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Environmental Marketing Policy to Enhance Customers' Environmental Awareness

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Abstract

Purpose: Increased awareness of the environment is essential, since the general health of people and the global economy is largely dependent on the health of the environment. The purpose of this study is to increase customer awareness and also to ensure that businesses enlighten their customers on how to act in an environmentally friendly manner, which can be done, for instance, through associations. **Research design, data and methodology:** Scant research is available regarding what elements of marketing strategy should be applied in an environmental plan to increase customer awareness. For this reason, this study suggests a specific marketing policy that conveys several strategies for practitioners who focus on successful environmental plans for their organizations. **Results:** The prior literature suggests that public education, mass media, campaign publications, and electronic networking, which are becoming more common today, can be used as platforms for conveying environmental messages that will increase environmental awareness among customers. **Conclusions:** Organizations can use health and safety training to ensure that customers are aware of the environment. Training programs by companies that point more to the environment can make customers aware of the environment and help them adopt activities that show respect to the environment.

Keywords : Environmental Awareness, Marketing Strategy, Behavior Change Model

JEL Classification Codes : M31, Q56, R11

1. Introduction

For multiple centuries, the environment has provided human beings and other many organisms with habitation. However, human beings possess numerous needs and wants, which result in them devising multiple ways to survive and adapt, and some of the strategies are harmful to the environment. It always occurs that human needs and wants are more than environmental or natural resources, which means that people always end up straining the environment (Nikkheslat et al., 2012). Most of the strategies, and

particular technological ones, result in direct and indirect consequences to the immediate environment and its consequent degradation. A large proportion of the environmental problems that the world is experiencing today are as a result of individual actions, personal decisions by consumers, as well as the activities that small and large business engages in. For this reason, the environmental awareness of people or customers in business contexts must be enhanced. This enhancement results in better decision making by consumers, more informed actions, as well as business' limitation or total removal of activities that can harm the environment (Tuczek, Castka, & Wakolbinger, 2018).

Increased awareness of the environment is essential since the general health of people and the global economy is largely dependent on the health of the environment. As a result, there is an immediate need for people and businesses to comprehend the different causes, patterns, connections, as well as the implications of environmental degradation. In

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this 21st century, this understanding cannot be done in any other better way apart from using education regarding the environment (Gkargkavouzi, Halkos & Matsiori, 2019). In this line of education, one crucial instrument that is most appropriate to achieve this vital feat of customer awareness is the use of environmental and business theories.

The application of theories to enhance customer's environmental awareness is vital since theories are a systematic method of understanding the behaviors of people or things, events that occur, as well as variable situations like it is the common case with the environment. Additionally, the environmental and behavioral theories will be used to give specific relationships among the different variables of the environment (Ruseva et al., 2019). In this regard, multiple theories have been used to comprehend the behaviors of human beings in the environment and how they can be influenced to change, for instance, through increasing their awareness. The use of these theories further enhances the comprehension of the reasons that make people take part in variable behaviors that have effects on the environment. Precisely, the theories reviewed and ones that can be used to enhance customer awareness on the environment include both business theories and environmental theories (Batel et al., 2016). Environmental theories that can be used for this awareness are the behavioral change model, the theory of environmentally responsible behavior, and the reasoned action theory.

These theories have one thing in common, which is to ensure that people and customers in a business context act in an environmentally responsible manner (Chen, 2020). Additionally, business theories can also be used for the same purpose; increasing customer awareness, and they include the consistency theory and the elaboration likelihood theory. The purpose of these theories is to ensure businesses enlighten their customers on how to act in an environmentally friendly manner, which can be done, for instance, through associations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Behavioral Change Model

To enhance customer environmental awareness, one of the most applicable theories that can be used is the behavioral change mode. The reasoning behind this theory was directly associated to the proposition that if people are better enlightened, their awareness of environmental problems would equally be increased and as a result, they would have more motivation to behave in an environmentally responsible manner (Liang, Kee & Henderson, 2018). In other words, increased knowledge to

customers results in them exhibiting attitudes that are more friendly to the environment, thus resulting in more responsible environmental actions.

