

Clean Value-Adapting the Theory of Consumption Value for Green Marketing

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Abstract: *The ever-increasing concerns sustainability have sparked intense debates and actions across various sectors, with marketing playing an important role in influencing both the problem and potential solutions. This article maps the historical growth of green marketing, discusses current trends, and directions for future to enhance sustainability within marketing practice. Green marketing is based on resource conservation, social and ethical considerations. We aim to have a deeper understanding of green marketing and explore solutions that will contribute to a sustainable future. According to (McDonough and Braungart, 2002, Mont and Heiskanen, 2015) the natural resources used in production, marketing and consumption should be avoided, minimised or recycled. Over time marketing has promoted the over-consumption of resources in ways that do not appreciate the delicate balance in our planet. The traditional marketing view has contributed to negative environmental impacts by looking on economic growth as an avenue to satisfy our needs at any cost (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, Swim et al., 2011).*

Keywords: Clean Value, Green Marketing, Green Consumer Behaviour, Theory of Consumption Value

1. Introduction to Consumer Behaviour

In this context we refer to ‘Consumers’ as people who buy products for their self-consumption. People may play different roles in the buying process as buyer, influencer, user and decider.

There is a plethora of theories related to consumer behaviour. A few of the well-known theories are the Consumer Choice theory, Theory of Consumption Values (Sheth et.al.,1991) and Theory of Reasoned Action. These three theories have different approaches.

The theory of ‘Consumer Choice Theory’ gives prominence to the economic benefits that accrue to the individual. This theory considers human behaviour as being rational.

The theory of Consumption values has importance to several independent parameters like superior quality, feelings, extent of green consciousness.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) developed The Theory of Reasoned Action which is focused on an individual’s attitude towards the behaviour and the opinion of friends and family towards the behaviour.

Some of the factors discussed in these theories include personal (age, income, lifestyle), psychological (learning, attitude, perception), social (family, social groups, status), cultural (beliefs, values), and economic factors (income, policies). External stimuli, such as marketing efforts and environmental conditions. These factors can convert a desire into a need, influencing the buying decision.

The consumer undertakes a complex process balancing the demands of her economic needs, need for convenient product features as well as balancing her psychological needs. The process starts with a perceived need. Consumers perceive an intense desire to reduce the sense of dissatisfaction.

Consumers undertake behaviour to reduce this state of heightened anxiety. This drives the individual to an activity for reducing her anxiety. Individuals explore different sources of information including personal or commercial. During this process there arises several alternatives in the individual’s mind.

According to (Ahluwalia et al., 2022) the consumer decision-making process involves five steps: recognition of need, active and passive information search, continuous evaluation of alternatives, decision to buy, and post-purchase feeling of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Marketers plan to add more consumers and increase loyalty by understanding the motivation influencing consumer behaviour.

Developing an integrated Model of Green Marketing

We reviewed a few models of consumer behaviour and used the theory of Consumption Values as it has been during our review of literature to be most suitable for understanding socially desirable consumer behaviour. (Sheth et al., 1991) explain the consumer buying choice as a sum of five different values as follows-utility value, affective value, novelty value, situational value and recognition value. According to Dodds (1991) the sum total is called Perceived Consumer Value. Perceived customer value is the ratio of expected advantages relative to expected efforts.

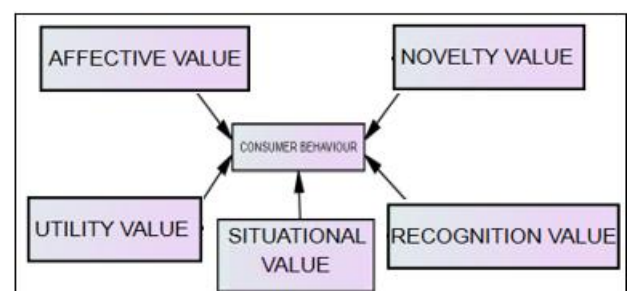


Figure 1.1: Adapted from the original model of the theory of consumption values by Sheth et al.(1991)

According to Sweeney et al. (2001) the **Utility value** refers to the want satisfying ability of the purchase. Example buying a washing detergent aims at having a clean wash than affective value, novelty value, situational value or recognition value.

Pihlström and Brush (2008) have interpreted **Affective value** as the capacity of the purchase to satisfy some emotional need. Example buying insurance or a home have deep emotional needs.

Howard and Sheth (1969) explain **Novelty value** as the extent to which the planned purchase will heighten the curiosity and need for exploration. Example Buying a high technology gadget leads to satisfaction of this need.

Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel (1974) refer to the **Situational value** as constraints based on the urgency of the need at the given point in time-Example A discount or a subsidy or a shortage.

