

## **GREEN AWARENESS AND YOUNG CONSUMER PURCHASING AN APPLICATION ON EGYPTIAN STUDENTS IN SOME PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

**Sherine El Sakka**

Department of management, School of Business, Future University in Egypt, 5<sup>Th</sup> Settlement, End of 90 St ,New Cairo , Egypt

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**ABSTRACT:** *Egypt as one of the developing countries which confront a lot environmental challenges, environmental issues and green products culture is not a priority, spreading the ideas of going green and expanding the culture of green product purchase (GPP) is very important step which it need awareness campaign for green marketing to clarify for new generation the benefit of purchasing green products. Our paper will investigate how much young Egyptians university students are aware about green product (GP), if the awareness impacts their green purchase (GPP) and how it might influence their consumer behavior; we will discover what kind of factors could affect Egyptian university students buying behavior of green products and green services.*

**KEYWORDS:** Green Product Purchasing (GPP), Awareness Purchase (AP), Green Product (GP), Consumer, Egyptian Students, Private Universities

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Climate changes, global warming, air and water pollution, ecofriendly products, and green marketing are some environment issues popped up internationally and nationally nowadays.

These environmental issues have impact on consumer health, which made producers to think green and to promote for green products and services.

Egypt like other developing country, confront a lot of environmental problems, from water pollution, air pollution, agriculture land problem, and unsuccessful waste management problem , due to economic problems there is community lack awareness about the environment its problem and its products actually there is no priority of the environmental issues in front of the economy .

Our study will try to discover how much young Egyptians are aware about green product and its consumption benefits as a way to highlights the importance of green products consumption.

This paper will be structured as follows, a brief literature review on green marketing and student green product awareness will be discussed , research methodology , statistical analysis result , finally conclusions and recommendations .

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Green marketing**

According to American marketing association it defines green marketing “as marketing of products that are believed to be environment friendly which organize into various activities

such as product adjustment , modification of production processes , packaging , labeling , advertising strategies as well as increases awareness on compliance marketing among industries” (1)

**Mintu and Lozardo** (1993) define green marketing as “the application of marketing tools to facilitate exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual goals in such a way that the preservation, protection and conservation of the natural environment are upheld (2)

**Yeung 2004, Peattie and Charter** (1997, p389) state” that green marketing relates to a holistic management approach for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of consumers and society in a profitable and sustainable way “(3)

According to **Grewal Levey 2008** green marketing is defined as” a strategic effort made by firms to provide customers with the environment friendly merchandise” (4)

(1) Global journal 2015page 2

(2)Ruth Dettie, kevin Burchell,Debra Riely , Kingston university , UK , normalizing green behaviors a new approach to sustainability marketing , journal of marketing management , page 423, vol 28 , no 3-4 , march 2012

(3)Arita khare , sourjo mukerjee, tanuj goyal , indian institute of management Rehtak , india social influence and green marketing an exploratory study on indian consumers , journal customer behavior volume 12, page 362

(4) Leslilelu , Dora Bock and Mathew joseph ,green marketing: what the millennials buy, vol 34,2013,p3, Emerald , journal of business strategy

### **Green marketing tools**

Eco label, eco brand and environmental advertisement are green marketing tools which can increase green products features and help consumers to buy green products.

- **Eco Label:** it’s a tool which allows consumers to easily distinguish environmentally green product between the ordinary products.
- **Eco brand:** applying it aspects could help consumers to recognize green products between other products which could harm the environment.
- **Environmental advertisement:** it’s a way to redirect the attention of customer to The benefit of purchasing green product (5)

### **Benefit of green marketing**

- Green marketing can help building a brand value
- Green marketing can eliminate the bad effect of production and better the image of the product.
- In green marketing the cost of raw materials are low and the price of green product is low on the long term (6)

### **Green consumer**

The consumer who support business that operate in the environmental friendly ways according to Renfro (2010) (7)

Green consumption behavior controlled by several factors such as changing consumption value and awareness of green product benefits, demographic factors like age, education and income the more the consumer is exposed the more his consumer behavior change ; also factors like price and quality of green products has an impact . (pp79)

(5) Investigation of green marketing tools effect on consumers purchase behavior ,elham rahbar& nabsiah abul wahid,p2,3 (5)Green marketing a study of consumers buying behavior in relation to green products ,wong Fuiyeng &Rashad Yaz dnifard 2015 , global journal p 4,5

