

YOUNG CONSUMERS ATTITUDE TOWARD GREEN PRODUCTS CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the intention of buying organic products by young consumers. In this regard, we considered young consumers, respondents being aged 18-36 years.

The attitude, friends and family influences are considered as three basic factors of this study. For quantification and statistical analysis, we surveyed 200 young people, based on a questionnaire developed and distributed as trial evidence. Data were collected from female and male consumers, on different age groups and professions.

Young consumers, men and women, showed attitude and interest to buy organic products in everyday life.

Key words: green products, consumers behaviour, attitudes, young consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Under current conditions, a change in consumer attitudes is mandatory, but also a change of attitude taking into account: the evolution of consumer behaviour towards a model of sustainable consumption; recycling of wasted products; improving technologies (Banu et al, 1998).

Polluted product is a certified fact (Stanciu, S., 2006; Whalin, G., 2006). Product transformation into a "clean" one can be made by given correct information to the public, through awareness of this problem (Zaharia et al, 2002; Zahiu et al, 1998). The importance of communication is crucial (Banu et al, 2000).

Environmental protection is achieved through the use of natural resources, pollution prevention and combating of all kinds, as well as the harmful effects of natural phenomena (Banu et al, 2009).

The activity to protect the environment aims not just the rational use of resources but also (Rîndașu V.C, 2005, Cătoiu et al, 2004): correlation of territory and localities systematization activities with measures to protect natural factors; adoption of less polluting product technologies; equipping technological installations and means of transport generating pollution with devices and efficient installation to prevent harmful effects on the environment; optimal recovery of usable waste substances; promoting technical cooperation, economic and scientific cooperation in this field (Constantin, M, 2006).

Organic shoppers manifest themselves in the market by concerns and their environmental beliefs (Saunders et al., 2009). They influence the selection systems and decision-making processes used in the purchase (Ajzen, I., 2005; Adăscăliței, V., 1996).

Reactions and ways of manifestation of organic consumers on the market, evidenced by actions towards products, brands and companies under the influence of internal and external factors represent the environmental behaviour towards buying (Kotler P. et al., 2009).

Manifestations of consumers towards organic products and companies may vary due to different pressures, numerous factors that can affect the entire decision-making process (Chiran et al., 2003, 2004, 2015).

Various factors that exert influence on the purchasing behaviour of organic consumer originate on the inside or personal psyche (psychographic factors), on one hand, and on external environment (environmental factors) on the other hand (Kent, R., 2007). Their environmental attitude is the result of learning based on environmental experience, on features and ecological profiles of individuals' environment oriented and their interactions with other people, organizations and regulations, usually green (Ajzen, I., 2005).

Green consumers will have a favourable attitude toward the products, brands, pricing and promotional activities of ecological oriented companies whose work and results have minimal impact on the environment.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Consumer interests for green food increase due to side effects of the use of non-organic food.

The aim of this study is to examine the intention of buying organic products by young consumers. In this regard, we considered young consumers, respondents being aged 18-36 years.

Attitude, friends and family influences are considered as three basic factors of this study. I tried to search the influence these three factors manifests on consumer purchasing intentions of young people toward green products.

The survey was conducted between November 23rd to December 18th 2015, and was conducted at the University of Oradea, Faculty of Environmental Protection. This study was conducted through quantitative research based on questionnaires. It was collected a total of 200 questionnaires.

Main objective of this research is to find out which of the three hypotheses (independent variables) has the greatest influence on purchase intent (dependent variables) of green products (Kent, R., 2007).

The independent variables from which we started are: information, knowledge, attitude, friends and family.

Hypotheses from which we started in achieving this research theme are:

- ✚ H₁: Opinion of friends and family can motivate young consumers to buy green product.
- ✚ H₂: Knowing the environment has an influence upon young consumers intention to purchase organic products.
- ✚ H₃: Attitude influences young consumers who intend to buy organic products.

The research was done by filling in a questionnaire by consumers regarding the intent on buying organic products by young consumers.

RESULTS AND DISSCUSIONS

In terms of age, respondents were classified on different age groups so as to obtain clear information about the attitudes and behaviour of young consumers buying organic products.

