

Green Marketing and Consumer Behavior towards Green Brands

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Abstract – The aim of this paper is to investigate the consumer opinion regarding green brands. Nowadays the issue of consumer behavior toward green brands has received considerable attention in the field of marketing, respectively in contemporary consumer research. This is the first time that this topic is scrutinized in the scientifically way based in statistical techniques and hypothesis testing. From consumer research we found that all the parameters that we selected in the research have a positive impact in consumer opinion as we as all factors are in the strong correlation each other. Consumers are ready to continue to buy and consume green brands not only for the concept of green, but for the healthy reason and environmental protection.

Keywords – Green Marketing, Green Products, Green Brands, Consumer Behavior

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays in the marketing environment is not just object of discussion the traditional marketing concept, but continually the marketing researcher, scholars and marketing manager are discussion about green marketing as the new concept of orientation of companies. Based in the different scientific literature green marketing has passed different stages during his development. According to Fathi A, Sheikhan AH, Doace K (2007) green marketing has passed three eras or stage, each stage has different features. The first, ecological green marketing, lasted from 1960 to 1970, this stage is characterized on external problems of the environment, respectively air pollution (Peattie K, Crane A, 2005). The second era is known as the green environmental marketing; this process began late 1980 and consisted of concept of clean technology, sustainability, consumer and competitive advantage. The third era consists on sustainable green marketing. All these stage have had positive impact of increasing importance of green marketing and becomes major trend in today's market place in the world. Green marketing

becomes more important for some kinds of products, such as information and electronics products (Chen et al., 2006).

According to Ottman, (1992) if companies want to adopt green marketing successfully, then their environmental concepts and ideas should be integrated into all aspects of marketing. On the other side, not all the companies have enough capabilities to market their green products to their consumers (Chen, 2010)

The issue of consumer behavior towards green brands has received considerable attention in contemporary consumer research. The main dimensions addressed by this research stream include the identification of environmental consciousness of consumers of various socio-demographic profiles

Green marketing becomes a major trend in today's business world but this trend is still new in Asian countries such as Malaysia (Wahid et al., 2011). Nowadays, Asian countries become the primary target market by international marketers due to the increase of environmental awareness and

the purchasing power of Asian consumers (Noor & Muhammad, 2012). Besides that, behaviour and practice of consumers as well as industry in production and marketplace has also been changed due to the increasing awareness on environmental issues (Barber et al., 2012). However, the local and international marketers are facing difficulties in developing adequate and effective marketing strategies caused by lacking of information related to the green purchase intention of the consumers in that particular country (Aman et al., 2012). Due to the lacking of experience, the green marketing strategies of Malaysia was adopted from western countries since the factors influencing green purchase behaviour in Malaysian were not identified at previous time (Shahnaei, 2012). According to Chen (2010) there are five reasons for companies to develop green marketing: compliance with environmental pressures; obtaining competitive advantage; improving corporate images; seeking new markets or opportunities; and enhancing product value.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of Green is not new in the consumer world, but becomes a major trend in the business worlds. This trend is still new in the Balkans country, respectively in North Macedonia. Consumer faces with green concept in everyday life in the general term, but this issue fulfill the gap of relation with green marketing, green products and green brands.

Academic brand researchers have paid attention to green branding issues in recent years in which several issues have been selected, such as green brand equity (Chen, 2010), green brand association and perceptions (Parker et al., 2010; Montoro-Rios et al., 2008), green brand competitiveness (Darnall, 2008), and green brand positioning (Hartmann et al., 2005; Haung et al., 2008)

Besides that, behavior and practice of consumers as well as industry in production and marketplace has also been changed due to the increasing awareness on environmental issues (Barber et al., 2012). Nevertheless, international marketers and the local marketers are facing difficulties in developing acceptable and effective marketing strategies caused by lacking of information related to the green purchase intention of the consumers in that specific country (Aman et al., 2012). Due to the lack of information of experience and information about green products local marketers truing to adopt western country strategy to influence with concept of green products and green brands in the present time.

According to Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) green marketing generally focuses on the efficiency of cognitive persuasion strategies, and believes that the consumer's high involvement concerning environmental issues is an effect of growing environmental knowledge

Some researchers have argued that green consumer behavior is determined by a multitude of factors depending on type of behavior and involvement with the product and

behavior (Black et al., 1985; Cleveland et al., 2005; Roberts and Bacon, 1997). Stern (2000) presents four categories of determinants of green consumer behaviors: contextual forces, attitudinal factors, habits or routines and personal capabilities.

