

SUSTAINABLE RETAILING PRACTICES ADOPTED BY ORGANIZED RETAILERS IN COIMBATORE

Dr. V. Kanimozhi¹

Assistant Professor¹, Department of Management Sciences,

Hindusthan College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

kanimozhiv.mba@hicet.ac.in; kanimozhi.viswanathan@gmail.com

S. Varun²

Student - II MBA², Department of Management Sciences,

Hindusthan College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

720721206052@hicet.ac.in; malikavarun11@gmail.com

Corresponding author: Dr. V. Kanimozhi¹

ABSTRACT:

This article explores the concept of sustainable retailing practices and examines the level of awareness, adoption, challenges, and perceived benefits among organized retailers. The study utilizes a cross-sectional survey design and collects data through self-administered surveys or questionnaires. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of retailers have some level of awareness and adoption of sustainable retailing practices, such as using LED lights and sustainable packaging materials. However, there are challenges in terms of lack of information, increasing costs, and perceived lack of customer demand for sustainable products. The study highlights the need for retailers to enhance their knowledge and resources to effectively implement sustainable practices in the retail sector.

Keywords: Sustainable development goals, retailing, sustainable retailing practices, awareness, adoption, challenges, perceived benefits, cross-sectional survey, LED lights, sustainable packaging, information, costs, customer demand.

I Introduction :

(Sustainable Development Goals) :

The Sustainable Development Goals or Global Goals are a collection of seventeen interlinked objectives designed to serve as a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet now and into the future". The SDGs are: no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitation; affordable and clean energy; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace, justice, and strong institutions; and partnerships for the goals. The SDGs emphasize the interconnected environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development by putting sustainability at their center. The SDGs were formulated in 2015 by the United Nations

General Assembly (UNGA) as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which sought to create a future global development framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals, which ended that year. They were formally articulated and adopted in a UNGA resolution called the 2030 Agenda, known colloquially as Agenda 2030. On 6 July 2017, the SDGs were made more actionable by a UNGA resolution that identifies specific targets for each goal and provides indicators to measure progress. Most targets are to be achieved by 2030, although some have no end date.

(Retailing) :

Retailing, the selling of merchandise and certain services to consumers. It ordinarily involves the selling of individual units or small lots to large numbers of customers by a business set up for that specific purpose. In the broadest sense, retailing can be said to have begun the first time one item of value was bartered for another. the more restricted sense of a specialized full-time commercial activity, retailing began several thousand years ago when peddlers first began hawking their wares and when the first marketplaces were formed. As with most other business activities, retailing is extremely competitive, and the mortality rate of retail establishments is relatively high. The basic competition is based on price, but, for brick-and-mortar retailers (those that operate within a physical building), this is moderated somewhat by non-price forms of competition such as convenience of location, selection and display of merchandise, attractiveness of the retail establishment itself, and intangible factors such as reputation in the community. Competition for sales has led to a blurring of traditional product lines in retailing, and many establishments offer a much wider variety of merchandise than their basic classification would indicate (e.g., drugstores may carry food, clothing, office supplies, hardware, etc.). Some retailers specialize in merchandise sold in bulk, while others, notably Walmart, created extremely large superstores offering groceries as well as an enormous variety of other goods at discounted prices. The advent of the Internet and its increasing use for e-commerce in the 1990s resulted in a revolutionary shift in retailing away from brick-and-mortar stores and toward online retailing, in which customers shop for and purchase merchandise through personal computers, mobile phones, or other Internet-connected devices. Many established retailers began selling merchandise online to customers who appreciated the convenience of shopping from their homes, while new wholly online retailers and “e-malls,” led by eBay (an online auction site) and Amazon.com, enjoyed spectacular growth. By the 2010s those trends had led to significant declines in sales at many brick-and-mortar retailers, though a large majority of retail purchases in the United States and elsewhere continued to take place in physical stores.

1.1 Need for the Study :

Academic Contribution: The study can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sustainable retailing practices. It can provide empirical evidence and case studies specific to Coimbatore, thereby adding to the understanding of sustainable retailing practices in a regional context.

Environmental Impact: Sustainable retailing practices have the potential to reduce the environmental impact of retail operations. By studying the practices adopted by organized retailers in Coimbatore, you can assess their efforts in areas such as waste management, energy conservation, sustainable sourcing, packaging, and transportation. The findings can help identify effective strategies and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices in the retail sector.