(6) The antecedents of green purchase intention among Malysian consumers, Ooi jen Mei , Kwek choon Ling , Tan Hoi Piew, p249

(7)Green marketing:what the Millennials buy ,leslilelu,Dorabock and Mathew joseph , vol 34no 6,2013,p3, Emerald , journal of business strategy

According to **Schuhwerkan Lefkoff-Hagius** (1995)” individuals who engage in environmental activities are devoted to purchase green goods “

Green consumers not only consuming green products but also deals with Company’s has engagements green practices and activities such as recycling and energy efficiency (**Montague and Mukherjee, 2010**)

According to **Vermillion and Peart** (2010), “consumers are not likely to purchase a product only for it’s environmentally attributes “(p5)

Green consumer is define as “products that are likely to endanger the health of the consumer or others , cause significant damage to the environment during manufacture , use of disposal ,consume a disproportionate amount of energy , cause of harming waste , use materials derived from threatened species or environments”(Strong 1996,P5) (8)

According to previous studies children and teens influenced by their family’s green product and service consumption, consumers are influenced as well by the product price they post pone their choices to buy green products to a time when they can afford it. (9)

### **Green consumer categories**

Roper Organization, categories consumers to five segments

- **True blue green:** when consumer believe that their green consumption have an impact on the environment, they have a will to invest on green products and engage in ecological activities.
- **Green back green:** when consumer invests in more expensive green products but is not willing to engage in environmental activities.

(8)Jesicca Ascherman –witzel and Emilie marie niebahr , international journal of consumer , elaborating products :young Danish consumer and in store food choice , 2014, page 552

(9)Opportunities for green marketing: young consumers, Kaman Lee, journal of consumer marketing vol 26, issue 2 pp 87 to 96

- **Sprouts:** green consumer who support environmental regulations, but they are less to spend money on green products.

- **Grouser**s: believe that it's not his responsibility to solve environmental issues; they use regular products and avoid consumption of green products.
- **Basic browns**: believe that environmental problems are very complicated no efforts on personal, commercial or political levels can solve any ecological problem. (Suplico 2009) (10)

(Hunger and Stanton 2007) stated customers could have an attitude towards green purchases but this doesn't guarantee that they will purchase green products

According to Gatersleben 2012 he clarify that people who consume green products are the young generation (11)

### **Green product**

A product which has ecological attribute the use of green products its aim to prevent pollution and reserve resources, the problem of green product use is its cost and that no many consumers could afford it specially in developing countries when the income is low .(12)

### **Consumer purchasing behavior**

“Is the decision process and acts of people involved in buying and using product “ ( 13 )

(10) Muntaha Anwar, Marike Venter, attitudes and purchase Behavior of green products among generation Y consumers in south Africa , Mediteranian journal of social sciences , vol 5 No 21, September 2014

(11) Violeta sima, green behavior of the Romanian consumers, economic insights trends and challenges vol 111 no 3\2014

(12) Hisham el din bin ismail, Mohamed fateh ali khan , multimedia university , Malaysia , consumer perception on the consumerism issue and its influence on their purchasing behavior , A view from Malaysian food industry page 43

(13) Lynsey Scott and Debbie Vigar –Ellis, consumer understanding perceptions and behavior with regard to environmentally friendly packaging in a developing nation, international journal of consumer studies 2014, page (2.4)

### **The history of going green idea and its implementation**

The force of going green idea started in western marketing at the millennium and then expanded in Asia and Africa, from 1990 consumers worldwide started to become socially and environmentally aware of the importance of the environment issues.

The concept of ecofriendly or going green approach was pushed by the developed countries to initiate international green marketing in order to expand their market and to take advantage of the positive image of their green brand established in their domestic markets.

Lately there is an increase towards green behavior due to the population increase and resources drain more can Egypt handle it as a developing country, and due to its economic situation it rely on some industries which could harm its environment like ceramic and cement, so we have to discover what is Egyptian consumers awareness situation considering green products.

Consumers environmental knowledge can be improved through education, some of previous studies stated that many consumers fail to understand the connection between their buying decision and environmental consequences.

