

Directing Consumers Behavior Toward the Adoption Of Eco Friendly Products: A Survey of economics faculty students at Ouargla university (UKMO)

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Summary: Recent decades have undergone a positive and noticeable growth in attitudes and knowledge among consumers who are Environmentally sensitive. under that, consumers behavior has a directly affects the values and beliefs, which is related to green buying. This study aims to examine the influence of key variables such as Environmental Knowledge, Eco labeling, and Green advertising, green pricing on the consumer behavior for adopting eco products. Additionally, unlike former studies, the current study explores The effect of the general consumption environment on green buying behavior. Data was collected by survey from 400 students, the sample covers a variety of economics department (students of Master 1 and 2.). The survey generated 363 usable questionnaires – a response rate of over 90.75%., The survey data were examined and interpreted using the SPSS (version 25.0, IBM Corp., 2017). The results of study showed that Green advertising (GA) and green Pricing (GP) are the major factors that affect the consumers behavior (CB) of the students. Environmental knowledge (EK) and Eco Labeling (EL) also have a significant and positive impact on the consumers behavior (CB). It could also be noted that the demographic variables (gender, age, Buying Frequency, and monthly income) had no effect on the behavior of students, as they have sufficient knowledge of environmental problems and are very willing to pay for environmentally friendly products.

Keywords: consumer behavior, eco-friendly products, Green advertising (GA), green Pricing (GP), Environmental knowledge (EK), Eco Labeling (EL), Algeria.

Jel Classification Codes : D46, E31, L66, M30, M31, M37

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I-Introduction:

In the recent years manufacturing sectors have made significant progress in issues related to environmental management. considerable efforts have been made to enhance the manufacturing processes for current and newly designed eco friendly products. through the most efficient use of inputs such as energies and raw materials minimizing the potential environmental effects. arguably companies in today's o9perating environment face ever increasing pressures to ameliorate the quality of environment, In this context, an increasing number of companies focusing on eco products, because of their environmental friendliness in the clean assembling process, low carbon footprint, recyclability, and so on (Zhaofu, et al., 2018)

Consumers spend their lives surrounded by reference groups and thus often make purchasing decisions not just for themselves, but also for those groups, most consumers know the Environment is facing great challenges and degradation, for this reason, environmental consumer choices have become a significant research field for the consumer behavior research area, Along with this, there

is a growing movement within the field of consumer research which focused on subjects that are more consistent with environmental awareness concern for human welfare and the environment. (Stuart , 2018)

Eco-behavior has closely related to the consumer's choices, as a consequence, consumers are paying high price for eco products which cause less damage to the environment. consumers' concern has also a direct impact on the awareness of eco product, eco price and brand image, ect. (divya, et al., 2019) based on a findings of the previous studies, consumer's choices research have raised many questions, are consumers becoming more concerned about the eco products? are consumers becoming more knowledgeable about nature and the positive effects of the eco products on nature? do consumers think before they purchase a product if the product is ecological or environment friendly or not?

I.1 Eco-product:

Eco-products can play a vital role in the achievement of environmental goals, generally , Eco or friendly products are defined as a products (goods or services) that have a lesser impact on human being health and the nature when compared with competing conventional products that serve the same purpose, when compared with competing conventional products that perform the same purpose, This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal, (EcoIndex, 2011) the broad concept of eco products give a major indication to describe the eco designing processes which are related to the developing a product that is new or significantly improve in reducing environmental harms in terms of (i) use of raw materials that generate less pollution, (ii) use materials that consume lesser amount of energy and resources (iii) fewest amount of materials to comprise a product, (iv) product should be easy to recycle, reuse and decomposed. (Lizwa , et al., 2014)

It should be noted that eco products as a term have been drafted largely within the environmental management and marketing field, and its popularity has coincided with the environmental awakening of the consumer, (Evangelia & Grigoris , 2019) Thus, the field of eco or green products hold special relevance to the domain of Marketing and environmental management. several studies have indicated that there are similar concepts used in the conceptual framework for Eco products include environmental products, ecological products, green product, and sustainable products, most modern scholars agree that eco products concepts have linked with environment compatibility, environment protection, environment friendliness, environment sustainability, environment-friendly production, etc. but nevertheless, there are divergence views on what constitutes a eco product, Hence, the term is open for discussion because there is no one generally

accepted definition, This confusion also offers scope for researchers for studying and analyzing the concept of eco products and related aspects and contribute to its understanding. (Amit , et al., 2020)

