

An Analysis of the Implementation of Eco-friendly Shopping Bags in the Retail Sector

Ashwini V. ¹ & P. S. Aithal ²

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University,
Mangalore, India,

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1992-7394; E-mail: ashviraashwini@gmail.com

² Professor, Institute of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,
Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: psaithal@gmail.com

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Ashwini V. ¹ & P. S. Aithal ²

¹ Research Scholar, Institute of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India,

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1992-7394; E-mail: ashviraashwini@gmail.com

² Professor, Institute of Management & Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore, India, Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: psaithal@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Major threats to human survival include climate change, pollution, global warming, and ozone layer depletion. In addition to having less of an impact on the environment than traditional products, green products can offer greater environmental advantages. Most plastic waste is generated by retail businesses, traditional markets, and street stalls. Utilizing eco-friendly shopping bags is a great strategy to cut down on plastic bag usage. This may be seen as one of the responsible environmental actions that have a little environmental impact.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The information for this qualitative research was obtained from secondary sources. Research data has been collected from published reputable magazines, books, journals, research articles, market reports, newspapers, and internet websites.

Findings/Result: The study discovered that using green products has a positive influence on the environment. The best strategy to encourage sustainable economic growth is possible to educate customers about the environmental advantages of using eco-friendly shopping bags. Manufacturers must concentrate on quality concerns if they want to expand the adoption of eco bags. Retailers should employ renewable energy sources, recycled packaging, waste management, and limited natural resources to increase sustainability by avoiding the sale of plastic products.

Originality/Value: The extreme negative effects of plastics on the environment. Pressure was required to assure a cleaner biological system because there was an increasing desire for eco-friendly products. The largest plastic waste producers are retailers. Green shopping bags is a great strategy to reduce utilize of plastic bags. The study focused on the use of eco-friendly shopping bags, public acceptance, benefits and downsides of eco-friendly shopping bags and retail sector CSR practice.

Paper Type: Research case study

Keywords: Green product, Eco-friendly bags, Retail industry, Sustainability, Public participation, Corporate social responsibility.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Global warming and destruction of the ozone layer are threats to human survival. Every human being, whether rich or poor is willing to lead a decent life full of health and vitality. The primary goal of business is to achieve monetary and economic profits. But the environmental costs of doing business globally are only now becoming apparent [1]. The current global climate the negative effects of plastic pollution. In fact, 80% of the plastic waste accumulates on land, beaches and the Ocean [2]. As the evidence gained clearly shows, decreasing the usage of plastic is critical to the global climate and marine ecosystems. Moreover, the damage caused by plastic pollution not only affects marine ecosystems but also has the potential to affect our lands and land-based ecosystems [3]. Retail businesses, traditional marketplaces and street sellers generate the most plastic garbage. Using and Reusing Eco-friendly shopping bags in an excellent way to reduce the consumption of plastic bags [4]. Green marketing, also known as environmental marketing and sustainable marketing, is the efforts made by a company to

create, develop, advertise, price, and distribute products and services that do not harm the environment [5]. The best way to achieve sustainable economic growth in emerging cities may be through consumer acceptance of the environmental advantages of using eco-friendly shopping bags. Furthermore, an increase in environmentally concerned consumer [6]. Many retail stores are currently working to get reusable shopping bags into the hands of customers for both environmental and economic reasons. Reusable bags are a kind of environmentally friendly packaging that are made to be used again with little influence on the environment after disposal [7].

2. RELATED WORKS ON ECO-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS :

Green shopping bags are becoming more and more common even in places where single-use plastic bags are not banned or changed. The most common reason for recycling is environmental sustainability or rather, by discarding plastic bags, shoppers agree to minimize the damage caused by plastic bags. Table 1 highlights some of the scholarly publications on green marketing, reusable shopping bags, and the retail sector along with the area of study.

