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An Investigation on the Additional Cost of Green Products: The Willingness to Pay of University Students

Emre YILDIRIM
Sakarya University, Turkey

Abstract. Nowadays, it is inevitable for companies to be human oriented as well as being customer oriented. Because one of the factors that provide long-term profitability is to be socially responsible. Companies perform this with the help of green marketing applications. The aim of this study is to determine the willingness to pay of university students for the additional cost of green product, and reveal consequences for companies in terms of price adjustments. In this study used convenience sampling, 10 different durable and non-durable products have been determined. Different price levels selected in order to expose price sensitivity. While determining the price categories increases in the cost of 5 % have been taken into consideration. The survey implemented to 481 participants at Sakarya University. It's concluded that consumers are willing to pay an additional price for green products. Price sensitivity is found to be relative. Product itself is also found important as well as price. Consequently for a better environment companies keep prices at acceptable levels and consumers purchase more green products.

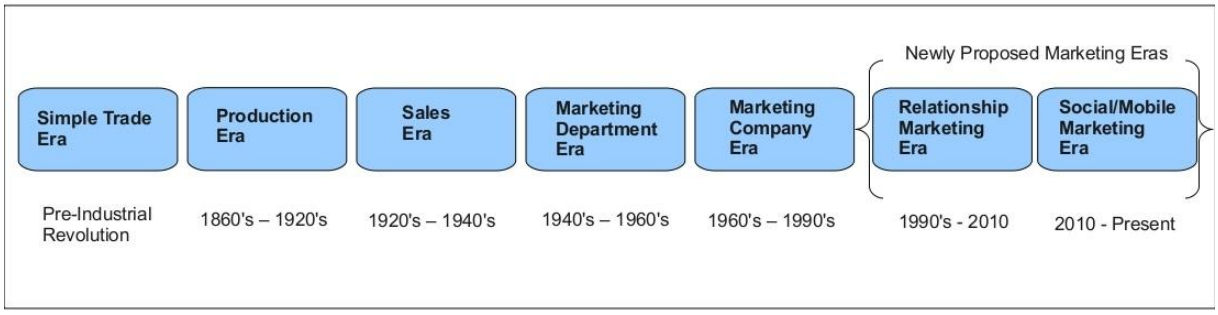
Keywords: Green product, Green marketing, Additional cost, Willingness to pay

I. Introduction

Marketing has been evolving as Marketing 1.0, Marketing 2.0 and 3.0 over the years. Nowadays, many marketing managers implement still Marketing 1.0 and 2.0; a small group has achieved to develop to Marketing 3.0 (Kotler et al., 2010). Marketing 1.0 is a product oriented approach and focuses on selling products to everyone. The most important purposes are standardization and mass production at this stage which comes upon industry period (Keith, 1960; Fullerton, 1988; Jones and Richardson, 2007; Dawson, 1970). Subsequently, conscious customers have started to take place of product concept by shifting to Marketing 2.0. Over time, a rising increase in the amount of manufacturers and variety of products has made the consumers 'the king' and given freedom to choose. The goal of Marketing 2.0 is providing customer satisfaction by focusing on consumer needs (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Kotler and Armstrong, 1994; Ruekert, 1992).

However, inadequacy of Marketing 2.0 over time has made transition to Marketing 3.0 compulsory. Marketing 3.0 also targets customer satisfaction as Marketing 2.0. The difference results from the changing view of companies to the customers. Companies engage with customers on account of being human; not just for their consumer needs (Kotler et al., 2010). Companies have started to change their visions in terms of using resources after considering the customers' demands of a more livable environment. In this context, companies have maintained the purpose of adding value to the environment and society (Kotler, 2011). In other words, building long-term relationships is only possible by not consuming while producing; not harming the environment. Companies achieve this mission with the help of green marketing applications.

Figure 1. Marketing Eras



Source: www.dstevenwhite.com (22.04.2014).

As can be seen from Figure 1, production and sales eras coinciding with industry period are related to production and selling of standard products as possible as mentioned before. Increased mechanization has provided an important support to mass production. Marketing eras comes after sales era has determined to produce within the context of consumer needs as the focal point. In other words, the market has been segmented and manufacturing has begun towards the demand of homogenous subgroups; not mass. In the period of 1990s and more which is called Marketing 3.0, the aims of companies are building relationships and being socially responsible as seen in the figure. Because, sustainable profitability is possible with sustainable relationships and social responsibility.

In this study, green marketing that enables business to be socially responsible has been discussed as a requirement of Marketing 3.0 era. The effects of green products' prices to consumer preferences have been investigated after manufacturing with the help of green marketing applications. It's aimed to guide to companies in terms of pricing and to customers in terms of a more livable place with this study.