Business Relevance: Sustainable practices can have economic benefits for retailers. Studying the sustainable retailing practices in Coimbatore can shed light on the business benefits, such as cost savings, improved brand image, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage. This information can be useful for retailers in Coimbatore and other regions looking to enhance their sustainability efforts.

Local Perspective: Coimbatore has its own unique characteristics, including consumer preferences, market dynamics, and environmental challenges. By focusing on organized retailers in Coimbatore, the study can provide insights tailored to the local context. This localized perspective can help retailers and policymakers make informed decisions and develop strategies that are relevant and effective for the region.

Stakeholder Engagement: The study can involve engagement with various stakeholders, including retailers, consumers, government bodies, and non-governmental organizations. This engagement can foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and awareness about sustainable retailing practices. It can also create opportunities for retailers to learn from each other, exchange best practices, and collaborate on sustainability initiatives.

1.2 Objectives :

- To identify the level of awareness about various sustainable retailing practices that can be adopted by organized retailers
- To identify the sustainable retailing practices adopted by organized Retailers
- To examine the challenges faced by the organized retailers in adopting of sustainable retailing practices
- To identify the perceived benefits in adopting sustainable retailing practices

1.3 Research Methodology :

Study Design: A cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data on various aspects of sustainable retailing practices.

Sampling: A targeted sampling approach was used to select participants who are involved in the retail sector. The sample size and selection criteria should be provided separately, as they are not mentioned in the given findings.

Data Collection: Data was collected through self-administered surveys or questionnaires distributed to the selected respondents. The survey might have been conducted in person, through email, or an online survey platform.

Variables and Measures: The survey included questions related to various demographic factors (e.g., gender, education) and specific aspects of sustainable retailing practices (e.g., awareness levels, adoption, challenges, perceived benefits). The response options provided in the findings suggest that Likert scale or categorical response formats were used.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The percentages mentioned in the findings indicate the frequency or proportion of respondents falling into different categories or response options.

Limitations: It is important to acknowledge potential limitations of the study, such as the sample representativeness, self-report biases, and any potential limitations associated with the survey instrument or data collection process.

II Findings

- ✓ 73.3% of the respondents are Male
- ✓ 55.8% of the respondents are Graduate
- ✓ 49.2% of the respondents are Other Employees
- ✓ 100% of the respondents are doing business in Offline
- ✓ 58.3% of the respondents are doing other businesses

- ✓ 77.5% of the respondents are Some what familiar with the concept of Sustainable Retailing Practices
- ✓ 77.5% of the respondents are have chosen Yes, to some extent to Sustainable Retailing Practices
- ✓ Among the respondents, the highest percentage was attributed to individuals who were "Aware" at 63.33%. This suggests a significant level of knowledge and understanding regarding the Usage of LED Lights
- ✓ Among the respondents, The highest percentage of individuals falls into the "Unaware" category, accounting for 34% of the total frequency.
- ✓ The highest percentage, accounting for 34%, falls under the category of being unaware of solar panels.
- ✓ The highest percentage is attributed to the category of individuals who are "unaware" of such an option, accounting for 33% of the total.
- ✓ The highest percentage falls under the category of being aware, with 43%. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents has knowledge of using sustainable packaging materials.
- ✓ The highest percentage of individuals falls under the category of being "neither aware nor unaware" at 35%. These individuals have a medium level of consciousness regarding water conservation.
- ✓ The highest percentage of individuals falls under the category of being "Unaware" of the usage of water sensors in washrooms, accounting for 36% of the surveyed population.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 33%, were highly unaware of rainwater harvesting. Following closely behind were those who were simply unaware, comprising 32% of the respondents.
- ✓ The highest percentage is represented by the category of "Unaware," accounting for 40%. This indicates that a significant portion of the retailers surveyed have little to no knowledge or information about natural manufacturers as potential sourcing options.
- ✓ The majority of retailers fell into the "Unaware" category, with 35% acknowledging their lack of knowledge about Fair trade products.
- ✓ The highest percentage of respondents falls under the category of being highly unaware, accounting for 25% of the total. This indicates a lack of knowledge or understanding among a significant portion of retailers regarding the promotion of local products.
- ✓ The highest percentage at 37%, fall under the category of "Unaware." This group consists of retailers who have a limited understanding of promoting organic products.
- ✓ The responses were categorized into different levels of awareness and frequency. The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 79%, indicated that they often use LED lights in their retail spaces.
- ✓ The highest percentage (30%) of retailers stated that they never adopt this practice Retailers (Maximum Natural lighting in store)
- ✓ The highest percentage, accounting for 34%, falls under the category of being unaware of solar panels. This group may have limited knowledge or understanding of solar energy and its benefits.
- ✓ The highest percentage is attributed to the category of individuals who are "unaware" of such an option, accounting for 33% of the total. This group may have limited knowledge or understanding of solar energy and its benefits.
- ✓ The highest percentage falls under the category of being aware, with 43%. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents has knowledge of using sustainable packaging materials.
- ✓ The highest percentage of individuals falls under the category of being "neither aware nor unaware" at 35%. These individuals have a medium level of consciousness regarding water conservation.

