

Green Consumerism and Consumer Behavior: A Theoretical Analysis

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Abstract

The research seeks to grasp the essence of green consumerism in a straightforward manner, incorporating both psychological and social factors. This research also investigates the impact of consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products on their purchase intentions. This study aims to assess the elements affecting green consumerism intentions among environmentally-conscious consumers. Therefore, the research results show a significant correlation between consumer perceptions of eco-friendly products and their purchase intentions.

I. Introduction

Green consumerism refers to the act of consumers seeking out products that have minimal impact on the environment. It is a societal conduct that encourages the utilization of environmentally friendly items. Green consumers make an effort to reduce energy usage by implementing energy-efficient habits in their day-to-day routines. This involves utilizing energy-efficient devices, switching off lights when not needed, and optimizing natural light and airflow. In this increasing wave of green, consumers will keep adopting eco-friendly and healthy habits and products. Brands are also paying attention and offering sustainable options at lower prices, making them more accessible and setting a precedent as responsible caretakers of the Earth's resources. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, this idea implies that consumers' likelihood to participate in eco-friendly shopping can be largely determined by a positive attitude toward environmentally sustainable products or actions. Experts define Green purchase intention (GPI) as consumers' intention to purchase products made with environmentally friendly manufacturing processes, despite the influence of various environmental factors (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). This study seeks to explore the connections between consumer attitudes and intentions toward environmentally friendly products. This tries to investigate the impact of these factors on consumers' green attitudes and intentions to purchase green products in an emerging market compared to traditional consumer behavior.

II. Objective of the study

To find out the essence of green consumerism in a straightforward manner, incorporating psychological, social factors and marketing sectors.

To investigate the impact of consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products on their purchase intentions.

III. Methodology

As stated previously, the aim of this article is to further explore the marketing field in research focusing on the idea of green consumerism. In order to steer the inquiry, we attempted to create an overarching model (Refer to Fig. 1) whereby study in the core green business disciplines such as green marketing, green product, and after all green consumerism is reviewed to identify the main themes. We then employ a theoretical analysis to determine how consumers' attitudes are inclined towards the green product which designs their intention to buy these products for consumption. We also outline the process we employed to identify the relevant factors that have been conducted on green concepts as they pertain to green consumerism. For this secondary data has been used.

Green Consumerism as a Phenomenon

Green consumerism is the ongoing extension of worldwide consumer action that began with consumer awareness regarding their rights to access safe, environmentally-friendly products. Consumer awareness of environmentally-friendly products is an important issue to consider, as it plays a key role in ensuring future human sustainability (Sangaralingam, 2014; Peattie, 2010).

In the modern times, there has been much discussion about the problem of global warming and the harmful effects it has on nature. The emergence of global warming concerns serves as a reminder for both individuals and businesses about the importance of monitoring the environment. To create a sustainable environment, it is necessary to return to the basics of nature in both consumption and marketing. The term Green frequently arises as a compelling topic in research studies. The popularity of the green is on the rise as more people are displaying a growing interest in sustainability issues now more than ever (Griskevicius, et. al., 2010). The

term "Green" is associated with environmentally friendly solutions or designs that aim to minimize negative impacts on the environment, to help combat global warming. This phenomenon illustrates the contrast between the cheap appearance of the Green term in our lives and its potentially high cost (Polonsky, 2008). The focus is not on the cost, but on the importance, the investment in understanding and implementing measures to create sustainable green solutions to combat global warming. This subject definitely has room for further growth. Therefore, by investing and planning ahead, cutting-edge organizations can cultivate the essential environmentally friendly skills and assets to create markets (Bigliardi et al., 2020).

