A Study on Consumer Behaviour towards Usage of Green Products

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Abstract - In the industrialized nations around the world, both businesses and consumers are concerned about the environment and the future of our planet. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses have begun to modify their behaviour in an attempt to address society's "new" concerns. The term "Green Marketing" has been used to describe marketing activities which attempt to reduce the negative social and environmental impacts of existing products and production systems, and which promote various types of goods and services that are considered to be environmentally safe. The idea behind green marketing is to find ways to connect consumers who want to live a lifestyle that is as ecologically responsible as possible. Green marketing in services includes service delivery processes. Other known titles for green marketing are: sustainable marketing, environmental marketing and ecological marketing. Marketers need to develop strategies which will allow them to overcome major problems associated with green marketing. The present study aims at finding out the relationship between various demographic factors with the environmental concern and thereby how it reflects in their behavior towards usage of green products.

Key words – Consumer behavior; Green marketing; Green products; Environment

1. INTRODUCTION

"Green" is a word that most of us come across at least once in a day. Nowadays this concept is getting popularized among different categories of people irrespective of their demographic factors. The concept of Green Marketing was initially started as a concept of ecological marketing in the first workshop organized by the American Marketing Association (AMA) focused towards the environment in 1975. Green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, packaging, as well as advertising so as to perform marketing in eco-friendly ways.

Green marketing comprises of two words: Green and Marketing; it is an eco-friendly idea to the need for quality, performance, affordable pricing and convenience without having a detrimental effect on environment. It is primarily an idea towards planet earth that produces a product or service that may be environmental friendly or being manufactured in an eco-friendly way. It is a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products and services happen in a manner that is less affecting the environment with growing awareness about the negative implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful pollutants and so on, both marketers and consumers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the need for switching in to green products and services. While the shift to "green" may appear to be expensive in the short term, it will definitely prove to be indispensable and advantageous, cost-wise too, in the long run.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The green movement has been expanding rapidly in the world. With regards to this consumers are taking responsibility and doing the right things. Consumer awareness and motivation continue to drive change in the marketplace—notably through the introduction of more eco-friendly products. Compared to consumers in the developed countries, the Indian consumer has much less awareness of global warming issues. Initiatives from industry and the government are still ice blue. Now a days the consumers have got certain level of awareness on organic products and started buying and utilizing for their regular consumption. Hence, the researchers show

interest on the positive impact of green marketing concept in the society. So, this particular study has been carried out.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly concentrates on the examination of consumer behaviour towards the use of green products. This study finds out the important factors, which influence the effective use of green products. The study was confined to Rajapalayam Taluk of Virudhunagar District in Tamilnadu.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

➢ To know the concept of green marketing.
➢ To identify the profile of the green consumers.
➢ To study the behavior of consumers towards usage of green products.
➢ To find out the factors influencing the effective use of green products.
➢ To examine the awareness of consumers regarding environmental knowledge.
➢ To offer suitable suggestions for the effective usage of green products.

5. METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used descriptive research design in this study. In the present study, both secondary and primary data were collected and analysed, for measuring consumer behaviour towards the usage of green products. The first stage of the research process was an extensive search of articles, reports and professional information concerning green consumer studies and green marketing strategies in general by using the internet and academic databases.

6. TOOLS FOR COLLECTION OF DATA

Data, which is a vital aspect in any research, has been collected through various resources for the study. Both secondary data and primary data have been collected and used for the research. The primary data is an integral part of any research study as it provides basic information on key variables, which form the major part of data relating to research. The secondary data have been gathered from various sources like standard text books of related topics, journals, newspapers, websites and so on.

Primary data have been collected through statistical sampling survey directly from the consumers of green products in Rajapalayam Taluk. Questionnaire specially designed for the study was used for the data collection.

The questionnaire for the present study was pre-tested in December 2014 with 20 respondents in Rajapalayam Taluk. Based on the results of the pre-test, the questionnaire was revised and finalised.

