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Consumer green purchasing behaviour: From attitude, perceived controllability and normative influences to purchasing behaviour

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Communication, Journalism and Marketing at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Yun-Chin (Paya) Hsu
2015
Abstract

Scholars in green marketing predicted that after the year 2000, the market for environmentally friendly products would mature and substantially expand. Today, although many people express their concern about the environment, environmentally friendly products are still not the first choice for most consumers.

Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this research investigated the factors that influence consumers’ decisions when buying energy-saving light bulbs. Descriptive norm, self-identity and past behaviour were hypothesised to influence consumers’ purchasing intentions and behaviour.

Survey data (N=313) were collected online from New Zealand residents between late 2011 and early 2012. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test the theoretical model. Given the study context and operational definitions of the constructs, all indicators in this study were specified as reflective. Construct validity and measurement model specification issues were examined and discussed. The results suggest that people who have positive attitudinal affections and beliefs, identify themselves as pro-environment and have purchased environmentally friendly products in the past tend to have stronger intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products. The findings also suggested that most people hold a positive purchasing intention and attitude towards energy-saving light bulbs. Practitioners in the field of green marketing could apply the findings when developing marketing strategies. Given the cross-sectional nature of this survey study, further research is needed to explore the causal relationships between the focal variables, as well as the intention–behaviour link. Theoretical contributions, methodological implications, future research directions are discussed.
Acknowledgements

Conducting and completing doctoral research has been an amazing journey for me. The journey not only helped me improve my research skills, but also helped me discover and know myself better. There were times that I thought I would not be able to complete my study. However, with enormous supports from my mentors, family, and friends (which came in all sorts of forms, e.g. carrots and sticks), I finally come to the other end of the journey.

Firstly, I would like to convey my greatest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Fiona S. Chan. Without her constant support and encouragement, I would not be able to complete my study. Her knowledge in the field, patience, optimism, and invaluable advice (which were more like a carrot hanging in front of me) have had a profound effect on my personal development (which led to and helped me to find my own strength for persisting in the research), and will be a continual source of inspiration during my research career (where I will need these characteristics to advance).

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my two co-supervisors, Dr. Raja Peter and Professor Frank X. Sligo. Their strict but valuable guidance and feedback were sometimes seen as sticks by me, which pushed me to dig further for the research, and improved my writing skills. The influences from their guidance will continue to have a positive impact on my attitude towards future research.

Big thanks to Dr. Ravi Balasubramanian, Lois Burns, and the colleagues in the office. Ravi shared his valuable knowledge and experience in statistics, which was relevant to the analytic method I employed. Lois provided her great patience and enthusiasm in proofreading my work. The colleagues in the shared office created a supportive and encouraging study environment.

My deepest gratitude goes to to Professor Janet Leathem (Convenor), Dr. Yeqing Bao (Examiner), Dr. Judith Holdershaw (Examiner), and Dr. Xuehua Wang (Examiner) for their constructive feedback, time, patience and continuous support. Their professionalism helps me improve the quality of this thesis significantly, and grow as a researcher.

I would also like to express my special appreciation to the survey respondents and the online group on Facebook, Nationwide Community NZ Culture, History, and Environment. The respondents provided their thoughtful insights about their
environmentally friendly consumption. The online group allowed me to post my survey link on their page (for free).

Last, but not least, I would like to give my big appreciation to my family and friends. Without their cheers and financial support, I would not be able to come this far.
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