

Environmental Awareness and the Role of Marketing Strategies in Shifting Consumers' Interest towards Organic Products

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Due to technological developments and the undeniable spread of social media use around the world, people have become more aware of environmental issues, and to the degree that it influences their purchasing behaviour. The current study aimed at examining the role of marketing strategies in increasing an environmental awareness among consumers, and how this aided a shift in their interest to use organic products. Through using the quantitative methodology, the researcher distributed a self-administered questionnaire to a total of 533 consumers within the malls, retail stores, and commercial complexes of the Jordanian capital, Amman. The results of study indicated the influence of marketing strategies upon the consumers' interest towards organic products. The results also showed that environmental awareness plays a role in increasing the influence of marketing strategies upon the consumers' perception of organic products. However, green marketing appeared to be the most influential factor, which was followed by corporate social responsibility. Green communication was found to be the least influential. The study recommended merging organic products management within organisational customer relationship management, in order to guarantee the value of knowledge that consumers have about organic products.

Keywords: *SCR, Green marketing, Organic products, Sustainable green communication, Environmental awareness, Consumer purchase behaviour.*



Introduction

As a result of the technological development experienced around the world, and the widespread usage of social media, in addition to its ability to connect people in a global context, there appears to be an immense interest in the issues related to the environment. Moreover, there is an endless number of lobbies, gatherings, and groups that have one shared interest, which is the well-being, and welfare of the environment (del Río-Rama et al., 2018).

Such environmental lobbies have managed to exert a significant amount of pressure upon organisations to re-evaluate their behavioural, and situational circumstances regarding their internal, and external performances. Many of these organisations were obligated to adopt environmental strategies that limit their harmful environmental practices (Khrushchev et al., 1993).

From that point, organisations began to follow sustainable strategies, and plans that guarantee the best for the environment, in order to increase their competitive advantage, and be aware of what the market wants. With the course of time, this interest has grown wider, and environmental awareness has moved to encompass the products, plans, strategies, and marketing techniques that an organisation will adopt through its life (Gadenne et al., 2009).

Statement of Problem

According to Tomić and Đuricaa (2012), both education, and spreading knowledge regarding the environment have played significant roles in increasing consumers' awareness towards using organic products. Boztepe (2012), on the other hand, has noted the fact that the environmental awareness that is vividly spreading now, has encouraged organisations to follow a green marketing approach. This has assisted the process of shifting the consumers' interest towards employing organic products in their daily lives. Solvalier (2010) also supported the same idea, arguing that green marketing is one of the factors that influences consumers' attitudes towards organic products, which is achieved through raising their awareness of environmental issues (Domazet & Kovačević, 2018).

From the argument above, the current study is aimed at examining the influence of marketing strategies in raising the awareness of environmental issues among consumers and shifting their interest to adopt organic products.

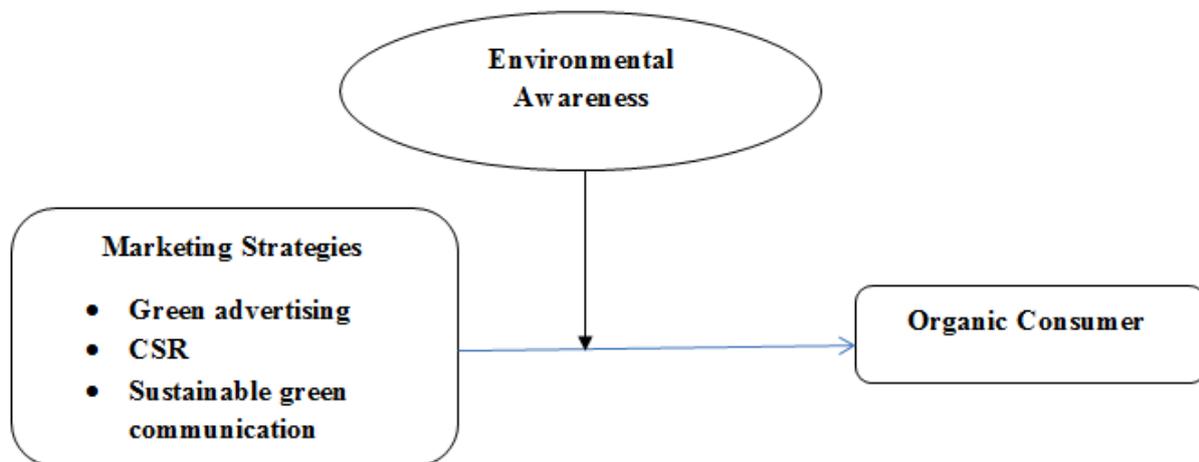
Questions and Hypotheses

According to the aforementioned problem, this study attempted to answer the following question:

What is the role of marketing strategies in environmental awareness, and how can it shift the consumers' interest towards organic products?

From the variables selected to build the overall hypothesis of the study, the following model was constructed:

Figure 1. Study Model (Mkik et al., 2016; Sumathy & Rathna, 2018)



According to the above model, the following hypotheses were extracted:

H1: Marketing strategies have a statistical impact on consumers' interest towards organic products.

