

Relationship among Consumer Values, Green Brand Equity and Green Purchase Intention: A Conceptual Framework

Neha Prakash and Anand Thakur

*Department of Financial Administration, School of Management, Central University of Punjab,
Bathinda (Punjab), India*

nehaprakash028@gmail.com; anand.thakur@cup.edu.in

[Abstract] Over the past few decades, green products have been recognized as a critical source for achieving environmental sustainability. Various factors, including attitude, norms, beliefs, values, and motivations, affect the consumers' behavior. However, the literature is scarce on the relationship between values and branding. The present study proposes an integrated conceptual model to better explain green consumer behavior by exploring consumer values (personal and consumption), green brand equity (trust, satisfaction, image, and loyalty) and green purchase intention. The study adds to the knowledge of green consumption and branding.

[Keywords] consumer values, green purchase intention, green brand equity, economic expansion

Introduction

Since the 1960s, the industrial revolution and rapid economic expansion have resulted in massive overconsumption and degradation of natural resources. This has resulted in environmental issues that endanger the planet's sustainability (Ajibade & Boateng, 2021). Climate change (MacMillan, 2020) and increased health consciousness (Zhang et al., 2018) have become the driving forces that influence how consumers value products. Growing concern about the environment has pushed companies to adopt "green strategies," propelling environmental issues and sustainability as their forefront agendas (Grant, 2008). In addition to concentrating on making a profit, businesses are actively investigating and developing new approaches, ideas, and plans to position their green brands in the minds of consumers and remain competitive in the marketplace. They are looking into ways they may use to make their products more environmentally friendly to increase brand equity (Mehraj & Qureshi, 2021) and increase the likelihood that customers will purchase.

To understand the consumers' desires, brand managers need to understand the behavioral perspectives (e.g., beliefs and values). Therefore, the best approach for comprehending green marketing involves connecting values with green brands (Ha, 2021). Integrating the behavioral aspects with branding may help understand the role of consumer values and consumers' perception of green brands (Butt et al., 2017). An understanding of values and green brand concepts, including green trust (GT), green satisfaction (GS), green brand image (GBI), and green loyalty (GL), could provide marketing managers with a strategic advantage in today's volatile marketplace. As a result, we need to consider variables like consumer values (CVs), green brand equity (GBE), and green purchase intent (GPI) together.

Literature Review

Consumer Values

Values are now widely acknowledged as the fundamental component of marketing (Tanrikulu, 2021). People have values shaped by their upbringing and the experiences they have had throughout their lives. These values affect people's decisions, behavior, and cognitive processes (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1968;

Weber, 2017). It refers to the type of social cognition that helps people adapt to their surroundings (Homer & Kahle, 1988). Values held by individuals have a significant impact on the ecologically friendly products that are purchased (Burgess, 1992). CVs are of two types, personal values and consumption values. Both the value types are essential to investigate as they may influence the GPI.

Rokeach (1973, p. 5) provides the following definition for the term “values”: “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A value system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance.” According to Schwartz (1992, p. 21), the term “values” refers to a “desirable trans-situational goal varying in importance, which serves as a guiding principle in the life of a person or other social entity.” Schwartz’s Value Survey (SVS) specified ten core personal values rooted in universal human needs (Schwartz, 1992). Based on Schwartz’s values, Stern (2000) developed the concepts of unique values in pro-environmental behavior: “altruistic, biospheric, and egoistic.” According to the “Value-Belief-Norm theory” (VBN), personal values and beliefs are critical motivators of pro-environmental behavior (Ha, 2021). Therefore, if a brand aligns with consumers’ values, they may view it as beneficial (Dibley & Baker, 2003) and purchase them.

Consumption values are different from personal values. Consumption values refer to “the degree to which the level of consumer need is met by the total evaluation of consumers’ net utility or satisfaction related to a product” (Tanrikulu, 2021, p. 2). It explains why people buy a particular product, why they choose a certain brand, and what factors influence their purchasing decisions (Mahmud & Abdul-Talib, 2022). Consumption value is a multidimensional method that analyses value from a behavioural standpoint and presents a typology of perceived value (Tanrikulu, 2021). Consumption values consist of certain values: “Functional, Social, Emotional, Epistemic, and Conditional.” The “Theory of Consumption Values” (TCV) recognized the significance of multiple consumption values in consumer choice through these five values. Any or all of the consumption values may have a role in shaping consumers’ preferences for particular brands and their purchase intention.

