Chapter 9
Greenwashing as Influencing Factor to Brand Switching Behavior Among Generation Y in the Social Media Age

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, social media (SM) platforms provide easy and affordable tools to market products' brands and services to a wider audience. It is rampant that many fast-moving consumable goods (FMCG) companies are using deceit-marketing tactics perceived as more environmentally friendly sensitive to their environment through the application of social media platforms. This deceptive approach is often used to enhance their market share base, profitability, brand equity, increase brand loyalty, increase their sales volume, and expand brand equity at the expense of Generation Y ignorance. This incessant practice of deceit tactic is called "greenwashing." Greenwashing has become prevalent and increasing in geometrical progression in the FMCG industry targeting Generation Y using the power of social media platforms. The high rate of this concern has become increasingly popular and interesting due to large benefits associated with green marketing initiatives and the role SM is playing towards it.

INTRODUCTION

Green washing is a deceitful practice adopted by organizations to lure consumers to believe in the green compliance of their product or service (Dahl, 2018). Green marketing has become a part of marketing strategies to entice the attention of consumers who are environmental conscious (Grant, 2015). According to Grant (2015) and Polonsky et al. (2010), green marketing is a multifaceted set of actions that aid the attainment of fulfillment of human wants and preferences, with little or no harm, and adding positive impacts to the environment. Green marketing is a model and approach adopted by an organization in which green attitudes are adopted to be more preference or environmentally friendly. In contrast, green washing is a deceptive behavior in which green marketing is dishonestly modeled and used as a deceptive tool to lure the target market, to stimulate their consciousness that a firm's offerings are ecologically compliant (Chen et al., 2015; Parguel et al., 2011).

Both Generation Y and FMCG companies are conscious of eco - friendly products, which are generally labeled 'green products', however, these young cohorts specifically are more mindful of eco - friendly products and their environment. Studies in marketing have revealed that "more and more consumers would rather buy goods and services from companies that are concerned for the environment, which is why company managers and owners have to add the ecological vector to the administration" (Kotler, 2011; Kotler et al., 2009). This emergent concern prompts FMCG brands to opt for environmentally friendly marketing practices in their production processes, as well as in the final production of their offerings to the target market (Daels, 2017). Globally, evidence has indicated that young consumers and society in general are craving green products, and this has influenced buying behavior processes (Barua & Islam, 2011; Peattie, 1995). Barua & Islam (2011) asserted that the recent rise in eco - friendly FMCG is not constant due to transformation and information from country to country, region to region, ethical beliefs, culture to culture, young to old, male to female. However, most influential is the active engagement of Generation Y on social media platforms on environmental issues.

Horiuchi et al. (2009) argued that firms' resources are limited while consumers' wants and preferences are ever changing. On this note, it is vital for advertisers to maximize the available resources professionally and judiciously to achieve organizational goals and objectives as well as satisfying consumers' wants and preferences. Therefore, 'green marketing' is inevitable. In fact, "the end product of green marketing is this environmental protection (eco - friendly) for the present and the future generations" (Choudhary & Gokarn, 2013). According to Grant (2015), green marketing is a multidimensional set of measures that strive to satisfy target

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