7. SAMPLING DESIGN

Since it was a descriptive research, a convenience sampling method of non-probability sampling has been adopted in this research study. The total population of Rajapalayam Taluk as on 2011 census was 3,47,318. To be representative, a total of 120 samples have been drawn from the various areas at Rajapalayam Taluk.

8. PLAN OF ANALYSIS

The data collected from consumer survey was tabulated category wise. To analyze and interpret the collected data, the researcher has been used the statistical techniques like, Percentage, Chi-Square test, Weighted Arithmetic Mean and Garrett Ranking.

9. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Green consumers often make purchase decisions based on information about the product and the producer rather than a catchy advertising campaign. According to Jacquelyn Ottman, green consumers seek out the following when making purchase decisions:

❖ Green consumers want to know how raw materials are procured and where they come from, how food is grown, and what their potential impact is on the environment once they land in the trash bin.
❖ Green consumers patronize manufacturers and retailers they trust and boycott the wares of suspected polluters.

❖ Green consumers often do not have the same consumptive spending patterns as the other mass consumer.

Table 1: Profile of the Green Consumers

Measure	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	86	71.67
	Female	34	28.33
Age	18-25	15	12.50
	25-35	71	59.17
	35-45	25	20.83
	45-55	7	5.83
	Above 55	2	1.67
Educational Qualification	Upto SSLC	5	4.16
	Upto Higher Secondary	8	6.67
	Diploma / ITI	12	10.00
	Under Graduate	62	51.67
	Post Graduate	18	15.00
	M.Phil	10	8.33
	Doctorate	3	2.50
	Professional	2	1.67
Marital Status	Married	53	44.17
	Unmarried	67	55.83
Type of Family	Joint Family	25	20.83
	Nuclear Family	95	79.17
Monthly Income	Below Rs.10000	61	50.83
	Rs.10000-Rs.20000	20	16.67
	Rs.20000-Rs.30000	16	13.33
	Rs.30000-Rs.40000	12	10.00
	Rs.40000 & Above	11	9.17

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 reveals that a majority of 71.67 per cent of the respondents is male consumers, the age of majority of 59.17 per cent of the respondents is 25-35 years, a majority of 51.67 per cent of the sample respondents is under graduates, a majority of 55.83 per cent of the respondents are unmarried, a majority of 79.17 per cent of the green consumers in Rajapalayam Taluk lives under nuclear family system and a majority of 50.83 per cent of the respondents'

monthly income of the family is below Rs.10000.

Table 2: Knowledge about environment

knowledge about	Know Great Deal (3)	Know a Lot (2)	Know Something (1)	Know Nothing (0)	Total	WMS	Rank
Solid waste disposal	61	11	12	36	120	1.81	V
	183	22	12	0	217		
Pollution from pesticides	62	23	24	11	120	2.13	IV
	186	46	24	0	256		
Global warming	87	12	5	16	120	2.41	I
	261	54	35	0	290		
Environmental certification	36	27	35	22	120	1.64	VII
	108	54	35	0	197		
Non-Biodegradable packaging	40	30	25	25	120	1.70	VI
	120	60	25	0	205		
Climate change	70	34	7	9	120	2.38	II
	210	68	7	0	285		
Acid rain	53	43	20	4	120	2.21	III
	159	86	20	0	265		

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 depicts that the knowledge of the respondents towards the consequences of environment degradation. Out of 7 areas of knowledge, Global warming ranked the first place with the weighted mean score of 2.41, followed by Climate change ranked second (2.38), Acid rain ranked third (2.21), Pollution from pesticides ranked fourth (2.13), Solid waste disposal ranked fifth (1.81), Non-biodegradable packaging ranked sixth (1.70)

and Environmental certification ranked seventh (1.64).

Table 3: Pollutants to Environment

Sl. No	Pollutants	Garrett Score	Average Score	Garrett Rank
1.	Plastic	6610	55.08	2
2.	Polythene	6740	56.17	1
3.	Chemical	5724	47.70	3
4.	Unbranded	5453	45.44	4
5.	E-waste	5233	43.61	5

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 indicates that the major pollutant material of the environment is 'Polythene products' with a Garrett score of 6740 points, followed by 'Plastic products' (6610 points), 'Chemical products' (5724 points), 'Unbranded products' (5453 points) and 'E-waste products' (5233 points).

