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FACTORS IN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISING INFLUENCING CONSUMER'S PURCHASE INTENTION

Habib Ahmad

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Cell: 0333-5339752

habibaswati@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Since 1975 green marketing has gone through several stages. The American marketing association held the first workshop on “ecological marketing” in 1975. Ecological responsibility is a critical function of management and emerges as an important tool for the success of any business. In 1980’s a drastic change in consumer behavior towards eco-products is observed with the emergence of green consumers provoking market mechanisms for environmentally genial organizations (Ottman, 1993). After an antagonistic response in 1990s, green marketing made an upswing in the western markets from 2000 onwards (Ottman et al., 2006). As a result an increasing number of consumers eagerly seek environmentally friendly commodities. This paper therefore attempts to fill the gap by investigating the green buying behaviors of consumers of Pakistan and finding the important factors which marketers should keep in mind while doing green advertising in this country. This paper will provide marketers a new insight to understand the market of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1975 green marketing has gone through several stages. The American marketing association held the first workshop on “ecological marketing” in 1975. Ecological responsibility is a critical function of management and emerges as an important tool for the success of any business. In 1980’s a drastic change in consumer behavior towards eco-products is observed with the emergence of green consumers provoking market mechanisms for environmentally genial organizations (Ottman, 1993). After an antagonistic response in 1990s, green marketing made an upswing in the western markets from 2000 onwards (Ottman et al., 2006). As a result an increasing number of consumers eagerly seek environmentally friendly commodities.

With a higher consumer awareness of environmental issues, firms obviously adopted “green” strategies (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004) and start making environmental claims in their advertising campaigns with the desire of gaining an edge over their competitors. (Connolly and Prothero, 2003) assert that a well implemented green positioning strategy can deliver that edge by producing a more favorable perception of the brand. Literature shows the existence of green market segments and the high responsiveness of the firms to this green consumer demand. Now it’s the consumer turn to differentiate between different competing products or processes on the basis of their choice. Numerous aspects can be considered in environmental advertising that are found to influence consumer’s liking in their adoption of “green” purchasing (D’Souza et al., 2007).

The power of “going-green” is currently extending to the Asian region, where environmental threats are disturbing local governments and citizens (Lee, 2008). Like many Asian countries, Pakistan suffer from hazardous air pollution, poor water quality and high intensity traffic noise. The government and citizens of Pakistan have started to realize the gravity of the environmental terrorization (Mustafa, 2006). The people are now more eager than previous to react to appeals based on green issues. Recent example of going green in Pakistan is the revival of Hudiara drain, a highly polluted tributary of the River Ravi flowing through India and Pakistan. (Mustafa et al., 2006)

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Emerging markets for environmental products, services and technologies in Pakistan mean promising opportunities for international green marketers. Having a large population Pakistan is of prime importance for firms to understand their attitudes towards advertising, their likes and dislikes in advertising and the media they preferred to capture this strategic market and expand their business. However, there are some ignored areas in contemporary environmental research regarding Pakistan and India. Research is needed to contribute in the existing literature because:

- Asian-based green marketing studies are comparatively small when weigh against the Western works (Lee et al., 2008).
- Among those scant Asian-based green marketing studies, a negligible research has been done to find out important factor of green advertising that can affect purchase intention of the consumer.
- No study has been done so far to evaluate the factors of green advertising which are central to purchase intention of the consumers of Pakistan.

This paper is a useful source of information for international green marketers about what works and what does not in appealing to Pakistani customers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This paper therefore attempts to fill the gap by investigating the green buying behaviors of consumers of Pakistan and finding the important factors which marketers should keep in mind while doing green advertising in this country. This paper will provide marketers a new insight to understand the market of Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CREDIBILITY OF CLAIM

Previous research support the view that consumers are inclined more favorably towards environmental friendly products and it is originated that environmental messages in advertisements are credible (Mathur and Mathur, 2000). It is also examined that consumers respond actively to product-related messages than cause-related messages. A brand with a green image may augment the emotional bond with the audience and thereby boost customer allegiance (Ginsberg et al., 2004). Researches established the view that environmental claims are more credible if ascribed to green brands as compared to neutral brand (Ong and Phau, 2007).

