

Chapter 1

Antecedents of Green Consumerism

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ABSTRACT

While green consumerism is considered as a solution to ecological problems, it is also seen as a good source of income and competitive advantage for commercial enterprises. It is extremely difficult for producers and marketers to design and position their green marketing efforts. Because green consumerism is not only a tendency towards products, but also a multi-faceted approach that varies from political struggle to ethical orientation. Therefore, green consumerism as a form of consumption is influenced by severe factors. Each green consumer exhibits different motivational drivers regarding to the attributes of a green product, service, or act. Therefore, it is vital to understand different preferences and different motivations among green customers. This chapter reviews the antecedents that affect the green purchasing behaviors of consumers. Factors affecting green consumerism are examined under three main headings: endogenous antecedents such as emotion, exogenous antecedents such as social norms, and structural antecedents such as price of the product.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'green' can be seen in all echelons of a supply chain such as manufacturing, procurement, distribution, packaging, and warehousing. Green marketing acts as a facilitator which informs consumers, the last node of supply chains, about green products (Peattie & Charter, 2003). Green consumerism has evolved herein, where the downstream flow of information through the marketing channels happens (Srivastava, 2007).

Green consumerism is generally associated with consuming green products that have a positive or less negative influence on the environment, avoiding excessive consumption, preferring recyclable and energy efficient products, and reducing consumption of natural resources. Green consumption, rather than production is now an important concern for societal change and sustainability. Because sustainability is coming to the fore as a source of added value and competitive advantage for marketers and companies and a critical concern for policy makers it is vital for them to have a coherent understanding of precursors of green consumerism for promoting it.

The basis of the existence of businesses is based on meeting the needs and demands of consumers. The most important reason why firms differ from their competitors is that they can meet their customers' needs better than their competitors. Businesses will be able to develop products and services in accordance with the wishes of their customers as they can understand the needs of consumers. Green marketing elicited enormous favorable opportunities for differentiation, cost reduction, segmentation, and product and market development. However as Peattie & Charter (2003) indicated, because each green consumer exhibit different motivational drivers regarding to the attributes of a green product, it is extremely hard for producers and marketers to design and position their green product. Therefore, it is vital to understand different preferences and different motivations among green customers.

This chapter's main aim is to focus on the key antecedents of green consumerism. These are vital and needed to be better understood in order to encourage green consumerism. This study summarizes each antecedent by supporting them with real cases and empirical studies.

BACKGROUND

By the effect of globalization and radical variations in the markets, consumption patterns of individuals have changed in time and accordingly new consuming behaviors have emerged since the rise of environmentalism (Cohen, 2001). The global temperatures rise and scarcity in natural resources increases. In the light of mentioned these changes, consumption patterns of individuals have shifted from

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