing. Mursandi, Sudirman and Militina (2020) observe that green marketing includes the creation of products and services that fulfill customers' needs, wants, and desires. Grimmer and Woolley (2014), in a research study, deduce that the sale of green products influences the pro-environmental action of society. Due to this environmentally friendly approach by businesses and customers, there has been tremendous growth in green marketing. As put up by Bokil and Sinha (2021), green marketing activities include the production of goods and other elements of the marketing mix that fulfill the environmental needs of customers. Chen and Chang (2012) believe that due to green

marketing strategies, the purchase intention of customers improves. Jaiswal and Kant (2018) assert that the concept of green marketing has become an important area of study for academic researchers. Sukhu and Scharff (2018) state that with the help of green marketing, one can reduce distressing environmental consequences through ecofriendly design and production.

Consumers are becoming more aware of sustainable consumption, so it is important for companies to adopt green marketing (Liu, Li and Su, 2019). Kanchanapibul, et al. (2014) observe that a customer who intends to buy a green product faces challenges like product assessment, searching for the product, or finding a reasonable price. According to Song, et al. (2019), with the help of green marketing, products are recognized as green products with the purpose of enhancing consumer purchase behavior. Suki (2016) mentions that the techniques of green marketing, i.e., eco-friendly advertising, help customers understand the characteristics of green products and thus influence them to buy ecologically friendly products.

The probability of buying a green product increases once customers are convinced of the cost-benefit relationship (Deari, Isejani and Ferati, 2020). Cerri, Testa and Rizzi (2018) mention that customers may think not to purchase a product because it is harmful to the environment.

Review of Literature

The literature review attempts to introduce the concept of green marketing and elements of the marketing mix and also brings out past studies explaining the influence of these elements on the purchase of eco-friendly products.

The concept of green marketing has been defined by the American Marketing Association from three perspectives. As per the retail perspective, it is considered the marketing of products that are environmentally safe; from the social marketing point of view, green marketing is perceived to be the creation and marketing of products that are created in such a manner that there is no or minimal impact on the environment; and finally, from the environmental point of view, it is defined as the strategies of companies to develop, communicate, package, and reclaim goods and services to address ecological concerns.

The green marketing term first came during the 1980s. A consumer who shows environment-friendly attitudes and prefers green products due to his consciousness about the environment is termed a green consumer (Boztepe, 2012). Consumers are

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beginning to value social responsibility and environmental concerns (Sawant, 2015). The consumers believe that the consumption attitudes of each and every consumer matter to the environment (Dagher and Itani, 2014). Due to this awareness and consciousness, consumers are increasingly adopting eco-friendly attitudes and preferring businesses with green practices. According to Ansar (2013), these attitudes of consumers are clearly visible through their shopping habits and their preferences, such as CFC-free products and recycling of products (Parthasarathy and Govender, 2016). According to Ferrell and Hartline (2014), the natural and social factors that are the basis of knowledge and product choices affect youngsters aged 18-25 to a great extent. Sharma (2015) explains that sociodemographic factors, such as a consumer's age and level of education, have a significant impact on their decision to purchase green products. The literature proposes that female youth with high education and income are more inclined towards greenness (Wang, 2014). In addition, green marketing is about making and selling products and services that are satisfactory to customers' needs and wants in terms of quality, outcome, pricing, convenience, and yet are environmentally friendly. Matin and Alauddin (2016) explain that green marketing is associated with designing, promoting, pricing and distributing environment-friendly products. According to Datta and Ishaswini (2011) eco-friendly products consumption and consumers attitude towards eco friendly product leads to the development of marketing mix that protects environment.

Overall, the literature suggests that elements of the green marketing mix, such as environmental labeling, product design, green packaging, and green advertising, play a significant role in influencing customers' purchase intentions of sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products. Moreover, customer characteristics such as environmental concern and trust in eco-friendly brands moderate this relationship. Finally, a green marketing mix can also foster customer loyalty and satisfaction towards sustainable fashion products.

Elements of green marketing mix

Green products are created and produced in an environment-friendly way with few negative effects, can be recycled, and are resource-saving (Alharthey, 2019). Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard (2014), point out that a product can be considered green if the manufacturing process is environmentally sustainable (eco-friendly) and the product's use causes little harm to the environment. Bhardwaj, et al. (2020) mention that green products have some indicators, like that the raw materials should be eco-

friendly, the goods do not produce waste, and they are safe for consumption. Also, for such a product, the packaging is biodegradable and eco-friendly.

