



THE CONCEPT OF GREEN MARKETING AND GREEN PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ON CONSUMER BUYING APPROACH

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Abstract

As the ecological issues are getting worse, the consumers' concerns about the environmental protection have led to the diversification in consumer buying approach towards a green lifestyle. Therefore, firms are taking action to develop potential ecological approaches in the green market industry. Green marketing and green product development are useful techniques that are used by firms to increase competitive advantages and stand a chance of gaining the satisfaction of consumers in order to achieve the firm's mission and vision. Green marketing and green product development have various benefits to firms in terms of increasing the sustainable environmental benefits and to increase the awareness of brand image of the firm. This study focuses on the concept of green marketing and green product development, the different consumer consumption in regards to green marketing and green product development, and lastly examines the problems that firms have faced when they have failed to implement green marketing and green product development.

Keywords: *Green marketing, green product development, consumption, environmental benefits.*

1. Introduction

According to Yakup and Sevil (2011), from the beginning of the 1980s, there have been ecological issues such as global warming, the greenhouse effect, pollution, and climate changes which are directly related to industrial manufacturing and this will continue to affect human's activities. Due to the increase of environmentalism which has dominated the world, there has been a raise in consumer concern with regards to environmental protection and great demand for green products. Hence, most firms have begun to use the green marketing and green product development strategies that can preserve the environment while satisfying consumers' preferences in order to make long term profits in businesses. Before such ideas came in to use, many firms were using green marketing as a sub form of their marketing structure as well as trying to develop green products that could help with the growing environmental problems. There are organizations implementing strategies which aim to solve ecological issues and build up the long term interest toward consumers. The advantages of green marketing and green product development, the relationship between green marketing and green product development towards the consumers buying approach and the problems are included in this research paper.

2. Green Marketing

Different authors provided different meaning of green marketing. According to Chaudhary, Tripathi, and Monga (2011) the term of "green marketing" first revealed in the late 1970s. American Marketing Association (AMA) defined it as "ecological marketing". Green marketing consists of a wide range of business activities which intends to satisfy customers' needs and wants, as well as diminish the negative impacts on the natural environment (Tiwari, Tripathi, Srivastava, & Yadav, 2011). Green marketing also refers to an organization that puts its efforts in to promoting, pricing, and distributing products with eco-concerns (Sarkar, 2012). American Marketing Association (AMA) stated that the green marketing approach is the marketing of products that are mainly focused on environmental safety; it incorporates business activities which consist of packaging modification, production process, and green advertising (Yazdanifard & Mercy, 2011). Green marketing is also described as any promotional activity which highlights the environmental ethics as business fundamentals and it can perceive an advantage of switching consumer behavior towards a brand (Peattie & Charter, 2003). In general, the main objectives of green marketing were to minimize the environmental hazards which are caused by the industrial manufacturing and to strengthen corporate eco-centric image in the consumers' perception.

3. Green Product Development

The efficient green product development played an important role in the green marketing strategy. It can help the firms and economies move swiftly towards a sustainable environment. Green product development emphasizes "end of pipe technology" where the firms are aware of ecological issues through process of production and product design (Chen, 1994). In particular, Chen (2001) discovered that the product designed to minimize the use of non-renewable resource, avoiding toxic materials, and renewable resource during its whole life-cycle would be the most effective manner to display green technological development. Most firms acknowledged integrating environmental laws and regulations such as Registration, Evaluation and Limitation of chemical substances into the process of green product development; hence it can reduce the hazardous risk to the environment while satisfying the consumers' expectation on green consumption

(Tsai, Chuang, Chao, & Chang, 2012). Green product development encompasses food safety concern, label, and price; it may affect the consumers' buying behavior of green products (Bing, Chaipoopirutana, & Combs, 2011).

4. Consumer Buying Approach

Consumer behavior has been illustrated as the actions of consumers who identify a need or want, searching for information, buying, using, giving feedback on the products and services in order to fulfill their desires (Vyas, 2009). In 20th century, most markets clearly understand the actual behavior, factors, and objectives of the consumers' buying approach by aiming for the use of environmentally friendly marketing. Due to the detrimental impacts on natural environment, green marketing activities have been a popular tool that used by many firms, and these events caused a shift in consumers' buying approach towards green products (Cohen, 1973). Therefore, most consumers have adjusted to the concept of "green consumers" who were aware of the importance of preservation and protection of the natural environment as well as seeking for eco-friendly products as their demand of green consumption grows (Peattie, 2001). Further to this information, Boztepe (2012) emphasized that the green consumers would stop consuming any harmful product which may affect their health, involves torture of animals and causes damage to the environment during production process, disposal or use. Lot of marketers may choose to enhance the consumers' consciousness of environmental problems by using marketing ploys to get them involved in social charities which motivate the consumers' to move from conventional products to eco-friendly products (Golkanda, 2013).

