

From Awareness to Action: Understanding Consumer Awareness of Green Marketing and Its Influence on Green Product Purchase Behavior

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Abstract

In recent years, environmental concerns and sustainability challenges have significantly influenced consumer behavior and corporate strategies. Green marketing has emerged as a vital approach for organizations aiming to align their offerings with eco-friendly practices while meeting the growing expectations of environmentally conscious consumers. This theoretical article explores the concept of consumer awareness toward green marketing and its influence on the purchasing behavior of green products. Drawing on established theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, Value-Belief-Norm Theory, and Consumer Decision-Making Models, the study synthesizes existing literature to understand how awareness shapes attitudes, intentions, and actual purchasing behavior. The article also examines key factors influencing awareness, including environmental knowledge, eco-labeling, advertising, and socio-demographic characteristics. Furthermore, it discusses the barriers that hinder the translation of awareness into actual purchase behavior, such as price sensitivity, skepticism, and lack of trust. The findings highlight that while consumer awareness plays a critical role in shaping green purchase intentions, its impact is mediated by psychological, social, and economic factors. The study concludes by providing theoretical and managerial implications, emphasizing the need for transparent communication, consumer education, and policy support to enhance the effectiveness of green marketing strategies.

Keywords: Green marketing, consumer awareness, sustainable consumption, green products, purchase behavior

1. Introduction

The modern marketplace has been considerably changed by the environmental degradation, changes in climatic conditions, and the large-scale use of natural resources that have changed consumer expectations and corporate responsibilities (Montt et al., 2018). The growing need to be more ecologically friendly as seen in the rising awareness of consumers to the ecological sustainability issue has pushed more consumers to change their consumption behavior towards the adoption of ecologically friendly, ethically sourced and

socially responsible products. This shift is a greater change in traditional mode of consumption toward sustainable consumption. Businesses have in turn responded to this by using green marketing as a business tactic to market products and services citing their environmental qualities e.g. smaller carbon footprint, use of recyclable packaging materials and sustainable production processes (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

The consciousness of green marketing among the consumers forms a defining aspect of the market (Alsmadi, 2007). It includes how well the consumers are informed about the issue of the environment, are aware of the eco-friendly product qualities and how they evaluate green claims by the organization critically. There is a tendency to have stronger environmental attitudes and inclination towards sustainable purchasing decisions through the increased levels of awareness. When consumers are well informed about the effects of the environment, they tend to purchase brands that resonate with their environmental beliefs. Nonetheless, even though there is an increase in awareness and positive attitude towards the green product, there is still a significant gap between the intentions expressed by consumers and the actual purchasing behavior pattern. This is commonly known as the attitude-behavior gap and it implies that knowledge in itself may not be enough to influence regular adoption of green (Haider et al., 2019).

Thus, it is important to learn how consumer awareness is converted into real buying behavior. This paper seeks to discuss the conceptual basis of consumer awareness about the green marketing process and how it affects the purchasing decision. The study aims at offering an overall structural framework that explains the cognitive and psychological mechanism by which awareness is transformed into actionable consumer behavior by incorporating the proven behavioral theories and existing literature.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Green Marketing

Green marketing is the strategic aspect of creating, marketing and selling goods and services that focus on eco-sustainability and minimized environmental effects (Sarkar, 2012). It goes beyond the simple advertising statements to incorporate the responsible design of its products, sustainability in the sourcing of raw materials, low-energy consumption production processes, and environment-friendly packaging. Companies that practice green marketing also incorporate corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, like cutting down of waste and control of carbon footprint, in their business models. This method is not only a way to solve environmental issues but also improves the brand image and competitive edge in highly sustainability-based markets (Ottman, 2017).

2.2 Consumer Awareness

Consumer awareness as used in green marketing refers to the level of knowledge, understanding and consciousness of the consumers about environmental factors and products that are environmentally friendly (Škatarić et al., 2021). It includes not only knowledge of such concept as sustainability, climate change, and responsible consumption but also knowledge of how to understand eco-labels, certifications, and environmental claims. Greater awareness will allow the consumer to make better decisions and critically assess the green marketing messages. In addition, awareness has a cognitive basis to influence attitudes, beliefs, and intentions to be environmentally responsible in consumption (Aman et al., 2021).

2.3 Green Products

Green products are produced in a way that they cause minimal environmental degradation throughout their life cycle such as the process of extracting raw materials to the disposal process (Wang, 2023). These products usually use environmentally friendly inputs, manufacture using energy saving methods and reduce the amount of emissions and wastes released. Green products are also characterized by packaging which is biodegradable or recyclable and they are made within ethical and environmentally acceptable standards. They add value to the environment and sustainability in the long run, thus offering not just functionality but also being valuable (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

2.4 Purchase Behavior

Consumer purchase behavior can be defined as the rational and methodical manner in which human beings recognize the needs, information seekers, compare and contrast, and purchase (Roy & Datta, 2022). Specifically in the case of green products, this type of behavior is considerably affected by environmental awareness, personal values, perceived product benefits, and social influences. Although it is true that awareness may influence development of positive attitudes and intentions, the process remains multidimensional and dynamic because external factors like price, availability and belief of green claims also contribute to actual purchasing decisions.