Table 1: This table review the literature on green marketing, eco-friendly shopping bags and retail sector

S. No.	Area of Study	Focus	Reference
1	Green marketing	Environmental marketing is another name for green marketing. It refers to any marketing that creates and facilitates any trading system that serves human desires or requirements in a way that does not significantly harm the environment.	Polonky (1994). [8]
2	Green Product	Green products also known as environmentally sustainable products can satisfy customers while offering long-term benefits, reducing customer stress and relieving customers of their environmental responsibility.	Medeiros et al., (2017). [9]
3	Sustainable product life cycle	A growing number of consumer-facing firms are taking extraordinary steps to glow. Environmentally friendly product and packaging. It is estimated that more than 80% of all product-related environmental problems are avoidable. The implications of the design of a product are decided throughout the process.	Ramani et al., (2010). [10]
4	Environmentally friendly shopping bag	Reusable bags made from biomass such as sugarcane and corn are 100% biodegradable and can be reused, recycled, composted, or incinerated while minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. It’s becoming more and more popular.	Muposhi et al., (2021). [11]
5	Characteristics of eco-friendly labeled plastic shopping bags	The traditional plastic bag does not break down over time, but there was an oxo-degradable sample that began to break down after two weeks. The results of SEM analysis showed that there were significant differences in the shapes of many types of plastic shopping bags, depending on their “eco-friendly” design.	Cornelia et al., (2013). [12]
6	Governance and policies towards	The study found that local policies play a significant role in changing people’s	Patterson J et al., (2017). [13]

	sustainability	behavior toward sustainability.	
7	Customer purchase intention to use reusable shopping bags	The study suggested that policymakers and retailers should create social ads that motivate customers to use eco-friendly reusable bags and reduce plastic bag use.	Ekasari & Zaini (2020). [14]
8	Transforming the service sector into a green business.	The impacts of being green on the sustainability of the services business through technological adoption are also explored. Green firms that use green products and services are seen to be more sustainable because of their ability to keep the environment clean and sustainable.	Aithal et al, (2016). [15]
9	Green retailing	The increasing power of retailers could easily influence their supply chain network and consumers so that they care about the environment. Bringing a greener world is possible with collaboration with suppliers, implementing green practices in stores, and reducing and redesigning long supply chains.	Vinish & Maruthi Ram (2015). [16]

2.1 Description on summary of review:

Green marketing is producing and distributing environmentally sustainable products or services. Many customers become environmentally concerned. It helps businesses gain popularity, reach a new consumer segment and stand out from the competition. Green products have long-term advantages and reduce consumer burden. Promoting eco-friendly shopping bags is an excellent strategy to reduce plastic pollution. Eco-friendly bags are reusable and produced from recycled materials like paper, cotton, canvas, and jute. Local government policies are influencing customer behaviour toward sustainability. Retailers utilize social media and other platforms to encourage customers to use environmentally friendly shopping bags. The brand image of the company will improve with the increased use of eco-bags.

3. RESEARCH GAP :

Extensive research has been conducted on negative impact of plastic shopping bags, this paper focused on Eco-friendly shopping bags. Plastic carry bags harm the environment it takes a very long time to degrade, damaging landfills and the oceans. Plastic carry bag generators are retail enterprises, street markets, and customers. Using eco-friendly shopping bags is a great way to reduce the use of plastic bags. Therefore, this study emphasizes on usage of eco-friendly shopping bags in the retail sector, its benefits and impediments and public acceptance of using eco-friendly shopping bags.

4. RESEARCH AGENDAS :

- (1) To comprehend the concept of green products.
- (2) What are eco-friendly shopping bags, their benefits and impediments?
- (3) How has the public accepted the use of eco-friendly shopping bags?
- (4) Which marketing strategies are used by companies to promote eco-friendly shopping bags?
- (5) How is the retail industry maintaining corporate social responsibility?

5. OBJECTIVES :

- (1) To understand the concept of green products and eco-friendly shopping bags.
- (2) To access the eco shopping bags benefits and impediments.
- (3) To analyze the public acceptance of the usage of eco-friendly shopping bags.
- (4) To analyze the retail sector's marketing strategies to maximize sales and customer satisfaction towards eco-friendly shopping bags.
- (5) To access the corporate social responsibility of the Retail sector.

6. METHODOLOGY :

The majority of the data used in this qualitative study was from secondary sources. The study highlighted the usage of eco-shopping bags in retail sectors, the benefits of the eco bag, the drawbacks of eco bags, the level of public acceptance, and the corporate social responsibility of the retail industry. To gather the information for this study used published reputable journals, books, magazine papers, marketable reports, newspapers, and internet websites.