Table 4: Type of green products used

Sl. No	Products	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Food & Beverage	23	19.17
2.	Health care/ cosmetic products	37	30.83
3.	Cleaning / household products	11	9.17
4.	Green/Eco Bag	12	10.00
5.	Electronic products	30	25.00
6.	Accessories & Fashion	7	5.83
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 unfolds that the major green products used by the consumers in the study area are healthcare/cosmetic products (30.83 per cent), followed by electronic products (25.00 per cent), food/beverage products (19.17 per cent), green/eco bag products (10 per cent), cleaning/household products (9.17 per cent) and accessories/fashion products (5.83 per cent). Table 5 highlights that the major reasons for using green products are health grounds (29.17 per cent), followed by quality (23.33 per cent), environmental consciousness (15.83 per cent), value (7.5 per cent), competitive price

(6.67 per cent), sales promotion (5.83 per cent), reputation/brand (5 per cent), better taste (4.17 per cent) and trail purpose (2.5 per cent).

Table 5: Reasons for using Green Products

Sl. No	Reasons	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Competitive price	8	6.67
2.	Reputation/brand	6	5.00
3.	Value	9	7.50
4.	Quality	28	23.33
5.	Sales promotion	7	5.83
6.	Better taste	5	4.17
7.	Environmental Consciousness	19	15.83
8.	Health grounds	35	29.17
9.	Trail purpose	3	2.50
	Total	**120**	**100.00**

Source: Primary Data

Table 6: Sources of Knowledge about Green Products

Sl. No	Sources of knowledge	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Friends	26	21.67
2.	Relatives	13	10.83
3.	Internet	23	19.17
4.	Newspapers	25	20.83
5.	Magazines & Journals	10	8.33
6.	Books	8	6.67
7.	Television	7	5.83
8.	Seminar and conferences	8	6.67
	Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 discloses that out of 120 respondents, a notable portion of 26 respondents representing 21.67 per cent came to knew about the green products through friends, followed by 25 respondents (20.83 per cent) knew from newspapers, 23 respondents (19.17 per cent) got the knowledge from internet, 13 respondents (10.83 per cent) knew from relatives, 10 respondents (8.33 per cent) through magazines & journals, each 8 respondents (6.67 per cent) through books, seminar & conferences and the remaining 7 respondents (5.83 per cent) knew from television.

Table 7: Characteristics of Green Products

Characteristics	D (5)	P (4)	PS (3)	PN (2)	DN (1)	Total	WMS	Rank
Recyclable	49	32	16	18	5	120	3.85	**1**
Reusable	32	34	29	13	12	120	3.51	**11**
Locally made products	23	27	24	42	4	120	3.19	**17**
Not harmful to the health of the human being	14	23	49	20	14	120	3.03	**19**
Waste minimization	34	46	28	10	2	120	3.83	**3**
Energy conservation	41	15	44	12	8	120	3.58	**8**
Water conservation	23	34	33	18	12	120	3.32	**14**
Refillable	21	29	42	12	16	120	3.23	**16**
Phosphate free	17	19	38	39	7	120	3.00	**20**
Biodegradable	32	37	32	14	5	120	3.64	**6**
Less damage to the environment	43	38	21	13	5	120	3.84	**2**
Save money in the long run	22	43	24	18	13	120	3.36	**13**
Quality	32	26	47	14	1	120	3.62	**7**
Durability	21	27	42	20	10	120	3.24	**15**
More Utility	43	17	29	21	10	120	3.52	**10**
Safety	44	23	40	9	4	120	3.78	**4**
Availability	42	19	20	25	14	120	3.42	**12**
Advertisement	46	18	20	28	8	120	3.55	**9**
Costly	27	41	41	8	3	120	3.68	**5**
Recommendations	17	24	42	28	9	120	3.10	**18**

