Application of Planned Behaviour Theory to Consumers’ Product Preferential Purchase

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Abstract: Several approaches have been used in literature explaining consumers’ behavior in relation to their patterns of consumption conceptually, empirically and theoretically. This study examined consumers’ consumption pattern from a theoretical perspective using theory of planned behavior. It is a desk research and the summary of the studies reviewed concluded that the application of this theory ‘theory of planned behavior’ is important in choices made by customers in respect to their consumption.

Keywords: Behavioural Intention, Behavioural Control, Environment, Information, Subjective Norm

1.0 Introduction

Across the globe, hardly could it found of any product with no substitute, this gives room for consumers to make choices from varieties of same but differently branded products available in the market. The decision is characterized by several factors ranging from taste, preference, loyalty to brands, maintaining good balance diet, health conditions, and addictions to some particular foods, environment as well as affordability among others (Zhang, Fan, & Zhang, 2019).

Behavioural approach of consumers is well grounded in theories relation to behavioural decisions (Goldstein & Hogarth, 1997; Shafir &LeBoeuf, 2002). Behavioural decision model projected consumers as rational human beings, who make best use of all available information in taking decision through critical evaluation (Peterson & Beach, 1967). According to Peterson and Beach (1967) consumers conduct evaluations based on identifiable attributes possessed by the brands which might not be realistic in real life or misinterpreted by the consumers; and most times other factors not directly associated with the brands are not considered.

Jacobs, Petersen, Hörisch, and Battenfeld(2018) addressed planned behaviour as a predetermined mindset towards an action, while studies have identified the drivers of such predisposed character as: level of awareness of the product components (Xie, Wang, Yang, Wang, & Zhang, 2015; Yin, Wu, Du, & Chen, 2010; Ghazali, Soon, Mutum, & Nguyen,2017; Choe,& Kim, 2018;Ottman, Stafford, &Hartman, 2006;Bauer, Heinrich,&Schäfer, 2013); individual backgrounds, norms, values and self-determinations (Schwartz, 1992; Ellis, &Thompson, 1997; Schultz, Shriver, Tabanico,&Khazian, 2004; Schwartz, 1994; Stern, & Dietz, 1994; Stern, Dietz, &Guagnano, 1995; Lee,Kim,Kim,Choi,2014, Workman & Lee, 2011); level of information exposed to via media (Holbert et al., 2003; Wray et al., 2005); knowledge of the environment (Mostafa, 2007; Jaiswal, D.; Kant,2018) among others.

Ajzen (2015) opined that the theory of planned behavior is helpful in the prediction of consumers’ intention to consume a particular brand of a product among diverse available brands. He was of the opinion that the theory capitalizes on behavioural interest of consumers. Several studies have been conducted on the applicability of theory of planned behavior with diverse results obtained. Rationally, human behavior are crystallized by some factors or interest. Based on this, the paper aimed at evaluating the wide acceptability of theory of planned behavior in literature using desk research.

The rest of the paper is in sections 2 to5. The theory and extant literatures were discussed in section 2; section 3 covered the methodology adopted; while section 4 captured the summary of the results of studies reviewed, section 5 brought the paper to conclusion.
2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour

In 1985, Ajzen came up with a theory stating that human behavior is a function of behavioural intentions. The theory of planned behavior was developed as rebranded theory from theory of information integration and reasoned action theory. While theory of information integration as developed in 1971 by Norman Anderson propounded that individual behavior emanated from evaluation of all sources of information in terms of value and weight and combining such in taking actions.

Fishbein and Ajzen in 1980 expanded the information integration theory topropound reasoned action theory. They opined that behavioural intention is a driver of specific traits exhibited by individuals, and that the behavioural intention is sharpened by individual private opinion, perceived expectation of the third parties and ability to impress third parties due to social pressure as well as the potential to tame its behavior in specific actions.

In the process of redefining the theory of reasoned action theory, Ajzen (1985) developed theory of planned behavior. Ajzen added that the three factors influencing individual intention to act in a specific way is driven by the background (individually, socially and on information availability). The key factors influencing behavioural intention as addressed in reasoned action theory are individual opinion, subjective and normative beliefs, and ability of the individual to tame his behavior, while these factors are subjected to personal, social and information background.

Individual factors include the mood, emotions, values, stereotypes, general attitudes, perceived risk, and past behavior. Social, education, age, gender, income, religion, race, ethnicity and culture are looked into as factors driving the behavioural intention, while the level of exposure to knowledge, media and intervention are considered as the informational background. Theory of planned behavior is a trending theory in the fields of psychology and behavioural science.