According to Hartmann et al. (2005) a green brand is defined as a specific set of brand attributes and benefits related to the reduced environmental impact of the brand and the respective consumer perception as being environmentally sound. Although green product attributes may be the outcome of environmentally sound production processes, responsible product uses or product elimination (Peattie 1995), here, we focus on brands that combine one or more of the above green product design attributes with the respective positioning entailing an active communication and differentiation of the brand from its competitors through its environmentally sound attributes. This in reality leads to the perception that a green brand's equity is absolutely related to its environmental-friendly character, so that the main association.

Green brand studies address several themes, such as green brand equity (Chen, 2010), green brand association and perceptions (Montoro-Rios, Luque-Martinez, & Rodriguez-Molina, 2008; Parker, Segev, & Pinto, 2010; Wang & Horng, 2016), green brand competitiveness (Darnall, 2008), green brand positioning (Hartmann, Ibáñez, & Sainz, 2005; Haung, Pan, & Lin, 2008; Wang, 2016), and green brand purchase intention (Hartmann & Apaolaza- Ibáñez, 2012). Among these studies, consumers' purchase behaviour towards green brands has not gained much attention from researchers.

Green brand awareness has a positive impact on purchasing green products. If companies create brand awareness regarding their green brands, products and corporate image through brand equity then it will create knowledge for customers to get aware about the company offering which will result in final purchase (Zubair, 2015)

According to Tseng and Hung (2013) there are several characteristics that a product must have to be regarded as a "green" product. Numerous criteria are presented below:

- Easily reused
- Made using natural and/or renewable resources
- Contains recycled content
- Readily recycled
- Biodegradable
- Energy efficient
- Durable with low maintenance requirements

This paper aims to contribute by investigating factors that impact consumer behaviors and green purchase behaviors, and by relating these two to each other. Specially the scientifically orientation of this paper is dedicated in the go deeply in the consumer opinion and to find out the correlation between factors that impact purchase intention of buying green brands. All these factors are tested, together with socio-demographics factors in North Macedonia.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Because of the attention of the society, more and more companies are willing to accept the environmental responsibility (Chen et al., 2006). Nowadays, environmental concern rapidly emerges as a mainstream issue for consumers because of global warming, and many companies are seeking to catch the opportunity (Chen, 2010)

The concept of environmentalism is going to grow up nowadays, for this reason according to Chen, (2010) if companies can provide products or services that satisfy their customers' environmental needs, then their customers would be more favorable to their products or services, as well as companies must find an opportunity to enhance their products' environmental performance to strength their brand equities.