Source: Primary Data

(Note: D- Definitely, P-Probably, PS-Possibly, PN-Probably not, DF-Definitely Not)

Table 7 portrays that Out of 20 properties of green products, recyclable ranked first with the weighted mean score of 3.85, followed by, less damaged to the environment ranked second (3.84), waste minimization ranked third (3.83), safety ranked four (3.78), costly ranked five (3.68), biodegradable ranked six (3.64), Quality ranked seven (3.62), energy conservation ranked eight (3.58), advertisement ranked nine (3.55), more utility ranked ten (3.52), reusable ranked eleven (3.51), availability ranked twelve (3.42), save money in the long run ranked thirteen (3.36), water conservation fourteen (3.32), durability ranked fifteen (3.24), refillable ranked sixteen (3.23), locally made products ranked seventeen (3.19), recommendations ranked eighteen (3.10), not harmful to the health of the human being ranked nineteen (3.03) and phosphate free ranked twenty (3).

Table 8: Level of Satisfaction towards Usage of Green Consumers

Sl. No	Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	High	46	38.33
2.	Medium	66	55.00
3.	Low	8	6.67
	Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 reveals that out of 120 respondents, a majority of 66 respondents representing 55 per cent were medium satisfaction towards usage of green products, followed by 46 respondents (38.33 per cent) were highly satisfied towards usage of green products and the remaining 8 respondents (6.67 per cent) were low satisfaction towards usage of green products.

Table 9: Relationship between Profile Variables and Level of Satisfaction towards Usage of Green Consumers

Sl No	Nature of Variables	Hypothesis	Calculated Value	Table Value	Degrees of Freedom	Acceptance of Null Hypothesis
1	Gender and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 1$	1.29	5.99	2	Accepted
2	Age and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 2$	24.49	15.5	8	Not Accepted
3	Educational Qualification and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 3$	19.88	23.69	14	Accepted
4	Marital Status and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 4$	6.41	5.99	2	Not Accepted
5	Type of Family and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 5$	23.18	5.99	2	Not Accepted
6	Monthly income and Level of Satisfaction	$H_0 6$	10.77	15.5	8	Accepted

Table 9 makes it clear that three hypotheses set, namely, $H_0 2$, $H_0 4$ and $H_0 5$ are rejected, because the calculated values of chi square are more than the table value at 5% level of significance. Thus it affirms that there is a significant relationship between age, marital status and type of family of the consumers with the level of satisfaction towards usage of green products. The remaining three hypotheses set, namely, $H_0 1$, $H_0 3$ and $H_0 6$ were accepted, because the calculated values of chi square are less than the table value at 5% level of significance. Thus it is evident that there is no significant relationship between gender, educational qualification and monthly income of the consumers with the level of satisfaction towards usage of green products.

Table 10: Factors Influenced on Use of Green Products

Sl.No	Factors	EI (5)	HI (4)	SI (3)	SWI (2)	NI (1)	Total	WMS	Rank
1	Comfort and convenience	30	24	49	11	6	120	3.51	20
2	Ingredients	24	32	39	11	14	120	3.34	25
3	Brand	37	31	30	17	5	120	3.65	9
4	Safety	22	38	46	13	1	120	3.56	17
5	Quality	38	42	22	14	4	120	3.8	5
6	Consumption pattern	38	24	35	20	3	120	3.62	12
7	Performance	35	31	34	12	8	120	3.61	13
8	Availability	18	47	33	21	1	120	3.5	21
9	Multi-utility	33	30	37	15	5	120	3.59	15
10	Attractive Packaging	42	35	23	18	2	120	3.81	4
11	Promotion, Offers and discounts	47	32	23	14	4	120	3.87	2
12	Durability	29	43	32	8	8	120	3.64	10
13	Color	33	45	20	17	5	120	3.7	7
14	Quantity	24	23	42	24	7	120	3.28	26
15	Design	35	32	22	25	6	120	3.54	18
16	Environmental benefits	29	20	54	12	5	120	3.47	23
17	Personal budget	42	30	19	19	10	120	3.63	11
18	Cost of alternatives	37	30	26	20	7	120	3.58	16
19	Government rules	23	41	34	15	7	120	3.48	22
20	Intensity of Need	34	24	42	12	8	120	3.53	19
21	Affordability	43	34	20	19	4	120	3.78	6
22	Demonstration and pretest	52	27	28	8	5	120	3.94	1
23	Disposal	34	30	35	16	5	120	3.6	14
24	Maintenance	18	24	26	48	4	120	3.03	27