After analysing the data collected, most of the young respondents share is those aged between 18 and 22 years, respectively 38.50% of the subjects, followed by young people aged 23 to 27 years at a rate of 25.50% and those aged 28 to 31 years old, 22%. The smallest segment consists of subjects aged 32-36 years, respectively 14%. Regarding the sample structure by education, most young users are students - 82% (164 respondents); 8% (16 respondents) are graduates, 4% (8 respondents) are employed and 6% (12 respondents) other professions.

The analyses of respondents' answers indicate a positive awareness of young consumers with the intention of buying green products.

Table 1.

The variables that influence purchase intent

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|------|----|----|----|------|
| I have a positive attitude towards environmentally friendly products. | 32 | 33 | 23 | 98 | 14 |
| Knowledge, environmental information motivates me to buy green product. | 1 | 12 | 65 | 97 | 25 |
| My parents and friends influence me to buy a green product. | 17,5 | 29 | 41 | 98 | 14,5 |

1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No no; 4 - I agree; 5 - Completely agree

The table above shows that all variables are important and can influence consumers when buying green products.

Thus, based on these answers, main purpose of this research is to find out which of the three independent variables have the greatest influence on purchase intent (dependent variable) of green products.

The correlation between attitude and the purchase intent present a linear, direct and strong connection between the two variables ($r = 0.942$, $r = \sqrt{0,889}$).

The correlation between information and knowledge and the purchase intent shows a direct and linear connection between the two variables ($r = 0.870$, $r = \sqrt{0,757}$).

The correlation between friends, family influence and purchase intent is the most linear, strong and direct connection between the two variables ($r = 0.968$, $r = \sqrt{0,938}$).

If we analyse correlations between variables (Table 2), we see that the strongest correlation is between the direct purchase intent and friends and family recommendation, a correlation coefficient of 0.968, and the lowest correlation between purchase intention and information about green products, correlation coefficient of 0.870.

Table 2
The correlation of independent and dependent variables

| | | Purchase intent y | Attitude x₁ | Information, knowledge x₂ | Friends and family members x₃ |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Purchase intent | Pearson correlation | 1 | | | |
| | N | 200 | | | |
| Attitude | Pearson correlation | 0,942 | 1 | | |
| | N | 200 | 200 | | |
| Information, knowledge | Pearson correlation | 0,870 | 0,708 | 1 | |
| | N | 200 | 200 | 200 | |
| Friends and family members | Pearson correlation | 0,968 | 0,939 | 0,898 | 1 |
| | N | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |

Friends and family members, but especially parents, are considered a positive influence on young consumers in the purchasing decision.

Correlation analysis between friends, family and the purchase intent shows the highest positive correlation ($r = 0.968$). The result of correlation and multiple regression analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between these two variables. Therefore, the result supports the hypothesis H_1 .

The correlation between information, knowledge and the purchase intent is positive ($r = 0.870$). Knowledge or information have been shown to have less influence on young consumers in terms of purchase intention of green products. Result analysis supports the hypothesis H_2 .

The correlation coefficients between attitude and intention to buy green products ($r = 0.942$) describes a strong relationship between these two variables. Therefore, the strong relationship between attitude and intention indicates that hypothesis H_3 is supported.

Analysing the data above, all hypotheses have been accepted, but a far greater influence on purchase intent have friends and parents, who are considered creators of normative beliefs for an individual. This is because consumers sometimes make decisions based on social pressure. The pressure from the social group motivate the individual decision.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, under current conditions, a change in consumer attitudes and beyond is mandatory, a change of attitude taking into account: the evolution of human behaviour towards a model of sustainable consumption; recycling of waste products; improving technologies.

The findings of this research are: younger consumers are ecological consumers and they have the intention to buy organic products.

The study also found that most of the young consumers are aware of environmental protection; they have sufficient knowledge about the environment and willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly and green products. Young consumers have shown to be motivated by their social group influence and also, information is one of the most important issues for young consumers who influence the purchasing process.

The theory of planned behaviour was used to identify consumer intent and purchasing behaviour. This theory explained that younger consumers have positive attitudes towards green or organic products.

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