The connection of increased knowledge, awareness, and action is represented in the figure



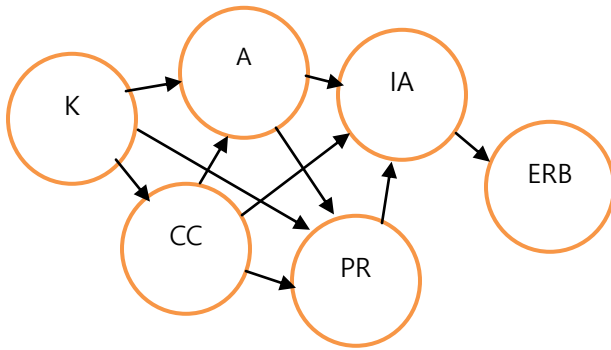
Figure 1: Essential Marketing Policy for Improving EA

Despite that this model is quite simplistic in the relation that it exhibits between knowledge, awareness or attitudes, and action on the environment, it does provide an essential foundation from which any other possible relationships may exist regarding environmental knowledge awareness as well as attitude and their translation to people acting or failing to act in a particular way. It is important to note that it is not always that a piece of useful knowledge and awareness of the environment results in sustainable environmental behavior. In contrast, it is not always that little or no awareness of the environment results in poor practices on the environment. Other aspects also influence how people behave on the environment, such as different intentions, personal responsibility, as well as their locus of control (Todaro et al., 2020). In other words, reality can be studied through this theory, but more needs to be done to ensure increased environmental awareness results in better environmental conservation.

2.2. Environmentally Responsible Behavior

The prior study argued that through people possessing an intention to act in a particular manner, it influences their environmentally responsible behavior (Gkargkavouzi, Halkos & Matsiori, 2019). This theory highlights several essential variables that determine whether people adopt a particular behavior or not. These variables are intention to act, attitudes, locus of control, sense of personal responsibility, as well as knowledge. According to this theory, the internal control centre of a human being influences a lot of their intention to act, which in turn determines how environmentally responsible the individual will be. Similarly, this theory highlights the relationship that exists between internal control centre, intention to act, and people's attitudes (Batel et al., 2016). The three authors assert that the internal control centre has a direct effect on the attitudes held by an individual, which can subsequently result in their improved intention to act and improved behavior on the environment. As a result, the main aim of

this theory is to improve the existing interactions between the different parameters that influence a person's behavior as opposed to considering a single attribute like awareness only. The following (figure 2) is a representation of this theory in diagrammatical form:



K – Knowledge, A – Attitudes, CC – Control Centre,
IA – Intention of Acting, PR – Personal Responsibility,
ERB – Environmentally Responsible Behavior

Figure 2: Representation of the theory in diagrammatical form

In processes of managing waste, there is no single factor that can be deemed as being responsible for the behaviors that people exhibit. For instance, some people pile up waste in particular places regardless of regulations that are set by authorities to prohibit such acts. It can be noted, however, that there are people who do it at night time since no law enforcers can see them. There are also people who pile up waste inappropriately when they see others doing it. In other words, people do not act in an environmentally friendly manner just because they are knowledgeable and aware; other factors also influence it (Okada, Tamaki & Managi, 2019). These are the factors that are discussed as an internal control centre, intention to act, and attitudes, among others.

2.3. Reasoned or Responsible Action Theory

Ajzen and Fishbein initialized this theory, and it makes the assumption that the behavior of human beings is bound on the aspect of rational thought (MacDonald, Milfont & Gavin, 2016). This theory is constructed based on the principle of compatibility, which entails the assertion that attitudes are a reflection of behavior only to the extent that both of them refer to the same valued outcome state. In this regard, this theory proposes that the intention to act directly affects behavior, which can be predicted using behavior. There are also factors that shape attitudes, and they include beliefs as well as situations (Gkargkavouzi, Halkos & Matsiori, 2019). For instance, this theory is reflected when a person may have a good intention to conserve the

environment, but they are not able to translate their intention into behavior due to issues such as little or no confidence as well as the unfavorable situation. This theory provides a good basis to understand why people do not always act to favor their environment, despite them having the intentions to do it, for instance, as they have no control over their good intentions. In this manner, good intentions to conserve the environment are not enough to propel good action.

2.4. Consistency Theory

Different from the above theories, this is a business or marketing theory, and it states that whenever there is a synergy and belief of the inner systems of human beings, they are able to find comfort and contentment (Ferrero-Ferrero, Fernández-Izquierdo & Muñoz-Torres, 2016). The inner systems include beliefs, values, as well as attitudes. When things or situations fall out of place, it leads to the discomfort of the cognitive dissonance and human desire to regain any lost balance. This theory is quite essential, but its most vital aspect is that people have a strong need to believe in their consistency with social norms (Zhou & Xu, 2017). However, the belief of this consistency comes from the support of the internal systems that control the decisions that a person makes. In other words, when the systems do not support each other, a person is likely to choose a social norm or action and risk any social dissonance as they fear being socially excluded (Li, Wang & Luo, 2020).