According to Sharaf and Perumal (2018), the green price is the cost associated with providing goods and services to customers. Bhalerao and Deshmukh (2015) describe the green place as a channel of distribution. According to Al-Majali and Tarabieh (2020), the green place helps improve transport by reducing emissions and energy usage. But when a company transports its products outside its location, some sensitive environmental issues come up. Green promotion has been defined by Bhalerao and Deshmukh (2015) as promotional measures undertaken by companies to create product or service awareness.

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), there are three important aspects of word of mouth: credibility, personal, and timely. Customers trust their peer groups and friends more than sellers.

Solomon (2004) states that satisfaction is linked to product quality, which leads to product performance and ultimately a positive attitude towards the brand. According to Kotler and Keller (2006), the better the quality of the product, the more satisfied customers are, and satisfied customers have a greater willingness to conduct repeat purchases (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996).

Elements of marketing mix and purchase decision

Various studies have been conducted indicating marketing mix elements and their impact on customer purchase intentions. Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020) observe that all the elements of the marketing mix have a positive correlation with customers purchase behavior for eco-friendly products. Humairoh and Elfani (2020) explain that advertisements, when companies promote eco-friendly products, have a positive correlation with customers attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Singhal and Malik (2018), through their study, observe that customers do not mind paying a higher price for green products as it would associate them with being environmentally compliant. Hossain and Khan (2018) state that green promotional effects have a substantial effect on consumers purchasing decisions.

Research Gap

A large number of studies have been done on green marketing mix elements and their impact on customer attitude and purchase intentions. But these studies have largely been done for FMCG, consumer durables for the European and US markets, and consumers. As the concept of green marketing grows across different product categories, it is very

important for brands to develop green marketing strategies. In order to develop such strategies, brands will rely on an available pool of knowledge. However, the researchers did not come across any such specific study that brings out the influence of elements of the marketing mix on customers' purchase intentions for eco-friendly fashion products from the point of view of Indian customers. In order to address the research gap, there was a need to conduct a research study in the field of green marketing and study how each of the elements of the marketing mix, word of mouth, and satisfaction influence customers' purchase intentions. With this need for research, the objective of the study was defined as:

- To study the influence of product quality on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.
- To study the influence of premium prices on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.
- To study the influence of the place of sale on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.
- To study the influence of promotion on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.
- To study the influence of customer satisfaction on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.
- To study the influence of word of mouth on customers' purchase intentions towards sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

In order to attain the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

H1: There is a significant influence of product quality on customers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

H2: There is a significant influence of premium prices on customers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

H3: There is a significant influence of the place of sale on the customer's purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

H4: There is a significant influence of advertising on customers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

H5: There is a significant influence of word of mouth on customers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

H6: There is a significant influence of customer satisfaction on the basis of past purchases on the customer's purchase intention of sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

Though there are various other factors as well, like environmental labeling, product design, green packaging, etc., that might have an impact on purchase intention, these variables are not part of this study.

Methodology

The study was conceptualized in June 2022. The secondary data was collected from a review of related literature in books, research articles, and online sources. The research design was exploratory research, and a non-probability sampling method was used for the survey. Within the non-probability sampling method, the judgmental sampling method was used. The sample size of 301 respondents comprised customers who understand, appreciate, and buy sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products. Their responses were checked for accuracy, consistency, and missing information. A total of 22 responses were rejected, and finally, 279 responses were processed for analysis. The sampling frame comprised men and women in the age group of 18–65 years and are in the third and fourth levels of the Maslow hierarchy of needs, i.e., social and self-esteem needs. Primary data was collected from respondents located in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad (Table 1).

Table 1: Sample size and location of respondents for the survey

S.No.	City	Number of respondents
1	Delhi /NCR	83
2	Mumbai / Pune	71
3	Bengaluru	53
4	Chennai	39
5	Hyderabad	33
	Total	279

Primary data was collected during June–July 2022 using a structured questionnaire. A total of 141 respondents were interviewed using an online personal interview, 25 were interviewed through Zoom, and 113 responses were collected using Google Survey Forms. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire with close-ended dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions, and 5-point Likert scale questions to measure the opinions, perceptions, and behaviors of the respondents.