7. GREEN PRODUCT :

Green products are not the only product that has a lower environmental impact than conventional products, but also products that offer greater environmental benefits [17]. The natural environment is driving the redesign of existing products and the creation of new ones that are more energy-efficient or less material-intensive [18]. The past few years have seen a large number of trade magazines and numerous media reports focusing on green product launches by companies from disparate industries. It has also become increasingly popular to conduct academic research on green product innovation in recent years [19]. A marketer's goal is to convince customers to try new environmentally friendly products by highlighting their features, innovations, and functional aspects through various media. A variety of marketing techniques are available to disseminate information about green products to the consumer. This has led to an improvement in consumer awareness and health consciousness about green product. Consumers are gradually changing their consumption concept and buying greener goods. The quality of green product is another issue for consumers. In general, green consumers are willing to pay more for these products, but they will not compromise on quality. To gain market recognition, companies improve the quality of their green products, highlight the environmental benefits of their products, and share these aspects with their customers. Customers expect all products to be environmentally safe without having to sacrifice quality [20].

7.1 Eco-friendly Shopping Bags:

Customers are conscious of the significant influence their purchase decisions have on the environment because they use plastic bags regularly, they occasionally don't care, and their awareness becomes a contentious issue. There is an urgent need to stop this trend because the environment is getting less sustainably produced. To do this, customers much change their purchasing choices and intentions to choose eco-friendly shopping bags [21]. Environmentally friendly shopping bags are non-plastic reusable shopping bags that can be made from organic materials that are easily biodegradable and usually reusable [22]. The idea of encouraging people to adopt eco-friendly reusable bags as an alternative to plastic bags can be effectively communicated with the intended audience through efficient social advertising. Eco-friendly bags contain no plastic, are reusable, use recycled materials, and are more durable. Many eco-bags have been developed as an alternative to plastic bags, including jute bags, cloth bags, paper bags, cotton bags, bamboo bags, canvas bags, and nylon reusable bags, etc., [23]. These bags are exceptionally well known by both retailers and consumers since they are cheap, lightweight, and clean. The use of plastic bags for carrying goods contributes to environmental degradation and the depletion of the earth's precious resources [24]. The use of eco-friendly reusable bags can itself be considered one of the responsible environmental practices that have little or no environmental impact [25].

8. THE BENEFITS AND IMPEDIMENTS OF ECO-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS :

Biobags are made with biodegradable and compostable materials. This bag is convenient and easy to use because the company uses eco-friendly raw materials when manufacturing its bags and other products [26]. Here are some benefits and drawbacks of using environmentally friendly bags [27-28].

8.1 Benefits of eco-friendly shopping bags:

- (1) **Save natural resources:** Plastic bags are produced using non-renewable resources with a high environmental impact on the environment, like crude oil and natural gas. In the United States alone, approximately 12 million barrels are spent on plastic bags each year.
- (2) **Cost saving:** The alternative to plastic grocery bags is to drop them off at recycling centers, reducing the cost to the taxpayer of maintaining the cleanliness of the streets, beaches, and other

green spaces. The majority of shops charge an additional fee for plastic bags, so customers would save money to bring their own reusable tote bag.

- (3) **Strong and durable product:** One of the most important advantages of these bags is that they can handle items of varying weights and last for a long time. Customers can carry items of any weight without worrying that the bag will tear apart or tear off. It is designed to hold the bag contents securely due to the strong materials used to manufacture the bags.
- (4) **Reusable:** Customers can reuse the bags repeatedly as per their needs. Maintaining and cleaning them regularly can make them suitable for reuse for a longer period without the fear of wearing them out.
- (5) **Suitable for carrying a variety of items:** A bag can be used to carry items that are important in a person's daily life. Plastic bags do not serve that purpose effectively. These bags are designed for carrying groceries, dairy products, or even important documents. People can also carry it to the supermarket.
- (6) **Protects the environment:** This bag is environmentally friendly and does not fill landfill sites. In contrast to plastic bags, these bags do not pollute the environment. Furthermore, unlike paper bags, which need to be cut down hugely, these bags do not destroy the greenery around us. So, they do not negatively impact the environment at all.
- (7) **A great tool for marketing brands:** Reusable bags can be an ideal medium for brands looking to reach more potential customers. As a result, more people will become aware of a company brand whenever they use the bags with the company logo on them. As a result, brand awareness and marketing are always carried out well with these bags.