3. Theoretical Foundations

3.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen (1991) suggests that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is an effective theory in explaining the relationship between consumer awareness and green purchasing behavior. TPB suggests that behavioral intention is the main determinant of an individual behavior, and that the behavioral intention is influenced by three main elements, such as attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Consumer awareness, in the green marketing context, improves the level of knowledge regarding environmental problems and products, which are environmentally friendly, thus developing the positive attitude towards sustainable consumption. Moreover, the subjective norms could be reinforced with the help of perception of the social expectations or environmental responsibility. The awareness also interacts with the perceived behavioral control, which includes whether green products are easily or difficult to obtain, which eventually leads to purchase intentions and behavior.

3.2 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory

The environmentally significant behavior is explained by Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, which is the results of a causal chain between personal values and ecological beliefs, and moral norms (Stern, 2000). Consumer awareness is central in this framework since it determines the beliefs of people on the effects of the environment and their perceived role in solving the environmental problems. The higher the consumer knows about the adverse effects of traditional consumption, the more he or she is inclined to form high pro-environmental attitudes, which trigger personal norms or moral codes to act in a way that

is sustainable. Therefore, awareness does not only educate the consumer, but also encourages them to make a moral decision to use green products as opposed to the traditional ones.

3.3 Consumer Decision-Making Model

Consumer decision-making model provides the steps that consumers go through in order to make purchase decisions and they include problem recognition, search of information, alternatives evaluation, purchase decision and post purchase evaluation (Panwar et al., 2019). The level of consumer awareness plays a critical role in all these stages especially concerning the green products. Awareness assists customers in being aware of environmental issues, find information concerning the environmentally friendly products, and compare the alternatives according to the principles of sustainability. Moreover, level of awareness also affects post-purchase satisfaction and reinforcement of green behavior hence is also a very important driver in the entire decision-making process.

4. Consumer Awareness toward Green Marketing

4.1 Environmental Knowledge

Environmental knowledge is the knowledge that consumers have on the ecological matters and sustainability practices. Research has shown that the more an individual has knowledge on the environment, the more the awareness on green marketing and positive attitude towards green products are enhanced (Mostafa, 2007).

4.2 Role of Eco-labeling

Eco-labels act as informational indicators that enable consumers to recognize the environmental-friendly products. Organic label and energy rating are examples of certification that helps build better consumer awareness and confidence (Rex & Baumann, 2007).

4.3 Green Advertising

In green advertising the consumers are made aware of the environmental benefits of the products and the perception they have. Good green advertising brings about awareness and persuades people to make sustainable purchasing (Leonisou et al., 2011).

4.4 Social Influence and Media

Factors such as social media, peer influence, and culture have a great impact on consumer awareness (Wang et al., 2012). The awareness of the environmental campaigns and discussions increases and fosters the environmentally friendly behavior.

5. Influence of Awareness on Purchasing Behavior

The consumer awareness is a significant factor that determines the buying behavior towards green products as it affects the attitudes, intentions, and the real purchase decisions. Consciousness increases the level of knowledge of consumers on environmental concerns and the advantage of green products, and as a result, positive attitudes towards green consumption are formed. Consumers with high information levels will morally view green products as ethical and socially responsible, which reinforces their intentions to buy.

But the correlation between the awareness and the real purchase behavior is complicated. Although awareness helps in enhancing the intentions, it does not necessarily lead to action since moderating factors that may affect an action include price sensitivity, availability of products, and perceived convenience. This leads to the commonly-known attitude-behavior gap, in which the consumers show intentions but do not act on them.

In addition, perceived risk becomes low and trust levels improve with credible information that creates awareness hence boosting purchase intentions. This relationship is enhanced by social influence and perceived value. All in all, awareness is a prerequisite drive in the decision-making process, yet the magnitude of awareness will be effective under favorable market conditions and the elimination of viable impediments to prevent the real pursuance of green buying.

6. Factors Influencing Consumer Awareness

With the help of this mixture of demographic, psychological, and socio-cultural factors they influence consumer awareness of green marketing. Age, education, income and gender are also demographic factors that have a strong impact on the level of awareness. Consumers who are younger and better educated tend to be more sensitive to the information on the environment and, therefore, more aware. On the same note, people with a high income usually have more access to sustainable products and knowledge.

Psychological criteria, such as personal values, environmental concern, and lifestyle preferences also have a significant contribution. Sustainability-focused consumers who also believe that they can do something to protect the environment are the ones who are interested in information about green products and this makes them more attentive.

Awareness is also formed through the influence of culture and social factors that define norms and shared attitudes to sustainability. A society that lays stress on environmental responsibility will ensure greater awareness among the individuals within the society. As well, media coverage, peer pressure, and the internet have a big role to play in disseminating information on green marketing. Therefore, consumer awareness is not a one-dimensional construct but a multidimensional result of internal motivation with regard to the external environmental factors.

7. Barriers to Green Purchasing Behavior

Although there is growing awareness, consumers do not convert their intentions to actual green purchasing behavior due to some barriers. Price sensitivity is one of the main impediments since the green products tend to be costlier in comparison to traditional products. A large number of consumers particularly in the developing economies are not concerned about the environment but rather affordability.