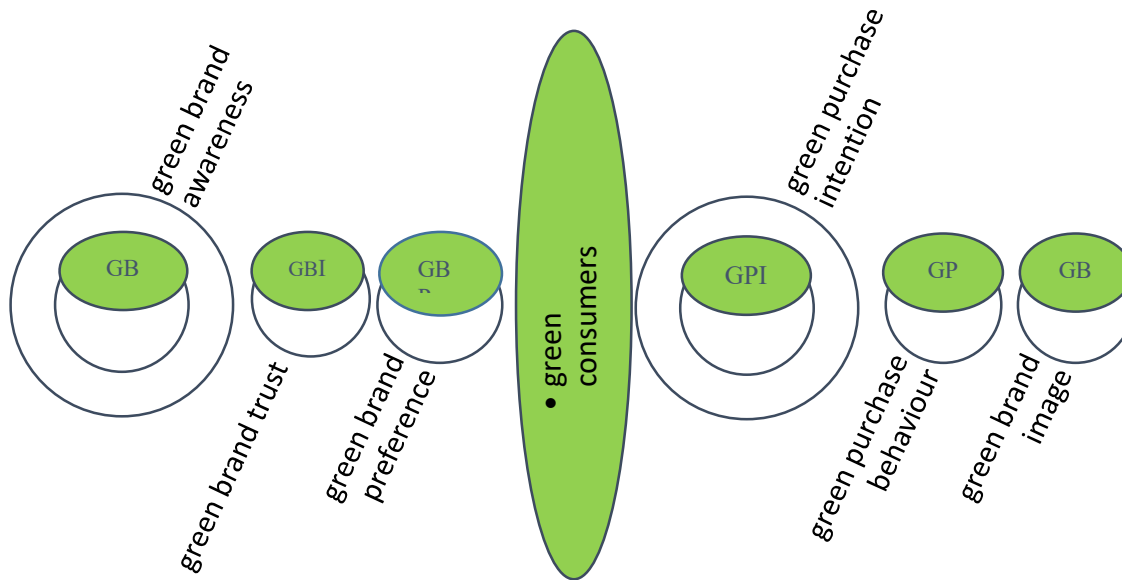


Figure 1. Conceptual theoretical model, authors' model

In the figure number one we have built a theoretical model that clearly shows all dimensions that are part of this research study. More precisely there are six relevant dimensions in the context of green brands, respectively global green brand awareness, green brand trust, green brand preference, green purchase intention, green purchase behavior, green brand purchase intention. All these elements later will be test in the statistical technics and are part of many research papers from different journal that have searched in the topics of green brands.

Defines green consumer as 'those actively seek and support those products satisfy their needs that are having less impact on environment' (Macdonald, S., et al. 2006), all consumers are potentially green consumers. When a consumer has choice to buy from two identical products, the consumer will prefer to buy environmentally friendly product.

According to Kreider, (2009] there is no 'significant relation between gender and green behavior'. On the other side Mainieri, (1997) in his research has found that women are generally more environmentally conscious and willing to buy green products.

There are many research articles and authors that have shed light in the concept of green. Some of them are focused in the green marketing as Dam and Apeldoorn (1996) who define green marketing a responsible organization activity to minimize ecological problems for sustainable development. On the other side there are authors that are concerned about environmental issues, respectively protecting individuals and society about environmental effects (Pac and Raposo, 2009)

IV. METHODOLOGY AND MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

Methodology is the core part of any research paper. Using appropriate methodology researchers came to the relevant and significant information regarding their research intentions. In order to be important and significant this research as well as we has used both qualitative and quantitative methods to bring to the readers significant information regarding green brands. Data for this research was collected through questionnaires to measure and assess the consumer behavior toward green brands.

In this research the instrument that we have used was a self-administered questionnaire, comprising mainly of Likert type five item scales with end-anchors (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) developed by Likert (1932). The

questionnaire consists of six main variables, as we have presented in the theoretical model like green dimensions with the subgroup variables, as we have explain in the figure number one. The six hypotheses have been tested using t-test or independent –sample t-test. In order to validate all variables, we first have analyzed the correlation of all six dimensions in this questionnaire. The overall correlation for

all item six dimensions are positive, which means that all variables that we have selected in this research are positive correlated and with high value each, this is a good point to continue with further quantitative analysis. In the figure number two we have created a research model, in this model we have collected six green dimension and six hypotheses.