Utilizing the 19-item scale that Hashem and Al-Rifai (2011) developed to measure the components of green marketing, the research evaluated the green marketing mix. The scale was further used by Mahmoud, et al. (2017) in their study titled "The Influence of Green Marketing Mix on Purchase Intention: The Mediation Role of Environmental Knowledge". For all six independent variables and the latent variable, this scale was adopted for measurement.

Respondent profiles included details of geographic location, psychographic, demographic, and behavioral characteristics. Prior to conducting the survey, a pilot test was conducted on a convenience sample of 20 respondents whose profiles matched those in the sampling frame of the research study, with the intention of testing the questionnaire to examine the validity of each question, clarity in terms of language, and terms used in the questionnaire. Based on problems and errors identified in the questionnaire, changes were made, and a final questionnaire was prepared for the survey.

Results and Analysis

The consumer responses collected through the questionnaire method of data collection were analyzed using the following stages:

Test of Reliability: The dependent and independent variables were tested for reliability. The reliability scale was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Table 2). It has been mentioned by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) that if the coefficient alpha values exceed 0.7, then the scale is considered to be a good estimate of internal consistency and reliability. All the variables used in the study obtained an acceptable level of alpha above 0.70, indicating that the scales used in this study were reliable.

The objective of the research was to determine the factors that influence the purchase intention of sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products. Hence, after the reliability test, each independent variable was tested with the dependent variable to examine the relationship in terms of direction and magnitude between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The correlation between independent variables and the dependent variable, i.e., purchase intention, was found through a Pearson correlation (Table 3). The independent variables were product quality, premium price, place of sale, advertising, word of mouth, and satisfaction. Purchase intention was chosen as the dependent variable as the aim was to demonstrate how marketing mix elements, word of mouth, and satisfaction influence consumers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Quality of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	04	0.751
Premium Price Premium price for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	02	0.811
Place of sale for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	03	0.772
Advertising of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	03	0.791
Word of mouth for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	02	0.701
Satisfaction of customers on the basis of past purchase of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	02	0.753

As seen in Table 3, word of mouth (0.821), advertising (0.801), premium price (0.791), and satisfaction (0.767) are the independent variables with the highest Pearson coefficients (r) with the dependent variable (purchase intention). The other two variables, i.e., product quality and place of sale, are positively correlated with purchase intention, but the correlation is found to be weak as per the correlation coefficient in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations Matrix

	Purchase intention for eco- friendly, sustainable fashion products	Product quality of eco- friendly, sustainable fashion products		Place of sale for eco- friendly, sustainable fashion products	Word of mouth for eco- friendly, sustainable fashion products	Advertising of eco- friendly, sustainable fashion products	Satisfaction of customers on the basis of past purchase of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products
Purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	1.00	0.113	0.791	0.114	0.821	0.801	0.767
Product quality of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.113	1.00	0.211	0.201	0.209	0.191	0.217
Premium price for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.791	0.211	1.00	0.311	0.321	0.491	0.417
Place of sale for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.211	0.201	0.311	1.00	0.191	0.517	0.213

Word of mouth for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.821	0.209	0.321	0.191	1.00	0.511	0.437
Advertising of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.801	0.191	0.491	0.517	0.511	1.00	.411
Satisfaction of customers on the basis of past purchase of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products	0.767	0.217	0.417	0.213	0.437	.411	1.00

Next, the researchers ran a regression analysis to determine the factors that have an influence on the purchase intention and also to determine the most influential factor that influences the purchase intention. The R Square in Table 4 is equal to 0.741, which means that the model composed of six variables explains 74.1 percent of the variance of the purchase intention for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

Table 4: Multiple regression: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimates
1	0.861	0.741	0.690	0.770

Having derived the overall impact of all the independent variables on the dependent variable, the individual variable contribution to the dependent variable was measured, for which regression analysis was done. The results are depicted in Tables 5 to 10, where the R Square value needs to be examined and interpreted. By observing the R Square value in the coefficient table, which indicates to what extent each variable contributes or not to the variance in the purchase intention, a comparison of the factors can be made to determine which contributed the most to the variance of the purchase intention. The R Square values indicate how well the regression equation fits the data.