Eco product has pride of place to consumers in many countries, and the challenge for companies has become clear: It's no longer a question of if trademarks must be transformed to more sustainable products but how?, according the Buying Green report conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, this report documents the replies of more than 15,620 consumers across the U.S., Europe and South America, survey respondents represent the population in age, gender and income distribution, ect. the survey is covered packaging for eco-products for the food, beverage, personal care and beauty, and home care and industrial markets, the survey results showed that 49% of americans are less likely to buy products in packaging harmful to the environment, for Europeans, 74% consider eco-friendly packaging important, in south america, 83% of consumers are willing to pay more for eco-friendly packaging. (trivium , 2020)

I.2 consumers behavior and eco friendly choices

consumer does not live in isolation, but reacts with social context that makes them subject to the influence of perceptions and values forced and influenced by their way of life, which allows them to realize the consumption manner as a set of behaviors derived from the living environment, social change and lifestyles, (Edna, et al., 2018) All in all, Consumer behavior refers to processes associated with searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of products, services, and ideas, (pieter, 2002) in addition, consumer behavior contains the stages of a consumer decision-making process, including problem identifying (i.e. recognition a consumption problem), information reaching (i.e. searching for information to solve the problem), assessment (i.e. judging the likelihood of an outcome or event), choice (i.e. deciding which products to purchase) and results (i.e. experiencing satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the product, or disposing of the product). (William , Charles , & Denise, 2010)

Since the second half of the 20th the governments of States take into consideration the increasing threat posed by the large-scale pollution and Limitation of resources. in the light of that vision, the concept of environmental behavior has been well developed during a United Nations conference on environment and development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, where the topics of sustainable consumption and production were raised for the first time at the international level, (Agnieszka, 2015) according to academic research in this area, Sarigollu, 2009 noted that environmental behavior reflected on the attitudes and values of purchasing which are related to environmental benefits, consumers today are becoming more delicate in their environmental preferences, attitudes

and purchases. (Mohammad Fateh Ali, et al., 2012) Furthermore, another authors such as (Roberts, 1996; Kalafatis et al., 1999; Laroche et al., 2001) deem that Customers are ever more conscious of gravity of environmental degradation, resulting more ecologically consciousness and desire to purchase eco-friendly products and services, besides, they are dealing with companies that prefer environmental practice. (Mohammad Fateh Ali, et al., 2012)

Studies are related to sustainable and eco consumption concluded that the flow of information, values and attitudes of the community groups all influence the consumer's behavior. in addition, Social studies field analyzed the method in which the social situation of a consumer could be a factor in determining a predisposition towards eco friendly products, taking into consideration the personal factors of those who adopt such an eco-behavior. (Teodora, et al., 2015) It is evident from the above that a main goal adopting environmental behavior is demonstrate to a positive influence or to minimize adverse impact on the environment, Additional Studies show that There are three types of the environmental consumers: consumers who are worried about environmental problems are positive about green products and highly motivated to buy eco-friendly products to sustain a good healthy lifestyle, educated consumers have concern about the environment. They are highly sensitive to the level of investment needed to protect the ecology, with a strong affection for their country, while for many consumers, just being aware of environmental issues represents an action or a change in behavior. (Nekmahmud & Maria Fekete-Farkas, 2020)

In order to examine the question of environmental behavior, a survey led by Southern Cross University to investigate how engaged citizens in america and Australian were regarding the Eco system and environment conditions, and just how far they were ready to go to protect the planet. The survey included 913 people in both countries, these top three issues were ranked as the major issues amongst citizens , in addition, they indicated that they were ready to act on them, with 77% of individuals wanting to learn more about sustainable lifestyles. Most citizens have already taken steps to become more green - 83.4% of them recycle, 57.5% use reusable bags and 45.2% avoid single-use plastics. However, the vast majority of respondents believe it is up to governments (79%) to tackle environmental problems head-on (ellsmoor, 2019).

