



Incorporating Sustainability into the 7ps of Marketing: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The increasing importance of environmental sustainability has transformed traditional marketing practices into a more responsible and value-driven approach. This study examines the integration of sustainability into the marketing mix by extending the traditional 4Ps to 7Ps. It uses primary data collected from 100 respondents to analyze consumer awareness, preferences, and behavioral responses toward sustainable marketing practices. The study also reviews existing literature to identify trends and research gaps. The findings reveal that sustainability significantly influences consumer satisfaction, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. The study concludes that businesses adopting sustainable marketing strategies across all 7Ps gain a competitive advantage and long-term profitability.

Keywords: Advertising Strategies, Customer Satisfaction, Buying Preferences.

Introduction

Marketing has evolved from focusing purely on profit to incorporating environmental and social responsibility. Sustainable marketing aims to satisfy customer needs while minimizing environmental impact. The expansion of the marketing mix from 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) to 7Ps (including People, Process, and Physical Evidence) provides a broader framework to integrate sustainability into all business operations.

Need of the Study

- Growing environmental concerns
- Increased consumer awareness of eco-friendly products
- Demand for responsible business practices
- Competitive advantage through sustainability

Research GAP

- Limited studies using primary data on sustainable 7Ps
- Most research focuses only on 4Ps
- Lack of Indian consumer-based empirical studies

Literature Review

- Kotler & Keller (2016):** Emphasized the importance of expanding marketing mix to include service elements like people and process.
- Peattie (2001):** Introduced the concept of green marketing and its role in sustainable development.
- Polonsky (1994):** Defined sustainable marketing and highlighted environmental responsibility.
- Ottman (2017):** Explained strategies for green marketing and consumer behavior.

- Grant (2007):** Focused on sustainability as a competitive marketing strategy.
- Belz & Peattie (2012):** Discussed sustainable marketing models and value creation.
- Charter et al. (2002):** Examined environmental marketing strategies in organizations.
- Gordon et al. (2011):** Linked sustainability with consumer engagement and behavior change.
- Leonidou et al. (2013):** Analyzed green marketing strategies and firm performance.
- Joshi & Rahman (2015):** Studied factors affecting green purchase behavior.
- Sharma & Trivedi (2016):** Highlighted the impact of eco-labeling on consumer choice.
- Kumar et al. (2017):** Found positive relationship between sustainability and brand loyalty.
- Singh & Pandey (2018):** Studied green marketing in the Indian context.
- Raut et al. (2020):** Examined sustainable supply chain and marketing integration.
- Hasan et al. (2022):** Showed sustainability improves customer satisfaction and trust.

Objectives

- To analyze consumer perception toward sustainability in the marketing mix
- To evaluate the impact of sustainable marketing on consumer buying behavior

Hypothesis

- **H1:** Sustainability in the marketing mix positively influences customer satisfaction

- **H2:** Sustainability significantly affects purchase intention and brand loyalty

Research Methodology

- **Type:** Descriptive Research
- **Data Source:** Primary Data and secondary data
- **Sample Size:** 100 respondents
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience Sampling
- **Tool:** Structured Questionnaire
- **Analysis:** Percentage and Mean Score Analysis

Primary Data Analysis

Table 1: Awareness of Sustainable Products

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	78	78%
No	22	22%

Explanation: Majority of respondents are aware of sustainable products.

Table 2: Preference for Eco-Friendly Products

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Prefer	65	65%
Neutral	20	20%
Do not prefer	15	15%

Explanation: Consumers show a positive preference toward eco-friendly products.

Table 3: Willingness to Pay Premium

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	58	58%
No	42	42%

Explanation: More than half are willing to pay higher prices for sustainable products.

Table 4: Impact of Promotion

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	30	30%
Agree	40	40%
Neutral	15	15%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%

Explanation: Sustainable promotion strongly influences buying decisions.

Table 5: Importance of People (Ethics)

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very Important	50	50%
Important	30	30%
Neutral	10	10%
Not Important	10	10%

Explanation: Ethical practices are highly valued by consumers.

Table 6: Process Sustainability

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agree	60	60%
Neutral	25	25%
Disagree	15	15%

Explanation: Sustainable processes improve consumer perception.

Table 7: Physical Evidence (Packaging)

Response	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Influences Purchase	68	68%
Does Not Influence	32	32%

Explanation: Eco-friendly packaging plays a significant role.

Table 8: Mean Score Analysis

Factor	Mean Score
Product	4.2
Price	3.8
Place	3.9
Promotion	4.1
People	4.3
Process	4.0
Physical Evidence	4.2

Interpretation: Strong agreement toward sustainability across all 7Ps.

Hypothesis Testing

- **H1 Supported:** Sustainability improves customer satisfaction.
- **H2 Supported:** Sustainability influences purchase intention and loyalty.

