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“Impact of Green Marketing Practices on Business Sustainability of Cotton Textile SMES”

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Abstract

Green marketing has emerged as a strategic approach that enables businesses to achieve sustainable growth while addressing increasing environmental concerns and changing consumer preferences. The cotton textile industry, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), plays a significant role in economic development but faces growing pressure to adopt environmentally responsible business practices. This study examines the impact of green marketing practices on the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs. The research is based on primary data collected from **100 owners and managers of cotton textile SMEs** using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency analysis, percentage analysis, mean, and standard deviation, were employed using SPSS to analyse the data. The findings reveal that respondents have a favourable perception of green marketing practices, with an overall mean score of **3.96**, indicating a high level of agreement regarding their contribution to business sustainability. Among the various dimensions, green marketing ensuring long-term business sustainability recorded the highest mean score (4.14), followed by environmental sustainability (4.06). The study concludes that green product development, eco-friendly packaging, green promotional activities, environmental certifications, and sustainable supply chain management significantly improve customer satisfaction, profitability, environmental performance, and competitive advantage. The study recommends that cotton textile SMEs strengthen green marketing initiatives, invest in sustainable technologies, and obtain environmental certifications to enhance long-term business sustainability and market competitiveness.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Business Sustainability, Cotton Textile SMEs, Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable Supply Chain, Customer Loyalty.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a central concern for businesses worldwide due to increasing environmental degradation, climate change, resource scarcity, and changing consumer preferences. Industries are under growing pressure to reduce their environmental footprint while maintaining economic growth and social responsibility. Among these industries, the textile sector has received significant attention because of its extensive use of water, chemicals, energy, and natural resources.

The cotton textile industry is one of the largest manufacturing sectors globally and contributes substantially to employment generation, export earnings, and economic development. In India, cotton textile SMEs form an important segment of the industrial economy. Despite their economic significance, these enterprises face increasing challenges related to environmental compliance, waste management, and sustainable production.

Green marketing has emerged as an effective strategy to address these challenges. Green marketing refers to the process of designing, promoting, pricing, and distributing products in a manner that minimizes environmental harm and supports sustainable development. It encompasses eco-friendly product design, sustainable packaging, environmental labeling, green advertising, and responsible supply chain management.

Business sustainability refers to the ability of an organization to achieve long-term economic success while maintaining environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Green marketing practices can help cotton textile SMEs improve their sustainability performance by reducing environmental impacts, enhancing customer satisfaction, and strengthening market competitiveness.

This study aims to examine the impact of green marketing practices on business sustainability in cotton textile SMEs using secondary data from various academic and industry sources.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Sharma (2020)** examined the growing importance of sustainability practices within the textile industry and identified environmental regulations and changing consumer preferences as key drivers of sustainable business transformation. The study observed that governments across the world have introduced stricter environmental policies aimed at reducing pollution, conserving natural resources, and encouraging responsible manufacturing practices. These regulations have compelled textile firms to adopt environmentally friendly production methods and sustainable marketing strategies. The study further highlighted that modern consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues and prefer

products that are produced through sustainable and ethical practices. As a result, textile firms are integrating sustainability into their core organizational strategies rather than treating it as a separate activity. The study concluded that sustainability-oriented firms are better positioned to enhance their reputation, comply with regulations, improve operational efficiency, and achieve long-term business success.

2. **Patel and Kumar (2022)** explored the relationship between green marketing practices and customer relationship management in small and medium-sized enterprises. The study reported that green marketing initiatives contribute significantly to building customer trust and fostering long-term business relationships. Consumers increasingly expect businesses to operate transparently and responsibly with regard to environmental issues. The researchers found that companies that actively communicate their sustainability efforts and environmental commitments are more successful in gaining customer confidence. Green marketing practices such as eco-labeling, sustainability reporting, environmentally friendly packaging, and responsible advertising help organizations establish a positive corporate image. The study further highlighted that transparency regarding environmental performance strengthens stakeholder trust and encourages customer retention. The findings suggest that environmental responsibility has become an important factor influencing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business sustainability.

3. **Reddy (2023)** examined the role of sustainable supply chain management in enhancing the sustainability performance of textile SMEs. The study focused on environmentally responsible sourcing, production, transportation, and waste management practices. The findings revealed that sustainable supply chain management plays a critical role in reducing environmental impacts while improving operational efficiency. The researcher observed that textile SMEs adopting sustainable sourcing practices, such as procuring environmentally friendly raw materials and working with responsible suppliers, achieved better sustainability outcomes. Additionally, the implementation of energy-efficient production processes, waste reduction initiatives, and resource conservation measures contributed to improved environmental performance. The study concluded that sustainable supply chain management not only supports environmental sustainability but also enhances economic performance by reducing costs, improving resource utilization, and strengthening organizational competitiveness. The research emphasized that integrating sustainability into supply chain activities is essential for the long-term success of textile SMEs.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The textile industry is often associated with environmental issues such as water pollution, excessive chemical usage, energy consumption, and waste generation. Cotton textile SMEs face increasing pressure from governments, consumers, and stakeholders to adopt environmentally sustainable business practices. Although green marketing offers opportunities for improving sustainability and competitiveness, many

SMEs encounter challenges in implementing green initiatives due to limited financial resources, lack of awareness, technological constraints, and market uncertainties.