However, some researches defy this view. Crane (2000) established that consumers formed skeptical attitudes towards green advertising, indicating the threat of consumers evading purchase. To avoid this danger positive differentiation from rival brands should be accomplished by constructive positioning. This will result in competitive advantage against the rivals (Grace and Ocass, 2002). Persistent worry for the environment and particular concerns over the environmental impact of certain products, have showed the

way for more environmentally focused advertising and an increase in environmentally beneficial claims. (Goldsmith et al. 2000) proposed that the perceived skill and reliability of the brand owner will influence consumer's attitudes. The higher levels of perceived trickery were linked with lower levels of perceived credibility, and with negative attitudes toward the advertisement and the advertised brand. On the basis of the findings of the studies so far reviewed, we propose that:

H1. Consumers will respond positively to environmental claims made for green brands provided with positive perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADVERTISING

Early research on attitude towards advertising has shown it to be a multidimensional component (Andrews, 1989). As consumers continue to uncover to growing volley of varied advertising message through a variety of media, it is of little surprise that advertisers are having a tricky time getting advertisements to be heard. Advertising and its allied creativity rely upon the audience for success. However; it is vital to remember that advertising is more often termed as unwelcome intrusion and regarded by many consumers as a constant source of annoyance (Cummins, 1996). It is thus central for advertisers to pay extra consideration to the kind of claims made in their advertising, or to risk skepticism. Previous literature shows that result suggest that various sort of green advertising evoke varied responses among customers, positive reactions being potentially self-promotional for the advertiser (Ong et al., 2007). This provides the basis of our second hypothesis that:

H2. Consumers with positive attitude towards advertising will respond positively to advertising of green products provided with positive perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

MEDIA

People embrace different expectations about different media. For example it has been found that people are likely to seek information from print and entertainment from broadcast (Speck and Elliott, 1997).

Television and print media are also very dissimilar with respect to the way they are used by their audience. Television is a display medium with external pacing (which means that the medium decides the moment and speed of information transfer), while print media are search media with internal pacing by the reader (Smit, 1999). Media selection has a major influence on advertising success and selection criteria changes with countries and cultures. In china the degree of likeness of print advertising is more than broadcast ones (Chan, 2004). Where as for the traditionalist Indians "entertaining and culture bound" television commercials are preferred (Fam and Waller, 2006). Based on these finding we proposed our third hypothesis.

H3. Consumers will like broadcast media as compared to print media provided with positive perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

INFORMATION

Environmental information may be in two forms, one being that consumers have to be educated to aware him or her of the wide-ranging impact of the product on the environment and the other is customer understanding in the product itself being produced in an environmentally friendly way. Now it is the responsibility of the marketers to publicize that information (D'Souza et al., 2006). It has been proved that customers seek solid and authenticated product information from advertisements to guide their shopping. (Chan et al., 2004). This leads to our fourth hypothesis that:

H4. Consumers will seek more information in environmental advertisements provided with positive perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

RELEVANCE

The ad should be relevant, meaningful, fitted and important to the audience. Relevance is related to the brand/informational properties of the ad. Yang (2004) states two types of relevance Ad–consumer relevance and Brand–consumer relevance. Here we are taking relevance of environmental advertisements with respondents daily life and develop our fifth hypothesis that