Green Marketing Involvement in Sustainable Future

Organizations promise to prioritize eco-friendly products and services while conducting marketing ethically (Moser, 2015). Marketers are also responsible for helping consumers grasp the importance and advantages of green products over non-green ones. Consumers in green marketing are ready to spend extra money to support a cleaner and more eco-friendly environment. Consumers, industrial buyers, and suppliers must apply pressure to reduce the adverse impacts on the environment. In countries such as India, green marketing becomes increasingly important and relevant (Sarkar, 2012). Green marketing involves promoting products that are environmentally friendly and do not harm the planet. Green marketing is established when a company recognizes the importance of the environment and implements green marketing principles. Green marketing is seen as crucial for sustainable development by finding a harmonious relationship between the environment, industry, and people (Van Dam, Y. K., & Apeldoorn, 1996). It is not only feasible but also financially beneficial in different aspects. Thus, green marketing as the creation and promotion of products and services that meet the needs of customers seeking high quality, performance, and convenience at a reasonable price without harming the environment (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

Experts of the field suggested that adopting transformative green marketing involves (a) developing different methods of showing value and costs with consideration for environmental impact, (b) altering communication strategies to emphasize educating about the connection between humans and the environment and the significance of taking action or not; and (c) redefining consumption as fulfilling desires rather than obtaining goods (Polonsky, 2011). Polonsky, (2008) stressed the importance of incorporating environmental concerns into marketing strategies and efforts to promote sustainability. Businesses can target these environmentally-conscious consumer groups by creating successful integrated marketing communications that cater to specific profiles, emphasizing the value and competitive advantages of their products to promote long-term growth (Polonsky, 2008). By gaining a more profound grasp on important sustainable consumption issues, industries can pave the way for a future that is clear, beneficial for their businesses, and beneficial for sustainable development. Corporations need to understand that sustainability has generated significant opportunities and has formed a connection between business and environmental consciousness, leading to an improved quality of life for present and future generations (Shrivastava, 1995).

Green marketing will not be a simple concept to grasp. The company must first strategize and then conduct studies to determine the level of feasibility. Implementing Green marketing may be challenging initially, but it will ultimately benefit the company in the long term. Businesses engage in a variety of initiatives to demonstrate their commitment to the environment and society, yet they should not neglect the financial side of marketing when implementing Green marketing strategies. Green marketing contributes to positive results such as reducing costs, increasing employee happiness, minimizing waste, and promoting societal well-being for both companies and society (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

What are Green Products?

Jennings & Zandbergen (1995) are of the opinion that it is logical for their organization to create environmentally friendly products and they must find the most optimal way to move forward (Jennings & Zandbergen, 1995). A green product is a product that utilizes recycling, renewable, toxic-free, or biodegradable resources in its design, attributes, production, and strategy to enhance environmental impact and minimize toxic damage during its entire life cycle (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). It is important to note that each code includes multiple synonymous terms. For instance, Green can also mean environmental or ecological; Attributes can refer to functions, concepts, methods, or characteristics; Uses can also be described as incorporates; Recycling can be renewable, non-toxic, or biodegradable; Resources may include energy, materials, or components; Benefits can maximize, promote, or contribute; Reduces can minimize, conserve, or eliminate; and Toxic damage can be synonymous with pollution (Moore, 1993).

Green products can be environmentally friendly for various reasons, such as being made using sustainable practices or encouraging a more eco-friendly lifestyle when used (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). As a result of the focus of society, numerous organizations have begun to acknowledge their environmental obligations. According to Chen & Chai (2010), a green product/service is one that does not harm the environment or exhaust natural resources and can be reused or preserved (Chen & Chai, 2010). Mendleson & Polonsky (1995) posited that

environmentally aware individuals were altering their purchasing habits for the sake of the environment (Mendleson & Polonsky, 1995). Following the mentioned phenomenon, the next step will involve studying how consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly products impact their intention to make a purchase.

Significance of Consumers’ Attitude toward Green Products

Green consumers are described as individuals who choose products that are unlikely to harm human health or the environment (Boztepe, 2012). Green consumers are the final users of products made by manufacturers, although industrial consumers can also be environmentally conscious, the main emphasis is placed on individual or household consumers. Some would argue that consumers play a significant role in driving the green movement by expressing their needs to the supply chain, therefore assisting in greening both the supply chain and markets (Cronin et. al. 2011). Organizations are well-informed about the preferences of green consumers, so profit-driven companies will be highly motivated to adopt environmentally friendly practices.