After the United Nations conference in 1972 the 21 st century become a green consumption Era all over the world, the word green gained attention according to previous studies they showed that knowledgeable consumers of ecological problems purchase environmentally friendly products, consumers with high knowledge are more willing to pay higher prices to support green products (13)

The four criteria for achieving the principles of green consumptions are known as the 4 Rs, (reduction, reuse, recycling and recognition). (14)

(14)Cheng –juri Tseng and shuo chang Tsaj , effect of consumer environmental attitude of green consumption decision making , pack J, statist , 2011 , volume 27 ,5, pp3,4

### **Socioeconomic environment of Egypt:**

According to the World Bank classifications, Egypt is a lower middle income country, the 2010 millennium development goal report highlights that poverty is one of the most critical areas of deficit in Egypt; Egypt has a lot of problematic issues concerning the environment, climate change, water scarcity, coastal problem and air pollution, Egypt has a mismanagement of natural resources which make the awareness process for the population about consuming green product a kind of luxury (15)

### **Environmental Awareness:**

The more people are knowledgeable about green products and its practices the more they will act positively (**Roberts 1996**), environmental awareness considered as knowledge and general concepts relating to the ecosystems (**Mustafa, 2007**)

### **Government initiative in Egypt:**

The government's role is a predictor to green purchasing behavior claiming Punitha & Rahman (2011) according to them that government should play a role in building green purchasing, Egypt pursue long term developments goals taking into consideration at its policies social and environmental dimension.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research objectives**

- To investigate the awareness level of Egyptian university students about green marketing
- To measure the green value for Egyptian university students
- To understand what factors could persuade Egyptian university students to buy green products or use green services
- To discuss if students environmental responsibility could impact their consumption behavior

(15)Iman F.Abou –El naga, demographic, socioeconomic and environmental changes affecting circulation of neglected tropical diseases in Egypt , Asian pacific journal of Tropical medicine,2015,page2

### Research questions

- Is there awareness of green marketing between university students?
- Is there a green value between Egyptian university students?
- What are the factors which could influence university students to buy green products?
- Are students environmental responsibility could impact their consumption behavior?

### Population and sampling

The populations researched were a random sample of future, British and the German universities students in Egypt aged between 18 to 24 years, a quantitative study, and self-administrated questionnaires had been conducted .

The main reasons for choosing this sample was as follows

- To explore the awareness of green product for young generation
- The sample chosen expected to represent consumer's behavior for green product in the future.

### Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relation between Egyptian university student's awareness and green consumption purchase

H1: There is a significant relation between Egyptian university student's awareness and green consumption purchase

### Findings and discussion

Respondent's surveys were not aware of green products, consumption benefits and practices

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1: students' perception about green products awareness**

Green marketing awareness	Mean	Std Deviation
Time spent discussing with your friends green products importance	2.06	1.441
Time spent with your friends discussing environmental problems issue	2.38	1.575
Time spent sharing information regarding green products with your friends	2.36	1.474
Sharing information about the benefit of green product consumption	4.09	,889
The importance of raising green products awareness among university students	4.48	,703

As revealed from the previous table the awareness of the students about green products it's not high, the data standard deviation measured are not concentrated around the mean

Awareness about green product should be raised between universities students and more protection works its need it

**Table 2: green products students' awareness scale reliability analysis**

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbath alpha based on standardized items	No of items
,310	.277	5

The alpha coefficient for the 5 items have relatively low internal consistency as it is ,277

**Table 3: green value between Egyptian university students**

Green value between students	Mean	Std deviation
It's essential to promote green living concept in Egypt	4.09	.889
Green products consumption is a waste of money and resources	2.67	1.4
Green products consumption issues are not of my interest	2.45	1.00
Consumption of green products is meaningless	2.47	1.02
Worry about worsening of the quality products in Egypt	4.00	,865
Using green products as a step to change consumer behavior one of my major concern	3.6	1.00
Involved in environmental protection issues in Egypt	3.21	1.14
the green products improvement in Egypt should be a priority	3.43	1.28
Green products market expansion in Egypt need to be dealt	4.02	,710
Think that the green products problem in Egypt is worsening	4.21	,656
Usage Non green products threat our health	4.30	,577
Non usage of green products problem threat Egypt reputation	4.11	,853

Green value is not that high between Egyptian university students, standard deviation show values that data set is not around the mean, the more the standard deviation is smaller the more the data are concentrated around the mean and this is shows in the students opinion that the green living should be promoted in Egypt, it shoes std ,886 while the mean is 4.09 , and how they are worry about the worsening the quality of Egypt environment std of .865 while the mean is 4.00, they think that problem in Egypt should be dealt std of ,710 while the mean is 4.02 , they think that environmental problem threat their health std of ,577 with a mean of 4.30 , they are concerned also about Egypt reputation std of ,853 with a mean of 4.11