I.3 Influencing Factors on consumers behavior for Adoption Of Eco-Products

companies and the entire marketing managers need to understand the underlying causes behind consumers adoption and acceptance of eco friendly products, as it is known, The adoption process of eco friendly products are affected by several factors such as, environmental knowledge,

I.3.1 Environmental Knowledge:

the major environmental challenges have transformed the concept of environmental knowledge into a new thinking, Given that modern orientation, several papers on environmental knowledge

have been based on the different beliefs of consumers, In general, environmental knowledge is defined as general knowledge of facts, concepts, and relationships concerning the natural environment and its major ecosystems. (Piyapong & Samattaphong , 2019) As such, According to Polonsky et al 2012 environmental knowledge explains consumers' factual knowledge that has do with the level of consumer's awareness about contemporary pressing environmental issues such as environmental degradation, greenhouse gas, climate change etc. Factual environmental knowledge is considered most suitable because this knowledge levels help consumers in making eco-friendly consumption decisions. (Khan , Chamhuri , Norshamliza , & Farah , 2015)

As has been pointed out in the previous paragraph, environmental knowledge of consumers usually relates to the question of how eco-friendly activities operate or to knowledge about environmental products, For example, if people know that product can be only qualified as being environmentally friendly when its life cycle 'from cradle to grave' respects the needs of the environment.

I.3.2 Eco labeling:

for companies, increased consumers' intention to consume ecolabel products assite them to reach their target market and provide encouragement to produce more eco-products. On the whole, Eco-label of products are attracting consumers' attention, this could lead to create a demand for eco friendly products and thus satisfying consumers wants through their buying behavior. A relevant researches also point to concept of Ecolabel is associated with waste treatment technology, recycling technology, or alternatives to non-renewable raw materials involved environmentally friendly products. (Ilma , et al., 2018) In general , the policy of ecolabel is proven as a directing tool for consumers to choose the eco-friendly products, This discussion suggests the following hypothesis:

I.3.3 Green advertising :

In general, green advertising refers to all operations that might result in the transfer Eco messages to consumer, In the context of advertising message, many studies have found that when green advertisements highlight environmental characteristics ,such as waste minimization , Energy conservation, renewable materials and use remanufactured components, consumers are more likely to respond by feeling a type of confidence and emotional engagement, namely, caring. (Tsai-Feng Kao & Yi- Zhan Du, 2020) Noticeably, companies are always trying to understand and analyses complex processes of cognitive and ethical attitudes control the consumers choice of eco-friendly products, thus, they are interested in generating positive consumer responses toward products through green advertisements, This discussion suggests the following hypothesis:

I.3.4 green pricing :

Pricing is an influential factor in green marketing strategy, in particular green pricing is based on environmental benefit where most consumers will only be prepared to pay if there is a perception of environmental product value. (Yatish & Zillur , 2015) from the perspective of companies the pricing operations affect consumers' purchasing decisions and behavior, and also take into account all the items that relate to eco product benefits such as environmental performance, eco-design, visual appeal, or taste, however, consumers do not want to obtain green benefits at the expense of the original convenience, quality, and another attributes. (Michel , asmin , & Guido , 2001) therefore it can be said, green prices are used to weigh the results of various environmental effects and their costs and profit margins. (bruyn, 2018)

II- Methods and Materials:

II.1. Survey Development and Measurements

A unified questionnaire was developed based on requirements of the problematic of study. and pretested with three experts from the research field. The questionnaire was developed in arabic to simplify items that had also been published in arabic and afterwards translated into english. In addition, Proper design of questionnaire is required mainly because it was conducted with students respondents. Therefore, some words and even sentence structures are changed to improve understanding., the items of questionnaire were based on a 7- point Likert scales, from 1 (strongly disagrees) to 7 (strongly agree). As a further step, The questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of Ouargla university students to ensure that the items were understandable and relevant to practices in Algerian markets.

II.2.Data Collection and Sample

In accordance with the requirements of this research, the target audience of the questionnaire is studnets of ouargla university in algeria . Samples cover a variety of economics department (students of Master 1 and 2.). A total of 400 students participated in this study, The survey generated 363 usable questionnaires – a response rate of over 90.75%. the data was collected between march –juine 2021.