5. Advantages of Green Marketing and Green Product Development

While the firms use green marketing in the modification of business and implement green product development, it can reduce operation and production costs in long term. There are firms who have set up the solar panel technology in their modification of business; it can be an investment on cost benefits (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006). The firms can practice the green product development to standardize the product modification and manage the raw materials with environmental concerns, thus, decrease the negative impacts on human health and environment (Tsai, Chuang, Chao, & Chang, 2012). Furthermore, the firm can attempt to improve the product design; it can reduce the amount of material that will need to be disposed of and try to determine whether it will be environmentally harmful. In this process, it can also be decided whether it is possible to reduce the material usage in order to enhance recyclability and reusability (Polonsky, 1994). According to Ankit and Mayur (2013), most marketers use green advertising with pollution free messages to attract consumers' attention; it can enhance their knowledge of the products and ecological issues. Indeed, the firms can increase their corporate eco-centric image and it drives the consumers' perception towards the firm. Substantially, the firms have generated the revenue and developed a new access to international markets; it can increase the competitive advantages of the firms in order to achieve the stable position of the firms. In addition, the employees will have more confident and satisfaction towards the stable position of the firm, thus the productivity of the firm will be increased (Pierce, Rubenfeld, & Morgan, 1991). Finally, the greatest opportunity for firms which are applying the green marketing is that firms can receive grants and loan from the government to set up the technology for the development (Ottman, 2011). It could be said that firms have a chance to behave in an environmentally responsible manner and use the financial resources to establish the firms' innovative environment products and technologies in order to achieve the long term profitability and as well as ensuring environmental sustainability.

6. The Relationship between Green Marketing and Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The marketing mix includes product, price, promotion, and place (4P's). The elements of marketing mix in green marketing are essential for marketers to use to achieve the firm's objectives. According to Young, Hwang, McDonald, and Oates (2010), there are 30% of consumers stated that green products must be energy-efficient, aid in water conservation, be safe in regards to the environment during the process of manufacture, use and disposal. The hazardous content of a product may affect the consumers' purchasing decisions; hence the manufacturers tend to produce the products which are eco-friendly to satisfy the demand of green consumers. There are international firms that use green marketing to produced hybrid cars that purposely aim to balance the demand of the firm's revenues with the firm's responsibility to reduce the environmental impacts of pollution. For instance, Toyota produces Prius which offers several desirable benefits for consumers and the natural environment (Halbright & Dunn, 2010). Prius has an environmental engine which includes emission-reducing gasoline, so it can decrease the emission of carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide in to the atmosphere; lower emissions will result in to a positive impact on the environment, lowering the pollution emitted in to the atmosphere. If enough people were to buy a Prius, it could be argued that it would have a large impact on global warming, but the sale of one of these cars will not solve the problem (May, Cheney, & Roper, 2007). Due to the price of fuel increasing, Toyota produced Prius which can save cost in fuel, which can be a positive factor if many consumer's opinions. Consumers who have strong environmental concerns, such as considering the environmental claims and safety to the environment, will likely result in ecologically conscious buying and use of a hybrid car (Balderjahn, 1988). It could be said that Prius satisfy the demand of the consumers for an eco-friendly product. As a consequence, the consumers expressed great satisfaction towards the eco-friendly product; it builds up a positive judgment towards Toyota Corporation and the consumers were likely to trust the reliability of the Toyota's products.

Next, the price of a product must be varies to the personal income of the consumer. Most of the firms are using low price strategies to encourage the consumers to buy eco-friendly products. In this situation, the firms create a competitive advantage in the marketplace in order to increase the business growth. If the price of a product is higher; the firms have to differentiate the value of the premium product in the terms of quality, specification and appearance (Chandra, 2009). Starbucks is a global firm that is selling at a premium and ethically sources its products which shows they are committed to being environmentally responsible, as well as minimizing the environmental footprints by reducing material waste and building green and energy-efficient stores ("Global", 2014). Additionally, Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E) Practices

awarded Starbucks' coffee; the certification of coffees meets the consumers' expectations, but also helps improving in the protection of environment ("Global", 2014). The consumers who are of a low-price sensitivity are willing to pay more on the product than the variation of price, also perceive that the value of the eco-friendly product more than the conventional price for a product in the regular terms of price and quality (Eze & Ndubisi, 2013). Thereby, the consumers who are willing to pay premium for Starbucks' products because the green brand equity of Starbucks is responding to climate change and being proactive in its attitude towards pollution issues. Furthermore, the consumers express warmly towards the green products and this will bring a positive effect to the brand equity and increase the probability of purchases in the future (Chen, 2010).