II. Green Marketing

Protection of environmental resources and developing social responsibility are also very important for enterprises as well as customers and the government (Peattie and Peattie, 2009; Grinstien and Nisan, 2009). Because, potential disasters directly affect the environment and people living in. In this context, companies operate more sensitive to the environment with the help of green marketing applications.

Green marketing gives messages such as "eco", "environmentally friendly", "earth friendly" and "sustainability" (Chamorro et al., 2009; Chen and Chang, 2012). According to Polonsky (1994) green marketing consists of all activities, designed to generate and facilitate any exchange indented to satisfy human needs, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occur with minimum detrimental impact on the natural environment. Jain and Kaur (2004) defined green marketing as a concept, which encompasses all marketing activities that are developed to stimulate and to sustain consumers' environmental friendly

attitudes and behaviors. In addition, Mintu and Lozada (1993) defined green marketing as the application of marketing tools to facilitate exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual goals in such a way that the preservation, protection and conservation of the natural environment is upheld.

Briefly green marketing is the marketing which includes marketing applications that consider the environment and environmental resources. The definition of green marketing has been refined and segmented into three main brackets (Singh, 2013):

- *Retailing Definition:* The marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe.
- *Social Marketing Definition:* The development and marketing of products designed to minimize the negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality.
- *Environmental Definition:* The efforts by organizations to produce, promote, package and reclaim products in a manner that is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns.

Companies should make their systems, policies and products green in order to economic and non-economic pressures from their consumers, business partners, regulators, citizen groups and other stakeholders. There are five reasons for companies to adopt green marketing which are enhancing corporate images, compliance with environmental trends, taking advantage of green opportunities, obtaining competitive advantages and increasing product value (Chen, 2008).

Table 1. Traditional Marketing vs. Green Marketing

	Traditional Marketing	**Green Marketing**
Goals	Customer satisfaction (as customers) Accomplish traditional goals	Customer satisfaction (as humans) Accomplish sustainable goals Eco-system compatibility
Decision making	Fragmented thinking Short term orientation	Integrated thinking Long-term orientation
Ecological responsibility	Organization alonly responsibility No underpaid ecological costs	Mutually responsibility Full accounting of ecological cost
Focus	Tangible goods	Products as services

Source: Gosh (2010).

Table 1 shows the comparison of traditional marketing and green marketing in terms of various headings. In this context, it's seen that traditional marketing provides customer satisfaction for traditional goals (advertising, sales, etc.). This case has turned into human orientation in green marketing; therefore sustainable aims steps forward. It can be also seen from the table green marketing develops long-term relationships with customer in this way. In addition, responsibility assembles in a common denominator. Because, all actors are affected and the part of the system. Finally green marketing differs from traditional marketing in terms of service and value when looked at the focal point.

III. Literature Review

Moving to green marketing applications and perception of customers as humans by changing the systems for companies are indispensable at present day. A sustainable environment and long-term relationships with customers are possible with only being green oriented. However, one-sided responsibility of companies is not enough for sustainability of green marketing success.

Furthermore, an increase on the consciousness level of customers and purchases of product/service components within the framework of green marketing are vital. Nevertheless, it's observed that even customers who perceive themselves as environmentally friendly don't turn the attitudes into behaviors constantly (Nordlund and Garvill, 2002; Bamberg, 2003). In other words, green consumers don't always act as responsible in purchasing decisions although they care about the environment.

Drozdenko et al. (2011) have classified the factors affecting the adoption of green products as consumer characteristics (gender, income, age, etc.), green product price, situational factors and additional monetary incentives (tax credits, etc.). Considering consumer characteristics, previous studies have revealed that high-income and well-educated individuals are willing to pay more for green products (Brecard et al., 2009; Jansson et al., 2009; Quah and Tan, 2010). Besides, pricing the green product is also very important (Ewing, 2009). Eco-friendly products may be more expensive than standard products because of manufacturing costs (Green and Peloza, 2011; Olson, 2013). However, these types of products are less harmful to the environment, consume natural resources less and help saving time, money and effort (Hartmann and Ibanez, 2006; Papista and Krystallis, 2012).

Recent researches show that consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impacts of their purchases and are therefore willing to pay an environmental premium for certain products (Sammer and Wüstenhagen, 2006). A general consumer tendency has begun to occur to accept higher prices (Auger et al., 2003; Laroche et al., 2001; D'Souza et al., 2007). On the other hand, high prices of green products create barriers for consumers (Padel and Foster, 2005; Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002; Gil et al., 2000; Magnusson et al., 2001). According to a study made by Cabinet Maker in 2008 37 % of 978 participants have expressed that they could pay an additional price of approximately 5-10 % for green products. Surprising thing is a majority of 44 % have denoted they would not pay an extra. Similarly, approximately 78 % of participants find green product prices important in the study made by Braimah ve Tweneboah-Koduah (2011).