II.3. Study Hypothesis

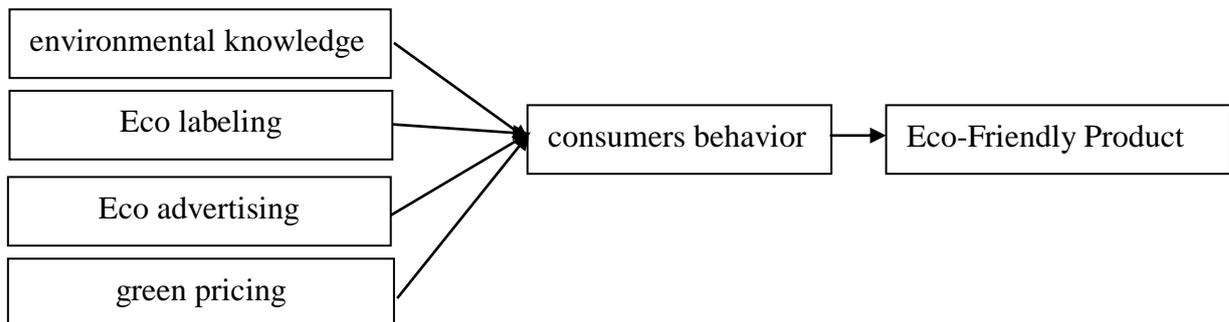
This study suggested the following hypothesis:

- (H1): environmental knowledge has a strong influence on consumers behavior.
- (H2): Eco labeling has a strong influence on consumers behavior.
- (H3): Eco advertising has a strong influence on consumers behavior
- (H4): green pricing has a strong influence on consumers behavior

(H5): consumers behavior has a strong influence on Eco Friendly Products.

In the light of the hypotheses, the proposed research model is depicted in Figure 1. which includes all of the causal relationships proposed in them:

Figure (1): study's hypotheses



II. 4. Data Analysis

A total of 363 valid responses were analyzed to study the relations among independent variables, adopting ecofriendly products as a dependent variable. persons in the sample are completed questions requesting information about the gender, age, Buying Frequency, and monthly income. The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table

The sample consisted of 47 percent Female and 43 percent males. Majority of the participants are students of master 2, which accounted for 92 percent while the other 8 percent consists of master 1 students,. The major age group is between 31 to 40 years old (58 per cent) followed by 22 to 31 years old (23 per cent). Most of the participants buy more than once a week (43 percent), followed by who buy twice a week (35 percent), while the other who buy once a week (22 percent) . The highest wages group is between DZ 80000 to DZ 6000 (39 percent) followed by less than DZ 4000 (23 percent) and DZ 6000 to DZ 4000 (38 percent). In term of Eco friendly products, roughly two-thirds of the participants used at least a eco-friendly products three times (71 per cent). while other participants used less than three times (29 percent).

III- Results and discussion:

III.1 Measurement Results

objective of the study is to measure the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the study variables. as shown in Table 1, The Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability (CR) all exceed the recommended threshold value of 0.7. This explains that all the variables have a high level of

internal consistency reliability. in addition, it can be seen that the AVE values are all above the required minimum level of 0.50.

Table (1). Cronbach alpha and Reliability, Convergent Validity

Construct	Item	Loading	Alpha	AVE
Environmental Knowledge	EK1	0.835	0.845	0.714
	EK2	0.869		
	EK3	0.831		
Eco Labeling	EL1	0.837	0.892	0.698
	EL2	0.872		
	EL3	0.792		
Green advertising	GA1	0.846	0.858	0.694
	GA2	0.853		
	GA3	0.822		
Green Pricing	GP1	0.814	0.870	0.670
	GP2	0.874		
	GP3	0.878		
Consumers Behavior	CB1	0.916	0.935	0.840
	CB2	0.916		
	CB3	0.906		
Eco Friendly Products	EFP1	0.872	0.943	0.783
	EFP2	0.887		
	EFP3	0.881		

Note: *** p < 0.001. AVE—average variance extracted; CR—composite reliability

Table 2 shows the results of discriminant validity, which was tested by comparing the constructs' AVE with squared multiple correlations, The results revealed that the square roots of the reflective constructs AVE are higher than the correlations of these constructs with other variables. and thus can the discriminant validity is established as the indicator's loadings are higher than their cross loadings with other constructs. besides, the model constructs were deemed appropriate for testing the structural models and hypotheses.