Low trust is another great hindrance owing to the greenwashing activities. False or exaggerated claims about the environment will lead to distrust by the consumer and undermine their faith in environmental products. This mistrust deteriorates the power of awareness and demoralizes buying choices.

The availability and accessibility of green products is also limited which further limits consumer behavior. The environmentally friendly products are not as accessible or located in select stores in most markets, which makes them less convenient to buy.

Also, habitual behavior has a very critical role in shaping the consumption pattern. Consumers do not usually switch to new brands and habits, even when they know that these are superior. Such habitual practices decrease the chances of behavioral change. Consequently, it is important to overcome these obstacles to make sure that awareness will be converted into sustainable purchasing behavior.

8. Strategies to Enhance Consumer Awareness

Consumer awareness should be improved through a complex procedure that entails education, communication, policy intervention, and digital interaction. Consumer education is the core to creating environmental knowledge and encouraging sustainable consumption behaviors. Awareness campaign, academic integration, and community programs would go a long way into enhancing the knowledge about green marketing concepts.

Honest communication by companies is also essential when creating trust. Sustainability of the product should be presented in a clear, accurate and verifiable information to enable the consumer make informed choices and minimize skepticism about greenwashing.

The government policies are also an important factor as they provide the regulations, eco-labeling standards and incentives that would foster the sustainable practices. Green products can be promoted among the businesses and consumers through subsidies and tax support.

In addition, technology in marketing and social media have become potent in creating awareness. These platforms make it possible to communicate in a specific way, to interact, share the real-time information. Awareness and perception of consumers are additionally enhanced through influencers and user-generated content. To sum up, businesses, governments, and the society have to join their efforts to raise consumer awareness and build a sustainable consumer purchase behavior.

9. Theoretical Implications

The research contributes considerably to theory by bringing together several theories of behavior and the environment to reveal the association between the consumer awareness and green purchasing behavior. The integration of the insights of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, and the consumer decision-making model allows the study to offer a rich context on the role of awareness in attitude, intentions, and real behavior. It highlights that awareness is not a cognitive phenomenon alone but also a psychological and moral force that forms consumer decision-making processes.

The paper shows that attitudes are a mediating variable of awareness in which awareness does not directly result in purchasing behavior but is mediated by attitude formation and intention development. It further determines the moderating effect of the external factors like price, availability, trust, and social norms on the strength of the relationship between awareness and behavior.

Moreover, the study can add to the existing body of knowledge about attitude-behavior gap because it sheds light on why green consumers cannot translate their intentions into action. It also supports the points of multidimensional analysis by using demographic, psychological and cultural characteristics. All in all, the research offers a complete theoretical framework that may inform development of future research in sustainable consumption and green marketing.

10. Managerial Implications

The results of this paper can be used by managers and marketers who want to become effective promoters of green products. The improvement of consumer awareness, based on the properly designed marketing strategies, that focus on education, transparency, and credibility have to be prioritized by the organizations. Presenting non-misleading information on the sustainability of the products such as certifications and eco-labels could enable a sense of trust towards consumers and a decreased distrust of skepticism that is linked to greenwashing.

Businesses are also encouraged to strive to match their products with the expectations of the consumer by making sure the products are of quality, affordable and accessible. Creating affordably priced green products, and increasing their presence in the mainstream retail outlets, would assist in breaking down major barriers to adoption. Also, marketers are encouraged to use storytelling and emotional appeals as a way of reaching the values of consumers and an interest in the environmental issues so that to reinforce attitudes and purchase intentions.

The consumers can be approached through the use of digital marketing platforms and social media to disseminate information and engage in interactive experiences that build awareness. Credibility and reach can also be improved by partnerships with influential people and environmental groups.

Finally, the organizations that make sustainability their central business theory and employ effective communication activities regarding their environmental actions have a high chance of achieving

competitive advantage, brand loyalty, and developing long-term consumer relationships in the dynamic green marketplace.

11. Conclusion

The green marketing consumer awareness has become a very determining factor in buying behaviour in light of the rising environmental issues. The paper has indicated that consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase green products are strongly affected by awareness through improving the level of knowledge, perception, and environmentally friendly behavior. The results however also indicate that awareness is not enough to ensure the actual purchasing behavior as there are various barriers including price sensitivity, a lack of trust, limited availability and habitual consumption patterns which prevent the intentions to be translated to action.

The stillness of the attitude behavior gap highlights the necessity of the holistic approach which includes addressing both mental and practical issues. Business, policymakers, and consumers need to collaborate to form an enabling environment to achieve sustainable consumption. The organizations should embrace clear and honest marketing activities, and the governments should have enabling policies and educative campaigns to sell green products. The next level of research ought to investigate the new aspects including the influence of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and cultural differences in consumer awareness and behavior. Longitudinal studies would also further investigate the effect of awareness with time and its impact in maintaining behavioral change. So, the concept of consumer awareness promotion is one of the main avenues in the process of sustainable development and responsible consumption trends.

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