Briefly, adding green attributes to products increase initial costs; but provides an increase in the perceived value at the same time (Zeithaml, 1988). As mentioned before, green products provide benefits to consumers in the long term and leave less ecological footprints. However, price levels of green products are still perceived as high. One reason is companies don't take the consumer's purchasing power into account while pricing (Dekhili and Achabou, 2013). Another reason is related to the observation of price variations on the market. In addition to this, price increases are often unjustifiable from the consumer's point of view (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979). Consumers are price-sensitive when it comes to buying green products (Eze and Ndubisi, 2013). Considering all of these a better understanding arises for companies how important is keeping green product prices at an acceptable level for a sustainable profit, long-term relationships and the environment.

IV. Methodology

In this study, 10 different durable and non-durable products have been determined in order to reveal the willingness to pay of university students for green product prices. While making this selection, products can be manufactured as environmentally friendly taking into consideration. Primarily, standard prices have been set for each product and then price categories for green products have been created with an increase of 5 % in costs. The selection of durable and non-durable products found also important in terms of revealing the price sensitivity. Finally the questionnaire has been completed with the questions of price categories and demographic factors. The survey has been implemented to 481 students from different faculties at Sakarya University. After data collection, the questionnaires have been edited and 49 of them excluded from analysis. Consequently, the analysis has been made with SPSS 20 by including 432 appropriate questionnaires.

Table 2. Participant Characteristics

		f	%
Gender	Male	219	50,9
	Female	211	49,1
Age	20 and less	123	28,7
	21	100	23,3
	22	94	21,9
	23 and more	112	26,1
Monthly Budget*	300 TL and less	88	20,6
	301-600 TL	210	49,1
	601-900 TL	94	22
	901 TL and more	36	8,4
Environmental Consciousness	Negative	32	7,4
	Unsure	135	31,4
	Positive	263	61,2
Any Green Product Purchased Before?	Yes	296	68,5
	No	136	31,5

When Table 2 is analyzed, it's seen numbers of participants are close to each other in terms of gender. In addition age distributions do not so much differentiate but the majority belongs to the group of 20 and less. When considering the monthly budget the majority seems to be between 301-600 TL. Table 2 also gives information about the environmental sensitivity of participants. 263 individuals see themselves as environmentally conscious; but 32 don't. 135 of them are unsure; videlicet they have attitudes neither positive nor negative. When asked to participants whether they purchased green products before or not, it's seen a great majority said "yes".

Hypothesis

In this study four hypothesis have been determined in order to measure the relationship between green product purchase and consumer characteristics (gender, age, monthly budget and environmental consciousness) as below;

H1: There's a relationship between gender and green product purchase.

H2: There's a relationship between age and green product purchase.

H3: There's a relationship between monthly budget and green product purchase.
H4: There's a relationship between environmental consciousness and green product purchase.

Table 3. Chi-square Analysis

		Any Green Product Purchased Before?		Chi-square sig.
		Yes	No	p
Gender	Male	151	68	0,793
	Female	143	68	
Age	20 and less	75	48	0,214
	21	72	28	
	22	68	26	
	23 and more	78	34	
Monthly Budget	300 TL and less	49	39	0,022*
	301-600 TL	154	56	
	601-900 TL	67	27	
	901 TL and more	23	13	
Environmental Consciousness	Negative	9	23	0,000**
	Unsure	74	61	
	Positive	213	50	

*sig.<0,05 **sig.<0,01

Table 3 indicates whether the relationship between green product purchase and consumer characteristics. In this context, no significant relationship has been found between green product purchasing with age and gender; so the hypothesis H1 and H2 rejected. This result resembles with the study of Chen and Chai (2010); conversely differentiates from the studies of Laroche (2001), Mostafa (2009) and DiPietro et al. (2013). When analyzed in terms of monthly budget and environment consciousness there's a significant relationship between green products purchasing; hereby H3 and H4 accepted. In other words, more income and more consciousness lead to more willingness to pay for green products. This result supported by the studies of Quah and Tan (2010), Kalafatis et al. (1999) and Sammer and Wüstenhagen (2006).

