

Consumer Behavior towards Green Products

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“Consumers are faced with less choice in their ambition to ‘go green’”. This article basically deals with how people define green products in their own perceptions and what have contributed to the appearance of Green Market.

Key Words: Green Purchase Behavior, Environmentally Conscious Consumers, Environmental Concern, Environmental Knowledge

Introduction

Consumer behavior means to know the “what-where-why-when and how” of the purchase intention of the consumers. Understanding the consumer behaviour has never ever been a simple task. Many a times consumers ‘say’something else but ‘do’something else. They are not very much touched with their inner motivations. Many a times they respond to influences that change their minds at the last minute.

According to Walter and Paul, “Consumer behaviour is the process whereby individuals decide whether, what, when, where and how and from whom to purchase goods and services.” Marketing research is primarily concerned with behaviour of the consumers. If the behaviour of the consumer towards a particular company or its product is unfavourable, the Company will not be able to sustain itself for too long. It is therefore in the interest of the company to ensure that people have a favourable inclination towards its products.

Environment Concern

The concern for climate change and global warming is increasing. Environmental pollution is one of the most challenging problems facing humanity and other forms of life. Today, environmental concern and knowledge is on the rising scale. Many laws have been formed. Even then our land and forest cover is decreasing, fresh water resources are being polluted, water table is declining and air pollution is increasing. Consumer’s concern about the environment has been on the rise all over the world. However, the understanding of the term ‘Greenness’ varies widely among the consumers. Manufacturers make various claims about greenness of their product but there is little the consumer can do to authenticate such claims.

Objectives

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To understand the concept of green product.
- To know consumers’ buying intentions regarding green products.

Green Consumers:

The green consumer is defined as one who adopts environment friendly behaviours and who purchases green products over the standard alternatives. Green consumers are more internally-controlled. They strongly believe that an individual consumer can be effective in protecting the environment and they feel that the job of environmental protection should not be left to the government, business, environmentalists and scientists only; they as consumers can also play a significant role in protecting the environment.

Green Product

Green products as such have no established definition till date. In simple words these are the products that are manufactured to give due consideration to the life cycle. The life cycle analysis of a product provides estimates of the positive and negative environmental impacts of the product from cradle to grave i.e. from the extraction of raw materials, processing, packaging, transportation, use and disposal or end of life.

Consumer Preference for Green Product

The dependent variable in this study is the factor affecting consumer preferences for green products. Everyone on this Earth, plays a vital role as a consumer. Consumers are the main factors that boost a country’s economy. Each consumer has his very own perspective and preferences towards his consumption. Consumer from demographic factors such as background and society may influence the behaviour in making decisions while

purchasing products. Thus, it undeniable stated that consumers' preferences and their perspective towards goods and services are hard to predict. Their preference for the green products depends upon the following factors:

Knowledge and Attitude towards Environment and Green Product

There is a general belief among the researchers and the environmental activists that by purchasing environmentally friendly products or green products, products with a recyclable packaging, consumers indirectly can contribute significantly in order to improve the quality of the environment. The quality of the environment depends on the level of knowledge, attitudes, values and practices of consumer. Attitudes are the most consistent clarifying factor in predicting consumers' willingness to pay for green products This means, price is not the main cause to avert consumers from purchasing green products. Influencing consumer behaviour is a complex and difficult task requiring knowledge of its determinants. The most convincing support of the growing influence of the ecologically-friendly consumer is the increase in the number of individuals that are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products

Social Norms and Values

Studies have also investigated that the interest in green initiatives is not expected to emanate only from external impositions and inducements but also from the internal sense of responsibility of a firm towards the society in which it exists. The sensitivity of the people towards the environment can be intensified by creating awareness towards environmental problems such as global warming and pollution. Such problems at world level will force firms to behave in a more socially responsible manner and reflect an image of due diligence and commitment to sustainability. Green purchasing is primarily motivated by degree of consumer ecological consciousness.

Social norms influence individuals to take into consideration the opinions of the other members of society when choosing a green product over another: if they think that the people in their circle are approving green products over standard products, there are induced to buy green products. Thus social

norms are important motivators of ecologically responsible behaviour. The strength of the normative influence of the consumers' family and social groups on purchasing decisions depends on the characteristics of the product e.g. luxury rather than a necessity.

Advantages of Green Products in Market

For companies, a green business model can transform the way companies are being run. Thus by combining an eco-conscious outlook with good safety practices, businesses can enjoy a wealth of benefits. Green business will also help in cutting down the costs which is due to unnecessary waste associated with it. Apart from this, introducing a green business will not only aid the company in cutting down their costs but also help in providing their employees with a safe and healthy workplace. Therefore, developing a green business can help companies to operate more sustainably, safely and efficiently. The other advantage of green products in market is that it can become a powerful competitive weapon in the market. It has opened up a new market for green products. Thus the companies should be ethical and have a social responsibility towards to the environment while introducing green products to the market.

According to the articles that have been reviewed, the factors that determine the consumer willingness to buy green products are their consciousness about the environment and their health. People are more willing to pay for green products especially in metropolitan cities. Other than that, consumers are more willing to purchase green products because green products have less harmful effects on the environment and human health Therefore, it could be said that consumers are willing to buy green products because they are "green" and eco-friendly. However, there might be some consumers who may not prefer to purchase green products for various reasons such as package size, unit bias, and size labels. Due to this, it shows that product preferences plays an important role in determining consumer's intention of purchasing a green product. In addition, other reasons that influence consumers to be less willing to buy green products are because consumers may consider green products to be less effective

than conventional products. It could be said that consumers are not willing to buy green products because they are not so sure about the quality standards of the green products as compared to conventional products. Other reason is that consumers sometimes may also think that green products are more costly as compared to conventional products. These product preferences are actually the reasons that consumers are unwilling to purchase green products. Moreover, it is not just the product preferences but consumers behaviors and perceptions that contribute to the reasons for why consumers decide not to buy green products.

The People who are willing to pay more for green products are the ones who have realized that the environmental issues are becoming worst. Due to this, it has developed into an opportunity for sellers to make profits by introducing green business. While introducing a new business, they must fulfill their social responsibility barriers to adoption of Green Products to the environment.

Conclusion

Basically, this article is about how people define green products in their own perceptions and what has contributed to the appearance of green market. It shows that people have different description towards green products with regards of their own perceptions. Therefore, it could be said that a clear understanding for the purpose of green products and green market are equally important. It is because it helps to avoid the problems of targeting the wrong market and purchasing fake green products. It is important to have a good knowledge towards the products producers are selling. Furthermore, there is a correlation between product preferences, consumers behaviours and advertisements credibility. As the credibility of the advertisements is trustworthy and true, consumers will perceive it as a believable message and thus buying the product solely based on the advertisements message. Other than that, product preference is also one of the main factors that may influence consumer's consumption. If green products quality are low and with a higher price compared to conventional products, consumers may consider buying conventional

products rather than green products. This is because even though they have paid a higher price for green products but they cannot get an equal or an even better satisfaction from the products.

As a conclusion, all the aspects that have been discussed in this review are important because all of the aspects are correlated. One may affect the others and viceversa. Therefore, to start a new business in a new market, marketers may have to take wider consideration before carrying out the actual moves.

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