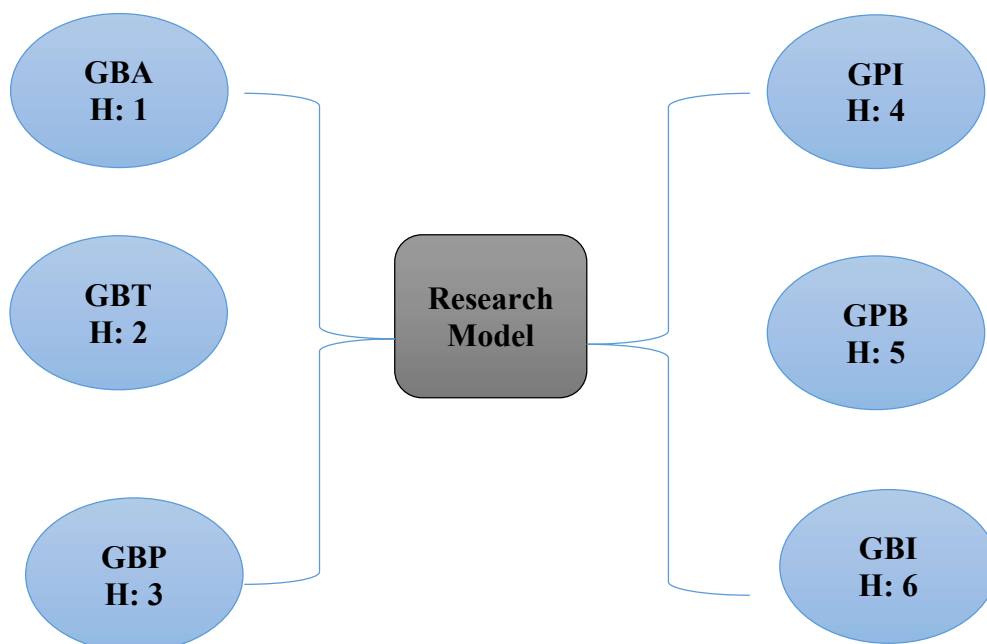


Figure 2. Research model, source: authors

Empirical Analysis

Table no.1 Correlation between green dimensions

Correlations						
	Green brand awareness	Green brand trust	Green brand preference	Green purchase intention	Green purchase behavior	Green brand image
GBA Pearson Correlation	1	,788**	,669**	,431**	,221**	1,000**
Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,000
N	300	300	300	300	300	300
GBT Pearson Correlation	,788**	1	,683**	,436**	,224**	,788**
Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,000
N	300	300	300	300	300	300
GBP Pearson Correlation	,669**	,683**	1	,603**	,258**	,669**
Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,000
N	300	300	300	300	300	300

GPI	Pearson Correlation	,431**	,436**	,603**	1	,488**	,431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
GPB	Pearson Correlation	,221**	,224**	,258**	,488**	1	,221**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,000
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300
GBI	Pearson Correlation	1,000**	,788**	,669**	,431**	,221**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	300	300	300	300	300	300

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the table number one we have presented our result from 300 respondents in this research regarding green brands. Based in the SPSS outputs we can see that all six dimensions that we have incorporated in this research are correlated with positive value each other starting from Green brand

awareness to green brand image. The higher value of correlation there is dimension of green brand image (1,000**) and the lower value of correlation have green purchase intention (,224**)

Table no.2 Significant relation between gender and green dimensions

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
		t-test for Equality of Means							
		t-test for Equality of Means							
		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
GBA Equal variances assumed	,383	,536	-,275)	297	,783	-,02442)	,08865	-,19889)	,15005
Equal variances not assumed			-,275)	295,607	,783	-,02442)	,08867	-,19893)	,15009
GBT Equal variances assumed	,120	,730	,517	297	,606	,05186	,10033	-,14558)	,24931
Equal variances not assumed			,517	296,988	,606	,05186	,10033	-,14558)	,24931
GBP Equal variances assumed	,051	,822	-1,586)	297	,114	-,12625)	,07962	-,28294)	,03044

	Equal variances not assumed			- 1,586)	296,858	,114	-,12625)	,07961	-,28292)	,03042
GPI	Equal variances assumed	,014	,905	-,627)	297	,531	-,05585)	,08907	-,23113)	,11943
	Equal variances not assumed			-,627)	296,603	,531	-,05585)	,08906	-,23111)	,11941
GPB	Equal variances assumed	,165	,685	-,799)	297	,425	-,06119)	,07660	-,21194)	,08956
	Equal variances not assumed			-,799)	295,110	,425	-,06119)	,07662	-,21198)	,08960
GBI	Equal variances assumed	,383	,536	-,275)	297	,783	-,02442)	,08865	-,19889)	,15005
	Equal variances not assumed			-,275)	295,607	,783	-,02442)	,08867	-,19893)	,15009

Based in the hypothesis testing by using the t-test (independent simple test) we have summaries in the model six hypotheses.

H: 1 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green brand awareness, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,783 or 78.3 %

H: 2 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green brand trust, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,606 or 60,6 %

H: 3 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green brand preference, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,114 or 11.4 %

H: 4 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green purchase intention, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,531 or 53.1 %

H: 5 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green purchase behavior, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,425 or 42.4 %

H: 6 There is no difference between consumers in the context of green brand image, Sig. (2-tailed) significance level (p-value) ,783 or 78.3 %

Since the p –value exceed our alpha value (5 %) we fail to reject the null hypothesis. In our case all the value exceeds alpha value. Six hypotheses that we have test using the t-test (independent simple test) have different value from the p-value (5%) .

V. CONCLUSION

Green marketing and green brands are new phenomenon in our country, increasing attention to the green consumers marketing managers need to train sales persons, to give much more information to the consumers, build new culture of consumption green and to increase the advertising activities. The priority of marketing managers as well as producers of green brands should be the increasing of advantages green concept via promotion activities, increasing the assortment of green product on the umbrella of green brands and lower prices in order to give chances to each consumer to buy and consume green brands.

Based in the empirical analysis we can conclude that consumers in the North Macedonia have interest in buying green brands, this means that all six dimension that we have selected in our research are correlated positively each other, as well as there is no differences between consumers,

respectively there is no difference between male and female on green behavior dimensions.

In this research paper several people surveyed feel that they are aware of the positive and adverse environmental effects of green brand they purchase. In future, with the rising consumers' environmental awareness and interest in green products can affect green brand market.

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