![Diagram of Theory of Planned Behaviour](source: Ajzen and Fishbein (2008))

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Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour Source: Ajzen and Fishbein (2008)
2.2 Empirical Review

Theory of planned behavior has been extensively applied to several studies in relation to human attitude in different dimensions.

Zhang et al., (2019) applied theory of planned behavior to individual’s intention in the choice of green products to purchase among different brands classifying the green products into utilitarian and hedonic types. The study was carried out using an online survey to administer questionnaire on 223 residents of Southern region of China, their findings revealed that theory of planned behavior influenced the decision of the consumers in making choices between the two varieties of green products examined.

Kim, Njite and Hancer (2013) examined the acceptance and engagement of consumers in ecological behavior in the selection of eco-friendly restaurants with the application of theory of planned behavior. It was obtained that the model induced consumers’ emotion to patronize eco-friendly restaurants. They generated important ideas within the context of restaurants for the improvement of green marketing tactics based on consumers’ decision-making processes.

Liobikiene, Mandravickaite, and Bernatoniene (2016) and Yadav and Pathak (2017) applied the theory of planned behavior to behavioural patterns of consumers towards the purchase of green products and its impact on the environment. While Liobikiene, et al., (2016) confirmed that intention induced the buying behavioural pattern; Yadav and Pathak (2017) modified the theory with the inclusion of certain modifying factors as viewed value and ability to pay premium; through the administration of structured questionnaire and retrieved 620 responses. The study adopted Structural Equation Modeling for the analysis and reported that application of theory of planned behaviour greatly influence consumers’ intention to purchase green products.

Janswal and Khant (2018) empirically examined the cognitive factors influencing the intention of individual in purchasing green products based on survey reports from 351 consumers and discovered that consumers’ attitude, the concern for the environment and the appraised consumer effectiveness as well as knowledge level of consumers influences their intention for the purchase of green products.

Kumar, Manrai, and Manrai (2017) conducted a conceptual and empirical analysis on consumers’ purchasing behaviour in relating to environmentally sustainable products with a mediating effect of the environmental knowledge; it was found that the consumers’ knowledge about the environment mediates their attitude and intention to purchase environmentally sustainable products. On the contrary, they found that subjective norm insignificantly mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude.

Fleseriu, Cosma and Bocănet (2020) applied the theory of planned behavior in examining the factors influencing Romanians purchase intention and behaviour of organic products using structural equation model, and the results revealed that Health consciousness and food safety significantly influence the buying decision and the Romanian personal attitude while perception about the product quality, consciousness of the society, concerns for the environment and individual lifestyle indirectly influence the purchase intention for Romanian organic products. Similar studies carried out by Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005); Aertsens, Verbeke, Mondelaers and Van-Huylenbroeck (2009); Asif, Xuhui, Nasiri and Ayyub (2018); Singh and Verma(2017); Paul, Modi & Patel(2016); and Maichum, Parichatron and Peng(2016) also supported the application of the theory of planned behavior in studies of consumers’ purchase intention and behavior. It was obtained that personal attitude, appraised control of the behavior as well as subjective norms are great influencers of the consumers’ purchase intention for organic foods.

3.0 Methods

This study is a desk research; previous studies on the application of theory of planned behavior to consumption patterns of consumers were reviewed. The thematic issues in the theory were ensured tested in the reviewed studies covering the aspect of background knowledge in terms of the individual trait, societal impact and level of knowledge of consumers about the product. Also, the subjective norms as well as appraised behavioural control were examined in the studies reviewed.
4.0 Results and Discussion

The reports of the studies reviewed justified the application of theory of planned behavior on consumers’ intention to purchase a particular brand of product over the other. The studies found that background mediates the behavioural intention to purchase (Asif et al., 2018); it was confirmed that societal consciousness triggers consumers’ intention to exhibit certain purchase behaviour (Fleseriu et al., 2020); Singh and Verma (2017) concluded that subjective norms greatly affects consumers’ purchase intention although Kumar et al., (2017) reported that subjective norm insignificantly mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude. Likewise, Maichum et al., (2016) were of the opinion that personal attitude, appraised control of the behavior as well as subjective norms are great influencers of the consumers’ purchase intention.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the reviews conducted, it is so glaring that theory of planned behavior is highly relevant and a trending theory in human psychology. It is greatly useful in predicting consumers’ behavioural pattern when it comes to behavioural control in purchase decision. The theory will be of good strategy to marketing managers and division of different corporate bodies in influencing the decision of the existing and potential consumers in buying their products. The theory should be critically evaluated by marketing units as a strategy in product promotion.

References