For instance, when a person's belief, values, and attitudes are not in support of each other, a person can likely follow the norm of not conserving the environment if it is the typical situation. It is essential for businesses to be aware of this concept since understanding it helps them to persuade their customers on how to act in an environmentally friendly manner without the need to fit in what others are doing if it is not friendly to the environment. Customers who are made aware of this theory are, therefore, enlightened to act in an environmentally friendly manner without the need for any social association. In other words, if the standard norm is to harm the environment, a consistent person will conserve it from their inner self-desires.

2.5. Elaboration Likelihood Theory

Ajzen Like the consistency theory, this is also a marketing theory that can be used to increase the awareness of customers regarding the environment. According to this theory, there are generally two methods that can be used for persuasion (MacDonald, Milfont & Gavin, 2016). The first one is the central route, which entails a change of attitude that originates from a purposeful evaluation that is also

known as elaboration. Away from the first method, the second one is known as the peripheral route. The second method or the peripheral route is one that involves little to no elaboration, which also means that the association causes a change of attitude as opposed to inference (Powell et al., 2018).

Through an understanding of these two means of persuasion, people are able to have a more critical focus on how their actions are an establishment of one of the two means. As a result, change is created within customers, which also results in persuasion to action. For instance, through the peripheral route, the association is the common cause of action, which means that customers are likely to act in a way that others are also acting. As a result, education and awareness are essential here to ensure that the associations held by customers are positive how they perceive the environment and conserve it.

3. Suggestions for Increasing Customers' EA

Environmental awareness includes the ability to understand the delicateness of our environment and the importance of protecting it. Environmental awareness is the ideology that involves the necessity and responsibility given to humans to protect, respect, and preserve the natural surrounding from afflictions caused by the same humans. Before becoming aware of the environment, it is important to consider some of the issues affecting it. Some of the environmental issues include; oil drilling, deforestation, and the production of plastic goods. Oil drilling is a major cause of environmental destruction. It poisons marine life, suffocates the earth, and increases atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, which causes global warming and ocean acidification. Deforestation is cutting down forests for industrial benefits such as oil mining, farming, and paper-based products. Deforestation results in the extinction of wildlife and biodiversity as it threatens the existence of species. Lastly, the production of plastic goods creates large hips of waste made of plastics. This waste ends up in both land and water, thus creating an environment that inhibits humans' and animals' existence (Ting et al., 2019). Therefore, the ways that can be used to improve the awareness of customers regarding their environment should consider some of these environmental issues.

Different stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, business institutions, and educational institutions, play a key role in raising environmental awareness. The two main reasons that make these stakeholders succeed in improving customers' environmental awareness are by engaging them in establishing environmental policies and engaging them in a sustainable management plan. Public education is one of

the main ways that has shown success in raising environmental awareness. It is the method that involves transferring of ideas and relationships that concern the environment. Public education helps raise environmental awareness as it involves translating the technical language of natural science to a non-scientific language that is easily understood. Public education is also done in a way that is entertaining and interesting to the public. Public education can be done in different ways to improve environmental awareness among customers.

Public education can be directed to any audience, but in most cases, it is done in programs that target adult audiences; people who can make decisions and their behavior affect the current environment. Awareness campaigns involve a series of events that are designed in a manner that will bring awareness of the issue. According to Jin et al. (2016), it is a step by step process that has established goals, targets audiences, determines the information to be provided, special education techniques to be used, how to implement the actions, and evaluation of results. While using awareness campaigns to improve customers' environmental awareness, it is important to establish goals that hope to accomplish the mission of addressing environmental problems and how to solve them. Also, the selection of information is a factor to consider ensuring that the target audience can comprehend and practice it. The selection of information should include the use of simple words and facts concerning the issue. All the information to be disseminated in an awareness campaign should capture the attention of the target customers (Gast, Gundolf & Cesinger, 2017). Besides, the selection of channels to be used as an effective campaign aims at taking the message to the people other than expecting the people to come and hear it. Therefore, it is essential to identify the tool that will reach the target audience with ease.