The typical green consumer is someone who backs eco-friendly beliefs and buys green products instead of regular options. Virtually all customers could be classified as environmentally conscious consumers (Gano-an, 2018). For example, if a consumer is faced with two similar products, they will opt for the environmentally conscious option. A variety of factors have played a role in motivating eco-conscious consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products. Extensive studies over time identify several factors including deep comprehension of environmental issues, increased awareness of sustainability, corporate use of green advertising, growing environmental concern, and increased recognition of eco-friendly products by environmental and social organizations as key contributors.

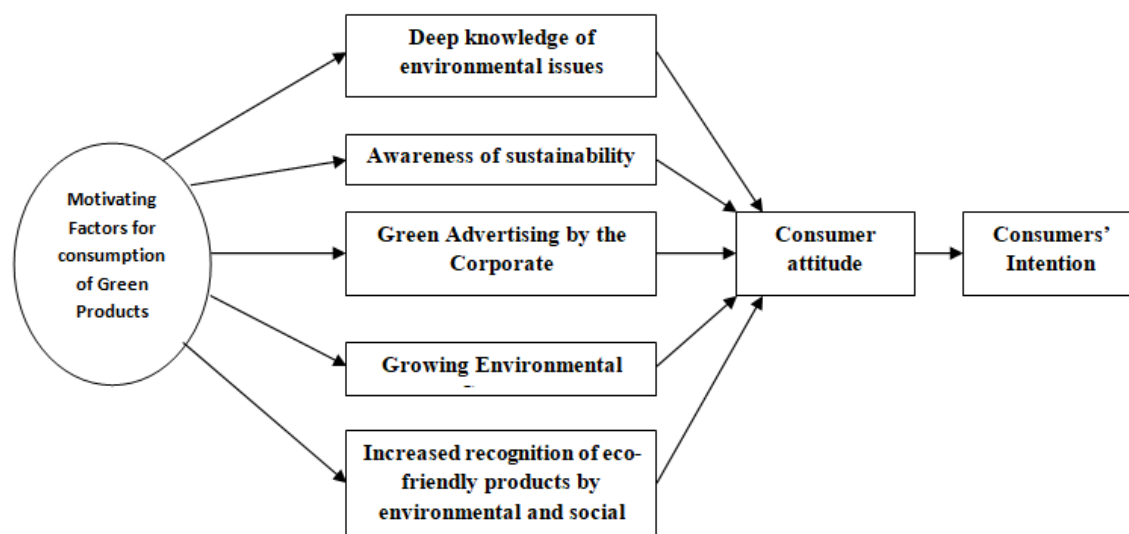


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Green Consumerism (Designed by the Author)

Companies have been trying to become more environmentally friendly by promoting the concept of corporate environmentalism, responding to the increasing awareness of environmental issues among different consumer groups (Chen & Chai, 2010). Consumers' worries about the environment are linked to the well-being of the natural environment and its impact on both consumers and their surroundings (Kaufmann et. al. 2012). At first, gender is a critical factor in both consumer behavior and awareness of the environment (Lee, 2009). Previous studies have acknowledged that women have a higher level of concern for the environment compared to men.

Furthermore, consumers' environmental concerns have been observed to vary based on product attributes, the accuracy of green product declarations, the information given about the products, and their benefits (Suki, Suki, & Azman, 2016). Personal beliefs are closely linked to psychographic and cultural factors. Psychographic factors could consist of the beliefs, actions, and worries of people (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Furthermore, psychographic variables like individualism and collectivism can also be classified as cultural factors (Nguyen, Lobo, & Greenland, 2017). According to Chan (2001), various combinations of single psychographic factors can lead to diverse consumer behaviors related to green activities (Chan, 2001). Various sets of people with common or comparable psychological traits could create behavioral segments within the framework of a sustainable way of living.