25	Recycle symbol	24	37	28	21	10	120	3.37	24
26	Energy star symbol	32	40	29	16	3	120	3.68	8
27	Advertisement	43	32	29	12	4	120	3.82	3

Source: Primary Data

(Note: EI-Extremely Influential, HI-Highly Influential, SI-Slightly Influential, SWI-Somewhat Influential, NI-Not Influential)

Table 10 shows that out of 27 factors, demonstration is ranked the first place with the weighted mean score of 3.94, followed by promotion, offers and discounts ranked second (3.87), advertisement ranked third(3.82), attractive packaging ranked fourth (3.81), quality ranked fifth (3.80), affordability ranked sixth (3.78), colour ranked seventh (3.70), energy star ranked eighth (3.68), brand ranked nine (3.65), durability ranked ten (3.64), personal budget ranked eleven (3.63), consumption pattern ranked twelve (3.62), performance ranked thirteen (3.61), disposal ranked fourteen (3.60), multi-utility ranked fifteen (3.59), cost of alternatives ranked sixteen (3.58), safety ranked seventeen (3.56), design ranked eighteen (3.54), intensity of need ranked nineteen (3.53), comfort and convenience ranked twenty (3.51), availability ranked twenty one (3.50), Government rules ranked twenty two (3.48), environmental benefits ranked twenty three (3.47), recycle ranked twenty four (3.37), ingredients ranked twenty five (3.34), quantity ranked twenty six (3.28) and maintenance ranked twenty seven (3.03).

Table 11: Problems during purchase of green products

Sl. No	Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Faced	57	47.50
2.	Not Faced	63	52.50
	Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 reveals that out of 120 respondents, a majority of 63 respondents representing 52.5 per cent, do not face problems during purchase of green products and the remaining 57 respondents (47.5 per cent) face problems during purchase of green products.

Table 12 Types of Problems faced

Sl. No	Types	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	High price	24	42.11
2.	Misleading Advertisement	15	26.32
3.	Poor Quality	8	14.03
4.	All the above	10	17.54
	Total	57	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 12 discloses that out of 57 respondents, a notable portion of 24 respondents representing 42.11 per cent face the problem of high price of green products, followed by 15 respondents (26.32 per cent) are affected by misleading advertisement, 8 respondents (14.03 per cent) have experienced poor quality of green products and the remaining 10 respondents (17.54 per cent) face all the three of above said problems.

Table 13: Recommendation of Green Products

Sl. No	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Definitely	53	44.17
2.	Probably	33	27.50
3.	Possibly	13	10.83
4.	Probably not	3	2.50
5.	Definitely not	18	15.00
	Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 13 shows that out of 120 respondents, a notable portion of 53 respondents, representing 44.17 per cent, definitely recommend the green products to others, followed by 33 respondents (27.5 per cent) probably recommend their green products, 13 respondents (10.83 per cent) possibly recommend the green products, 18 respondents (15 per cent) definitely not recommend the green products and the remaining three respondents (2.5 per cent) probably not recommend the green products to others.

