

GREEN ADVERTISING THROUGH THE EYES OF THE YOUTH: A STUDY ON ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

Abstract

Green advertising aims to highlight environmentally friendly products or the advertiser's corporate environmental responsibility towards environment. Considering the importance that responsibility of organisations towards environment and environmental behaviour of consumers have in modern market circumstances, green advertising is a crucial theoretical and practical idea in modern advertising. The goal of undertaking present research was to know the opinion of the youth of Vadodara city regarding green advertisement and their environmentally responsible behaviour. The research was descriptive in nature. Questionnaire was prepared to collect the data using the survey approach wherein 200 youth from Vadodara City made up the study's sample, sample size, and locale. The study's conclusions demonstrated that majority of respondents (80%) were undergraduates belonging to nuclear families (78%) where only 9% of the respondents were men and 90% were women. It was also found that majority of respondents (80%) were students and television was the source of medium from which highest number of respondents heard about green advertising. Results showed that the majority (98.50%) of respondents showed most favourable opinion towards green advertisements. Majority (94%) of the respondents showed somewhat environmentally responsible behaviour. Further, the sub section "emotional response to environmental problems"(31.50%) showed highest environmentally responsible behaviour and the sub section "emotional response to environmental problems"(4.50%) again showed least environmentally responsible behaviour. The results of the study implies that targeting youth through television advertisements may be an effective strategy to garner favorable opinions and encourage environmentally responsible behavior, with a specific focus on emotional engagement with environmental problems as a key driver. Thus, green advertising is becoming a crucial component of the advertising industry to promote company's products in an innovative way and attract customers who would eventually purchase eco-friendly goods. The long-term benefits and necessity of it will make it profitable through increased customer satisfaction, which will positively affect consumer purchasing intentions.

Keywords: Green advertisement, Environmentally responsible behaviour, Youth

INTRODUCTION

'Green advertising' is defined as commercial advertising that uses an environmental theme to promote products, services, or corporate public images (Banerjee et al., 1995).

The environment is a global concern. Countries have been aggressively implementing the sustainable green living idea to reduce the unfavourable effects of modernization and development, including pollution and the degradation of natural resources. According to reports, the Obama administration in the United States spent USD 150 billion on their investment plan for renewable energy, hybrid vehicles, and clean energy (Desan, 2009). Any commercial that addresses the connection between a product and the biophysical environment, whether explicitly or implicitly, can be considered to be using green advertising (Banerjee, Gulas & Iyer, 1995). It should also be able to support a green lifestyle and, occasionally, improve a company image of social responsibility. Along with promoting the idea of a greener environment, the government's green advertising campaign also works to

improve citizens' perceptions of the government and of good living. Green advertising is defined as marketing that highlights a product, service, concept, or organization's capacity to prevent or lessen environmental harm. Green living is an effort to live in an environmentally friendly and responsible way while also attempting to reduce the size of our ecological imprint. When it comes to the biophysical environment and its concerns, including human interactions and impacts, environmental awareness is defined as the growth and development of awareness, understanding, and consciousness. Environmental attitude is described as a trained propensity to regularly respond in either a positive or negative way with regard to the environment (Rashid, 2009).

Many business marketers are responding to this trend by engaging in "green advertising" or "eco-labelling," which involves making claims about a product's use of ecologically friendly components or its packaging. As consumer knowledge of environmental issues rises, businesses inevitably adopt "green" tactics and begin using environmental claims in their advertising campaigns in an effort to stand out from the competition (Ginsberg & Bloom 2004). Green education, sometimes referred to as environmental education, is a concentrated attempt to teach people about how natural environments function and how they may control their behaviour and ecosystems in order to live sustainably. According to Ahmad et al. (2010), there are two ways that environmental information can be presented to consumers: either by educating them about the product's extensive environmental impacts or by informing them that it was produced in an environmentally friendly way. Shen et al. (2020) found that environmental danger appeals, perceived severity, and perceived authenticity of advertisements all play a part in pro-environmental behaviour. Additionally, the results provide important information that supports the application of threat appeal in green advertising, enabling advertisers, marketers, and governmental organisations to create strong and efficient marketing plans for promoting the usage of environmentally friendly products. Furthermore, Goldsmith et al. (2000) found that how consumers view the brand owner's competence and dependability would affect their attitudes. Higher perceived deception levels were linked to lower perceived credibility and unfavourable views toward the advertisement and its brand. Compared to other approaches to the problem, research aiming at determining public perceptions of green advertising has faced more difficulties. Instead of adopting a social science perspective, audience research has always emphasised enhancing the effectiveness of current commercials. According to the findings, Ahmad et al. (2010) stated that consumers are pragmatic, so while establishing green advertising strategies, advertisers should provide as much information about the product as they can. The authors of this study examine how consumer purchase intentions in environmental advertising are influenced by media, claim credibility, relevance, information, and perceived effectiveness of environmental behaviour.

