Ethical Purchase Behaviour and Consumer Social Responsibility

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Abstract:
Research show that consumers value ethical products but with inconsistent daily buying behaviours. Translation from intentions to actual buying behaviour, remains poorly understood with inconsistent results with regard to consumer claims for ethical and environmental purchasing. The purpose of the study is to explore and gain an understanding of consumers’ ethical purchase behaviour and the influence of consumer’s social responsibility. Also explored are the cultural dimensions and how they play out compared to what pertains in developed countries. Qualitative data from four focus groups made up of 33 consumers selected conveniently in Accra was collected, coded and analysed using thematic technique. Awareness of ethics and social responsibility appeared to be high among respondents with more than 80% declaring that they were socially responsible, showing a link to ethical purchase behaviour. Over 70% reported they do not consider ethics in purchasing but are mindful of social good guided by norms, values and cultural beliefs. Health factors, convenience and affordability, were of high concern for most participants rather than concerns for the environment and social issues for instance when they shop. Over 75% were willing to pay more for environmental, social and ethical product alternatives unless they offered the necessary value. This discrepancy has implications for organizations with intention to engage ethical consumers. This requires that organizations become proactive in their quest to engage ethical and green consumers.

Keywords: Consumer purchase behaviour, consumer social responsibility, willingness to pay a premium

1. Introduction
Ethical behaviour is gaining grounds in the developing world (Quazi, Nejati, & Amran, 2015). Studies have focused on efforts toward sustainability but refer to misalignment of ethical intentions with actual behaviours (Carrigan & Attalia, 2001). Increasing awareness of environmental and social sustainability impact in recent decades have led to escalating concerns about the effect of current levels of consumption (Defra, 2012), which is however not translated into actual purchases (Carrington, Neville and Whitwell, 2014).

Concerns about whether companies’ socially and ethically sound behaviours pay off and whether the growing ethical and environmental consciousness among consumers is translated into extensive purchasing behaviours have been raised in the past (Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan and Attala, 2001; De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). It has been widely argued that businesses can achieve economic success by doing ‘good’ to society (Falck & Heblich, 2007; Laszlo, 2008; Quazi, Amran & Nejati, 2015). However, socially responsible consumers, are often neglected. Socially responsible acquisition is the longing to show concern for social and ecological issues through buying (Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014). It relates to consumer’s values, goals, and activities that reflect environmental, health, legal, cultural, and ethical fundamentals. Samavatyan et al, (2014) contend that culture affects individual behaviour and serves as one of the bases for the selection, use, and disposal of products.

Ethical consumers have radical, ecological and social reasons for choosing products (Carrington et al., 2014; Harrison, Newholm & Shaw, 2005). What is ethical encapsulates different expressions, concerns, and issues for individuals and in developing counties, increased public awareness of health and environmental issues and resource limitations together with high demands have become a source of concern for consumers (Carrington et al., 2014).

2. Background and Problem
Theoretical and pragmatic research on consumer social responsibility in developing countries is limited (Chen & Kong, 2009). Extensive research has captured such behaviours in developed countries according to Samavatyan, Akhoondi and Zareie (2014). They found that developing countries face different issues and concerns and as such a need to study the concept for cultural variation. The concept is multi-dimensional and varied scales developed to measure it are based on western culture. Samavatyan et al., (2014) notes that differences in economic, social, legal, and cultural development of each country can make different dimensions in the area of social responsibility which requires the
identification of factors involved. On the other hand, due to the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of the concept, it is necessary to implement and monitor social responsibility over time.

Research has focused on defining ethical consumption more than understanding it (Newholm and Shaw, 2007). Most studies investigate why consumers often do not implement sustainable behaviours, even when they have expressed intentions to do so (Carrington et. al., 2010; Eckhardt, Belk & Devinney, 2010; Hiller, 2010). DEFRA (2011) reported low market share for sustainable products, an indication of an attitude-behaviour gap (Eckhardt et. al., 2010). This study explored the influence of consumer social responsibility on ethical consumption of buyers in a developing country. The purpose was to gain understanding of consumer responsibilities and ethical purchase behaviours and the implications on organizations.