While several studies have explored sustainability and green marketing in large organizations, limited attention has been given to cotton textile SMEs. Therefore, there is a need to understand how green marketing practices influence the sustainability performance of cotton textile SMEs and contribute to long-term business success.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To analyze the green marketing practices adopted by cotton textile SMEs.
- To evaluate the impact of green marketing on economic sustainability.
- To suggest measures for enhancing business sustainability through green marketing initiatives.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the impact of green marketing practices on the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs. Primary data were collected from 100 owners and managers of cotton textile SMEs using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The respondents were selected through convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed using SPSS with descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Relevant secondary data were also collected from journals, books, government reports, and other published sources to support the study.

6. GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES IN COTTON TEXTILE SMES

6.1 Green Product Development

Green product development involves designing and manufacturing products that have minimal environmental impacts throughout their life cycle. Cotton textile SMEs increasingly use organic cotton, natural dyes, biodegradable materials, and sustainable manufacturing techniques. Organic cotton cultivation reduces the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, thereby minimizing environmental degradation. Similarly, natural dyes reduce water pollution and improve environmental performance. Sustainable product development also enhances customer confidence and supports environmentally conscious consumption.

6.2 Eco-Friendly Packaging

Packaging plays an important role in green marketing. Traditional packaging materials contribute significantly to environmental pollution. Cotton textile SMEs are increasingly adopting recyclable, biodegradable, and reusable packaging materials. Eco-friendly packaging not only reduces environmental impacts but also strengthens the green image of organizations. Consumers often perceive sustainable packaging as an indicator of corporate responsibility and environmental commitment.

6.3 Green Promotion

Green promotion involves communicating the environmental benefits of products and services to consumers. It includes environmental advertising, sustainability campaigns, eco-labeling, digital marketing, and green branding. Through effective green promotion, textile SMEs can educate consumers about sustainable products and encourage environmentally responsible purchasing behavior. Green promotional activities also enhance brand recognition and customer loyalty.

6.4 Environmental Certifications

Environmental certifications serve as evidence of an organization's commitment to sustainability. Certifications related to organic cotton production, environmental management systems, and sustainable manufacturing practices enhance credibility and market acceptance. For cotton textile SMEs, certifications facilitate access to domestic and international markets where environmental standards play an increasingly important role in purchasing decisions.

6.5 Sustainable Supply Chain Management

Sustainable supply chain management focuses on integrating environmental considerations into sourcing, production, transportation, and distribution activities. Cotton textile SMEs adopting sustainable supply chain practices aim to reduce waste, conserve resources, minimize emissions, and improve operational efficiency. Such practices contribute significantly to environmental and economic sustainability.

Table 1: Green Marketing Practices and Business Sustainability among Cotton Textile SMEs

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Green product development improves product quality and customer satisfaction.	32	46	12	8	2	3.98	0.86
Eco-friendly packaging enhances the brand image of the enterprise.	30	44	15	8	3	3.90	0.89

Green promotional activities increase customer awareness and purchase intention.	28	47	15	7	3	3.91	0.82
Environmental certifications improve market competitiveness.	26	49	14	8	3	3.87	0.91
Sustainable supply chain management improves operational efficiency.	29	48	13	7	3	3.94	0.84
Green marketing practices increase customer loyalty.	34	43	12	8	3	3.97	0.80
Green marketing practices improve business profitability.	31	45	13	8	3	3.93	0.88
Green marketing practices contribute to environmental sustainability.	38	42	11	6	3	4.06	0.79
Green marketing strengthens the social responsibility of the enterprise.	30	46	14	7	3	3.92	0.85
Green marketing ensures long-term business sustainability.	40	43	10	5	2	4.14	0.76

Source: SPSS Output

Graph: 1 Green Marketing Practices and Business Sustainability among Cotton Textile SMEs