To win customers' trust, environmental promises should be clear-cut, accurate, and exact. Green marketers must concentrate on these issues if they are to convert their green marketing into purchase intent. Consumers no longer trust green advertising as a result of repeated claims of false promises made in green advertising (Leonidou et al. 2011). A green brand image is also becoming more and more important for firms, particularly as consumer knowledge of environmental issues rises and environmental regulations tighten up. Businesses can use the idea of green marketing to their products to get an advantage in product differentiation (Chen et al. 2006). Businesses may also invest substantial resources in improving their brand image in order to better serve customers that have environmental goals, sustainable expectations, and green demands, in addition to complying with the law. Brand equity has a positive effect on convincing customers and influencing purchase intent. Over time, a brand gains power based on how consumers have interacted with, viewed, read, heard,

learned about, felt, and thought about it (Phusit and Paitoon, 2008). Customers are increasingly better informed about products before making a purchase. It has been demonstrated that consumers use adverts to steer their purchase by looking for reliable and trustworthy product information (Chan et al. 2004). According to a study on the aspects of environmental advertising that affect consumer purchase intention, consumers in Pakistan had enough exposure to print and broadcast media, but television advertising was preferred. The report also shows that Pakistani customers care about the environment and want to buy products that are kind to the environment (Habib et al. 2010). Rashid (2009) evaluated the use of eco-labels in Malaysia's green marketing initiative and found that if a consumer was made aware of a product's environmentally beneficial qualities through the use of an eco-label, they would be more likely to choose to buy a green product. Nevertheless, environmental research has grown over time to encompass a variety of perspectives and regions.

In a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of functional green advertising, Mo et al. (2018) discovered an intriguing pattern. Their research revealed that such advertising exerted a perceived stronger impact on influencing others' purchase decisions than on the respondents' own decisions. Moving on, Bailey et al. (2018) delved into the impact of consumers' green consumption values on advertising reactions. Their findings suggested that these values play a pivotal role in shaping how individuals respond to green advertisements. Shifting the focus to post-purchase effects, Meijers et al. (2019) explored the aftermath of consumers buying a 'green' product as advertised. Interestingly, they identified possible paradoxical post-purchase effects, adding nuance to the understanding of consumer behavior in the green market. Examining the visual aspect, Sahin et al. (2019) scrutinized the effects of green advertising images on consumer behavior. They concluded that green text, green certification logos, and green combination ads had a more significant impact than their non-green counterparts. Ursey et al. (2020) further enriched the literature by investigating the interplay between advertising appeal, perceptions of typicality, and green products. Their study highlighted the importance of congruity between the appeal used and consumers' pre-existing assumptions about the product category. Alamsyah et al. (2020) explored the correlation between green advertising, green brand image, and green awareness among customers. Their findings suggested a positive relationship, indicating that green advertising has the potential to enhance customers' green awareness and influence their purchasing intentions positively.

OBJECTIVE

- To understand the viewpoint of the youth in Vadodara concerning environmentally conscious advertising.
- To assess the environmentally responsible behaviour of the youth

METHODOLOGY

The current study was descriptive in nature. To assess the respondents' opinions and behaviour toward the environment, questionnaire was developed. The data was collected from 200 youth selected randomly from Vadodara city of Gujarat. Youth were chosen because they represent a growing customer base and are the nation's future generation. Younger individuals are also thought to be more ecologically sensitive. In order to accomplish this, the study was guided by three categories of questions in the areas of background information of the respondents, their opinion about green advertising where the five-point Likert scale was

used, and the third section measures a series of statements on environmentally responsible behaviour on the three-point Likert scale.

STEPS TAKEN TO STANDARDIZE THE TOOL

Step 1: Establishment of content validity

The scales prepared by the researcher was on opinion of the youth regarding green advertising and a series of statements on environmentally responsible behaviour.

The response structure of the scale, opinion of the youth about green advertising was least favourable, somewhat favourable and most favourable. Again, the response structure of the scale, environmentally responsible behaviour of the youth was least extent, somewhat and high extent. To establish the content validity of the data collection tool, it was given to a panel of 5 judges from the related field. The judges were requested to judge whether the listed statements under each aspect were clear or ambiguous and relevant or irrelevant. Based on the valuable suggestions given by the experts, changes were made.