Green advertising is a promotional strategy which allows the marketers to use unique and creative ways to promote the product. The strong convincing message from the green advertisements causes the consumers to focus on the issues being explained to them, as well as influence consumers' purchase behavior in regards to the firm's image (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995). Sharma (2011) discovered that there are three criteria of green advertisement which are the advertisement begins with educational content that concern for the environment, the advertisement states the firms have changed the procedures of production in order to promote a green lifestyle and the advertisement addresses a firm's image of environmental responsibility. According to Laric and Lynagh (2010) stated that Samsung have an environmental program named as "Planet First" which was purposely introduced to balance the demand for cutting edge technology with the responsibility of diminishing the environmental impacts in order to promote a green way of life. Moreover, Samsung delivered their responsibility of green commitment and green messages to the consumers through the Samsung web site and ESPN Magazine, hence it can promote the firm's dedication to sustainability (Laric & Lynagh, 2010). In this situation, the consumers form emotions when exposed to green advertisement which affects their attitude and perception towards the green advertisement and beliefs about the firm image (Cox, 2008). In addition, the environmental claims from the advertisement will lead the consumers to behave in a positive ecological manner and it will influence their purchase intention of that product (Davis, 1993).

Finally, the firms have to provide the product at a strategic place that is convenient for consumers to access so that it may influence the purchase decision of consumers. Most marketers successfully positioned new green products in the marketplace as long as the location was more outstanding than that of a company from its competitors. For example, Starbucks builds the green concept in its stores globally in order to integrate the approach of reducing the environmental risk to create the sustainability of the firm ("Global", 2014). The keyword of "Place" in marketing mix also refers to physical distribution which is a set of business activities that involves the movement of storing and transporting finished products while continuing to maintain concern with the environmental responsibility of the firm. Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard (2014) emphasized that green distribution focuses on safety precautions and reduces environmental damages during the process of delivering products. For example, reducing the thickness of packaging can reduce the fuel that is consumed by trucks and it can reduce the negative impacts on the roads. B&G focused on the "centralized distribution" program and the establishment of policies that bring environmental benefits such as reducing the frequency the number of vehicle movements as well as the reduction in fuel consumption which lowers the problem of pollution, hence the firm has been awarded with environmental excellence (Peattie & Charter, 2003). Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) indicated that there are empirical researches that have shown that high corporate social responsibility levels of the firm positively influence the consumers' purchasing decision. The green commitments and environmental concerns of the firm that caused the consumers established positive evaluation of the firm in the consumers' perception, therefore B&G have a great value positioning among the consumers. Due to this event, the demand from consumers towards B&G's product increased and the production of the firm will increase in long run.

7. The Relationship between Green Product Development and Consumer Purchasing Behavior

According to Song and Parry (1997) there are eight stages of product development which are; idea generation and screening, business opportunity analysis, technical implementation, product testing and product commercialization. Similarly, green product development consists of eight stages of product development and pollution analysis which are the procedures to identify the environmental hazards, identify the sources of pollution during the product's life cycle and minimize the environmental impacts that have been found (Bhat, 1993). Fujitsu Group developed "Green Product Evaluation Standards" criteria into the environmentally friendly products that it creates. This process is designed to help save natural resources and reduce chemical emission in order to maintain low eco-foot printing standard norms and increase productivity of the firm ("Green Products", 2014). Furthermore, Fujitsu Group established recycling technology that used biodegradable plastic integrated in notebook computers. Fujitsu's notebook computers promote energy-efficiency and it has fulfilled the consumers' needs and wants by supplying a computer that covers all aspects of consumer criteria ("Green Products", 2014). It was shown that consumers have become sensitive to the ecological issues, and this has to be incorporated in to green products for them to be deemed successful in their relevant markets. Customers who are concerned with the environmental impact of products are likely to purchase green products where they are available to them; it is also likely that they will be more willing to pay a higher price for such products if they are deemed to be better for the environment (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

One of the important elements of green product development is the promotion of eco-labels on the products. Eco labeling is an effective tool which can provide the information on two main functions which is the information function that addresses the quality characteristics of the tangible product and the value function which provides the corporate environmental image of the firm (Sammer & Wustenhagen, 2006). In the eyes of consumers, eco-label is an innovation. The present of the information on the product has to be reliable so that the labels provide functional instructions and meaning to consumers, as it addresses an important role in consumers' purchasing decision (Pedersen & Neergaard, 2006). Rashid (2009) found out that the consumers who have environmental knowledge enable them to differentiate the products which are more environmentally preferable in the marketplace, thus eco-labels were initiated to promote

environmental consumerism. Moreover, the eco-label on the products creates a distinct image to the consumers' cognition and the positioning of a product make up the consumers' first choice of purchase (Purohit, 2012). One of the examples of eco-label is Nordic Swan that related to energy and water conservation, this credible environmental information positively influences the consumers' purchase intention toward a brand and it will increase the sales volume of the firm (Bjorner, Hansen, & Russell, 2004).