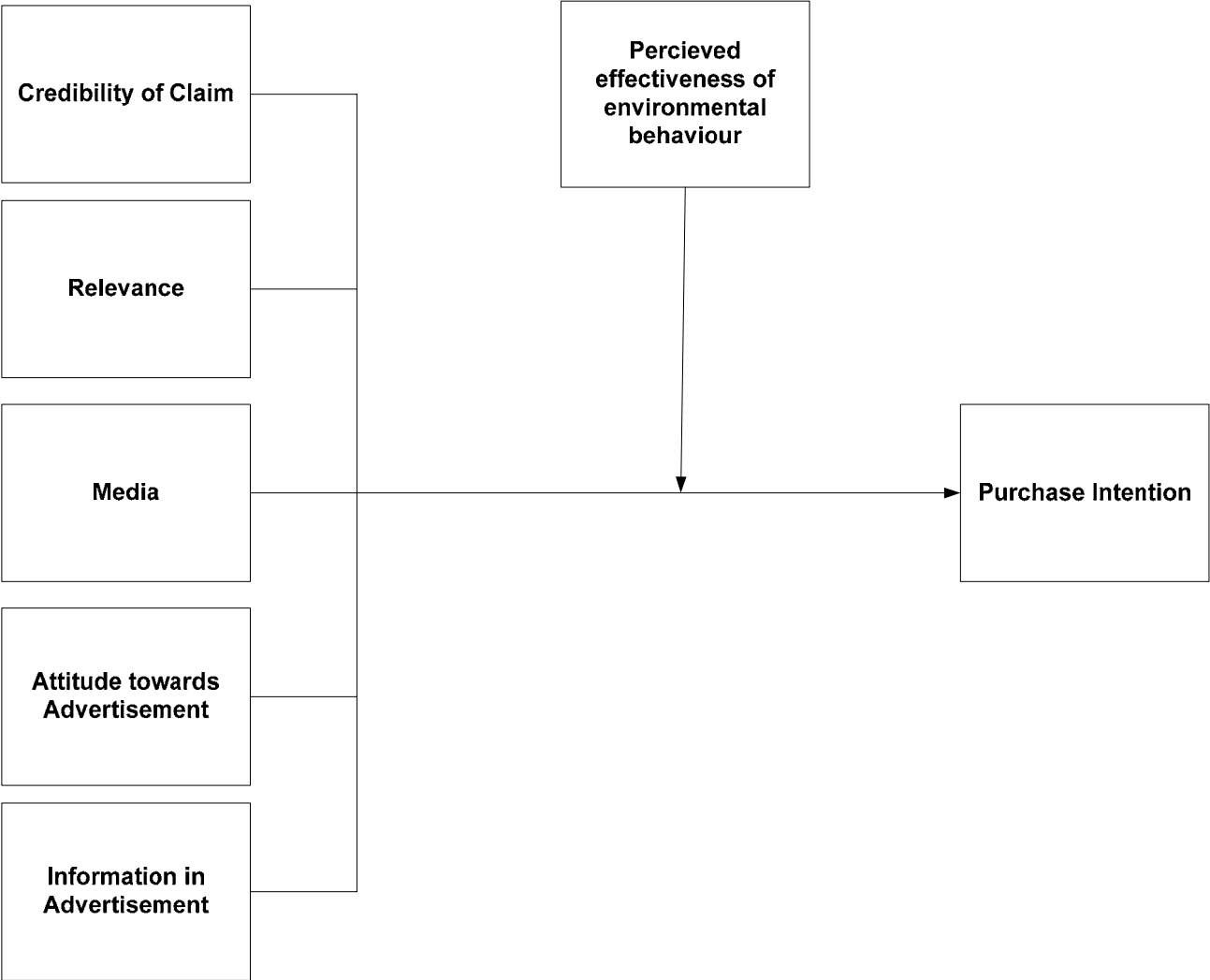
H5. Consumers will respond more positively to environmental advertising having relevance with their daily lives if they have positive perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR

Perceived effectiveness of environmental behavior means the thinking of the respondents that how much he can contribute to the environment through his actions. Literature showed it to be positively related to purchase intention of the respondents (Lee, 2008). This leads to our sixth hypothesis:

H6. Purchase intention of the respondents will increase with increase in perceived effectiveness of their environmental behavior

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METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The study was carried out in different cities of Pakistan including Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad and Wah Cantt. Different educational institutions were selected for the survey. Our sample size consists of 400 questionnaires. The scale was adopted from previous work (Tan and Chai, 2007; Chan, 2004; Teng et al., 2007).

