

Chapter 3

A Review on Green Trust and Environmental Quality Awareness Affect Towards Environmental Attitude

Trianna Rosli

University Technology of Malaysia, Malaysia

Fauziah Sh. Ahmad

University Technology of Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

There are literally thousands of the global warming and pollution issues affecting the living resources, habitats and residents of an ecosystem. The question is, do the issues affects consumers' environmental attitude? Although environmental awareness is gaining more ground among consumers, it is still not clear how this influence their cognitive thinking and consequently their action. The findings on this issue are still equivocal. There are also arguments that most consumers expect others to solve environmental issues which seems to be more of future concerns while they seek immediate gratification or short term personal satisfaction. To date, marketers are still struggling to convince consumers towards eco-products. Furthermore, green halo effect and greenwashing continues distorting buyers and caused them to be more skeptical. This chapter intends to consolidate the literature on green trust factors and environmental quality awareness and assess how these could stimulate environmental attitude.

INTRODUCTION

During the past decades, researchers from multidisciplinary areas relating to environmental studies recognized the importance knowledge and practices that can lead to more responsible ecological decisions and sustenance of environment. While advance nations have been more action oriented towards green and reported to take more initiatives to control and manage environmental issues (Otman, 2011), the developing nations including Malaysia are building up their stronger perceptions on the importance

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2912-5.ch003

to go green. Slowly it builds concerted effort to provide solutions to protect, develop and sustain the environment. The government as well as other responsible parties have been increasingly educating and undertaking the responsibility to enhance the nation's capacity in dealing with the environment issues. The consumption issues of natural resources such as water, energy as well as the protection of natural habitats and endangered species are making it more important for all individuals to practice green in their daily life. However, the national effort may not necessarily translated into a better green perceptions of customers.

However, in a different perspective, it is believed that conscious customers are socially performing daily decision making to minimize the impact of environmental burden and some voluntarily join the green movements to highlight the importance of being green. They even called themselves as 'green people' or more fashionably known as 'pro-environmentalist' (Ottman, 2011). Often, these environmentalist are not leaving the responsibility of environmental issues entirely on the government and businesses (Thøgersen, Jørgensen, & Sandager, 2012).

The environmental movement has extended into organization's practice that determines environmental performance. This includes higher environment standards to innovate and stimulate technology performance that affects companies' efficiency (Peng & Lin, 2009). The implementation of environmental regulations and development of environmental technology (improvement) are one of the critical factors in the organizations towards environmental performance. However, many firms are not capable of undertaking the green marketing strategies and integrating the green concept within all aspects of marketing routine (Ottman, 2011). The implementation of environment performance in the organization has proven such environment oriented practice can support customers to become greener practical within the company. It may not reflects individual's practice-related activities such as practicing product recycling at home or using the green product in the daily routine (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013).

Generally, people who are aware of the environmental problems tend to possess the environmental attitude, and it will translate into supporting or encouraging environment movements. Several research findings support that individuals who possess the environmental awareness have the tendency to perform the environmental behavior (Boztepe, 2012). Unfortunately, the past results seemed to be inconsistent. No matter how severe is the environmental degradation issues and people are expected to monitor lifestyles ethically, yet, there is an indication of poor green practice. People may take the environment for granted, as well as to some, leave for the others to solve the issue (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010) because bio-gradable or green products may often cost more money and efforts (Markkula and Moisander, 2011). Customers are likely to seek personal gain (self-fulfillment) and satisfaction rather than a future outcome (Oliver, 2014). Furthermore, the reality in Malaysia shows the presence of a green idea in individual perspective but it is still limited (Goh & Wahid, 2014; Mei, Ling, & Piew, 2012; Ramli, 2009; Sinnappan et, 2011).

Based on Boztepe (2012), people behavior has a complex spectrum of habit, personality, and lifestyle. Hence, the attitude problem is rooted in customers' deep confusion on the green idea. Therefore, marketers are still struggling to change people behavior to be greener as well as to convince them on green consumption. Furthermore, it is difficult to overstate the effectiveness of the green initiatives and marketing strategy due to many possible constraints to make people going green.

The famous green constraints are known as green halo effect and greenwashing that are distorting the reality of green products. These restrictions are escalating the misconception and skeptical towards eco-label, claims, and advertising. Time to time, it has become a serious challenge for marketers to create a solid marketing strategy that will 'move' people towards being green.

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