

The Relationship Between Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Practices

Urooj Ch.

Department of Commerce, University of Mianwali

Zian ul Abidin

Department of Commerce, University of Sargodha

Abstract

One of the major developments in the current discourse on the environment is the realization of the impact of consumer behavior on the sustainability of the environment. As one of the principal aims of pursuing sustainability is to appeal the environment as viable in the long-term, hence the concern on how to introduce or encourage sustainable consumer behavior. However, it is essential to first explore consumer motivations and behavior with a view to thereafter enhancing and introducing pro-sustainable behaviors. The task of comparing price, performance, and energy label criteria when buying a mobile telephone can be a tedious, time consuming, and sometimes a confusing process. There are a valid environmental or green dimension of consumer behavior, that exploration of this dimension has come up significantly lately, and that this espousal of green consumer behavior has entered policy agendas in the U.K. There are insights derived from this analysis, which might inform changes in consumer behavior that might engender sustainability. Why is it that UK consumers are only willing to intermit to trading in/out a mobile every one and two years, respectively, when there seems to be no rational point in such intermission in terms of seeking to satisfy the aforesaid referential needs? Automatic updates of handset technology every two years have been driven by the lucrative consumer contracts mobile companies operate. These contracts offer free mobiles replaced every subsequent year of the contract, which are alluring to consumers, but end up costing them in the region of £500 more than standard pre-paid contracts at

the end of the contract. However, when mobile companies started introducing cameras, music players, and the ability to send picture-messages on handsets in the later to mid-2000s, they ran out of readily imaginable consumable ‘lifestyle’ leads for new applications. And so, despite colossal leaps in technology thereafter, only as yet ‘gimmick’ applications rather than new habitual lifestyle applications have been developed. Amongst this backdrop of find and understanding findings, therefore, it would seem fitting for the U.K. Government to restrict the current consumer contract arrangements of mobile companies to update and offer free handsets every two years, as this would inevitably assist in engendering more sustainable habits amongst UK mobile phone consumers in the UK.

Keywords consumer behavior, sustainable practices, environmental impact, green consumerism, motivation, sustainability, mobile technology, policy change

2. Introduction

The careful examination of consumer behavior and sustainable purchase practices is an increasingly important focus for the commercial sector. Market dynamics are changing to include an increased awareness and understanding of sustainability. Empirical issues relating to these sustainability issues and consumer choice behavior around sustainability-related products are poorly understood. Decisions made by consumers play a vital role in accelerating either the adverse or favorable implications for the ecological crisis (Hosseinpour et al., 2016). The difficulty is that most of the undesirable outcomes realized are a consequence of the myriad choices made by consumers on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, it is critical to ensure that the underlying variables that shape behavior are clear and actionable. This essay intends to empirically analyze the association between consumer behavior and the purchase of sustainable products based on these premises. Here, the concern is not simply with purchasing sustainable products. The research is asked to what extent underlying perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes impact this behavior (Oates et al., 2016).

Attention to sustainable concerns has developed significantly. There is a greater desire and request in public consciousness to maintain ecological well-being, reflecting concerns about environmentally friendly policies, and changing consumption patterns. For individuals, environment-focused economies are indicative of the acquiring social awareness, while change in consumption patterns, such as using sustainable commodities to preserve or produce ecological welfare, is based on social responsibility. For businesses, in order to adhere wisely to and meet these necessities; the organization must show enthusiasm and commitment to the environment, which will enhance sustainability and vision. One of the primary business objectives is therefore to promote environmental protection initiatives that would help foster a green image.

3. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between consumer behavior and sustainable practices. The paper is designed to take this broader view, examining ways in which individual, essentially psychological, processes - such as attitudes, beliefs and knowledge – interact with social structural variables, including income, to shape the environmentally sustainable of households (Hofmeister Tóth et al., 2011). In doing this, it draws on a large body of social science literature.

Consumer behavior includes the psychological account of consumer choices, and an analysis of the current approach used to change sustainable behaviors and encourage sustainability in practice. In this paper, consumer behavior is taken as psychoanalysis, focusing on attitudes, information, and knowledge. It tends to view sustainable behavior as the cost of lost reward: acting out of concern for the environment would require giving up something valued more highly, such as comfort, convenience, or lifestyle.

Sustainable practices refer to a conger-like group of different practices concern with environmental care and the long-term economic and social viability of the community. A range of sustainable practices follows: environmentally conscious consumers, use

waste as resource, action based on the local economy, avoid the purchase of products of indirect exploitation, avoid the purchase of objects with negative moral consequences, support environmentally friendly companies, and ethical consumerism. The definition of sustainable practice has widened, including environmental ethical considerations, corporate social responsibility, and equity principles in social justice. Sustainable promoters are now involved with vising awareness of living attitudes and the potential means of minimizing adverse and destructive behavior.