Table 14: Environmental Friendly Activities

Sl.No	Environmental Friendly Activities	A (5)	O (4)	S (3)	R (2)	N (1)	Total	WMS	Rank
1	Prefer recycle goods	34	16	54	9	7	120	3.51	**4**
2	Switch off the light when not in use	27	26	51	11	5	120	3.49	**5**
3	Buy organic food	27	32	27	23	11	120	3.34	**10**
4	Conserve the water	35	28	27	24	6	120	3.52	**3**
5	Use waste water for other purposes	30	40	32	10	8	120	3.62	**2**
6	Prefer decomposable packaging material	23	33	36	25	3	120	3.40	**9**
7	Buy products with refillable containers	34	25	27	33	1	120	3.48	**6**
8	Use public transportation whenever possible	43	54	23	15	5	140	4.46	**1**
9	Go with bag for shopping	34	32	20	23	11	120	3.46	**8**
10	Dispose the waste properly	35	22	34	22	7	120	3.47	**7**

Source: Primary Data

(Note: A-Always, O-Often, S-Sometimes, R-Rarely, N-Never)

Table 14 portrays that out of 10 environmental friendly activities, Use public transportation whenever possible is ranked the first place with the weighted mean score of 4.46, followed by Use waste water for other purposes ranked second (3.62), Conserve the water ranked third (3.52), Prefer recycle goods ranked fourth (3.51), Switch off the light when not in use ranked fifth (3.49), Buy products with refillable containers ranked sixth (3.48), Dispose the waste properly ranked seventh (3.47), Go with bag for shopping ranked eighth (3.46), Prefer decomposable packaging material ranked ninth (3.40) and Buy organic food ranked ten with the weighted mean score of 3.34.

Table 15: Role of Government

Nature of efforts	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
Provide tax incentive to environmental friendly companies	11	9.17
Take action against most polluting companies	12	10.00
Separate waste as recyclable and non recyclable one	13	10.83
Promote campaign to create awareness	15	12.50
Formulate strict rules	19	15.83
All the above	50	41.67
Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 15 shows that out of 120 respondents, an appreciable portion of 50 respondents, representing 41.67 per cent, expresses that all the above five efforts of the Government are essential to save the environment, followed by 19 respondents (15.83 per cent) indicate that the Government should formulate strict rules to save the environment, 15 respondents (12.5 per cent) mention that Government should promote campaign to create awareness about to save the environment, 13 respondents (10.83 per cent) state that Government should separate the waste as recyclable and non recyclable one for recycle the waste, 12 respondents (10 per cent) reply that Government should take action against most polluting companies and remaining eleven respondents (9.17 per cent) specify that Government should provide the tax incentive to environmental friendly marketers.

Table 16: Better Future for the Planet

Sl. No	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	Yes	115	95.83
2.	No	5	4.17
	Total	120	100.00

Source: Primary Data

Table 16 discloses that out of 120 respondents, a great majority of 115 respondents, representing 95.83 per cent believes that the green process would promise a better future for the planet and the remaining 5 respondents (4.17 per cent) do not believe that

that the green process could promise a better future for the planet.

10. SUGGESTIONS

From the above findings of the study, the following are the important suggestions for the effective use of green products by consumers in Rajapalayam taluk:

❖ Awareness about the green product among the consumers is at the primitive level. So, awareness is to be improved through advertisement. Since majority of the respondents came to know about the green product through news paper and internet, the advertisement in these media about the utilities and significance of green products shall bring the desired increase in the level of awareness.

❖ Price of the green product may be reduced by the marketers of green products because, though green products are good for themselves and our mother Earth, the consumers are considering price and affordability for purchasing products and availing services.

❖ Consumers are considering brand and Quality of the product as key drivers of their purchase decision. Hence, green marketers shall rename and redesign the brand name and Quality of their products incorporating green.

❖ Based on the findings as viewed by majority of the respondents the Government shall takes the action against companies polluting the environment which in turn shall reduce eco-imbalance and save the environment.

11. CONCLUSION

The present study makes it clear that almost everyone is concerned about the environment, but only few are really acting and participating in the process of consuming green products. Most of the respondents agreed that green marketing is of great value to consumers as the initiatives were to not only protect the environment but also produce quality products to consumers. Hence, Green marketing assumes even more importance and relevance in developing countries in the world like India. *Our country should be path breakers and trendsetters of green products and marketing leaving all others to follow. The findings emphasize that in the present day situations 'becoming consumer friendly through green products' is the only mantra for long term success of any economic activity.*

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