Green Brand Equity

“Brand equity” is the value a company receives from its name and the associations that affect stakeholder behaviour (Weller & Streller, 2019). Considering the brand’s equity, Chen (2010) presented a novel concept called “green brand equity.” According to Górska-Warsewicz et al. (2021), GBE is “a set of consumer perceptions and actions related to a brand’s environmental problems that improve its usefulness and help it attain greater value.” In this view, GBE emphasizes consumers’ feelings and attitudes regarding green brands (Li et al., 2019). GBE is a relatively new concept in the marketing literature and offers scope for exploring its impact on GPI. Several studies, such as Javed et al. (2020), Kang and Hur (2012), and Lee and Chen (2019), have identified the elements of GBE. The various branding literature is unclear about how managers might use brand equity structures to gauge and enhance the effectiveness of different GBE elements. Indeed, the academic debate is inconclusive about the conceptual foundations of the measures of brand equity; the present article discovered four novel dimensions of GBE, namely GBI, GS, GT, and GL, through the literature review.

Green Purchase Intention

Purchase intention denotes the probability that a consumer will purchase a product or service. It is “the likelihood that an individual will purchase a particular product based on the interaction between customer

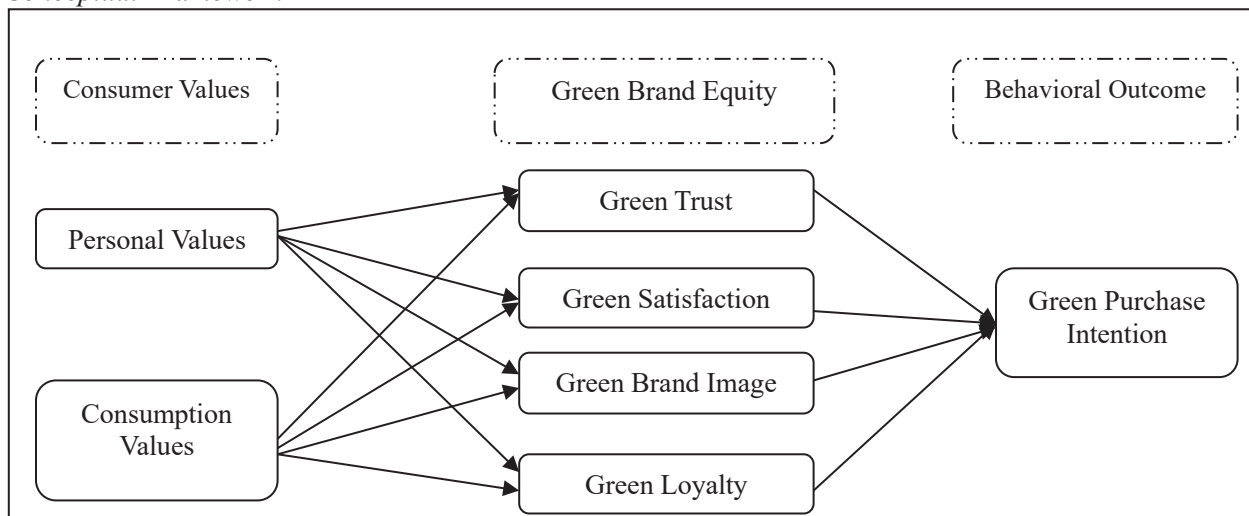
needs, attitude and perception towards the product or brand” (Beneke et al., 2016, p.176). In a similar vein, the term GPI represents the likelihood that customers will make a purchase of environmentally friendly products in the near or distant future. A higher intention to purchase equals a higher possibility of the targeted behavior (Ajzen, 1991). GPI is a complicated term influenced by various variables, like “green” customer attributes (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004) as well as brand-related aspects, such as perceived quality, brand awareness, product features, pricing, eco-labels, and others (Weisstein et al., 2014). Understanding green purchase intention is important for green brands as it can help them predict future sales and identify potential areas for growth.

Based on the reviewed literature, the current study provides a conceptual framework that integrates CVs (personal and consumption), GBE (GT, GS, GBI, GL) and GPI. The study seeks to enhance the understanding of green consumer behavior by acknowledging the integrated role of behavioral and branding perspectives.