- ✓ The highest percentage of individuals falls under the category of being "Unaware" of the usage of water sensors in washrooms, accounting for 36% of the surveyed population.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 33%, were highly unaware of rainwater harvesting. Following closely behind were those who were simply unaware, comprising 32% of the respondents.
- ✓ The highest percentage is represented by the category of "Unaware," accounting for 40%. This indicates that a significant portion of the retailers surveyed have little to no knowledge or information about natural manufacturers as potential sourcing options
- ✓ The majority of retailers fell into the "Unaware" category, with 35% acknowledging their lack of knowledge about Fair trade products.
- ✓ The highest percentage of respondents falls under the category of being highly unaware, accounting for 25% of the total. This indicates a lack of knowledge or understanding among a significant portion of retailers regarding the promotion of local products.
- ✓ The highest percentage at 37%, fall under the category of "Unaware." This group consists of retailers who have a limited understanding of promoting organic products.
- ✓ The responses were categorized into different levels of awareness and frequency. The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 79%, indicated that they often use LED lights in their retail spaces.
- ✓ The highest percentage (30%) of retailers stated that they never adopt this practice. This indicates that people are not using the practice Maximum Natural lighting in store.
- ✓ The majority, accounting for 55% of the total, indicated that they often employed these sustainable practices. This indicates a commendable level of awareness and commitment to sustainability within the retail sector.
- ✓ The majority of the retailers, constituting 34%, responded that they never display water conservation boards in their stores, indicating a lack of awareness or initiative towards this sustainable practice.
- ✓ The highest percentage reported in the "Never" category at 47%. This suggests that a significant portion of retailers have no awareness or knowledge about the implementation of water sensors in washrooms.
- ✓ The majority (68%) indicated that they have never adopted rainwater harvesting as a sustainable retailing practice
- ✓ The highest percentage is observed in the "Never" category, with 49% of retailers stating that they never adopt these practice, Sourcing products from natural manufacturers.
- ✓ The highest percentage (35%) mentioned that they never engage in Fair trade products. This suggests a lack of awareness or unwillingness to adopt Fair trade products.
- ✓ The highest percentage of respondents, comprising 36%, indicated that they never engage in such practices, suggesting a significant lack of awareness or interest in promoting local products.
- ✓ The majority of the retailers, constituting 50% have never prioritized sustainable retailing practices. This indicates a lack of awareness or a limited commitment to promoting organic products within their establishments.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers (42%) strongly agree that lack of information is a major challenge they face in adopting sustainable retailing practices.
- ✓ The majority of retailers, accounting for 56% of the respondents, agreed that increasing costs pose a challenge to adopting sustainable retailing practices.