Step 2: Establishment of reliability

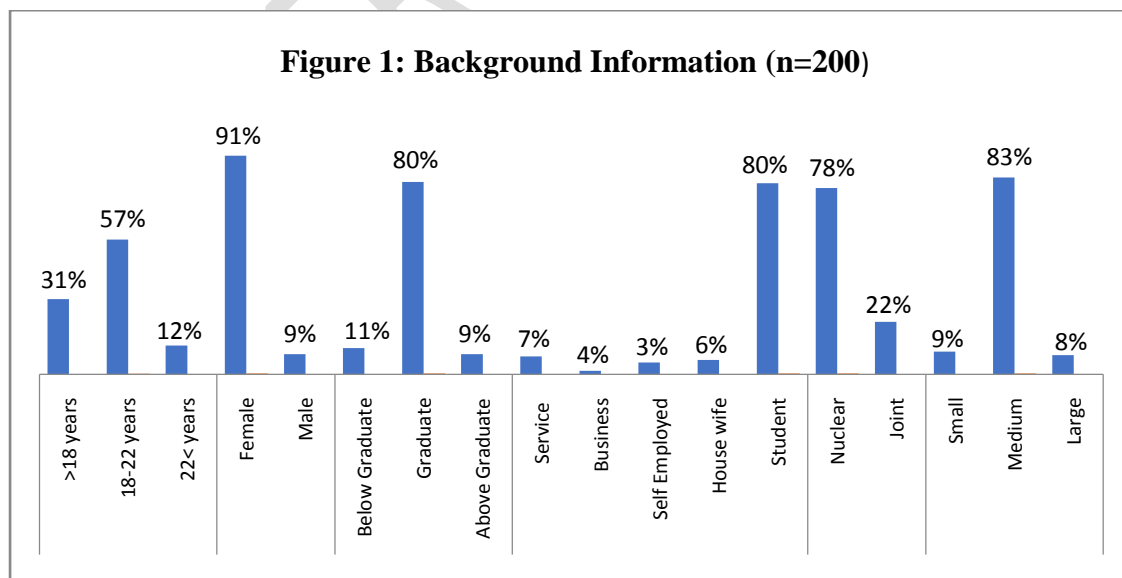
The reliability was established for the scales, opinion of the youth regarding green advertising and their environmentally responsible behaviour.

Reliability of the scales: The scale was pretested with 30 random samples from the non-sampling areas. The reliability value of the scale was established to be 0.746 and 0.726 respectively.

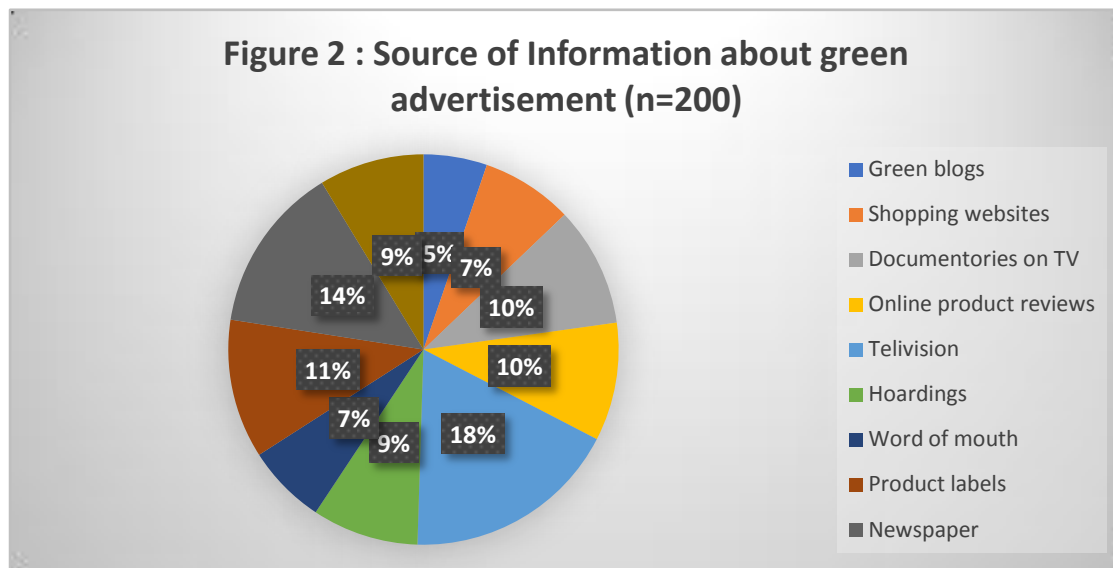
MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings obtained on the basis of the responses gathered are discussed in details here.