8. Problems While Going Green

There are firms who apply green marketing to achieve their mission and vision, but there are a number of firms who fail to implement green marketing successfully, whereby the marketers did not structure the green marketing strategy appropriately that caused potential problems to arise. Therefore, the firms should obey the laws and regulation according to FTC's guidelines in order to not mislead any consumers or industry members (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2013). The firms have to perform with the FTC's guidelines which describe the environmental benefits, providing environmental criteria, explaining the way the environmental benefits are achieved, developing the comparative advantages, avoiding the hazardous content and expressing the environmental claims in picture or text (Polonsky, 1994). Some of the firms have limited scientific and business technology knowledge, which causes many incorrect business decisions to be made which can lead to further danger towards the environment. For instance, some firms used DME (dimethyl ether) as an aerosol propellant; it will also bring a negative impact to ozone layer (Fleisch, Basu, Gradassi, & Masin, 1997). Most of the consumers at the time were unaware of the severe ecological issues had been brought in to effect with the use of the product. Since this incident it is likely that the consumers will not pay attention to the environmental claims from the green advertisement for these products (Golkonda, 2013). Chan (2004) discovered that the ambiguous environmental statement from the green advertisement did not strongly illustrate the eco-centric image of the firm, thus the advertised product fail to attract consumers' attention. In results, the consumers perceived that the performance of the green products that were manufactured with recycle materials or remanufactured products have poor performance than the conventional products and the consumers are not willing to buy green product for a higher price (Michaud & Llerena, 2011). Due to the lack of knowledge of the consumers, the consumers will not trust the eco-labels; it may results in the consumers ignoring the eco labeling (Cherian & Jacob, 2012).

9. Discussion

The research of this paper aims to study how the concept of green marketing and green product development and how it influences the purchasing approach of consumers. This research paper is important because the earth is now faced with environmental devastation and pollution levels are getting worse day by day, which will eventually lead to the continued deterioration of human life. Green marketing is a strategy that addresses the concern of promoting and preserving the natural environment which can benefit the firms, consumers and environment while the green product is developed. Most firms have started to practice the concept of green marketing and green product development in the day to day business operations to produce eco-friendly products in order to satisfy the consumers' wants and needs. Beyond this, there is a shift in consumers' behavior towards a greener lifestyle; it is known as the "green consumer". While the firm fulfills the demand of consumers, it caused the production of the firm to increase. The eco-centric image of the firm makes a profound impression of in consumers' cognition; hence the firm can get the great satisfaction and trust from consumers easily. In results, the firm which behaves in an environmentally responsible manner is likely to achieve long-term profitability and environmental sustainability.

As the environmental issues have worsened, most international firms have started to use the marketing mix concept in green marketing which can achieve the firm's mission and vision in short periods. The firms have to identify the customers' environmental needs and develop green products which exceed the quality expectations of customers. Moreover, firms have to ensure that the value of the green product on the aspect of performance, design, and visual appeal must exceed the price of the green product. Most firms used green advertisement as a promotional strategy which can educate consumers about the way of protecting the environment and it also can establish the eco-centric image of the firm. Additionally, the location of the stores must be convenient for the consumers to access. The firms have to reduce the environmental impacts while distributing and transporting the raw materials or finished goods. Eco-labels has been a particularly important issue within green product development, it often provides customers with a reliable indication of a product's social and ecological credentials. The more consumers willing to pay for a green product, the more firms are able to observe the changes in demands and behavior of the consumers.

However, there are firms that implement green marketing and green product developments inappropriately and it leads to the occurrence of problems that may burden the firm in the future. For example, the low perceived credibility of ecological claims in green advertisement may cause the consumers to have negative attitude towards the firm when they go to purchase a similar product in the future – if they are not deterred completely in the first instance. Therefore, the marketers should structure their green marketing strategy with great care and precision before they implement the product in to their firm. The goal of strategic planning can keep consumers retention; as well as minimizing environmental impacts in order to achieve long term profitability and growth.

10. Conclusion

As the growing concern of ecological issues had begun to form, society and the government have started to be aware about these issues and begin to make changes to contain the negative impacts of these problems. Green marketing and product development have been deemed the best ways forward for a business to be able to conform with new rulings from the government, and also to be able to comply with the behavior of consumers from field studies in to the wants and needs. The firms believed that the ideas of green marketing such as implementing a green supply chain, green products design, packaging, pricing and promotion are beneficial to society and the environment; and therefore it has taken

priority over conventional marketing initiatives. Furthermore, the firms should present notable efforts to its customers in a manner that shows the firm is actively trying to decrease its environment risk. In conclusion, implementing green marketing and green product development strategy are not convoluted, but rather a relative concept that consistently differs over the time.

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