Conceptual Framework

Through exploratory research, the present study provides a framework for CVs, GBE and GPI. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Discussion

Relationship between Consumer (Personal) Values and Green Brand Equity

Consumers’ purchases and consumption of environmentally friendly products are influenced by their values because they believe doing so contributes to the common good (Han, 2015). Consumers will trust environmentally responsible firms if they can meet their values (Butt et al., 2017). Consumers’ personal values affect their pro-environmental behavior (Stern, 2000). They have more knowledge and are more conscious of the environmental prevention efforts taken by businesses (Tortosa-Edo et al., 2014). Individual characteristics and values shape a person’s trust in an organization, which affects their decisions (Chrysochoidis et al., 2009). Prior studies have looked at the faith, but not many have examined how

personal values play a role in building trust (Pirson et al., 2017). As a result, the present article posits that GT mediates the association between personal values and consumers' intentions to make a green purchase.

In order to ensure long-term success, brand owners need to ensure that their brand positioning is relevant and appealing to their target audiences (Dibley & Baker, 2003). When consumers associate a brand with favorable environmental feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and actions, that brand is more likely to remain in their minds (Butt et al., 2017; Chen, 2008). Green brands' eco-friendly features may help customers meet their environmental values (Butt et al., 2017). Environmentally conscious consumers assume that eco-friendly companies with positive images allow them to associate their environmental values (Butt et al., 2017). According to the image congruence theory, the desire for consumers to keep and improve their self-concepts drives their product choices (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Ha, 2021). It will be relevant to propose an association between consumers' values towards purchase intention of the green product mediated by the GBI.

Various scholars elucidated the link between values and satisfaction (Omigie et al., 2020). Consumers feel highly satisfied with a brand if they believe it is fulfilling their personal values. Prior studies have analyzed the impact of one's values on satisfaction in higher education (e.g., Arambewela & Hall, 2011) and luxury hotels (e.g., Cam Le et al., 2021). In services marketing, various scholars have suggested that personal values are essential to satisfaction (Oliver 1996). Based on the prior literature, the present study posits an association between personal values and GS.

Personal values influence and direct consumers' behaviors following the priority that citizens of the society pay to them. Personal values are crucial in explaining consumer behavior (Lages & Fernandes, 2005). As a result, it is a reasonable assumption that one's values might play some role in the explanation of customer loyalty, given that consumer loyalty is associated with behavioral challenges (Jones & Taylor, 2007). Few studies have confirmed a significant relationship between them in banking, airlines, petrol stations, and other services (e.g., Hau & Thuy, 2012; Salciuviene et al., 2009). Even though they appear to be related, very few researchers have examined this connection in green marketing. Therefore, the present study proposes a relationship between personal values and GL.

Relationship between Consumer (Consumption) Values and Green Brand Equity

Consumption values increase confidence in green brands and products (Chen & Chang, 2012; Eid, 2011). GT significantly mediated the effect between consumption values and GPI (Amin & Tarun, 2020; Zaidi et al., 2019). Prior studies show that social value (Khare & Pandey, 2017), emotional value (Karjaluo et al., 2021; Shuhaiber, 2020), conditional value (Chakraborty et al., 2022), and epistemic value (Jamrozy & Lawonk, 2017) significantly influence trust. Hence, the study proposes a positive influence of consumption values on GT.

Consumption values are a significant predictor of satisfaction in previous research (Carlson et al., 2015; Chen, 2010; Lam et al., 2016). The existing literature on consumption value confirms that it has been widely acknowledged as a reliable predictor of satisfaction (Ryu & Han, 2009). According to Chan et al. (2015), customers who receive more benefits report a higher degree of happiness, which may be equated to the amount of pleasure they experience. Prebensen and Xie (2017) demonstrate that benefits positively impact satisfaction and consumer behavior. Given this, the present study proposes that consumption values influence GS.

According to Hartmann et al. (2005), the most significant effects on green brand positioning result from functional and emotional compensation benefits. The studies that have been done so far have looked

at GBI based on the “Associative Network Memory Theory,” which helps explain factors like green brand preference, trust, loyalty, and corporate image (Bashir et al., 2020). To explain green brand loyalty, functional and emotional benefits have been identified as the antecedent of GBI (Lin et al., 2017). Given the prior literature, the present study proposes that consumption values influence the GBI.