Green consumer behavior involves incorporating environmentally friendly knowledge into all consumption decisions. Consumers need to take certain steps to practice eco-friendly behavior known as the 3R

(Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) concept (FuiYeng, & Yazdanifard, 2015). A number of researchers aimed to investigate the impact of attitude on green consumer behavior. Govender, & Govender (2016) sought to explore green consumption behaviors by examining the impact of collectivism, personal values, environmental attitudes, and effective consumer perception (Govender & Govender, 2016). They claim that, in most cases, positive views on eco-friendly products play a role in the buying of such products. The way consumers feel about the environment is typically developed by their consistent positive or negative reactions to it, influenced by their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Govender & Govender, 2016). There is still a deficit in consumer awareness regarding eco-friendly claims that can be observed from there. Consumers trust the company's information and do not feel the need to continuously process it because they have faith in the quality of the product (Lewandowska, Witczak, & Kurczewski, 2017). The details about the product's environmental impact in the table are insufficient in providing consumers with a precise understanding of how consuming the products affect the environment. The information regarding environmental aspects and products labeled as green is still insufficient, preventing consumers from knowing the truth behind these claims.

Other Traits of Consumer Attitude toward Green Products

A person who values the significance of many individuals, particularly their family, is likely to hold a favorable view of environmentally friendly products. Cheah and Phau's study (2011) backs up this viewpoint. This clarifies the direct correlation between value orientation and consumer attitudes towards green products. The previous measurements for the Attitude Toward Green Product variable are as follows: Eco-literacy, also known as eco-literacy, refers to the ability of consumers to recognize symbols, concepts, and behaviors related to ecological issues (Laroche et al. 2001). Peer-group influence involves persuading and influencing others towards a particular goal. The primary factor shaping individual behavior is the impact of another person (Khare & Pandey, 2017). Value orientation refers to an individual's inclination to achieve a desired goal by prioritizing its significance and incorporating guiding principles into their daily lives (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Relation between Consumers' Attitude and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the likelihood of a consumer buying a brand or engaging in a purchase-related action, which is gauged by the consumer's probability of making the purchase. Consumers who consider buying multiple products from a specific brand tend to mentally contemplate their purchase intentions. Marketers and economists rely on intention variables to predict consumer behavior in the future in order to understand consumer purchase intention towards a product. Acquiring the intention to buy comes from the development of knowledge and thoughts that shape one's perception. The intention to buy something motivates the consumer, remains in their mind constantly, and eventually leads to them fulfilling their desire by making the purchase. Therefore, intention to buy plays a critical role in a business. (Sugandini, Susilowati, Siswanti, & Syafri, 2020).

The Influencing Factors of Green Consumer Attitude toward Purchase Intention

A number of researchers aimed to investigate the impact of attitude on green purchasing behaviors. In an effort to comprehend green consumption habits, Kim (2011) examined the impact of collectivism, personal values, environmental attitudes, and effective consumer perception (Kim, 2011). Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, Lobo, & Vu, (2019) anticipate that consumers' perceptions of organic farming being less damaging to the environment will have a positive effect on their attitudes towards organic food and intention to purchase it (Nguyen et. al., 2019). The approach to the environment friendliness rise when buying products or the readiness to utilize it. The researchers' findings suggest that people with a favorable outlook on the environment are likely to be more inclined to purchase and use environmentally friendly products (Murphy, 2005; Katrandjiev, 2016; Hsieh, 2011; Malyan & Duhan, 2018).

This suggests that as more people or customers engage with the environment, they will purchase more eco-friendly products. Felix & Braunsberger (2016) study also reinforces the idea that individuals who have a favorable opinion of green products are more likely to desire to purchase them. Attitude reflects an individual's level of approval or disapproval towards an object. An individual's attitude is connected to their behavior, so having a positive attitude will result in positive behavior as well (Felix & Braunsberger, 2016). The relationship between green product purchase behavior and attitudes is positively linked, as evidenced by the study of Chen & Chai (2010) showing that consumers who prioritize their environment are more likely to purchase green products. Given the previous background and problem explanation, the conclusion that can be proposed is that the attitude of consumers towards environmentally-friendly products positively impacts their intention to purchase.

IV. Conclusion

Consumer behavior is influenced by attitudes towards green products, which are shaped by factors like understanding environmental issues, sustainability awareness, green advertising, environmental concern, and recognition of eco-friendly products. These influences, along with eco-literacy, peer-group influence, and values, lead to intention towards green consumer behavior, known as green consumerism.

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