Pihlström and Brush (2008) have defined **Recognition value** as the extent to which the intended purchase will enable the individual to become a part of a desired or reference group. Example and individual planning to buy membership of a prestigious club.

The Theory of Consumption Value finds easy adaptability to the needs of Green Marketing.

According to Tanrikulu (2021) the theory of consumption values is one of the most accepted theories with studies on biofuels, sustainable consumption, green buying, green purchase intention, green products, organic foods, bamboo products, green packaging, green information technology and environmental behaviour of tourists.

Biswas, (2017) Green products have direct or indirect utility value. While the price of the product may increase the utility increases through better quality, higher durability, increased longevity, easier usage or even convenient disposal of the product. Example plates which are disposable cost more but are easy and convenient to dispose of as compared to plastic plates.

Green products promote the affective value wherein the consumer derives the satisfaction that he is doing his bit to protect the environment. Example buying an electric car gives the consumer emotional satisfaction.

Green products also cater to the Novelty needs as it caters to the need of consumers to explore new technologies.

In the context of Situational Value, the Green products find relevance as there is imminent shortage of natural resources. Already parts of the world are facing extreme shortages which give rise to the urgency or criticality of the situational value.

Green products cater to the esteem needs of the consumer where they are perceived to be standing on higher moral ground than those using conventional products.

Review of research shows that the Theory of Consumption values is sufficient to explain the green marketing.

Proposed Clean Model

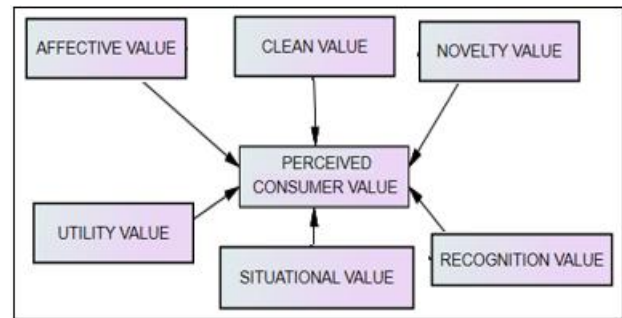


Figure 1.2: Proposed Clean Model

To refine our model, we develop a questionnaire for the existing five values of the theory of consumption values in addition to the new 'CLEAN VALUE'

The five existing values are measured through a questionnaire based on an exhaustive study of literature. This value has been named as 'CLEAN VALUE' post review of literature.

Questionnaire Development

According to Lin & Huang, (2012)

Utility Value Questions

- 1) Green products will have consistent quality
- 2) Green products will be well made
- 3) Green products will be economical
- 4) Green products will offer value for money
- 5) The green product is reasonably priced.
- 6) The green product offers value for money.
- 7) The green product is a good product for the price.
- 8) The green product would be economical.

Recognition value

- 1) Buying the green product would help me to feel acceptable.
- 2) Buying the green product would improve the way that I am perceived.
- 3) Buying the green product would make a good impression on other people.
- 4) Buying the green product would give its owner social approval.

Affective Value

- 1) Buying the green product makes you feel that you are making a good personal contribution to something better.
- 2) Buying the green product makes you feel that you are doing the morally right thing.
- 3) Buying the green product instead of conventional products would make me feel like a better person.

Situational Value

- 1) I would buy the green product instead of conventional products under worsening environmental conditions.
- 2) I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when there is a subsidy for green products.
- 3) I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when there are discount rates for green products or promotional activity.
- 4) I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when green products are available.

Novelty Value

- 1) Before buying the product, I would obtain substantial information about the different makes and models of products.
- 2) I would acquire a great deal of information about the different makes and models before buying the product. I am willing to seek out novel information.
- 3) I like to search for the new and different.

Clean value-Proposed Construct

- 1) Conserve-I will use products that will conserve the usage of non-renewable resources.
- 2) Lower-I will use products which Lower emission into the atmosphere.
- 3) Energy-I will use Energy efficient products in my daily use.
- 4) Aware-I will be more Aware of sustainable purchase, usage and disposal of products.
- 5) Natural-I will use Natural products and avoid synthetic products.

2. Limitation of the Study and Future Plan

We could not conduct a reliability and validity study of the proposed questionnaire due to paucity of time. Also, the proposed model is for a generic understanding of consumers behaviour towards green product and does not focus on any specific product category. The study is in the conceptual stage, and we propose to use the refined version of the questionnaire and analyse the data using SPSS and PLS-SEM to create a model to test the new 'CLEAN VALUE' construct. Additionally, we plan to add moderators based on demographic and geographic variables to understand if there are significant differences in green behaviour between these distinct groups.

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