

Green Marketing and Its impact on Consumer Behavior: A Qualitative Study on Consumer buying behavior

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Abstract:

This research paper motivation has been to lead an extensive and basic survey of the observational writing on green promoting and shopper conduct to decide arising issues and patterns. It starts with a layout of the important hypothetical system that supports green showcasing and customer conduct. Then, the paper presents a thorough investigation of the ongoing logical writing. This is trailed by an evaluation of arising patterns and issues got from the writing survey. In conclusion, the article draws significant advertising suggestions and diagrams proper proposals for administrative direction.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Behaviour, Consumer Behavior, Green brands, Purchase Intention, Green Marketing,

Introduction:

The concept of green marketing is on the rise and it has attracted a lot of research. However, there is no single unanimously accepted definition of green marketing. For instance, Tsen et al. (2006), and Wahid et al. (2011) have argued that green marketing is a concept which integrates ecological concerns in all the processes of marketing. Juwaheer et al. (2012) view green marketing as a business strategy which has been adopted to differentiate business practices and products for consumers by going green. The definition used in this thesis is that of Chan (2004), who argued that green marketing identifies the needs of environmentally concerned consumers and influences their buying behavior through the provision of green products. The rationale behind using this definition is that it addresses environmental knowledge as well as the impact of green marketing on consumer buying behavior, which is the main target of this study.

The environmental knowledge of consumers is considered to be the primary factor for determining the success of green marketing in influencing the consumer buying behavior (Chowdhury, 2013). Unfortunately, the level of environmental knowledge is lower in developing countries than in developed ones, which becomes a hurdle in the way of influencing consumer buying behavior through green marketing (Sinnappan & Rahman, 2011).

The green marketing is operationalized by current study through three dimensions: ecolabeling, green branding and green advertising. Eco-labels are voluntary initiatives taken by organizations to preserve the environment. Green branding shows the trend of 'going green' by highlighting the environmental friendliness as additional benefits of the brand and incorporating the green initiatives into brand positioning (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013).

Finally, green advertising uses persuasion strategies that aim at convincing people to prefer eco-friendly products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

Research gap

Green marketing forms an important base to influence consumer buying behavior. However, studies have normally discussed it in terms of a Corporate Social Responsibility and not in the marketing context. Therefore, there is still a need to understand the factors that influence the decision making process of the consumer. Such an understanding is important to multiply the results of influencing consumer buying behavior (Khare et al., 2013). Thus, the concept of green marketing, which is at infancy stage, needs more studies to fully understand the potential of this important field. Moreover, the studies which have been conducted on this topic have been carried out in developed countries, especially the US market (Leonidou et al., 2013).

Research objectives :

The objectives of this research: □

1. To evaluate the impact of green marketing on consumer buying behavior
2. To analyze the role of environmental knowledge on the relationship between green marketing and consumer buying behavior.

Literature Review:

Green marketing is a creative opportunity to innovate in ways that make a difference and at the same time achieve business success (Maheshwari, 2014). Thus, green marketing is a production mechanism which strives to produce products that are safer to use and protect the environment. Like previous studies (Rahbar & Wahid 2011; Zandhessami et al., 2016; Sarkar, 2012), the current study has measured green marketing using three key variables: eco-labeling, green branding and green advertising

Green branding

Branding is considered as the heart of any marketing strategy. The companies try to position their brands at a compatible position to be successful in the long run. Affected by the increased environmental concerns, companies are now increasingly concerned with positioning their brands in relations to going green, i.e. to make their brand perceived as eco-friendly in order to make consumers believe that the brand is offering additional benefits of being environmental friendly and healthy for consumers (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Wahid et al., 2011).

Green advertising

Green advertising is intended to persuade people to use environmental friendly products. In other words, to adopt advertising strategies aiming to make people take decisions to purchase products that are manufactured using harmless environmental processes and causing less waste (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). In recent years, green advertising is on the rise and consumers who are more environmentally concerned pay increased attention to green advertising (Peter & Olson, 2010).

