Green Stimuli Characteristics and Green Self-Identity Towards Ethically Minded Consumption Behavior with Special Reference to Mediating Effect of Positive and Negative Emotions

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Abstract

Research studies related to ethical consumerism has been gaining increasing attention in the last decade due to growing importance with environmental pollution. Research studies pointed out a gap between ethical consumers' behavior and intention which is common in Sri Lanka as well. Hence the study used emotions and self-identity as two key drivers which assist in exploring the intention-behavior gap that has not been researched so far. Therefore the research problem addressed is "whether the positive and negative emotions aroused as a result of consumer subjective evaluation to stimuli, impact on the ethically minded consumption behavior?".

The study focused only on environmental friendly electrical household appliances and the population is the academics and professionals who reside Gampaha and Colombo suburbs and who bought environmental friendly electrical household appliances within the last one year of duration. The unit of analysis is individual consumers and the convenience sampling method used. 200 individual respondents contributed to the study and the data collection was done through a self-administered questionnaire. The study has used Smart PLS 3.2 software and the results showed that the green stimuli characteristics and green self-identity significantly influence ethically minded consumer behavior and only positive emotions act as a significant mediator. Most importantly if the consumer's perceived effectiveness is high, despite the presence of emotions ethically minded consumer behavior will be triggered more. In conclusion, marketers have to use positive emotions when creating the stimuli and should give more priority for assuring the individuals small step for protecting the environment.

Keywords: cognitive appraisal theory, self-identity theory, green stimuli characteristics, green self identity, positive emotions, negative emotions, ethically minded consumer behavior, perceived consumer effectiveness

1. Introduction

The statistical reports reveal that the global carbon emission has been rising up at a rapid rate and making it worse, forest area also has been drastically reduced (World Bank, n. d.). Therefore, research studies on consumer behavior towards protecting the environment have been increasing since the 1990s' (Khare, 2015). Hence, this research study focus on the ethical consumerism as the broader area which can be defined as, "the practice of purchasing goods and services which has been manufactured in a way with less impact on the society and/or the environment and rejecting the goods and services which will have a harmful impact on the society or the environment.

It has been often concluded by previous researchers that the ethical consumer's behavior does not comply with the attitudes that they report which are observed as common across the globe (Eckhardt, Belk, & Devinney, 2010; Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016; Papaoikonomou & Ryan, 2011). Often the theory adopted in exploring this gap between attitude-behavior is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Khare, 2015; Samarasinghe & Ahsan, 2014). It has been recognized by the researchers that TPB has several disadvantages; assessing intention to behave without focusing on actual behavior (Hassan, Shiu, & Shaw, 2014) and ignoring emotions such as anger, fear, hatred, etc. (Ajzen, 2011). Therefore many researchers incorporated emotions as a predictor of intention and