H2: Environmental awareness moderates the relationship between marketing strategies, and consumers' interest towards organic products.

Literature Review

Environmentalism speaks to a standout amongst the most powerful and persisting social developments within recent memory. Blasting onto the American scene in the late nineteen-sixties, cutting-edge ecological development has flourished in the United States of America (USA), as well as spread across the globe. The ecological development is broadly thought to be a standout amongst the best social developments of the late twentieth, and mid twenty-first hundreds of years, particularly as far as increasing across the board, the societal acknowledgment of its objectives. Furthermore, it is likely that it will keep on playing a critical part in territorial, national, and worldwide legislative issues (Xu, Prybutok & Blankson, 2018).



Environmental Awareness

Ham et al. (2016. P. 160) defined environmental awareness as “the attitude regarding environmental consequences of human behavior”. When looking at the definition, one can see that being environmentally aware means to have the needed attitude, and perception regarding what could be harmful to the environment, and what is safe. From another perspective, Culiberg and Rojšek (2008. P. 132) defined environmental awareness as a “predisposition to react to environmental issues in a certain manner” (Al-Taher, 2013; Rashid et al., 2012).

Environmentalism, and environmental awareness have played significant roles in changing how organisations design their marketing strategies (Savo, 2014; Kärnä, 2003; Shelest et al., 2017; Ashill & Jobber, 2014).

Looking at the issue of environment, and how it has changed the way organisations act on a marketing level, one can notice that the influence of environmental awareness has appeared on levels which managed to exert an influence upon the whole marketing system. These levels include:

Economics

The idea of economics having an influence upon the marketing field is recognised in terms of the nature of the market, and its economics. Organisations are now more aware of the importance of running practices that are financially efficient, and will not be expensive, as an approach to limit organisational expenses (Servaes, 2013).

Laws and Legislations

With the technological developments, and the increased awareness towards the environment, countries are now legislating laws, and policies which follow the practices, and activities of organisations, and limits the behaviours that may harm the environment.

Supply Chains and Lines

Having a total understanding of the governmental laws, and legislations, supply chains, and sources are becoming more attaining to the raw materials, and items that organisations may ask for. They are limiting the items that are proven to harm the environment, and are following each, and every organisation, which deals with them, in terms of what is acceptable, and what is not.

Customer Behaviour

The consumers' behaviour has shifted greatly due to social media, and other websites, which support the environment. In addition to that, the wide popularity that environmentalists have managed to gain, and the public sympathy that those groups have manifested through the years, has managed to change the consumer behaviour towards using items that are friendlier to the environment (Ahuja, 2013; Rishards, 2013).

Factors Influencing Consumers' Interest in Organic Products

The 'customer's awareness' stands for a product's qualities, investigation, and acknowledgment by purchasers. This is the organic item's qualities and/or properties. For example, nutritious substance, regardless of whether the item is guaranteed to be organic or not; privately delivered or imported; and nation of starting point marking data, including date of lapse, and level of freshness. Moreover, particular brands are probably going to be considered by the customers to have amazing organic items, so such thought may influence consumers' intention about acquiring a particular brand of sustenance items (Sumathy & Rathna, 2018; Muhammad et al., 2016; Chouichom et al., 2013; Bravo et al. 2013; Meixner et al., 2014).

Working through the literature, many factors arose that may play a role in changing the consumers' behaviour towards being more interested in organic products. Some of the major literature has noted that corporate social responsibility (CSR), green marketing, and green communication play a role in changing consumers' behaviour (Pöyhönen, 2016; Borin et al., 2011; Merilä, 2015; Pivato et al., 2008; Mkik et al., 2016; Sumathy & Rathna, 2018; Rishards, 2013; Das et al., 2012; Solvalier, 2010; Bodkin et al., 2015).

Corporate social responsibility is an automatic plan of action that enables an organisation to be socially responsible to itself, its partners, and the general population (Peloza & Shang, 2011; Kanji & Chopra, 2010; Hohnen & Potts, 2007; Wang et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Xu & Yang, 2012).

Green communication refers to the process which an organisation uses in order to develop its communication channels. Therefore, green communication is basically the process of an organisation in delivering communication by using energy sources that are friendly to the environment (Volos et al., 2012; Cox, 2008; Hba & El-Manouar, 2017).