Under the tools of communication, different tools can be used to improve customer environmental awareness. According to Gast, Gundolf and Cesinger (2017), mass media that include local televisions, radio coverage, and newspapers is one of the ways that can be used as a tool to convey the message concerning environmental awareness. The fact that the environment is a topic that has captured the attention of many around the globe helps in generating media coverage. It is assumed that media can boost public awareness because almost every individual has access to two media platforms. Therefore, the use of mass media can be used to improve customers' environmental awareness (Heiskanen, 2005). While using the media to create environmental awareness among customers, it is significant to make messages short and direct to the point to ensure the target audience does not get irrelevant information that will confuse them. Also, the press release should use a few sentences to present the key issue of the campaign.

Besides, social media platforms such as Facebook, Tweeter, and Instagram can improve customer environmental awareness. The stakeholders involved should draft a message that captures the audience's attention to ensure that they want to know more about it. These messages can then be sent to social media platforms to ensure it reaches a wider population. While disseminating the environmental issue to media platforms, it is essential to consider the possibility of the message reaching the target audience (Peng & Liu, 2016). In this regard, it is important to select a full platform of the target population before delivering the message. Also, the message should be organized in a manner that makes sense and attracts those who come across it. Social media platforms are an essential method to use if the message aims at reaching a large audience because these platforms have the option of sharing, which means that the message can be shared across all the platforms (Deniz, 2016). By so doing, the message regarding an environmental issue that needs to be addressed will reach the target audience and improve their awareness.

Further, environmental awareness can be made through campaign publications that include; posters, leaflets, and brochures. In campaigns targeting to improve consumers' environmental awareness, publications play a significant role in improving awareness (Gast, Gundolf & Cesinger, 2017). In most cases, posts are used in environmental awareness campaigns to communicate the theme to the viewer. Therefore, while doing a poster, it should catch the viewer's attention with a theme that is well recognized and understood. Also, posters should be placed in strategic positions such as in the marketplace, churches, and institutions to meet many individuals. Since the environment is the surrounding, each person should get involved in activities that aim to protect it; thus, posters need to be placed in locations where all can be seen. Marakanon and Panjakajornsak (2017) denote that the artistic aspect of a poster must be creative enough to meet the purpose of the campaign. Concerning leaflets and brochures, they should be attractive, brief, and clear. They should contain more information than a poster so that a person can go with it at home to read and understand further. For brochures and leaflets to improve environmental awareness, it is crucial to develop a distribution system that will ensure that they are given to the right audience.

Customers' environmental awareness can be improved through organizing special events and role playing that will equip them with knowledge of issues affecting the environment as well as how these issues can be addressed. Though it is common sense, people need to entertain themselves a bit while conducting their daily activities. As a result, promoting environmental awareness can be made interesting through organizing special events that will involve concerts, exhibitions, and competitive outdoor activities. Freije, Hussain, and Salman (2017) state that the

involved stakeholders should come up with a day in a calendar that is meant to celebrate the environment. While this day is set aside, drama and role-playing skits that promote environmental awareness should be included in the event. Also, those present in the event should engage in competitive activities and the win is awarded with an environmental based reward. By doing so, people will be entertained and at the same time learn one or two things concerning the environment. Besides, the person that wins the competition may be crowned environment ambassador and given the role of ensure that people close to them protect and respects the environment. Apart from engaging in entertaining activities, the environment special day can be used to benefit the environment through planting of trees and cleaning out surrounding (Centobelli, Cerchione & Esposito, 2017). All the activities done on this special day should aim at protecting the environment, which means that people will be more aware of the environmental issues and how to protect the environment from dealing with them. Therefore, organizing special events can be used as a way of improving customers' environmental awareness.

Lastly, the electronic tool plays a great role in improving customers' environmental awareness. The internet is the tool of electronic networking that involves computers, modems, and internet accounts. These tools are becoming more common today and can be used as platforms of conveying environmental messages that will increase environmental awareness among the public. Besides, the power of technology is supporting the strategies of applying networking in improving awareness. In this regard, some stakeholders engaging with the environment need to use the internet to make their customers know about the environment. These stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and other institutions, need to create internet accounts that they can use to make their followers aware of their environment (Aikens, McKenzie & Vaughter, 2016). These accounts may include websites and emails. Organizations should use websites to write anything that they wish to pass to their target audience to ensure they have the right information concerning the environment. Also, they should send random environmental-related emails to random individuals. If these emails are received well by recipients, they can request them to create an account with them to send important messages concerning the environment. Such websites and emails will help in improving the awareness that the public has on the environment (Bányai et al., 2019). Also, through these emails and websites, recipients will be in a position to learn the trending issues affecting the environment as well as special events set aside to protect the environment. The below table 1 indicates the summary of solutions for this research.