- 1. Background Information:** This section included information related to personal and family information of the respondents viz. age, gender, education, occupation, family type, family size.

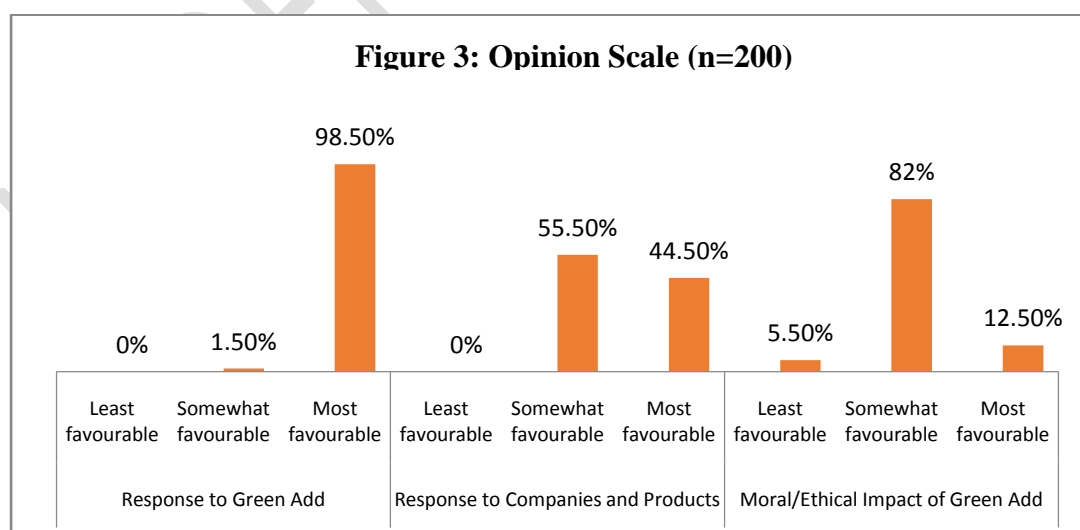


The data in fig.1 showed that less than three fourth of the respondents (57.0%) belong to the age group 18-22 years, highest being women (91%) with majority of students (80%) living mostly in nuclear families (88%) having 3-5 members mostly (83%).



The data in fig.2 revealed that television was the main source of information regarding green advertisement as highest (18.0%) of the respondents agreed to it, followed by newspaper (14%) and product labels (11%) respectively whereas green blogs and online product reviews were the least source.

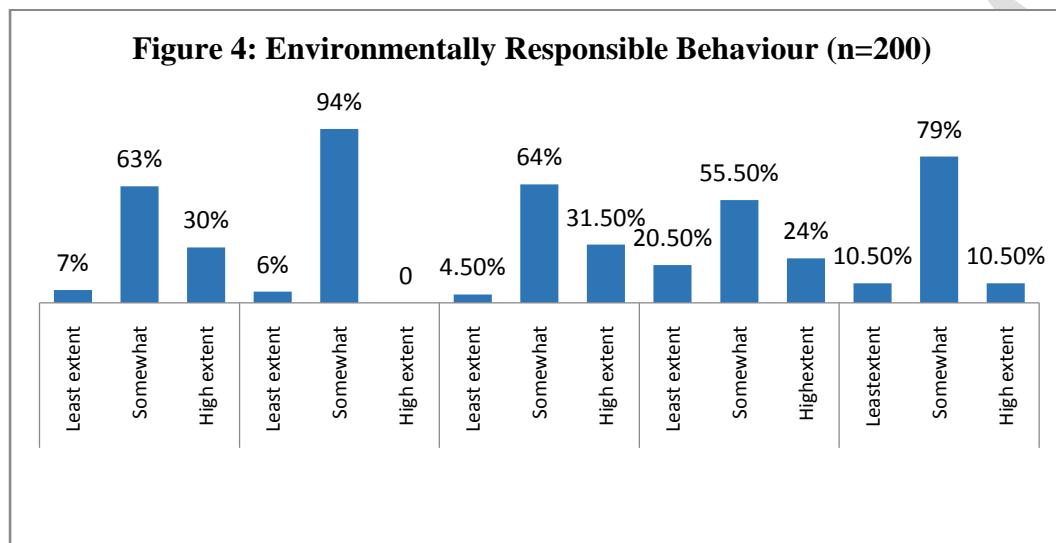
2. Opinion of the respondents regarding green advertisement: This section includes responses regarding opinion of the respondents towards green advertising. The opinion scale comprises of three categories viz. responses to green advertising, consumer responses to the companies and their products, moral/ethical impact of green advertising.



