



Sustainable Apparel and Marketing Positioning with Pricing Strategies which affects Consumer's Perceived Value in the Indian Mainstream Market

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1. Introduction

The majority of people who would ordinarily purchase conventional clothing do not actively seek out or use eco-clothing, despite the fact that the creation of conventional clothing has a detrimental effect on both human health and the environment (McNeill & Moore, 2015). However, eco-apparel companies place a stronger emphasis on environmental value, which deters consumers from buying eco-apparel. Consumers often prioritise aesthetics, distinctiveness, and innovation in clothes. If the market for eco-apparel is to expand from a niche to a larger customer base, eco-apparel items should offer value that is equivalent to non-eco-apparel (Bly et al., 2015). The fact that many consumers are not interested in them due to their consumption habits, resistance to new technologies, or resistance to the higher prices associated with these new products prevents sales of these products from occurring even though manufacturers have created environmentally friendly products (Jung, H.J. 2020). Therefore, a key component of successful green marketing is having a thorough understanding of the factors that consumers consider when purchasing sustainable clothing (Xiaoyun Zhang, 2020).

This study, which is qualitative in nature, aims to provide a framework that would guide marketers in positioning their sustainable apparel brands in the general market.

The following are the research questions developed for this study:

How can eco-friendly clothing be positioned in the market by adopting a pricing strategy that is comparable to that of fast fashion?

What value components should be enhanced, decreased, added, or removed to give eco-clothing a competitive advantage over regular clothes buyers?

2. Literature Review

a. Apparel customer expected value

The fashion industry is really cutthroat. The availability of goods and their distribution sustains the competitiveness of the garment industry (Bonetti & Schiavone, 2014). Customers are requesting a broader variety of clothing items more frequently and during shorter seasons. This has put pressure on garment manufacturers to offer unique and uncommon attire. Clothing makers attempt to comprehend consumer sentiment and respond swiftly to those needs in order to stay competitive in the industry. The main factors driving competition in the apparel industry have emerged as flexibility in design, excellent quality, and short time to market (Doyle et al., 2006)

2.2. Customer value

Customer value is the benefit customers receive from a product. It discusses customer preferences, how consumers evaluate the characteristics of products, and how well they work (Anderson et al., 2006). Customer value proposition must be produced in order to satisfy customers and answer their needs (Saarijärvi, 2012). The important elements or values that can affect consumers' buying intentions can be thoroughly investigated to produce the customer value proposition (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015).

3. Research method

This study employed secondary data and an exploratory methodology to analyse the research problem. A few frameworks from earlier studies have been used in this investigation.

4. Framework for the Strategy to Position Sustainable Clothing

The positioning and branding of a product on the market are key considerations, and a market with intense competition requires additional marketing methods. The very competitive fashion industry regularly changes to reflect consumer trends. Sustainable apparel needs a strong strategy in place if it wants to become competitive and promote its brands in the general market. This strategy must focus on the cost and availability of apparel in the market because sustainable clothing is pricy and only available online. The following provides the basis for presenting eco-friendly apparel in the general market.

4.1 Raising awareness of the environment

Over the past few decades, pollution, environmental harm, and resource constraint have compelled corporations to focus increasingly on sustainable business practices. Companies that take initiative when they realise it, they modify their business practices. The cost of achieving environmental and social goals decreases with their ability to compete (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). Although the willingness of consumers to pay more for environmentally friendly products is increased by higher CEA, other factors, known as the reference greenness effect, also have an impact on consumers' purchasing choices, such as their expectations for future environmental awareness and the greenness of previous products (Yao., et al., 2021).

4.2. Product Attributes

Customers' decisions to buy sustainable apparel are mostly influenced by product qualities, or aspects of a product that may be associated to it, such as price, variety, and quality (Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire, 2015). The product features that have been emphasised as crucial for consumers making sustainable fashion purchase decisions include price, material/fabric composition that is related to a product's quality or performance, labelling or terminology used to communicate that a product was created in a sustainable manner, and others (Rothenberg, L, 2017).

4.3 Strategic Pricing

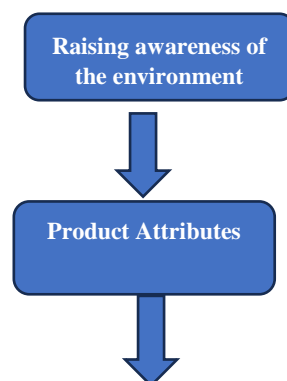
According to various studies, buyers may be unwilling to spend more money on sustainable items even though they have a wonderful chance to show that they are willing to pay more for sustainable clothing when they become aware that some sustainable materials, such as organic cotton, may cost more (Kim, J, 2014). Following selections about product kind, businesses decide on variety and lead time before setting prices (Xia and Rajagopalan, 2009).

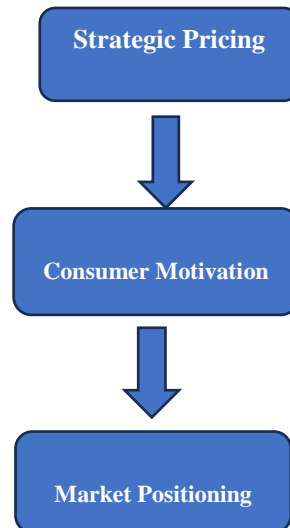
4.4. Consumer Motivation

Role-playing in which shopping is perceived as a chore, diversion, gratification, a way to stay up with the current trends, sensory stimulation, and exercise are some examples of personal motives (Mehta et al., 2014). Hedonic consumers, in contrast to those driven by utilitarian motivation, buy products because they like shopping, rather than because of their utility or other practical benefits. Through research, a number of motivational antecedents have been identified (To, P.L., Liao, 2007). A sensory focus also supports the claim that sustainable consumerism can be motivated by a desire for "enchantment" or the sensory outcomes of selecting alternative consumption rituals, such as purchasing locally and ethically produced food (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

4.5 Market Positioning

It's interesting to notice that shoppers were concerned about the validity of environmental promises made on eco-apparel even when environmental friendliness wasn't the key factor (Saugat Neupane 2021). According to Harris et al. (2016) Customers do not want to spend the extra time required to purchase eco-apparel because they believe it is difficult to understand and recognise such clothing. Eco-apparel producers should create vibrant clothing with appropriate fashion and designs. Eco-apparel companies have so far only offered simple, unattractive garments. Eco-apparel contains minimal, basic colours in contrast to consumer demands for more vibrant and stylish clothing. To appeal to the majority of consumers, eco-apparel must consider these factors.





5. Discussion and Conclusion

Standard socioeconomic background parameters are not as effective at explaining green commitment as lifestyle or psychographic characteristics (Haanpaa, 2007). Marketers must, first and foremost, make sure that consumers can easily obtain all relevant data regarding eco-friendly clothes. Implementing a successful digital marketing strategy for eco-friendly clothes is a wise place to start (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). Convenience is related to saving time and demanding less work, both physically and mentally. This pertains to factors like the accessibility of the stores, the availability of the products or services, and the convenient shopping hours (Gilboa, S., Mitchell, 2020). Customized offerings include alterations to a product's or service's features as well as to the transaction's shipment, packaging, and other details (Dabbous, A., 2020). According to a number of studies that have been published in the literature, important factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions include price, quality, convenience, and brand name.

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