**Table 4: green value scale reliability analysis between Egyptian university students**

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbash alpha based on standardized items	No of items
,499	,542	12

The alpha coefficient for the 12 items has relatively low internal consistency as it is , 542

**Table 5: factors could influence university students to buy green products**

Factors could influence students to buy green products	Mean	Std deviation
Green product is Expensive in Egypt	3.46	1.40
Non availability of green product everywhere create a consumption barrier	3.66	1.29
Its unwise to spend a big amount for green product consumption	2.89	1.17
Green products and green services need high income	3.38	1.03
Brand image could persuade to buy green products	3.94	,824
Awareness of green product price could persuade to change consumption behavior	3.82	,687

**Table 6: factors scale reliability analysis could influence university students to buy green products**

Cornbrash's alpha	Cronbash alpha based on standardized items	No of items
,120	,202	6

The alpha coefficient for the 6 items have relatively low internal consistency as it is, 202

**Table 7: Student's environmental responsibility could impact their consumption behavior**

<b>Environmental students responsibilities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
You should be responsible for protecting our environment	<b>4.01</b>	<b>,759</b>
Environmental protection starts with buying green products	<b>3.21</b>	<b>1.14</b>
How much responsibility do you think you have in protecting the environment in Egypt	<b>3.91</b>	<b>1,102</b>
Do you have the will to buy green products as a part of your responsibility to protect the environment in Egypt	<b>3.67</b>	<b>,766</b>
Environmental protection is the responsibility of Egypt government not you	<b>3.44</b>	<b>1.402</b>
Environmental protection is the responsibility of environmental organizations	<b>3.53</b>	<b>1.123</b>
If you carry out some pro environmental behaviors by buying green products in your everyday life you would contribute a lot in changing consumption behavior	<b>4.01</b>	<b>,659</b>
Your participation in buying green products would encourage your family and friends to participate in changing their consumption behavior	<b>3.86</b>	<b>,817</b>
Environmental quality in Egypt will stay the same even if you engage in some pro-environmental behaviors	<b>2.76</b>	<b>1.357</b>
Even if you buy green product recycle and reuse stuff , the consumption behavior will remains as it is	<b>2.97</b>	<b>1.314</b>

Responsibility for protecting community environment shows a std of , 759 and mean of 4.01, willing to take responsibility to protect the environment in Egypt shows Std of ,766 and mean of 3.67, carrying pro-environment behavior with std , 569 and mean of 4.01, encouraging family and friends to protect the environment std of ,817 with a mean of 3.86

**Table 8: Student's environmental responsibility scale reliability analysis could impact their consumption behavior**

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach alpha based on standardized items	No of items
,543	,570	10

The alpha coefficient for the 10 items has relatively low internal consistency as it is , 570

## CONCLUSION

There is no high awareness for green marketing between private Egyptian universities students ; also there is no high green value between them as well, they don't differentiate between green products and non-green products, they don't know the importance of buying green products and how they will participate in saving and protecting the Egyptian environment by going green , the factors like green product price, availability of green product in the markets and brand image could influence university students to buy green products, student's environmental responsibility could impact their consumption behavior if they aware of the benefit of the consumption of green products and if the green product has a reasonable price and available everywhere.

The relationship between awareness and green products consumption is positive, which mean the more an individual's awareness the more his consumption behavior towards green products

## RECOMMENDATION

- Awareness campaigns about green products importance and its benefits , is recommended between Egyptian universities students
- Environmental issues should be included in education program to help students to know the relation between going green and how consumer behavior changes could solve environment problems.
- Students involvement in finding solution for community environmental problems
- Government should highlight the importance of green product awareness campaign in public universities as well as in private as a priority in its agenda
- Reinforcement of environmental laws in Egypt will help to highlight the importance of the environment as well as using green products.

## CONTRIBUTION

This study contributes to the theory by adding current literature on green buying behavior awareness among young consumer in some of private universities in Egypt; it contributes to the practice by

Shading the light on the importance of the awareness of green products for young generation in Egypt as one of the developing countries.

### **Limitations of the Research**

This study was limited to students in some private universities in Egypt and did not cover all the universities in Egypt, in future studies it would be ideal to major the awareness of the students in all Egypt universities on both sectors public and private.

Secondly, this study concentrated on green product awareness in general, further studies could focus on specific process of green product awareness which can generate a more reliable response.