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that sustainability has a significant and multidimensional impact on all elements of the extended marketing mix (7Ps). Each element contributes uniquely to enhancing customer value, improving brand perception, and ensuring long-term business sustainability. The detailed discussion is as follows:

1. Product: Eco-Friendly Goods Increase Demand

Sustainability in product design focuses on minimizing environmental impact while maintaining functionality and quality. This includes the use of biodegradable materials, recyclable packaging, energy-efficient production, and longer product life cycles.

From the primary data analysis, a majority of respondents (65%) prefer eco-friendly products, indicating a shift in consumer behavior toward sustainable consumption. Consumers are increasingly evaluating products not only based on price and quality but also on their environmental footprint.

Sustainable Products:

- Enhance brand differentiation
- Attract environmentally conscious consumers
- Reduce long-term environmental costs

Thus, businesses that invest in green product innovation gain a competitive advantage and build stronger customer relationships.

2. Price: Consumers Accept Premium Pricing

Pricing plays a crucial role in sustainable marketing. Traditionally, consumers were highly price-sensitive; however, the study reveals that 58% of respondents are willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products.

This indicates a value-based pricing approach where

Customers are ready to Pay More for:

- Ethical production
- Environmental protection
- Social responsibility

Sustainable Pricing Strategies Include:

- Transparent pricing policies
- Justification of premium through value communication
- Long-term cost benefits (durability, efficiency)

Hence, sustainability transforms pricing from a cost-based strategy to a value-driven strategy.

3. Place: Green Logistics Reduce Environmental Impact

The “Place” element focuses on distribution and logistics. Sustainable marketing emphasizes eco-friendly supply chain practices such as:

- Reduced carbon emissions
- Efficient transportation systems
- Local sourcing
- Minimal packaging in distribution

Green logistics not only reduce environmental impact but also improve operational efficiency and cost savings in the long run.

Consumers are increasingly aware of how products reach them. Companies adopting sustainable distribution:

- Improve brand image
- Gain trust
- Align with global environmental standards

Thus, sustainable place strategies contribute to both environmental conservation and operational effectiveness.

4. Promotion: Ethical Advertising Builds Trust

Promotion in sustainable marketing focuses on transparency, honesty, and ethical communication. The study shows that 70% of respondents agree that sustainable promotion influences their buying decisions.

Key Aspects of Sustainable Promotion Include:

- Avoiding misleading claims (greenwashing)
- Providing accurate product information
- Highlighting environmental benefits
- Promoting social responsibility

Ethical Advertising Builds:

- Customer trust
- Brand credibility
- Long-term loyalty

In the digital era, consumers are more informed and can easily verify claims, making transparency essential for successful promotion strategies.

5. People: Employee and Customer Ethics Matter

The “People” element emphasizes the role of employees, management, and customers in delivering sustainable value. The study indicates that 80% of respondents consider ethical practices important.

Sustainability in People Involves:

- Employee welfare and fair labor practices
- Training employees in sustainability practices

- Encouraging ethical behavior among stakeholders

Employees act as brand ambassadors, and their behavior significantly influences customer perception. Ethical practices:

- Enhance organizational culture
- Build trust among customers
- Improve service quality

Thus, sustainability in people ensures alignment between organizational values and customer expectations.

6. Process: Sustainable Operations Enhance Efficiency

Processes refer to the methods and systems used to deliver products and services. Sustainable processes focus on:

- Reducing waste
- Minimizing energy consumption
- Using eco-friendly technologies
- Streamlining operations

The study shows that 60% of respondents believe sustainable processes improve product value.

Benefits of sustainable processes include:

- Cost reduction in the long run
- Improved efficiency
- Compliance with environmental regulations

Sustainable operations not only benefit the environment but also enhance organizational productivity and profitability.

7. Physical Evidence: Eco-Packaging Improves Brand Image

Physical evidence refers to the tangible aspects that support service delivery, such as packaging, store design, and branding elements. The study reveals that 68% of respondents are influenced by eco-friendly packaging.

Sustainable physical evidence includes:

- Recyclable and biodegradable packaging
- Eco-friendly store environments
- Minimalistic and sustainable branding

Eco-packaging:

- Enhances visual appeal
- Strengthens brand identity
- Communicates environmental responsibility

Consumers often associate packaging with product quality and company values, making it a powerful marketing tool.

Findings

- High awareness of sustainability
- Strong preference for eco-friendly products
- Willingness to pay premium
- Ethical practices influence decisions
- Sustainability enhances brand loyalty

Conclusion

Sustainability integration into the marketing mix is essential for modern businesses. The study confirms that consumers prefer environmentally responsible companies, making sustainability a key driver of success. Organizations adopting sustainable 7Ps can achieve long-term growth, improved customer satisfaction, and competitive advantage.

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