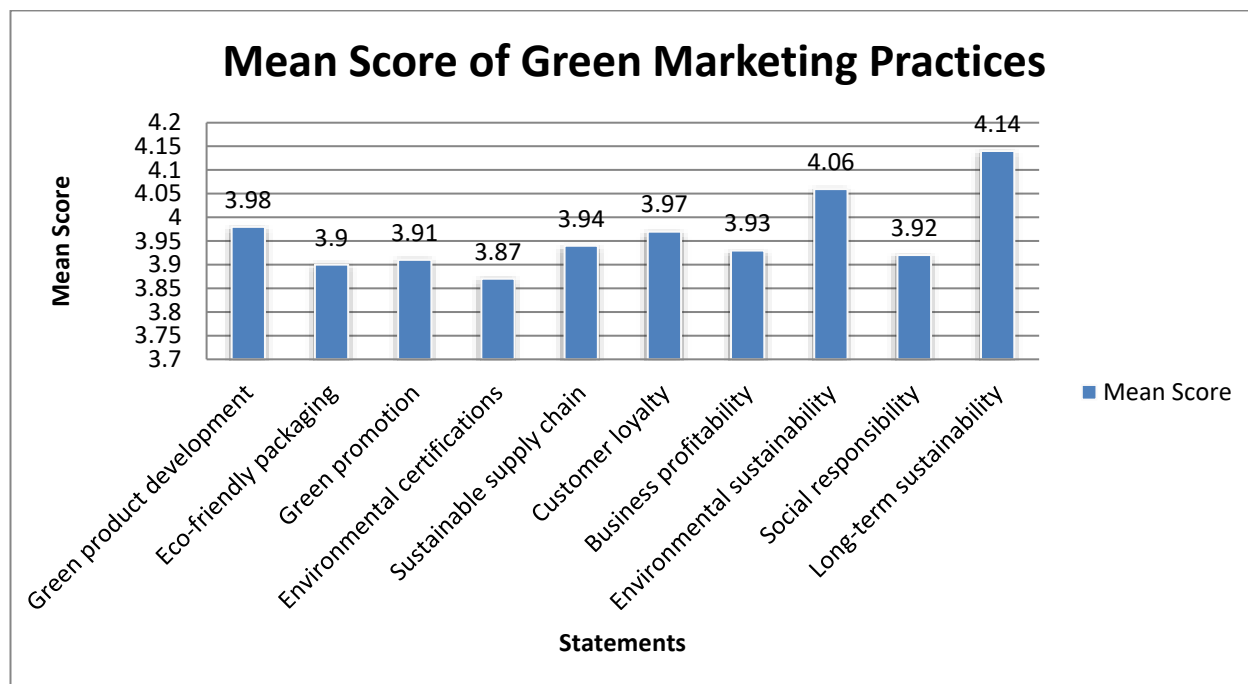


Table 1 presents the respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of green marketing practices on the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs based on a survey of 100 respondents. The analysis indicates that the majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with all the statements, demonstrating a positive attitude towards the adoption of green marketing practices.

The statement "Green marketing ensures long-term business sustainability" recorded the highest mean score of 4.14 with a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating strong agreement among respondents and a high level of consistency in their responses. This finding suggests that the respondents perceive green marketing as an essential strategy for achieving sustainable business growth, improving organizational resilience, and maintaining long-term competitiveness.

The statement "Green marketing practices contribute to environmental sustainability" obtained the second-highest mean score (Mean = 4.06, SD = 0.79), indicating that most respondents strongly believe that adopting green marketing practices helps reduce environmental pollution, conserve natural resources, and promote environmentally responsible production processes.

Similarly, the statements "Green product development improves product quality and customer satisfaction" (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.86) and "Green marketing practices increase customer loyalty" (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.80) also received high mean scores. These results suggest that environmentally friendly products not only enhance customer satisfaction but also strengthen customer trust and encourage repeat purchases, thereby contributing to business growth.

The respondents also expressed positive opinions regarding sustainable supply chain management (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.84) and green marketing practices improving business profitability (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.88). These findings indicate that integrating sustainability into sourcing, production, and distribution activities helps improve operational efficiency, reduce production costs, and enhance overall financial performance.

Furthermore, the statements related to green promotional activities (Mean = 3.91, SD = 0.82), eco-friendly packaging (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.89), environmental certifications (Mean = 3.87, SD = 0.91), and social responsibility (Mean = 3.92, SD = 0.85) also received favourable responses from the respondents. These findings imply that effective communication of environmental initiatives, sustainable packaging, recognized environmental certifications, and socially responsible business practices significantly enhance corporate image, customer confidence, and market competitiveness.

The overall mean score of approximately 3.96 indicates a high level of agreement among the respondents regarding the effectiveness of green marketing practices in promoting business sustainability. The standard deviation values ranging from 0.76 to 0.91 show relatively low variability in the responses, indicating that respondents had consistent opinions across all the statements. Therefore, it can be concluded that green marketing practices have a significant positive influence on the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of cotton textile SMEs and play a vital role in ensuring their long-term growth and competitive advantage.

