Male Consumers' Motivation and Intent to acquire Eco-friendly Apparel in the South African Emerging Market Context

Hanri Taljaard, Nadine C. Sonnenberg and Bertha M. Jacobs
Department of Consumer Science, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

Keywords: Pro-environmentalism, male, apparel, eco-friendly

Pro-environmental initiatives in the South African textile and apparel supply chain is still in the early phases of inception and face several challenges in a retail sector that is saturated by cheap apparel imports. The diverse profile of local consumers further complicates matters and therefore requires careful consideration of their underlying motivation and intent to acquire eco-friendly alternatives. Such alternatives may include apparel with pro-environmental attributes or it may also involve limiting apparel consumption by acquiring fewer pieces, and/ or selecting items that that will last longer. To date, substantial research effort has focused on female consumers' acceptance of eco-friendly alternatives, especially in more developed countries. Yet, few have ventured into exploring male apparel consumers' pro-environmental intent in an emerging market environment. In order to grasp the determinants of pro-environmental intent, researchers such as Bamberg and Möser (2007) have proposed combining the variables from Schwartz's (1977) Norm-Activation Theory (NAT) and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The theoretical approach for this study was thus based on Bamberg and Möser's (2007) meta-analysis of studies that interpreted pro-environmental intent and behavior according to NAT concepts (i.e. awareness of consequences, moral norms) in addition to TPB concepts (i.e. social norms, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intent). Following Ajzen's (2002) recommendations, perceived behavioral control was further extended to include two dimensions, namely perceived self-efficacy and controllability. Based on the aforementioned theoretical insights, construct associations were hypothesized as illustrated in Figure 1.
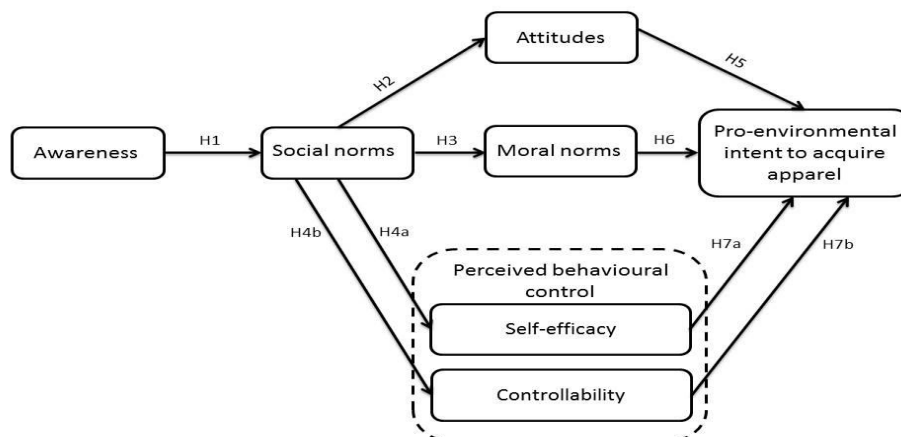
Figure 1. Proposed construct associations (adapted from Bamberg and Möser's (2007) model).

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study: 54 items derived from prior empirical research were adapted to comply with local conditions and pre-tested to refine question format and wording. Data was collected online and paper-based, culminating in the responses from a non-probable purposive sample of 305 male consumers who reside in the geographical scope of Gauteng, South Africa. The respondents had a basic level of schooling, lower income levels and were between the ages of 18 and 24 years (70%). It should be noted that 48.9% of the South Africa's population is in fact 24 years and younger (Indexmundi, 2013). Initial data analysis involved exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using varimax rotation. Cross loadings and items that failed to exhibit a factor loading above 0.4 were eliminated. A resulting eleven factor solution with 50 remaining items was validated by means of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The λ coefficients of indicator variables ranged from 0.50 to 0.86. The measurement model fit indices were as follows: CMIN/DF = 2.15, GFI = 0.82, RMSEA = 0.06, NFI = 0.80 and CFI = 0.88. Further path analysis established that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4a, H4b, H5, H6 and H7a (as indicated in Figure 1) were all supported with significant paths from awareness to social norms (β = 0.31; p <. 001); from social norms to attitude (β = 0.36; p < .001), from social norms to moral norms (β = 0.64; p < .001), from social norms to self-efficacy (β = 0.41; p < .001) and from social norms to controllability (β = 0.28; p<.001). Attitude was found to be the strongest predictor of intent (β = 0.37; p < .001) in addition to significant relationships between moral norms and intent (β = 0.19; p < .001) as well as self-efficacy and intent (β = 0.34; p < .001). The path from controllability to behavioral intent (β = -0.04; p = 0.374) was not significant and could therefore not support H7b. Some prior empirical evidence point to the fact that controllability might be more directly related to behavior than behavioral intent (Ajzen, 2002). The findings of this study underscore the relevance of existing theoretical insights in a Third World emerging market context and offer valuable input for pro-environmental information campaigns and other intervention strategies. It may also serve as a basis for further investigation in other emerging markets to establish underlying motivational factors that may contribute to consumers' eco-friendly apparel practices.

References
Ajzen, I, (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
Ajzen, I. (2002). Perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, locus of control and the Theory of Planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32, 665-683.
Bamberg, S. & Möser, G. (2007). Twenty years after Hines, Hungerford, and Tomera: a new meta-analysis of psycho-social determinants of pro-environmental behavior. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27, 14-25.
Indexmundi. (2013). *South Africa Demographics Profile 2013*. Retrieved June 25, 2014 from the World Wide Web: http://www.indexmundi.com/south_africa/demographics_profile.html
Schwartz, S.H. (1977). Normative influences on altruism. In L.Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp.221-279). New York: Academic Press.