INSTRUMENTS AND MEASURES

Twenty two items (see APPENDIX) will be selected to test the dependency of purchase intention on Attitude towards advertisement, Credibility of claim in environmental advertising, Relevance of advertising with respondent's daily life, Information contained in the advertising and media to be selected for advertising. Perceived effectiveness of environmental behavior is taken as moderator in the relationship. Attitude towards advertising is further divided into attitude towards television advertising and attitude towards print advertising.

Out of 22 items, items 1-3 in appendix measure attitude towards television advertising, Items 4-6 measure attitude towards print advertising, items 7-9 measure relevance of environmental advertisement with respondents' daily life, Items 10-13 measure credibility of claim in advertising, items 14-17 are used to measure purchase intention, Item 18 for information in environmental advertising and items 19-22 will measure perceived effectiveness for environmental behavior. All the items are taken on the 5 Likert scale. 7 control variables are also included in the study i.e. Gender, Marital status, education, income level, country of origin, religion and age of the respondents.

PROCEDURE

The following will be qualifying conditions for our study.

- Respondents should have exposure to advertising of green products on at least one media i.e. print or broadcast.
- The respondents should have at least 12 years of education.

Those who reported previous exposure to green advertising on at least one media will be asked to express their views on environmental advertising (Chan 2004). Subsequently attitude towards advertising will be measured followed by judging the reasons for negative attitudes towards environmental advertising.

In the second step of our study we will find the main reasons for low perceived credibility of environmental claims.

In the third step product of each Independent variable and moderating variable will be found and will be regressed with our dependent variable separately. Afterward each independent variable will be regressed with our dependent variable. After comparing the betas of relationships (with and without moderating variables) we will be able to reject or accept our hypotheses.

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QUESTIONNAIRE



This questionnaire is about an explanatory research namely “Factors in environmental advertising that influence purchase intention”. The information retrieved will be used for research purpose only so unbiased reply to the answers is expected.

Please, carefully read the following and mark the appropriate answer. Your valuable response will be very helpful in this regard.

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried	
Education	<input type="checkbox"/> SSC	<input type="checkbox"/> HSSC	<input type="checkbox"/> Graduation	<input type="checkbox"/> Master	<input type="checkbox"/> M.Phil	<input type="checkbox"/> Ph.D
Income Level (Rs.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 10,000 to 50,000	<input type="checkbox"/> 50,000 to 100,000	<input type="checkbox"/> >100,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	
Country	_____		Religion	_____		
			Age	_____		

Have you any exposure to advertising of green products on print media. Yes No

Have you any exposure to advertising of green products on Broad cast media Yes No

Please specify your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by marking the appropriate response whereas **1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3 is interpreted as a neutral response, 4= agree and 5=strongly agree.**

Overall, I consider television advertising a bad thing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Overall I like television advertising.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I consider television advertising to be very essential	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I consider print (newspaper and magazine) advertising to be very essential	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Overall, I consider print advertising a bad thing	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Overall, I like print advertising.	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The contents of environmental advertisements are of little relevance to daily life	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Environmental advertisements are poorly produced and thus are not attractive	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Environmental advertisements are always exaggerated	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Arguments to substantiate the environmental claim are not convincing or vague	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The source country of the advertised product does not bear an eco-friendly image	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The manufacturer (advertiser) of the advertised product does not bear an eco-friendly image	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The alleged eco-friendliness of the advertised product does not match with the respondent's previous consumption experience	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I would definitely intend to buy those products that are environmental friendly	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I would absolutely consider buying those products that are environmental friendly	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I definitely expect to buy those products that are environmental friendly	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I would absolutely plan to buy the environmental friendly products	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I like those advertisements that contain information regarding the environmental friendly products	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I think if I carry out some pro-environmental behaviors in my everyday life I would contribute a lot to our environment	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
I think my participation in environmental protection would influence my family and friends to participate too	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
The environmental quality of our country will stay the same even if I engage in some pro-environmental behaviors	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Even if I recycle reuse things, the environmental quality of our country will remain as it currently is	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<input type="text" value="4"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>

Thanks for your cooperation