Methods

Methodological Approach

A quantitative methodology is employed in order to gather the needed data in the study. Raw data that will be gathered through the quantitative tool will be screened and processed, in order to provide the reader an ability to understand the participants' tendencies in relation to the main questions, and hypotheses of the study. A self-administered questionnaire was developed as a tool in gathering the data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first took into perspective the demographic variables of the sample, such as gender, age, education, and income. Meanwhile, the second section consisted of statements that are related to the variables of the model, such as marketing strategies, environmental awareness, and organic consumers. The population of the study included customers within the Jordanian malls, retail stores, and commercial complexes. A sample of 750 individuals was chosen, in order to form the main sample of the study. The researcher was able to collect 533 properly filled questionnaires, which managed to form 71 per cent of the initial sample, a figure which is considered to be statistically accepted. The raw gathered data of the study from the questionnaire was screened and processed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Demographic Results

In analysing the participants' demographics according to gender, it was found that 57 per cent of the sample were female, compared to 43 per cent whom were male. This can be attributed to the fact that females are more enthusiastic towards shopping and purchasing, when compared to males. Moreover, it was found that 41.5 per cent of the sample comprised individuals within the age range of 29–39, which was followed by 28.3 per cent of the participants being within the age range of 40–50. Furthermore, it was found that more than half of the sample, 68.9 per cent, held a master's degree, which was followed by individuals who held a PhD, with a percentage of 21 per cent. Whereas, 95.7 per cent of the sample had an income of above 1001, which provides an indication that the participants' enjoyed a good level of life.

Questionnaire Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Green advertisements	533	3.00	5.00	4.5854	0.52720
CSR	533	3.25	5.00	4.6149	0.49461
Sustainable green communication	533	2.00	5.00	4.5713	0.56202
Environmental awareness	533	2.60	4.20	3.4308	0.45251
Organic consumer	533	2.50	5.00	4.5577	0.70749
Marketing strategies	533	3.25	5.00	4.5905	0.50292

In analysing the variables in Table 1 above, it is evident that there is a positive attitude from the participants towards these variables. This appeared through the mean of the paragraphs, which scored higher than 3.00, referring to the paragraph as a good indicator.

Hypotheses Testing

First Hypothesis

H1: Marketing strategies have a statistical impact on the consumers' interest towards organic products.

Table 2: H1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	0.429 ^a	0.184	0.179	0.64097		
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	48.956	3	16.319	39.720	0.000 ^b
	Residual	217.333	529	.411		
	Total	266.288	532			

This hypothesis was tested using a multiple regression analysis. With an r value of 0.429, it was confirmed that the independent variables, and dependent variables are strongly correlated. Again, with 39.72 as the value of F, and significant at the level of 0.05, it is confirmed that marketing strategies have a statistical impact upon consumers' interest towards organic products.

H2: Environmental awareness moderates the relationship between marketing strategies, and consumers' interest towards organic products.

Table 3: H2 Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p	
0.4480	0.2007	0.4023	44.2796	3.0000	529.0000	0.0000	
Model							
coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI		
constant	14.1758	4.1589	3.4086	0.0007	6.0059	22.3457	
Marketin	-1.7162	0.8529	-2.0123	0.0447	-3.3916	-0.0408	
Environm	-4.1774	1.3411	-3.1148	0.0019	-6.8120	-1.5428	
Int_1	0.7921	0.2732	2.8990	0.0039	0.2554	1.3289	

Product terms key:

Int_1: Marketin x Environm

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	0.0127	8.4043	1.0000	529.0000 0.0039

A hierarchal regression was used to test the hypothesis by using a PROCESS version 3.1, which was written by Andrew F. Hayes. It was found that F equals 44.2796, and is significant at the level of 0.05, which means that the model is significant. Furthermore, it was found that the t value for marketing strategies equals -2.0123, and is significant at the level of 0.05, as well as the t value for environmental awareness equals -3.1148, and is significant at the level of 0.05.

It was also found that the F value for the interaction equals 8.4043, and the R2 equals 0.0127, which are significant at the level of 0.05. This result means that environmental awareness moderates the relationship between marketing strategies, and the consumers' interest towards organic products.

Conclusion

In marketing for a product that might not be acceptable for sure in the market is something tricky. Organisations should be aware of how to employ their marketing abilities in a way that is for their own benefit. The study revealed that marketing strategies should be more developed and oriented when it comes to marketing for organic products. This should also be accompanied by an increased awareness of environmental issues among consumers, and the

organisation should be aware of the level of this awareness. When carrying out a marketing plan, there should be a place for the organisation to market its environmental tendencies by focussing on the strategies that are related to the environment. This can be attained through focussing on CSR, green marketing, and green communication. The study found that green marketing was the most influential factor, while green marketing is a more current issue, according to advertisers. Green marketing is characterised as the promoting of items that are ventured to be earth safe. There is a typical recognition among the overall public that the term green marketing alludes to publicising or advancing items that have ecological attributes. Individuals relate terms, such as ‘recyclable’ with ‘green marketing’. While concurrently fusing these cases, green marketing is a more extensive idea. It incorporates adjusting the publicising of an item, as well as an assortment of exercises. For example, adjusting creation forms, changing bundling, and altering items.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, and launching from the discussion and the conclusion above, the following is recommended:

1. Merge organic product management within organisational customer relationship management, in order to guarantee the value of knowledge that consumers have about organic products.
2. Carry out research that examines the influence of green marketing upon consumers’ acceptance of organic products.
3. Organisations should be more aware of the strategies and plans that are used in marketing, in order to promote organic products. Marketers should have the needed awareness regarding what makes a marketing plan beneficial for organic products, and what is not.



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