Table 4. Frequencies for Green Products

Standard Products	Standard Product Price*	Green Products	Willingness to Pay of Additional Price for Green Products					
			Never	5 % and less	5-10 %	10-15 %	15-20 %	20 % and more
Notebook	1200 TL	Notebook case made of bamboo	69 (16)	66 (15,3)	121 (28,1)	40 (9,3)	77 (17,9)	57 (13,3)
Mobile phone	500 TL	Less energy consumption	38 (8,8)	53 (12,3)	57 (13,2)	61 (14,2)	127 (29,5)	95 (22)
Sun glasses	200 TL	Rim made of recycled goods	74 (17,5)	61 (14,5)	58 (13,7)	47 (11,1)	97 (23)	85 (20,1)
Shoes	120 TL	80 % recycling shoes	66 (15,4)	36 (8,4)	51 (11,9)	49 (11,4)	108 (25,2)	119 (27,7)
Handbag	100 TL	100 % made of natural latex	81 (19,1)	53 (12,5)	63 (14,8)	37 (8,7)	99 (23,3)	92 (21,6)
Plastic desk	80 TL	Wooden desk	74 (17,4)	57 (13,4)	45 (10,6)	50 (11,7)	84 (19,7)	116 (27,2)
Detergent	40 TL	Pure soap powder	75 (17,5)	76 (17,8)	84 (19,6)	43 (10)	63 (14,7)	87 (20,3)
Battery-powered calculator	30 TL	Solar-powered calculator	99 (23)	61 (14,2)	59 (13,7)	52 (12,1)	77 (17,9)	83 (19,3)
Plastic-covered book	20 TL	Recycled-covered book	90 (20,9)	76 (17,7)	61 (14,2)	73 (17)	54 (12,6)	76 (17,7)
Deodorant	10 TL	Reduced aerosol ratio	57 (13,2)	37 (8,6)	27 (6,3)	46 (10,6)	119 (27,5)	146 (33,8)

* TL (Turkish Liras).

Table 4 shows the additional price levels that participants are willing to pay for green products. When table analyzed it's seen that a majority of participants accept additional price for 8 products of 10. Furthermore the additional price for two products which are calculator and book is not acceptable. The reason for this can be shown that participants are students and they prefer to borrow instead of purchasing these products. In other words, participants who don't prefer to purchase the standard product frequently also don't prefer to pay an extra price for the green one. When considering the other products a low level of willingness occurs for notebook. This is because the standard price for notebook is the highest one in product categories. It's seen from the table that tendency to pay an additional price is within the range 15-20 % and 20+ %. In addition, the highest ratio 33,8 % of willingness to pay belongs to deodorant. It's thought to cause that a majority of participants uses deodorant in daily life and knows the harmful effects to the ozonosphere. In other words, they are already ready to pay a 20+ % price if the level of aerosol ratio is reduced. The lowest price can be shown as the latter reason in terms of deodorant. Participants are willing to pay more by considering the environment when an increase occurs at the frequency of purchase and use. It can be said that participants are willing to pay an additional price for green products when table analyzed generally. It can be expressed that presence of more conscious participants (as can be seen from Table 2) leads to higher levels of willingness to pay for green products.

V. Discussion

In this study, it has been reached that a majority of participants purchased at least one green product before. Analyzes show a significant relationship between purchasing green product with budget and environment consciousness; but no significant relationship with gender and age. It can be expressed more conscious consumers are willing to purchase green products more. In addition, the financial strength of participants also affects the purchasing behavior. Absence a significant relationship in terms of age can be associated with closer age groups of participants to each other. When evaluating the gender, it's thought similarity of the education level is more important than gender.

Consumers are willing to pay an additional price for green products when the 10 durable and non-durable products analyzed generally. It's seen that willingness to pay an additional price is relative when taking price sensitivity into consideration. Frequency of purchase and product itself may lead to this conclusion. Consumers don't prefer to pay an extra price for the green products they don't need frequently. There's a less willingness in terms of the most expensive product. Furthermore, cost incurred is at the top level in terms of cheapest green product.

It can be said keeping prices at acceptable levels for green products is important when evaluating the conclusions in terms of enterprises. A case faced at the research process has revealed this necessity. A note which is "*Why do we have to pay additional prices? Costs and taxes must be reduced for more purchases*" written by a participant can be considered as a proof. This shows the importance of price adjustment process for companies. Enhancing the willingness to pay additional prices for green products lies in the hand of companies. Consuming the resources less and an increase level of green product sales lead to a more livable environment. Consequently, the most important actors in a sustainable environment are companies which set prices and consumers who purchases green products from the level of perceived acceptable price.

VI. Limitations and Implications

One of the limitations of this study is implementing the survey to the students of Sakarya University. Performing the study with groups that have different demographic characteristics (age, occupation, education etc.) may reveal results supported by others. In addition, the study has been implemented in only spring semester because of the time constraint. Different and comparative results can be obtained with spreading out. Finally, a new study can be made with only price categories without determining the products in order to measure the price sensitivity more accurately. In this way, additional prices consumers are willing to pay may be revealed more clearly.

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