

Factors Affecting Recycling Intention: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Pollution and resource scarcity are critical obstacles to the sustainable development of society. Recycling Management has been an important concern for governments during the last three decades, both nationally for the formulation of policy and locally for the implementation of recycling operations. This paper is an attempt to describe the factors affecting the recycling intention of consumers and an individual's self-commitment to engage in recycling behavior. The results revealed that perceived behavioral control has little influence on one's intention to engage in recycling practices while subjective norms and attitudes have a favorable effect on one's intention to recycle. It will provide valuable suggestions to policymakers for Sustainable Development and marketers to develop their marketing campaigns.

Keywords- Intention, Attitude, Subjective norms, Perceived behavioral control, Recycling behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Climate change is one of the most serious problems confronting the planet (Hameed et al., 2021). Key regions affected by environmental issues are underdeveloped and developing countries. The most serious worry for the entire world nowadays is environmental degradation because according to the "Global Climate Risk Index" the air quality of countries like China, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh is the poorest (WEF, 2023). It all began shortly after the Second World War when the Second Industrial Revolution began. It also gave birth to the consumerism. After this, world leaders began collaborating in the 1970s to disperse the elements driving environmental damage. The concept of "Green Marketing" was introduced in 1990.

Businesses began incorporating pro-environmental characteristics to meet the increasing demand from consumers for recycled products (McDaniel et al., 1993). However, it has become more important for consumers to have sufficient information about their environment to govern the current environmental changes in their surroundings. New-generation consumers are more interested in adopting sustainable lifestyles (Dabija and Bejan, 2019). They prefer green products and services that promote social responsibility and environmental protection.

Recently, a significant movement in the field of eco-friendly marketing has shifted the emphasis to other pro-environmental practices. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the complicated connection between someone's consuming habits and surroundings (Hameed & Khan, 2020). Regardless of these efforts, expected outcomes from both consumers and businesses have yet to be seen. The circular economy (CE), which refers to reuse, recycling, and reduction, is one approach to moving toward sustainable development (Ghisellini et al., 2015; Grafstrom and Aasma, 2021). Recycling has regained attention in the past few years and is being discussed and promoted politically. However, the global economy still has to go a long way from putting CE into action.

Recycling is one of the most prevalent 3R techniques (Ghisellini et al., 2015). In 2015, "17 Sustainable Development Goals", which included measures like diminishing global hunger and poverty were released by United Nations. Goal 12 targets sustainable production and consumption which emphasize reducing ecological footprint through effective utilization of resources by adopting recycling (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). In recent years, well-known firms like Adidas, Apple, etc. have developed recycling initiatives to collect recyclable material.

As per the research of the World Bank (2018), Asia contributes approximately 23% of global garbage each year. Similarly, it is reported that recycling recovers more than thirty-three percent of waste in developed nations, but in the case of developing countries, it is only 4% (EPA, 2019). Lack of understanding is an important reason for not implementing a suitable recycling system. The fundamental difficulty is that most households are unaware of the technique to properly dispose of their solid trash. Recycling is a long-term attempt to reduce human environmental consequences that plays an important role in the waste management hierarchy (Chen and Tung, 2009). Psychological research has been considered to be preferable to other behavioral theories for understanding the recycling behavior of consumers. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was thoroughly accepted as an excellent model for understanding recycling behavior in this kind of research (Ofstad et al., 2017).

OBJECTIVES

Much research has been carried out in recent years to find out what variables affect purchase intentions for environment-friendly goods as a whole (Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas, 2020; Testa et al., 2021). While recycled materials can be considered sustainable, not much is known about the broad variables encouraging recycling intentions. This study's main goal is to identify the factors that affect consumers' intentions and behaviors related to recycling.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is a comprehensive literature review that focuses on existing literature on factors affecting recycling intention. The scope of the review included research articles from high-quality journals and reputable databases such as Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Springer, Google Scholar, and Research Gate that focus on constructs of recycling intention.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To gain deeper insight about this concept various national and international studies have been evaluated. A literature review is classified into 4 sections, the first section is about recycling intention, the second section deals with attitude, the third section is about subjective norms and the fourth section will describe Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). A brief review of the relevant literature regarding the above is given under

Recycling Intention

Recycling intention is defined as the commitment of an individual to recycle (Park & Ha, 2014). The dominant theory in this field is the "Theory of Planned Behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991). He also agreed that The Theory of Planned Behavior is adaptable and open to the addition of new factors if they contribute much to the explanation. When people make decisions, they worry about both environmental and individual consequences. Environmental implications are the effects of specific activities, such as using refillable containers, which minimize waste and do not harm the environment (Follows and Jobber, 2000). Individual consequences, on the other hand, are the personal costs and rewards of taking action, like the time invested in distinguishing recyclable materials and the money saved by reducing the consumption of energy. Individuals are more likely to recycle when people around them support it.