The data in fig.3 showed that the response of highest (98.50%) number of respondents were most favourable towards green advertisements followed by very few (1.50%) respondents showed somewhat favourable response towards green advertisements. More than half

(55.50%) of the respondents showed somewhat favourable response to the companies and their products, while less than half (44.50%) of the respondents showed most favourable response to the companies and products using green advertisement. Very less respondents (12.50%) were most favourable towards moral/ethical impact of green advertising, while highest number of respondents (82%) were somewhat favourable and very few (5.50%) respondents were least favourable towards moral/ethical impacts of green advertising.

3. Environmentally responsible behaviour of the respondents: This section consist of information regarding environmentally responsible behaviour of the respondents. This section comprises of five categories viz. environmental activism, personal everyday thoughts and behaviours, emotional response to environmental problems, environmental responsibility and impact, consumers' specific behaviour.



The data in fig. 4 showed that overall majority (94%) of the respondents showed somewhat environmentally responsible behaviour. Further, the sub section “emotional response to environmental problems”(31.50%) showed highest environmentally responsible behaviour and the sub section “emotional response to environmental problems”(4.50%) again showed least environmentally responsible behaviour. More than half of the respondents showed somewhat responsible behaviour under the sub sections “environmental activism”(63%), “emotional response to environmental problems”(64%), “environmental responsibility and impact” (55%), “consumers’ specific behaviours”(79%).

TABLE 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE OPINION SCALE AND BEHAVIOUR SCALE WITH SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	χ^2	p' value
Opinion Scale	Age	18.482	0.046**
	Education	31.141	0.040**
Environmental Responsible behaviour	Age	17.562	0.025**
	Education	30.321	0.035**

Significance level 5%

Analysis of table 1 indicate that there is existence of significant relationship between the opinion scale with the selected independent variables, and behaviour scale with the selected independent variables.

Regarding the relationship between opinion scale with age and education of the respondents, it was found that there is significant association between opinion of the respondents with age and education ($p=0.046^{**}$ and $p=0.040^{**}$). Therefore, it can be stated that with increase in age and education, the opinion of the respondents will be most favourable towards green advertisements. Again, it was found that there is significant association between behaviour of the respondents with age and education ($p=0.025^{**}$ and $p=0.035^{**}$). So, it can be stated that with increase in age and education of the respondents, the youth will show more responsible behaviour towards their environment and will have response favouring the environment since it is their responsibility to protect their mother earth.

CONCLUSION

It was discovered that youngsters who are concerned about the environment in general are more conscious of green advertising. However, the percentage of people who actively practise "green living" is substantially lower. They do, however, have a favourable attitude toward green advertising and promotions. As a result, those with some knowledge of 'green living' have a favourable attitude toward green advertisements and initiatives. Nonetheless, the efficacy of advertisements in terms of message delivery, design attractiveness/creativity, and inspiring people to take action must be taken into account. Perhaps it explains why the real practise of "green living" is so much lower. According to the report, the top three chosen mediums for green advertising/campaigns are television, social networking websites, and websites. These media vehicles are known for providing more in-depth information, such as television, which delivers actual and moving visuals to be grasped. Green advertising/campaigns are seen as a successful method for educating and encouraging kids to go green, although the city's level of green awareness remains low. As a result of the research, it has been demonstrated that advertising may indeed be utilised to inspire adolescents to embrace the green concept. It is obvious that the administration has taken steps to improve and green the city's existing predicament. While the government's efforts are commendable, stronger green messaging and green advertising/campaigns are required.

IMPLICATION

Finding out the primary components of green marketing that have a beneficial impact on customer behaviour is an important strategic decision for green advertising. Adapting green advertising as a campaign will not achieve the goal; instead, marketers must understand the green marketing features of target consumers and how these influence their buy intentions. The importance of green advertising in informing various audiences about a company's environmentally friendly operations is critical. This study provides factors affecting customer attitude toward green marketing through a literature review, taking the study's objectives one at a time. This will serve as a conceptual framework for future academics and researchers. It will also aid marketers and policymakers in their efforts to influence customers and other stakeholders by focusing on these aspects.

ETHICAL ISSUE

There were no ethical issue.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication the publication of this paper.

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UNDER PEER REVIEW