Consumer buying behavior

Consumer buying behavior describes how consumers behave when making certain buying decisions. In the context of green marketing, consumer buying behavior is characterized by purchasing products which are environmental friendly and are produced using harmless production processes (Herring & Sorrel, 2009). Consumers usually take pride in making green buying decisions. The techniques of eco-labeling, green branding and green advertising are all used to influence consumers to make green buying decisions (Akenji, 2014).

Environmental knowledge

With the passage of time, people are faced with increased environmental issues which directly affect their lives. In order to effectively deal with environmental issues, people must possess the relevant knowledge to cope with such concerns (Wole, 2009).

Importance of green marketing The primary aim of green marketing efforts is to reduce the environmental losses and to earn a good reputation for the company as an environmentally concerned company, with a responsible attitude towards the environment (Sarkar, 2012). It is a novel concept which helps organizations to achieve their long-term objectives of attracting more consumers to increase their consumer base. Organizations are paying increased attention to eco-innovation in order to use it as their marketing strategy. It is also helpful for organizations to not only achieve sustainable production processes but to gain a marketing advantage in the form of influencing the behavior of consumers to buy green products (Singh & Pandey, 2012). On the other hand, the organizations, by virtue of increased legal and regulatory pressures, are also bound to follow green practices for the protection of the environment and to provide consumers with healthy and green products and services (Sarkar, 2012). The ultimate goal of all such activities is to influence consumers to contribute towards a healthy environment and a healthy lifestyle by purchasing green products. Modern organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of eco-labeling to improve the brand image. Eco-labeled products reduce the possible information asymmetry between manufacturers and end users (Okada & Mais, 2010). The detailed description of environmental credentials allows consumers to develop informed opinions about the brands (Mishra & Sharma, 2010). The importance of eco-labeling has been highlighted by some recent studies. For example, Esteves et al. (2017) discussed the importance of eco-labeled products by comparing the consumer buying behavior of ecolabeled and non-eco-labeled products available in the New Zealand market. The comparative results highlighted the importance of eco-labeled products and authors proposed that a detailed description of products' environmental credentials enhance the competitiveness in the market (Esteves et al., 2017).

Understanding consumer buying behavior

Consumer buying behavior can be studied under Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991) which seeks to address the motivational factors behind the certain behavior of consumers as influenced by intentions, subjective norms and perceived behavioral controls. This theory says that intentions exhibit a significant influence on a consumer to behave in a certain way. Attitudes are formed by individual judgments of a certain behavior or the beliefs about the outcome of certain actions. As for instance, if a consumer feels that purchasing a green product is helpful for him/her and society's wellbeing, they will form the attitude to buy it and finally, they will perform the action. Normative beliefs, on the other hand, are societal or familial or spousal pressure on someone to act in a certain way. For example, societal or familial pressure on someone to buy and encourage consumption of green products for environmental protection influences a consumer's behavior to buy green products. Finally, perceived behavioral controls are the factors which influence consumer buying behavior in the form of whether he/she can afford to buy a product or the perceived ease or difficulty attached in its buying. As for example, the consumer's perception of whether he/she can afford to buy green products which are normally more expensive than others. In this way, all three factors, i.e. personal intentions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls, all have significant influence in shaping consumer buying behavior (Ajzen, 2011). Thus, green marketers try to influence consumer buying behavior for the purchase of green products by using all tactics mentioned under the theory of planned behavior.

Consumer buying behavior in relation to green marketing.