3.1. Consumer Behavior Theories

This subsection considers various consumer behavior theories relating to the formation and influencing of consumer choices (Hosseinpour et al., 2016). The chosen theories blend psychological and sociological factors, which are influential in understanding the grounding of sustainable products in consumer behavior. Such products are defined in this section, and focus is primarily placed on how psychological and sociological phenomena can be linked to consumer decisions regarding these products. Ecological production and relation to environmental background are excluded from discussion. Terms such as sustainable development, green solutions, consumer goods, and eco-friendly products each have their peculiarities, which are not elaborated upon in this subsection, although investigations focus on products. More sophisticated models like means-end chain theory are also avoided due to the restrictions of space. The theories which are applied are largely simple consumer behavior theories accessible in various studies of consumer behavior.

This chapter does not seek to provide a conclusive explanation of the ambivalence of sustainable goods inherent in consumer choices but rather a number of plausible models for understanding it. The primary aim is to provide an informed and thorough frame in which to interpret the empirical research findings upon which the consumption analysis is based.

3.2. Sustainable Practices Theories

This subsection discusses the theories underpinning sustainable practices and aligning them in the consumer markets. First, sustainable consumption is introduced, and ecological sustainability is defined, moving on to ecological sustainability within marketing and applying it to the Body Shop. Ethical theories are then discussed from a sustainable perspective, followed by the circular economy, considering its connection to Cradle-to-Cradle design.

The alignment of ecological, sustainable practices regarding why people may take them up, is underpinned by a range of theories. (J. Oates et al., 2012) note socio-psychological (including an individual's values, beliefs, norms), demographic (such as age, gender, income, education), and situational (the context in which choices are made) aspects combine to encourage or inhibit sustainable consumption, and the responses of Homo economicus (assumed to be a rational, utility-maximizing automaton concerned only with consumption) are so varied and inconsistent that Earth is placed in jeopardy. In an effort to understand why Homo economicus seems unwilling or incapable of considering the consequences of his or her actions, a range of theories from a range of disciplines have been advanced, that consumer behavior may be influenced by knowledge or Values of Sustainability, perceived consumer effectiveness, willingness to adopt new environmental behaviors, and perceived consumer responsibility (Hunt & Reynolds, 2009).

Sustainable consumption is closely linked to ecological sustainability, which in turn is founded on the concept of development that 'meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. It is generally understood to mean meeting not just the economic needs of society, but also those of society's social and biological bases. In a business context the concept of ecological sustainability is often expressed in the framework of the 'Triple Bottom Line', suggesting that a business focus not simply on Economic Goals, but on Social and Environmental ones as well. At its most basic, businesses that engage in

practices aligned with ecological sustainability cause the least harm, or perhaps even do some good, in the social and environmental spheres in the course of earning a profit, and obey the law.

4. Methodology

The research design included qualitative and quantitative research methods designed to explore the relationships between consumer behavior and the corresponding sustainable practices. A mixed method approach was employed for the purpose of triangulation and to increase the depth of the understanding of the research problem. The research involved the collection of primary data through qualitative surveys, in-depth interviews and case studies as well as the analysis of secondary data. Statistical analyses were performed on the quantitative data while qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Case studies were analyzed using cross-case analysis. The methodology section provides a clear and detailed account of the research design and methods and allows for the study to be replicated or expanded upon in future research endeavors. The research was conducted over a period of eight weeks in Melbourne, Australia. Samples were obtained from students and consumers living in Melbourne through a convenience sampling technique.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to investigate and explore consumer behavior toward sustainable practices in Melbourne, Australia. A mixed method approach was adopted to gain a greater depth of insight and understanding with the collection of primary data. A deeper understanding of a specific situation, phenomenon, or a problem can be acquired when quantitative and qualitative data is combined compared to research that uses only one type of data (Queirós et al., 2017). The research was divided into a number of phases which included exploratory research, designing the primary data questionnaires and the secondary data, collecting the survey data, carrying out the statistical and content analysis of data and finally, writing up the dissertation. The research design includes a step-by-step blueprint for future investigation that can be followed to undertake a

similar study dealing with consumer behavior towards sustainable practices. Ethical considerations concerning research integrity and the well-being of the participants have been adhered to at all times throughout the course of the research and writing of the dissertation.