- ✓ The highest percentage of them face the challenge of awareness when adopting sustainable retailing practices, with 14% strongly agreeing and 43% agreeing. This suggests that a significant portion of retailers recognize the need for sustainable practices but may lack sufficient awareness or understanding of how to implement them effectively.
- ✓ The highest percentage of respondents, accounting for 52%, agreed that they face challenge Perceived uncertainty in adopting sustainable retailing practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 52%, agreed that they faced challenges in this area. This suggests that a significant portion of retailers acknowledged the need for change but also recognized the difficulties associated with implementing sustainable practices.
- ✓ The most significant challenge faced by retailers in adopting sustainable retailing practices is the perceived lack of customer demand for sustainable products, with 64% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.
- ✓ The highest percentage was recorded for the "Agree" category, accounting for 46% of the responses. This suggests that a significant portion of retailers acknowledges the existence of regulatory constraints affecting their adoption of sustainable practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 53%, agreed that they face this challenge. These retailers recognize the need for sustainable products but struggle to find them in the market.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 53%, agreed that they face this challenge. These retailers recognize the need for sustainable products but struggle to find them in the market.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers (63%) agreed that they face challenges in this area, indicating a significant recognition of the difficulties.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers (61%) agree that maintaining cost competitiveness is a challenge when adopting sustainable retailing practices. This suggests that a significant portion of retailers acknowledge the financial difficulties associated with implementing sustainable practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage (60%) of them agreed that a lack of financial resources is a challenge in adopting sustainable retailing practices.
- ✓ The majority of retailers, accounting for 58% of the respondents, agreed that the lack of staff resources is a significant challenge. This indicates that a considerable portion of retailers is aware of the issue and acknowledges its impact on their ability to implement sustainable practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, accounting for 56%, agreed that they face challenges due to a lack of knowledge. This indicates that a significant portion of retailers recognizes the need to enhance their understanding of sustainable retailing practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage of respondents (55%) agreed that lack of expertise is a significant challenge faced by retailers in adopting sustainable retailing practices. This indicates that a majority of retailers are aware of their limited knowledge and skills in implementing sustainable practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage was for the "Agree" category at 59%. This indicates that a significant portion of the retailers acknowledged the presence of a challenge related to the lack of consumer demand for sustainable products.
- ✓ The majority of retailers (50%) disagreed that adopting sustainable retailing practices, specifically in terms of ease of access to funding, offered perceived benefits.

- ✓ The results show that the highest percentage of retailers, 50%, disagreed with the notion that adopting sustainable retailing practices would provide them with improved access to resources.
- ✓ The highest percentage was for retailers who strongly disagreed with the benefits, accounting for 52% of the responses. This indicates that a significant portion of retailers did not perceive any benefits from adopting sustainable practices.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers (45%) strongly agree that adopting sustainable retailing practices improves their brand image. This indicates that a significant portion of retailers recognizes the positive impact of sustainable practices on their brand perception.
- ✓ The highest percentage, strongly agree (33%) that adopting sustainable retailing practices enhances their reputation. This suggests that they believe implementing sustainability measures positively impacts their image in the eyes of consumers and the public.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, at 42%, strongly agree that sustainable retailing practices lead to enhanced customer loyalty. Similarly, an equal percentage of retailers, 42%, agree with this statement.
- ✓ The highest percentage is found in the "Agree" category, with 60 responses, representing 50% of the total. Retailers in this category strongly believe that sustainable retailing practices lead to increased customer satisfaction.
- ✓ The highest percentage was for the response "Agree," with 44% of retailers acknowledging the perceived benefits of sustainable retailing practices in terms of cost savings.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, 49%, agreed that they perceive benefits from adopting these practices, indicating a positive stance towards sustainability.
- ✓ The highest percentage of retailers, with 47%, agreed that adopting sustainable retailing practices would bring about increased sales.

III Suggestions

- ❖ Gender-focused initiatives: Since 73.3% of the respondents are male, it might be beneficial to implement gender-focused initiatives or programs to encourage more female participation and representation in sustainable retailing practices.
- ❖ Educational campaigns: With 55.8% of the respondents being graduates, it indicates a higher level of education among the participants. Capitalize on this by organizing educational campaigns and workshops to further increase awareness and understanding of sustainable retailing practices.
- ❖ Online presence: Since 100% of the respondents are doing business offline, consider expanding their reach by encouraging online presence and e-commerce platforms. This can help retailers tap into a wider customer base and reduce their environmental impact through reduced physical infrastructure.
- ❖ Diversify sustainable practices: While LED lights seem to have high awareness and adoption, other sustainable practices such as natural lighting, solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and sourcing from natural manufacturers have low awareness. Focus on educating retailers about these practices and their benefits to encourage wider adoption.
- ❖ Sustainable packaging materials: Since a significant percentage (43%) of respondents are aware of using sustainable packaging materials, retailers should actively promote and utilize such materials to cater to consumer demand and differentiate themselves in the market.
- ❖ Water conservation initiatives: With a considerable percentage of retailers falling into the "unaware" or "neither aware nor unaware" categories for water conservation practices, provide targeted training and resources to enhance their knowledge and encourage the adoption of water-saving measures such as water sensors in washrooms.