Affordability is one of the main reasons which direct consumers to go for green products. In a survey study in India, Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) found that 67% of the consumers belonging to high-income classes responded that they prefer green products, while 65% of upper middle-income, 59% of middle-income, and 48% of lowincome responded the same. The lower number of consumers showing their preferences for green products implies that green products usually are not within reach of the low-income class (Purohit, 2012). Even if they incur lower costs, businesses generally charge premium prices in order to take advantage of their green concept (Boztepe, 2012). Researchers have also used behavioral theories to establish a behavior – attitude relationship for consumers, i.e. the consumers make buying decisions based on their favorable attitude towards certain products. Ottman (2011) has however argued that the relationship between green behavior and the attitude of consumers is low. Albayrak et al. (2011) conducted their study in the Turkish context to understand the role of environmental knowledge on shaping consumer buying behavior. They found that green consumers

are like confused consumers'. This is because they are unable to specify what exactly is meant by green, so forming an attitude for green products is also difficult. Spanos (2008) discussed that due to increased regulatory requirements and to match consumers' requirements for green products, the companies are engaged in green manufacturing and green marketing. Similar arguments were made by a later research conducted by Purohit (2012) who argued that consumers, under the influence of social norms, are required to move towards green products and ultimately their intentions are converted into actual buying behavior. In addition to organizations, consumers now also bear equal responsibility for the protection of the environment through green purchases. In this regard, Boztepe (2012) found that in Turkey, the perceived pressure of social norms urges consumers to buy green products. However, this social pressure is different and varies with the change in demographic factors. In support of this, Lee et al. (2012) found that gender, age, qualification, and level of income all result in changing consumer buying behavior for the purchase of green products in the Korean context. Many companies are trying to preserve the environment by delivering environment friendly products (Renfro, 2010).

Previous researches argued that there are several factors which influence the behavior of the consumer in terms of the green products purchase. Like previous research findings from different countries, in India consumer's income class and social norms (Purohit, 2012), in Turkey environment protection behavior and social norms pressure (Boztepe, 2012), in Korea gender, age, education, and income status (Lee et al., 2012) respectively plays an important role in the purchase of green products. Psychological and social factors are persuasively more influential on the consumer's behavior as compared to the demographic factors for the consistency of the green product purchase (Pickett et al., 1995). Laroche et al. (2001) argued that green consumers are more educated and wealthier, yet there is democratization in the purchase behavior in Europe and North America. Other motivators for the purchase of green marketing products are animal welfare, health, and quality of organic products (Raska & Shaw, 2012). The attitude of parents is also a strong predictor of the green marketing purchase behavior. Parents have concerns about green product consumptions and they tend to privilege that organic products more to increase health and safety. Organic consumption is a strong driver that affects the behavior of the consumer for purchase (Renfro, 2010).

Green Marketing and Sustainability

Countless systems portray how firm manageability procedures develop. Nonetheless, these systems are driven by a comparable presumption — that all organizations follow an anticipated procedure in making the essential abilities and assets to accomplish ideal lead. At last, major areas of strength for an ought to integrate three essential credits as follows:

- (1) It is a focal, noticeable, and essential piece of the organization's promoting procedure;
- (2) It is reflected all through the showcasing blend, joining both double-dealing and investigation situated learning and advancement systems; and
- (3) It contains drives to embrace business supportability in showcasing that are connected with issues and cycles including other utilitarian region of a firm and its worth chain. (Tollin and Christensen, 2019).

As per a previous report, 82% of firms intend to spend more on green showcasing. Besides, 74% of these organizations wanting to increment green-promoting speculations intend to use the Web, while simply half intend to utilize green ads through conventional media (Minton et al., 2012).

A large number of frameworks depict how firm sustainability strategies evolve. However, all of these frameworks are driven by a similar assumption—that all companies follow a predictable methodology in creating the requisite skills and resources to achieve optimal conduct. Ultimately, a strong commitment should incorporate three primary attributes as follows:

- (1) It is a central, visible, and integral part of the company's marketing strategy;
- (2) It is reflected throughout the marketing mix, combining both exploitation-and exploration-oriented learning and innovation mechanisms; and

(3) It contains initiatives to adopt business sustainability in marketing that are related to issues and processes involving other functional areas of a firm and its value chain. (Tollin & Christensen, 2019).

According to a past study, 82% of firms plan to spend more on green marketing. Moreover, 74% of these firms planning to increase green-marketing investments plan to leverage the Internet, while only 50% plan to use green advertisements via traditional media (Minton et al., 2012).

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