Attitude

"Attitude" is an overall assessment of a human being that his or her particular conduct is positive or negative (Ajzen, 1991; Ramayah et al., 2012). Numerous research has discovered numerous elements that impact attitudes toward recycling and the attitude of the consumer is usually defined as favorable or unfavorable toward an object and when used to the environment, this term refers to a consumer's environmental attitude (Islam, 2021). It implies that an individual's personal desirability and belief influence his purpose and action (Waris and Hameed, 2021). According to these arguments, recycling-specific beliefs predict recycling intentions better than universal environmental attitudes. Hutahaean and Kurnia (2021) discovered that non-demographic factors such as perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental knowledge, perceived product benefit, altruism, and collectivism influence attitudes toward green products. Singhal and Malik (2018) studied that age and education levels did not affect attitudes toward "green cosmetic products," but income level did.

The attitude of individuals towards the environment has a strong connection with recycling. Attitudes greatly influence behavior, thus assessing attitudes is critical (Otto et al., 2019). Environmental attitude is defined by Liu et al. (2020) as the value of individual judgment toward environmental conservation. Environmental attitude is defined by Cai et al. (2020) as a proclivity to learn and respond consistently in favor of or against the environment. Individual attitudes are influenced by psychological elements like personal values, and social groupings (Rosa & Collado, 2019). Individuals will feel concerned about issues of the environment such as pollution, which will damage their family, health, and quality of life. Some studies discovered a weak relationship (Izhar et al., 2022),

while others have discovered a favorable association between attitude and environmental behavior (Liu et al.,2020).

Measuring attitude should encompass both experiential and instrumental components. The experiential form of attitude factor is derived from consumer experiences with products, according to Voss et al., (2003). According to Ajzen and Driver (1992), while exploring attitudes toward conduct, the instrumental dimension needs to be considered in addition to the dynamic dimension. Indeed, utilitarian aims (i.e., instrumental) are another factor that motivates consumers to make purchases.

Instrumental attitude is the degree to which a product influences consumer behavior. Previous recycling research explored how recycling can rescue energy and the environment to analyze the instrumental attitude from the utilitarian perspective (Chen & Tung, 2009; Davies et al., 2002). The items mostly concentrate on the purposes and implications of recycling activities.

Subjective Norms

"Subjective norms" are the viewpoints of friends, family members, or peers on an individual's adoption of prescribed standards (Khan et al., 2019). Subjective norms are one's feelings about whether or not to engage in a specific activity in response to social pressure (Ajzen,1991). Different research studies have explored and proven the association between "subjective norms and intention" (Kumar, 2019; Keat et al., 2011).

Mannetti et al. (2004) analyzed that subjective norms have a poor association with recycling intention finding was consistent with earlier research, such as Armitage and Conner's (2001) meta-analytic review of 185 publications indicating subjective norms to be the TPB model's worst predictor. Fornara et al. (2011), on the other hand, reported that numerous social norms, such as home garbage recycling, influence place-related behavior, and descriptive norms were strong predictors of the desired environmentally friendly conduct. Social pressure from individuals may promote recycling intention as a positive commitment in exchange for acceptance from society without legal enforcement (Tudor et al., 2007). Consumers will try to behave if they are aware that others feel she or he should recycle (Alhamad & Donyai, 2020).

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Perceived behavioral control is the ability of an individual to execute a particular behavior (Ajzen,1991). It demonstrates confidence and control of people in overcoming potential barriers when doing a specific behavior. This concept is related to the concept of self-efficacy, which denotes one's view of one's capacity to perform specific behavior (Kumar,2019; Ramayah et al., 2012). Stoeva and Alriksson (2017) found that insufficient facilities for trash recycling led to a poor association of perceived behavioral control and, as a result, a decrease in household contribution to recycling activities. The most significant barriers to recycling, according to several studies, are few facilities to recycle, limited time, and long distances between recycling hubs. (Wang et al.,2011,2016). When it comes to an individual's recycling behavior, the expense of recycling, the accessibility of space, and the speed with which recycling-related tasks can be completed count the most (Sidique et al.,2010). PBC has been proposed to be a good predictor of customers' home recycling intentions in developing countries (Kianpour et al., 2017).

Earlier research has shown that perceived behavioral control encourages people to recycle household waste (Tudor, 2007; Alhamad & Donyai, 2020; Mitkidis et al., 2020). Previous ecological behavior field investigations have found that PBC predicts pro-environmental behavioral intentions and self-reported behaviors (Davis et al., 2009). Carrus et al. (2008) tested an extension of TPB, that is the model of goal-directed behavior, using an Italian survey and found that PBC linked marginally but strongly to engagement in home recycling ($r = .44$). Thus, when facilities were not considered to be inadequate the PBC-intention association was substantially stronger. PBC, on the other hand, has not always been a strong independent predictor of recycling intentions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Theoretical grounding is built based on the well-supported "Theory of Planned Behavior" (TPB) to predict customers' recycling intention and behavior. As a result, the model includes TPB constructs such as "attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control". Many studies indicate that "perceived behavioral control" has little influence on one's intention to engage in recycling practices. Recycling intention is positively and significantly influenced by attitude and subjective norms, which in turn drive consumer recycling habits.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Primarily Marketers and Policymakers will benefit from this research since it allows them to streamline their marketing methods by executing big awareness campaigns. However, advertisers are advised to create advertisements that target customers' attitudes; In this manner, customers can understand the advantages of raising

their effectiveness level, leading to the creation of a more positive attitude in society. Secondly, this paper possesses implications for developing-country businesses to better understand the customers they serve. It is advised that they address customer problems to obtain the most competitive advantages inside the sector.

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