8.2 Impediments of Eco-friendly shopping bags:

- (1) **Non-waterproof product:** In the case of the paper bag, once it is exposed to liquid and steam, it will deform and will no longer be useful. However, plastics are much more durable when they are exposed to liquid and steam.
- (2) **Bacterial contamination chances:** These bags are often used to transport meat, fish, or fruits and vegetables, which might result in bacterial contamination. Therefore, it is advised not to carry these items in these bags, which can later become hubs for bacteria and germs.
- (3) **Washing can cause shrinkage:** Reusable shopping bags are typically made from materials that shrink after washing, which can become a real problem after several washes.
- (4) **Fabric-related problems:** A variety of materials can be used to make these bags. One of the most widely used materials is nylon, a petroleum-based product that takes longer to break down. This makes disposing of such bags difficult. As jute is not moisture-resistant, certain grocery items can be hard to carry. Polypropylene bags aren't biodegradable or compostable because they're made from non-renewable materials.
- (5) **Frequent cleaning required:** Reusable bags tend to get dirty when used frequently for carrying various items. This means they need to be cleaned frequently, which can be frustrating for people who have a hectic schedule and do not have time to clean the bags often.
- (6) **Sometimes causes inconvenience:** These bags are often kept in cars by people who think they'll carry them to the supermarket every time they shop. Because of this, bacteria and mold can grow in these bags if they're not cleaned or kept in sunlight.

9. PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ECO-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS :

Customers believe these green products are less harmful to the environment, and 80% of Indian customers prefer green enterprises. Due to the severely negative environmental effects of plastics and the need for eco-friendly products, pressure was needed to assure a cleaner ecosystem [29]. As a result, green consumers are therefore consumers who consider the environmental impact of their environmental impact by changing their purchasing and consumption patterns. Environmentally friendly consumer behaviour is described as supporting environmentally friendly businesses and purchasing environmentally friendly products [30-31]. Consumers may easily and conveniently find eco-friendly plastic bags because they are the preferred product delivering the benefit of a green product. The green brand will have an impact on the purchasing intentions of consumers who use eco-friendly plastic bags in green retail establishments [32]. The vast majority of customers are aware of how harmful plastic is to the ecological balance of the environment is primarily responsible for the high

level of market acceptance. Social acceptance of the idea of environmentally friendly products [33]. It was proven that young consumers' attitudes toward buying recycled, fair-trade, and organic clothing had a big impact on their decision to buy. Because of this, it is anticipated that consumer perception of clothing shops and their use of eco-friendly shopping bags will be positively associated [34].

10. RETAIL SECTOR MARKETING STRATEGIES TO USE ECO-FRIENDLY SHOPPING BAGS :

To improve corporate image and business performance, many enterprises employ green marketing strategies. An organization that uses green marketing as a way to develop safe, eco-friendly products is committed to using recyclable and easily decomposable packaging, improving pollution prevention methods, and using energy more efficiently. To position their green brands in consumers' minds and keep up their level of market competition. Businesses are quickly looking into and exploring new methods, coming up with new concepts, and preparing new tactics. This is done to achieve sustainability. A few businesses are also genuinely working to maintain environmental concerns. The use of eco-friendly plastic bags is one of the green retail store's practices that represents their attempts to address environmental issues. This is one of the solutions offered by green retailers. Plastic bags help increase public awareness of the environment by reducing their negative impact on the environment and communicating eco-friendly values to customers [33]. Popular brands can successfully promote eco-friendly products since consumers prefer to trust their performance [35]. Companies may encourage customers to carry their bags rather than stocking and providing throwaway plastic ones from retailers for obvious economic reasons. Currently, many retailers encourage customers to use green shopping bags by selling them directly to customers, giving away single-usage plastic bags, and rewarding them financially and socially for doing so [36-38]. The benefit of adopting eco-friendly shopping bags for the business is that the brand logo will gain more exposure [39]. Shopping bags are incredibly helpful for people in their regular shopping activities. Demand for these products has increased as a result of an increasing global population and living levels. To provide customers with a luxurious shopping experience, businesses are continually concentrating on manufacturing high-quality bags. The development of biodegradable bags has greatly aided businesses in meeting the need for environmentally friendly items. Additionally, companies frequently incorporate recyclable materials into the bag design to lower their carbon footprint. To entice customers to buy these products, producers are now placing a focus on creating stylish bags in a variety of colours. The modern marketing and promotional strategies used by businesses to promote their goods. When creating personalized bags for their corporate clientele, businesses target the commercial market. The need for a range of shopping bags is also fuelled by the shift in consumer preferences toward luxury and premium supermarket items. Growing shopping mall and convenience store infrastructure make it easier for consumers to shop, which in turn increases demand for these eco-bags that are simple to carry [40].