Table (2) : Discriminant validity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
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Environmental Knowledge	0.842				
Eco Labeling	0.656	0.834			
Green advertising	0.671	0.732	0.834		
Green Pricing	0.672	0.686	0.720	0.882	
Consumers Behavior	0.647	0.646	0.701	0.753	0.915
Green Pricing	0.604	0.636	0.699	0.691	0.804 0.843

Note: Values in bold represent the square root of AVE

III. 2. Structural Model and Testing of Hypotheses

The inner model of study concerns the relationship between constructs as hypothesised in this research model. Table 3 shows the summarized results of the proposed structural model with regards to t-statistics and path coefficients standard error. The results of study show that four variable have a crucial influence on Consumer Behavior towards eco friendly products . Green advertising variable, demonstrates the largest path coefficient ($\beta = 0.2468$), followed by Green Pricing ($\beta = 0.2230$), Eco Labeling ($\beta = 0.1454$), Environmental Knowledge ($\beta = 0.1145$) The results also show that Consumer Behavior has a significant influence on adoption Of Eco Friendly Products ($\beta = 0.8161$). On the other hand, the R2 values for Consumer Behavior and adoption Of Eco Friendly Products were 0.6897 and 0.629 indicating that Consumer Behavior can explain 63.9% of the variance in adoption Of Eco Friendly Products.

Table (3): Hypotheses Testing Results.

Hypothesis	Path coeff.	T stats	P values	decision
H1: Environmental Knowledge → Consumers Behavior	0.1145	2.912	0.039***	supported
H2: Eco Labeling → Consumers Behavior	0.1454	2.912	0.004***	supported
H3: Green advertising → Consumers Behavior	0.2468	3.602	0.003***	supported
Green Pricing → Consumers Behavior	0.2230	3.314	0.001***	supported
Consumers Behavior → Eco Friendly Products	0.8161	25.31	0.000***	Supported

Note: ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, n.s not significant

III.3 Discussion

Results of this study provide sufficient evidence that the consumers behavior dimensions that influence adaptation of eco-friendly products . green advertising had a significant impact on behavior towards eco-friendly products. This is due to the Green advertising policies are based on expanded persuasion. In addition to sending impactful environmental messages, This result also

supported past research that "green advertising " is fundamental variable of green behavior for consumers. on the other hand, this result noted that regardless of whether customers take care or not what the eco-products are, the companies need to focus on green advertising efforts.

The next important aspect is green pricing where the results of study found this variable has a significant influence on behavior towards adoption eco-friendly products . green pricing refers to currency units consumers are willing to meet to purchase green products and services, hence, consumer's evaluation of green pricing of products which related to the environmental performance.

the third variable is Eco Labeling , followed by “ Environmental Knowledge”, With regards to Eco Labeling, the respondents considered that variable had become a crucial aspect for promoting reliability of ecological information to assure consumer's confidence. as for the environmental knowledge, the significant relationship between this variable and ” and “adoption of eco friendly products” is acceptable, the results show that environmental knowledge positively influence consumer behavior towards adoption eco-friendly products, through the provision of effective communication strategy, in addition, trying to educate consumers about specific environmental issues.

While the relationship between consumers behavior and adoption eco-friendly products has shown that there is a significant positive impact of consumers behavior on purchasing or consuming eco-friendly product, this relation demonstrated that a tendency to buy eco friendly products is influenced by behavioral aspects such as personal convictions, satisfactions , and living environment, This result also concluded that consumers mainly focus on the environmental value of products regardless of their price value.

IV-Conclusion:

This research enriches the literatures on eco friendly products as it incorporates the "consumer behavior " variables into a Green purchasing. As a conclusion, eco friendly products became an important aspect of green production for serving consumers and satisfying their environmental needs. in addition, the effect of eco friendly products and its production process on nature obligation the consumers to respect the environment's components. in general, eco friendly products strategies contribute to provide an innovative goods and services to stimulate the green demand in target markets.

This study was carried out in Algeria (Ouargla province) To study and determine the relationship between eco-friendly products approaches and the behavior of consumers towards that products. Based on survey findings, We are certain that consumers behavior have a positive and significant impact towards Adopting eco-friendly products. In addition, the study also highlighted the

importance of variables like environmental knowledge, Eco labeling, and Eco advertising, green pricing that affect consumers behavior to drive them to make a green purchase decision. we concluded that companies should move towards adopting eco-friendly strategies and try to create an add value in the contemporary business environment.

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