- ❖ Fair trade and local products: Given the lack of knowledge or understanding about fair trade and local products among retailers, initiatives such as workshops, collaborations with fair trade organizations, or local producer showcases can help increase awareness and encourage retailers to support these sustainable sourcing options.
- ❖ Overcoming challenges: The findings indicate various challenges faced by retailers, including lack of information, increasing costs, and perceived uncertainty. Provide support and resources to address these challenges, such as organizing information sessions, offering financial assistance or incentives, and providing guidance on sustainable retailing practices.
- ❖ Benefits of sustainable practices: Emphasize the positive outcomes of adopting sustainable retailing practices, such as improved brand image, reputation, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and potential cost savings. Highlight success stories and case studies to showcase the benefits and encourage retailers to embrace sustainability.
- ❖ Collaboration and knowledge sharing: Foster collaboration among retailers, industry associations, and sustainability experts to create a platform for sharing best practices, exchanging knowledge, and collectively addressing challenges. This can help create a supportive environment for sustainable retailing initiatives.

IV Conclusion

By addressing the gender gap, educational campaigns, and online presence, retailers can enhance diversity, expand knowledge, and reach a wider customer base while reducing their environmental impact. Diversifying sustainable practices, promoting sustainable packaging materials, and increasing awareness of water conservation and fair trade/local products will further advance sustainability efforts. Overcoming challenges through support, resources, and highlighting the benefits of sustainability will motivate retailers to adopt these practices. Collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders will create a supportive environment for continuous improvement and innovation in sustainable retailing. By implementing these strategies, retailers can contribute to a more sustainable future while also reaping the benefits of increased customer loyalty and brand reputation.

V Bibliography

Bibliography

- Antonio Marín-García, I. G.-S.-M.-C. (2021, January 19). Sustainability, Store Equity, and Satisfaction: The Moderating. *MDPI Journal*, 1-21. Retrieved April 2023, 24, from <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13021010>
- Biswajit Sarkar, B. K. (2021, February 6). A Sustainable Online-to-Offline (O2O) Retailing Strategy for a Supply Chain Management under Controllable Lead Time and Variable Demand. *MDPI*, 1 - 26. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su13041756>
- Bolton, R. N. (2019, August 26). Responsible Research in Retailing: Is Your Research Really Useful? *Journal of Retailing*, 0-1. Retrieved April 10, 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2019.08.005>
- Christian Fuentes, P. E. (2019). Unpacking package free shopping: Alternative retailing and the reinvention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 50, 258-264. Retrieved April 12, 2023, from <https://www.elsevier.com/locate/jretconser>
- Dhruv Grewal a, *. D. (2021, February 28). Strategizing Retailing in the New Technology Era. *Journal of Retailing*, 6-12. Retrieved April 17, 2023 , from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2021.02.004>

- Ismail Erol, N. C. (2008, October 20). Sustainability in the Turkish Retailing Industry. *Wiley InterScience*, 50 - 67. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/sd.369>
- Lang, C. M. (2013). Sustainable Product Service Systems: The New Frontier in Apparel Retailing? *RJTA*, Vol. 17, 1 - 12. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from file:///C:/Users/varun%20sankar/Desktop/Articles/SustainableProductServiceSystems-TheNewFrontierinApparelRetailing.pdf
- Marcus Saber, A. W. (2019). Sustainable grocery retailing: Myth or reality?—A . *Journal of the W. Michael Hoffman*, 479 - 496. Retrieved April 2023, 24, from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/basr.12187>
- Peter Jones, D. C. (2016). MATERIALITY IN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING WITHIN UK RETAILING. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 1 - 17. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/pa.1570/abstract;jsessionid=6C7D6D2D23C8403470AE685A7197FC76.f02t03>
- Suheela Shabir1, N. A. (2021, 9). Sustainable Retailing Performance of Zara during COVID-19 Pandemic. *Suheela Shabir1, Norah Ali AlBishri*, 1013-1029. Retrieved April 26, 2023, from <https://www.scirp.org/journal/ojbm>
- Yang, S. (2017, JUL 17). Sustainable Retailing in the Fashion Industry. *MDPI*, 1-19. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from <http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability>
- Yeming Gong, J. L. (2019, March 28). When to increase firms' sustainable operations for efficiency? A data envelopment analysis in the retailing industry. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 1010 - 1026. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejor.2019.03.019>
- Yi He, Q. X. (2020, October 30). Impacts of the BOPS Option on Sustainable Retailing. *MDPI*, 1-16. Retrieved April 2023, 24, from <https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su12208600>
- Yoonjae Bae, J. C. (2022, March 10). Technology-Based Strategies for Online Secondhand Platforms Promoting Sustainable Retailing. *MDPI*, 1 - 37. Retrieved April 2023, 24, from <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14063259>