11. RETAIL SECTOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY :

The function of CSR in the retail industry as the company's social interface. It describes how the retail sector is a vast and vibrant worldwide industry that makes a substantial contribution to the global economy by offering a variety of goods and services to customers and companies. Retail businesses must not only follow ethical standards in their operations but also offer customers products produced by suppliers using sustainable techniques. Global retailers appear to prioritize various CSR initiatives in different geographic areas, which necessitates more government regulations [41]. Companies are gradually recognizing that to achieve a competitive advantage and assure a sustainable future, they may need to rely on public goodwill and ethical business practices rather than only focusing on profits [42]. As a result, sustainability is increasingly being taken into account by the retail business on a global scale. For instance, by providing consumers with ecologically friendly goods or services [43-44]. To maximize the use of resources available, environmentally conscious retailers seek to integrate and simplify every aspect of their business. Additionally, adopting sustainable business practices also helps retailers achieve greater business benefits and higher retailers achieve greater business benefits and higher performance [45]. Retail companies should make optimal use of the limited natural resources available to them, reduce their use of plastic, utilize recyclable packaging materials, employ renewable energy sources, and reduce waste. Environmentally friendly behaviour involves minimizing emissions and utilizing fewer natural resources [46].

To improve the standard of living for their employees, their families, the neighbourhoods, and society at large, merchants may focus on the idea of ethical responsibility to support sustainable economic development. The ethical standards of the retailers can be examined in terms of their “Good Actions,” or ethical behaviours. According to the customer’s perspective, the retail sector is the first link in the supply chain [47]. Due to increased media space, fading brand differentiation, and global competition, businesses are utilizing strategies other than the traditional marketing mix to boost the value of intangible assets. Retail businesses nowadays are putting forward a variety of socially responsible initiatives to draw customers and foster brand loyalty [48]. Organizations that have not included sustainability in their operations need to keep in mind that stakeholders worldwide are becoming more concerned about their organisation's social and environmental performance than not just their financial success [49]. The Indian retail sector is experiencing a time of golden sunshine. Retailers: The management of the retailers lacks definite policies. They haven’t created an ethical code of conduct. They are concerned with morality and doing what is right. Since ethical behaviour is mostly an individual process, training and other personal elements are crucial. Retail salespeople require ethical guidelines. Retail managers face a lot of difficulties because of this. The retail industry in India would prosper if they concentrate on its challenges and find solutions [47].

12. FINDINGS :

- (1) Switching from single-use plastic bags to eco-friendly shopping bags greater impact on environmental benefits. The product life is very important as there is greater environmental protection.
- (2) Most plastic waste is generated by retail businesses. Eco-friendly shopping bags is a great strategy to cut down on the use of plastic bags.
- (3) To improve the quality of eco-friendly shopping bags, manufacturers must pay attention to these factors need to be cleaned frequently, are non-waterproof, contain bacteria, shrike when washed, and do not degrade like polypropylene bags.
- (4) Retail establishments should reduce their consumption of plastic products and make the best use of the scarce natural resources available. Utilize recyclable packaging, renewable energy sources, and waste reduction strategies to ensure sustainability

13. RECOMMENDATIONS :

- (1) Environmentally friendly shopping bags can be a terrific marketing tool for businesses looking to connect with more customers. Increased use of eco-bags with firm logos on them aids in raising brand awareness among the public. Because of this, these bags are successful at increasing brand recognition.
- (2) Organizations must prioritize sustainability initiatives because stakeholders are more concerned with social and environmental performance than financial success.
- (3) Government should come up with strict rules for supporting the usage of eco-friendly shopping bags and for banning the use of plastic bags.
- (4) SMEs that manufacture eco-friendly shopping bags should be subsidized.

14. CONCLUSION :

Plastic pollution harms the current state of the world’s climate. In addition to harming marine ecosystems, plastic pollution also has the potential to harm our lands and land-based ecosystems. Green shopping bags are becoming more and more popular in areas where single-use plastic bags are neither restricted nor replaced. The foremost common reason for reusing is natural sustainability, or maybe by disposing of plastic bags, shoppers concur to play down the harm caused by plastic bags. Numerous retail stores are as of now working to urge reusable shopping bags into the hands of customers for both natural and financial reasons. Eco-friendly bags contain no plastic, are reusable, use recycled materials, and are more durable. Eco-friendly shopping bags are incredibly popular with both retailers and customers because they are affordable, lightweight, and environmentally friendly. The study concluded that using environmentally friendly products benefits the environment. Educate consumers about the environmental benefits of adopting eco-friendly shopping bags is the greatest way to promote

sustainable economic growth. Customer intentions to purchase will be influenced by the green brand when they use eco-friendly shopping bags in green retail establishments.

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