Table 5: Regression analysis of quality and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	0.113	.012	.009	0.931	.069

Table 6: Regression analysis of premium price and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	0.791	0.625	0.59	0.711	.023

Table 7: Regression analysis of place of sale and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	0.21	.044	.038	0.947	.061

Table 8: Regression analysis of word of mouth and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	0.821	0.674	0.580	0.761	.024

Table 9: Regression analysis of advertising and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1	0.801	0.64	0.58	0.672	.021

Table 10: Regression analysis of satisfaction of customers on the basis of past purchase and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products

Mod	el	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	P value
1		0.767	0.588	0.48	0.667	.022

In Table 5, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.012, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that only 1.2 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between the product quality (independent variable) and the purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products (dependent variable). The other 98.2 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between the quality of eco-friendly sustainable fashion products and purchase intention is insignificant, and the R Square value also indicates an insignificant contribution to the product quality of eco-friendly sustainable fashion. Thus,

the hypothesis is rejected, and it can be inferred that there is no significant influence of product quality on customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products.

In Table 6, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.625, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that 62.5 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between premium price (independent variable) and purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products (dependent variable). The other 37.5 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between premium prices for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products and purchase intention is significant, and the R Square value also indicates a significant contribution of premium prices for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, and it is inferred that there is a significant influence of premium prices on customers' purchase intentions for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products.

In Table 7, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.044, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that only 4.4 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between place of sale (independent variable) and purchase intention of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products (dependent variable). The other 95.6 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between place of sale for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products and purchase intention is insignificant, and the R Square value also indicates the insignificant contribution of place of sale for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected, and it is inferred that there is no significant influence of place of sale on customers' purchase intentions for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products.

In Table 8, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.674, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that 67.4 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between word of mouth (independent variable) and the purchase intention of eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products (dependent variable). The other

32.6 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between word of mouth for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products and purchase intention is significant, and the R Square value also indicates a significant contribution of word of mouth for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, and it is inferred that there is a significant influence of word of mouth on customers' purchase intentions for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products.

In Table 9, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.64, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that 64 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between advertising (independent variable) and the purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products (dependent variable). The other 36 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between advertising for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products and purchase intention is significant, and the R Square value also indicates the significant contribution of advertising for eco-friendly sustainable fashion products. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, and it is inferred that there is a significant influence of advertising on customers' purchase intentions for sustainable, eco-friendly fashion products.

In Table 10, the R Square (measure of the coefficient of determination) is 0.588, which indicates how well the regression equation fits the data. It means that 58.8 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention can be explained by the linear relationship between satisfaction with eco-friendly sustainable fashion products (independent variable) and purchase intention (dependent variable). The other 41.2 percent of the total variation in customer purchase intention for eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products remains unexplained.

Since the correlation between satisfaction and purchase intention is significant, and the R Square value also indicates a significant contribution of satisfaction with eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, and it can be inferred that there is a significant influence of satisfaction with eco-friendly, sustainable fashion products on customers' purchase intentions.

The analysis of the data results clearly indicates that of the factors identified in the study for which influence on purchase intention has been measured, word of mouth, advertising, premium price, and satisfaction have been found to have significantly influenced the purchase intention of the respondents, but factors like product quality and place of sale do not seem to have significant influence on the purchase intention of the respondents.

Conclusion

The current study clearly shows that consumers' intention to purchase an eco-friendly sustainable fashion product is influenced by their satisfaction with their past purchases of eco-friendly fashion products, advertising, premium pricing of these products, and communication by way of word of mouth for these products. This gives a message to business managers that they should continue and further enhance eco-friendly advertising campaigns to create purchase intention. As Kotler and Keller (2006) mention, consumers trust more the people who are close to them, such as family and friends, than a seller in a shop because there is an "intimate dialogue". Furthermore, "80 percent of all of our buying decisions are influenced by someone's direct recommendations" (Solomon et al., 2010). Thus, brands should also give importance to word-of-mouth communication, which will happen when customers are satisfied with their past purchases, uses, and consumption of the product.

The finding that place and product quality do not seem to have influenced customers' purchase intentions may suggest a way forward for the marketing team of brands. Managers should make efforts in place as the correlation between place and purchase intention is positive, though it is a weak correlation. Managers should work on the right place in the store where such products are placed, and they should be placed at strategic points in the store so that they are easily noticeable in the store. In the same way, for product quality, a positive correlation exists, but again, it is a weak correlation. Customers do not perceive a product to have superior quality if it is an eco-friendly product. Their basic purpose is to care for the environment. But the product managers can start positioning their products as of superior quality, so the emphasis should be on making these products of better quality, as the study shows that customers are willing to pay premium pricing. The study can assist marketing managers in particular in planning marketing strategies with the purpose of satisfying the target customers, making profit, and preserving the environment.

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