Table 1: The summary of solutions

Marketing Strategy	Types of Marketing strategies
1: Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Public education helps raise environmental awareness as it involves translating the technical language of natural science to a non-scientific language that is easily understood. * Awareness campaigns involve a series of events that are designed in a manner that will bring awareness of the issue. * The selection of channels to be used as an effective campaign aims at taking the message to the people other than expecting the people to come and hear it.
2: Using Mass Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Media can boost public awareness because almost every individual has access to two media platforms. * It is significant to make messages short and direct to the point to ensure the target audience does not get irrelevant information that will confuse them. * The stakeholders involved should draft a message that captures the audience's attention to ensure that they want to know more about it in social media platform.
3: Campaign Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Posts are used in environmental awareness campaigns to communicate the theme to the viewer. Therefore, while doing a poster, it should catch the viewer's attention with a theme that is well recognized and understood. * Also, posters should be placed in strategic positions such as in the marketplace, churches, and institutions to meet many individuals. * The artistic aspect of a poster must be creative enough to meet the purpose of the campaign. Concerning leaflets and brochures, they should be attractive, brief, and clear. They should contain more information that a poster so that a person can go with it at home to read and understand further. * Customers' environmental awareness can be improved through organizing special events and role playing that will equip them with knowledge of issues affecting the environment as well as how these issues can be addressed.
4: Electronic Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The electronic tools are becoming more common today and can be used as platforms of conveying environmental messages that will increase environmental awareness among the public. * The stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and other institutions, need to create electronic accounts that they can use to make their followers aware of their environment * Through these electronic tools, recipients will be in a position to learn the trending issues affecting the environment as well as special events set aside to protect the environment.

4. Conclusion and Implication

For centuries humans beings and other organisms have depended the environment for habitation and provision of food. Humans have shown to dominate it as they are the creatures that need the environment the most compared to others. However, they are the main contributors of environmental degradation from their activities. As a result, there is need to come up with strategies that will improve their environmental awareness so that they take care of the environment that fulfills most of their needs. Therefore, while looking for approaches to use in improving the environmental awareness of humans, it is important to understand different marketing and environmental theories that will help in ensuring humans are made aware of their environment. The application of these theories in enhancing customer environmental awareness are important as they help the stakeholders understand behaviors of their customers and use appropriate strategies that matches the behaviors. Most of theories applied involve models of behavior change to ensure that the customers change their way of thinking and in return care for their surroundings.

Environmental awareness involves the activities that ensure customers are well knowledgeable with issues environment. There are various ways that customers can be made aware of the environment. Firstly, they need to be made aware of the environment and its impact on them. By understanding what the environment is and what impact it has on them, they will understand some of the issues affecting the environment and how these issues can be solved (Abdullah, Jali & Ibrahim, 2017). Regarding issues affecting the environment, various human activities have been identified to cause a nuisance.

Further, businesses need to go greener and ensure that their customers know some of the ways that help in respecting the environment. There are some of the steps that the customers need to be aware of the environment going green (Yu, Han & Hu, 2016). One of the steps that customers can be aware of the environment is how businesses can make their products green. One way that the business can make its customers aware of the environment by the products and services they offer. Businesses can opt to provide products and services that are environmentally friendly to avoid the chances of harming the environment. Besides, businesses should provide efficient energy sources that save money and are eco-friendly. The use of eco-friendly energy means that the businesses will not be hurting the environment, which also shows that they care for the environment (Peng & Liu, 2016). When the customers that visit these businesses see the source of energy that this company uses, they will be aware of what the environment wants them to do. Some of these things that businesses do imply that their customers have the

responsibility to respect the environment. Businesses need to make their customers aware of the environment by using clean energy that does not include those that pollute the environment. Some clean energy companies can use renewable sources like solar modules, geothermal heat pumps, and wind turbines.

Encouraging customers to use clean means of transport is another way that businesses can improve their customers' environmental awareness. The company can also make transportation of their employees easy by reducing the number of employees that travel on their own. While this kind of transportation reduces the number of vehicles on the road, it ensures no emission of carbon dioxide in the air. More so, Businesses can use health and safety training to ensure customers is aware of their environment. Training programs by companies that point more on the environment can make customers aware of their environment and help them adopt some of the activities that will show their respect to the environment.

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