7. IMPACT OF GREEN MARKETING ON BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

7.1 Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the ability of an organization to maintain profitability and growth over the long term. Green marketing contributes to economic sustainability in several ways. First, environmentally responsible products attract a growing segment of consumers who prioritize sustainability. This leads to increased sales and market opportunities. Second, green branding enhances customer loyalty and strengthens competitive advantage. Third, resource-efficient production processes reduce operational costs and improve profitability. Many textile enterprises have reported improved financial performance after implementing green marketing strategies. The ability to differentiate products through environmental attributes provides a significant market advantage in increasingly competitive markets.

7.2 Environmental Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is one of the primary outcomes of green marketing practices. By promoting eco-friendly products and sustainable production processes, cotton textile SMEs can significantly reduce their environmental footprint. Green marketing encourages the adoption of cleaner technologies, waste reduction initiatives, water conservation measures, and energy-efficient production systems. These practices help minimize pollution and support environmental protection. The use of organic cotton and sustainable materials reduces the environmental impacts associated with conventional textile production. Similarly, eco-friendly packaging and waste management practices contribute to resource conservation and environmental sustainability.

7.3 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability focuses on the well-being of employees, customers, communities, and society. Green marketing practices contribute to social sustainability by promoting ethical business conduct, responsible production, and stakeholder engagement. Organizations that prioritize environmental responsibility often demonstrate greater commitment to employee welfare, workplace safety, and community development. Green marketing also enhances transparency and strengthens trust among stakeholders. Consumers increasingly expect businesses to operate responsibly and contribute positively to society. Therefore, green marketing helps organizations build stronger relationships with customers and communities.

8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study examined the impact of green marketing practices on the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs. Based on the analysis of responses from 100 respondents, the following major findings were observed:

1. The majority of respondents agreed that green marketing practices positively influence the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs, with an overall mean score of approximately 3.96, indicating a high level of agreement.
2. Green marketing ensures long-term business sustainability received the highest mean score (Mean = 4.14; SD = 0.76), indicating that respondents strongly perceive green marketing as an effective strategy for achieving sustainable business growth and maintaining long-term competitiveness.
3. Environmental sustainability was identified as one of the major benefits of green marketing practices (Mean = 4.06; SD = 0.79), reflecting strong agreement that environmentally responsible practices help conserve natural resources and reduce pollution.
4. Respondents agreed that green product development (Mean = 3.98) and customer loyalty (Mean = 3.97) significantly contribute to improving customer satisfaction, product acceptance, and repeat purchasing behaviour.
5. Sustainable supply chain management (Mean = 3.94) and green marketing for business profitability (Mean = 3.93) were perceived as important factors that improve operational efficiency, reduce production costs, and enhance financial performance.
6. Respondents also expressed favourable opinions regarding social responsibility (Mean = 3.92), green promotional activities (Mean = 3.91), eco-friendly packaging (Mean = 3.90), and environmental certifications (Mean = 3.87), indicating that these practices strengthen corporate image, customer trust, and market competitiveness.
7. The relatively low standard deviation values (0.76–0.91) indicate consistency in respondents' opinions regarding the effectiveness of green marketing practices.

9. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are recommended:

1. Cotton textile SMEs should increase investment in green product development by adopting organic cotton, eco-friendly dyes, and sustainable manufacturing technologies.
2. Enterprises should strengthen eco-friendly packaging practices to improve brand image and reduce environmental pollution.
3. Green promotional campaigns should be expanded through digital marketing and environmental awareness programmes to educate consumers about sustainable products.
4. SMEs should obtain recognized environmental certifications to enhance customer confidence and improve access to domestic and international markets.

5. Sustainable supply chain management should be integrated into procurement, production, transportation, and distribution activities to improve operational efficiency.
6. Government agencies should provide financial incentives, subsidies, and technical assistance to encourage SMEs to adopt green marketing practices.
7. Regular training and awareness programmes should be conducted for SME owners and employees to improve knowledge of sustainable business practices.
8. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of environmental performance should be undertaken to ensure long-term business sustainability and competitiveness.

10. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that green marketing practices play a significant role in enhancing the business sustainability of cotton textile SMEs. The findings indicate that the adoption of green product development, eco-friendly packaging, green promotional activities, environmental certifications, and sustainable supply chain management contributes positively to economic performance, environmental protection, and social responsibility. The high mean scores across all variables demonstrate that respondents have a favourable perception of green marketing and recognize its importance in improving competitiveness, customer loyalty, profitability, and long-term organizational success.

Furthermore, green marketing enables cotton textile SMEs to meet the increasing demand for environmentally responsible products while complying with sustainability standards and market expectations. Although the implementation of green initiatives may require additional investment and technological support, the long-term benefits in terms of business growth, operational efficiency, and environmental conservation outweigh the associated costs. Therefore, cotton textile SMEs should continue to integrate green marketing strategies into their business operations to achieve sustainable development and strengthen their competitive position in both domestic and global markets.

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