Prior studies have demonstrated that consumption values favorably influence customer loyalty (Eid, 2015; Suki, 2016; Wang et al., 2017). These values significantly influence purchase intentions (Brady & Robertson, 1999). Although several studies have been conducted on loyalty, there is a paucity of pertinent research in green marketing that investigates the connection between values and commitment (Ahn & Kwon, 2020). Hence, the present study posits that consumption values significantly influence GL.

PI: CV (Personal and Consumption) influence the GBE dimensions (GT, GS, GBI and GL).

Relationship between Green Brand Equity and Green Purchase Intention

Trust is a belief that one party's actions will satisfy another party's expectations. As a result, building trust is essential to reducing business risk (Anderson & Narus, 1990). GT is necessary for the green brand-consumer relationship because consumers are skeptical of companies' claims of environmental responsibility in the wake of greenwashing (Chen & Chang, 2013). Customers' faith in the green market may suffer if green brands are deceitful about their products, which would be bad for their business (Chen et al., 2014; Ha & Trinh, 2021). Previous studies have shown that GT is a critical component of GBE (Akturan, 2018; Ha, 2020). Furthermore, the intention to buy green products is significantly predicted by GT (Amin & Tarun, 2020; Doszhanov & Ahmad, 2015). The current study suggests a link between GT and GPI in green marketing.

When consumers decide to purchase green products, they have certain expectations regarding the product's characteristics, quality, and other aspects; in other words, they anticipate receiving an eco-friendly product of greater value (Chen & Lee, 2015; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2004). When a brand or product satisfies a consumer's wants and goals, the consumer is more likely to be satisfied, enhancing their delightfulness (Olsen, 2002). A satisfied customer will have a strong and positive association with the brand. As a result, it becomes crucial for brands to meet consumers' expectations of green products or services. Previous literature certifies that GS influences GBE (Chen, 2010; Kang & Hur, 2012) and GPI (Gil & Jacob, 2018; Han & Kim, 2010). It will be pertinent to propose the influence of GS on GPI.

Organizational success in building a “green” brand image depends on the extent to which it can harness customers' positive feelings, emotions, attitudes and behavior about the environment and direct them to the company's products and services (Chen, 2010; Chen & Huang, 2021). Several studies have documented the significance of brand image in establishing brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Martenson, 2007). Prior studies demonstrate that brand image positively influences the customer's purchase behavior and intentions (Alia & Deshmukh, 2022). Customers are more likely to buy a company's items if they believe its brand image is better (Tariq et al., 2013). Likewise, GBI influences GPI (Chen et al., 2020). Thus, the present article postulates that GBI influences GPI.

Previous studies have shown that customer loyalty positively correlates with purchase behavior (Huo et al., 2022; Yaseen & Mazahir, 2019). Customers who consistently buy from a company are less likely to be aware of the goods and services offered by rival companies because they recognize the differentiated value of the brand. A company is seen in a more favorable light by loyal consumers than customers who are not loyal or switch companies frequently (Wu et al., 2021). Although there hasn't been much investigation into the relationship as mentioned above in the past, there is a potential to uncover a

connection between the two (Huo et al., 2022). As a result, the study proposes that GL considerably influences GPI.

P2: GBE dimensions (GT, GS, GBI, GL) positively influence the GPI.

Conclusion & Future Research Direction

Due to shifting consumer preferences, several businesses offering products and services are implementing green marketing strategies. These eco-friendly marketing strategies draw in customers who care about the environment and give marketers a sustainable business opportunity. It enables businesses to enter new markets, increasing profits and competitive advantages (Chen, 2010). The present study derives from the CV, GBE, and GPI literature. The study combined existing literature from various domains into a comprehensive framework that aims to represent brand equity in a more realistic, multi-attribute manner. The model proposes that CV (personal and consumption) influences GBE, which further affects the purchase intention for green products. When compared to just one value (either personal values or consumption values), a person's complete "value system" can provide marketers with a more in-depth understanding of the motivations that guide each individual's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Sivapalan et al., 2021). Understanding CVs may help the brands to make a good image, foster trust, and eventually win customer loyalty and increase purchases. By including the relationship of CV in the broader framework of GBE, marketers may create effective green strategies.

Additionally, future studies may be conducted empirically based on the given conceptual framework. Empirical findings may help marketers understand the factors that influence or deter consumers from making green purchases. Marketers may find fresh opportunities to add value and insights about how to tailor their offerings to different consumer segments.

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