5. Empirical Findings

This article endeavors to shed more light on the relationship between consumer behavior and sustainable practices. This study will help sustain brands, governments, and NGOs better understand the reasons behind the acceptance and rejection of sustainable practices by consumers (Simpson & Radford, 2014). To explore the extensive literature, this paper reports empirical findings based on newly collected data from Turkish consumers of varying age, gender, and income level. The aim of this paper is to raise awareness of sustainability among non-expert consumer circles and to guide policy recommendations based on evidence. It is expected that several excellent proposals will emerge to strengthen the publication of datasets and academically groundbreaking papers. The actual actions for reuse in this area aimed at increasing social welfare may be welcomed by policy makers, brand managers, and consumers for where they stand today.

To a greater extent, the interplay between consumer behavior and sustainable practices has been included in current research, meanwhile, the conflicting blockages have been rarely covered. The present study, however, mega efforts to give a more detailed account. (McDonald et al., 2009) propose that consumer behavior changes across the product sector. In some cases, ethical values guide buyers toward green items, when in other circumstances, these values are not effectively practiced. Since consumers have little influence over the goods and services offered on the market, products, production methods, advertising, and common representations are designed outside individuals' control. Better understanding the influential factors surrounding consumer behavior may improve the effect of marketing activities for sustainability.

6. Implications for Businesses and Policy

Does success lie in aligning strategies of a business with consumer sustainability knowledge and behaviors? Examining cross-industry sustainable efforts and consumer behavior, study implies multiple directions for businesses looking to foster sustainability, and public policy concerned with driving this end. Cultivating greater alignment between consumer understanding of sustainability issues and their own sustainable practices can consequentially bolster a supportive environment for more normative sustainable industries (Simpson & Radford, 2014).

Consider cross-industry sustainable efforts and consumer behavior within the clothing, electronics, and tourism macro-industries. Wherein to a consumer survey of sustainable practices and knowledge, findings suggest consumers hold more knowledge of the environmental dimensions of sustainability. However, this knowledge does not equate to a strong rate of sustainable practice overall. The analyzed industries may be failing to act on this anthropogenic issue linke. Indeed other efforts could be eroded by consumers' limited knowledge in some other areas. Building industry credibility, findings highlight the importance of including sustainability-focused elements within broader efforts. For businesses looking to foster sustainability, findings suggest strategies include transparent communication and the incorporation of sustainable practices into design – an avenue currently overlooked. There are some areas represent a higher shared understanding and are the potential entry points for future sustainable multi-industry mass media campaigns that have driven other industry-led mass initiatives. Symbolic industry strategies that seem that they're acting is found to foster greater sustainable practices overall, as is the fitting of this proclaimed industry position in its design of sustainability-focused programs.

Analysis clearly signals the importance of businesses to drive public policy adoption and vice versa. Only when efforts across state regulatory bodies, businesses and industry groups, academia, and the wider support network are pooled is substantial

progress made towards potential sustainability. In the meantime, the findings are a reference point for the Solomon Island state government as catastrophic terrestrial ecosystem loss acquired continue to occur. Experiment with firm and public policy options such as tax incentives for the consumer of sustainable forestry are likely to achieve success. Ultimately, success in efforts to drive sustainable practice lies in industry and policy reflexivity supporting each other in the long and difficult journey to meet ambitious sustainability goals.

7. Conclusion

Consumer behaviour is complex, and the motivation behind consumer choices frequently depends on the situation. As consumers gravitate toward more sustainable practices, the question of a willingness to pay premium prices is especially relevant. Success in the marketplace arguably depends on an understanding of the circumstances in which consumers place the most emphasis on sustainability. Consumers do not consistently evaluate “product” as conventional preference models suggest; they assess “products, ” too, in terms of consumption. In this broader view of consumption, where products might include not only goods, services, and ideas but also practices and related activities, free choices will sometimes be constrained by wider consumption concerns. Consumers consume not just “products” but also the consequences of how products are consumed.

The research on consumer behavior and the environment is complex, dealing with multiple levels of analysis and numerous variables. The findings concerning consumers’ propensity to pay a premium are frequent and sometimes contradictory. This makes the issues complicated, and to the casual or untrained observer, it may seem illogical. As to the literature on other factors, such as demographic variables, the later research noted contradictory results. However, the importance of examining consumer behavior in the light of these practices should be of interest to marketers and policymakers. Businesses and governments are both realizing the importance of understanding and shaping consumer behavior in the context of

sustainability. Recession and saturation in Western markets have made understanding consumer behavior as regards the adoption of more sustainable practices a survival issue for many products. An appreciation of the environmental and human rights implications further enhance attention of the firms and policy makers.

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