

Assessment of public purchase behavior towards household green products in United Arab Emirates (UAE).

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Abstract

The aim of green production and consumption is to adopt the idea of supplying the consumers with products that fulfill their needs with lower consequences on the environment. This concept, introduced in 1970, aims to protect the environment and to have better control over natural resources. This study is aiming at investigating the consumers' purchase behaviors toward green products which can help decision-makers identify the tools that may be needed to promote green products in UAE markets. The study was conducted through the distribution of a self-administered questionnaire to assess green purchase practices and public knowledge about green products. The study concluded that the quality of green products is the most important factor that the UAE's consumers consider for their decision regarding the green purchase. Eco-labeling may not be well understood among the studied population, and more awareness is needed about Eco-labeling among the community. This study showed that social media is a very important and effective tool to spread and influence green purchase practices among the residents.

Keywords: green product, eco-labeling, consumer purchase behavior, environment, green marketing.

1. Introduction

The concept of green purchase was introduced in the 1970s aiming to protect the environment and to have better control on the natural resources. The demand for green products has significantly increased due to the strict environmental regulations in some countries and environmental concerns of individuals. The demand for green products has created pressure on different industries to conduct their business in a sustainable manner (Delafrooz, Taleghani & Nouri, 2014).

Green consumption practices started a long time ago in many developed countries; these practices have been transferred quickly to developing countries through awareness programs organized by governmental and nongovernmental organizations. A number of studies have been conducted since the 1990s onwards to

understand customers behaviors toward green purchase behaviors, e.g., USA (Min & Galle, 2001), UK (Young, Hwang & others, 2010), Jordan (Al-Otoum & Nimri, 2015), Germany (Moser, 2016). and Singapore (Soo & Mok, 2016). Those studies helped to prepare a theoretical framework to explain the consumption patterns considering factors such as quality, price, consumer interest, pressure from the government,...,etc.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) is one of the Arab countries in the Gulf region. UAE is aiming to ensure sustainable development while preserving the environment and achieving a perfect balance between economic and social development. Understanding and studying consumers purchase habits towards green products will help decision makers to identify the factors needed to promote the green products in UAE markets.

2. Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire has been used to investigate different factors affecting the green purchase behavior among the UAE population. The web link to the questionnaire has been sent through email, and social media. Questions have been prepared to cover all aspects related to green purchase behavior as shown in the conceptual framework presented in figure 1 such as consumers' environmental beliefs, knowledge, consumers awareness about the availability of green products, consumers' attitudes on green products and the influence of marketing methods on consumers buying habits.

3. Results

Results showed that the level of knowledge in relation to various environmental issues such as green products, global warming, and used plastic bags ranged from average to high level of knowledge. Respondents also reported a lack of knowledge about green certification or how to identify green products in the market. This indicates the importance of organizing more campaigns about eco-labeling and green products in the community.

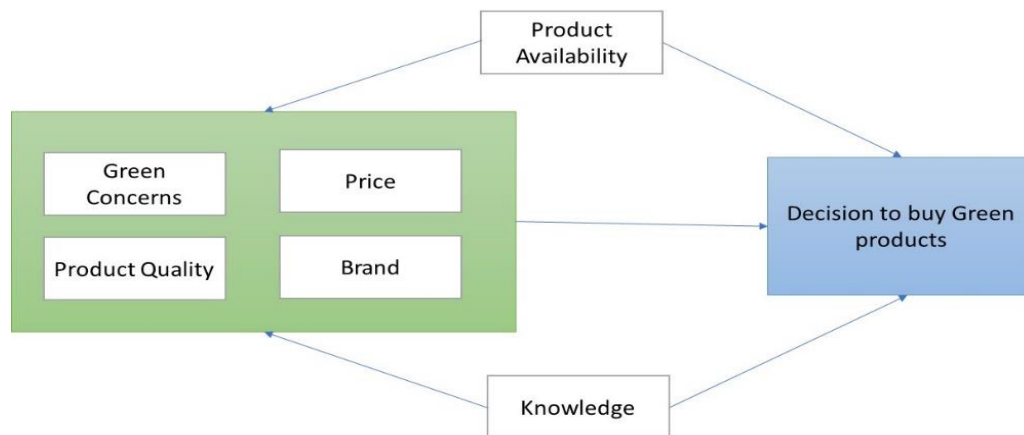


Figure 1. the conceptual model used for study design

To identify the factors influencing the green purchase, a number of 16 questions have been included in the questionnaire. The questions covered consumer beliefs, green products availability, products' quality, price, advertisements, and available regulations. It was found that 42% of the consumers confirmed that green products are available in UAE, majority of the consumers (more than 55%) think that the prices of the green products are on the higher side, more than 58% thought the green products are not well promoted and more than 60% believed that green products have high quality.

The study revealed that the purchase preference for the green products is mainly impacted by environmental awareness of consumers even about 50% of consumers are willing to pay more to purchase the green products. The main driver for the willingness to pay was the consumer's environmental concerns.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The findings indicate that most of the factors that have been identified by literature are affecting the consumers' green purchase behavior in the UAE

Good environmental knowledge about different environmental issues is an important factor that impacts the consumers' attitude and the purchase preference of green products these findings are in agreement with finds proposed by Joshi & Rahman (2015) and Anvar & Venter (2014)

The green products quality, price, and brand reputation are all important factors influencing the consumers' purchase behavior. The results suggest that consumers in the UAE are mostly concerned about the quality of the product more than price and brand. One of the surprising findings is the impact of Ecolabeling on green purchase decisions. It was found that the Eco-labeling/eco-certificate has little impact on the green product purchase decision. these findings were different from what was found by previous studies This indicates that Eco-labeling is not well understood among the UAE residents, and more awareness about the Eco-labeling is needed in the future.

5. Recommendation

Awareness campaigns about green products and their impact on the environment should be increased.

Use of social media as a tool to improve the attitude and green purchase behavior should be considered in future marketing plans.

Government and various environmental organizations should consider suitable tools to incentivize the green production and consumption among the population.

More efforts should be made to introduce high-quality green products with competitive prices in the market.

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