In view of the above, the following objectives have been proposed:

- To explore Consumer Attitudes, Intentions and Purchase Behaviour towards packaged consumables,
- To examine the consumer’s awareness of social responsibility and ethics
- To explore consumer's perceptions towards the environmental, social, ethical and health issues of consumption,
- To investigate consumers’ Willingness to Pay a Premiums for ethical products and the effect on organizations.

The following questions were also addressed accordingly.

- What are consumers purchase behaviour, attitude and intention with respect to packaged consumables?
- What is the level of awareness of ethics and social responsibility among consumers?
- What are consumer's perceptions about ethical, social, environmental and health concerns towards consumables?
- What is consumers' willingness to pay a premium price for ethical products

3. Consumer Attitude towards Sustainable Consumption

There is a growing impatience from some stakeholders that there is a lack of speed and scale in moving towards a sustainable economy (World Economic Forum, 2012, 2013). Quiet often, references to technology in the world of sustainability are limited to innovations being developed on the supply side of industry, for instance improving resource efficiency and infrastructure (Lacy & Keeble, 2013).

The world is experiencing the emergence of intelligent solutions to ensure convenience and efficient living for example, the use of mobile apps and social media to reward users for good behaviour and penalties for bad behaviour (Lacy & Keeble, 2013). The use of social networks by companies is to encourage peer pressure, competition and brand communities for more sustainable behaviour. It is also for multi-channel platform to tell narratives about the origin of products, influencing the masses by connecting consumers with similar values among others (Lacy & Keeble, 2013).

Leading companies know that sustainability is good business not for legal or charitable reasons but a growth strategy (Leonard, 2011). There is willingness from consumers to become more sustainable and a clear opportunity for businesses to start inspiring behaviour change and sustainable living accepted by the mainstream (Leonard, 2011). Collaborative approaches are needed to discover ways for businesses to empower consumers to do more with less, while also providing real value back to businesses (Leonard, 2011). It is obvious that consumer attitudes towards sustainable consumption and social responsibility require an alignment with organizational social responsibility. It also depends on the value consumers perceive they will obtain from sustainable consumption, and whether or not organizations are also committed to sustainability. It is proposed that consumers have positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption.

4. Consumer Perceptions, Intentions and Purchase Behaviour

Purchase behaviour is affected by several factors outside the scope of the seller but needs important consideration in the quest to comprehend the multifaceted conduct of buyers (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Buyer behaviour according to the authors is attached to selling, and it is the means by which consumers purchase, use and discard products. On the other hand, purchasing intention is related to consumers’ behaviour, perception and their attitudes (Keller, 2001). The Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen, 1991), notes that consumer’s attitude leads to purchase intentions which predict purchase behaviour (Morrell & Jayawardhana, 2010). Consumers are motivated by their intentions to choose products. This is however changed by the effect of price, value, sensitivities and value perceptions (Zeithaml, 1988).

The likelihood of a consumer to purchase a product can be calculated by purchase intention. The higher the intention is, the higher the buyer’s readiness to purchase the product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Buyers track their knowledge, inclinations and outer settings to gather evidence, assess options and take a decision (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Yang, 2009). Basically, purchase intention represents what consumers think they will buy (Wee, Ismail and Ishak, 2014; Blackwell et al 2001). Empirical evidence has shown that intention to buy organic products is influenced by consumer’s perception (Wee et al., 2014). For instance, Krissoff (1998) reported that consumers purchase organic products because of a perception that such products are safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly than conventionally produced alternatives.

It is established that consumers purchase intentions have significant effect on purchase behaviour. This however contradicts the attitude-behaviour gap (Lombardo, 2011) which states that there exists a gap in research between positive attitudes towards social responsibility and actual purchase behaviour, pointing to a flaw in the predictive capabilities of purchase intentions vis-a-vis behaviour change. Wee et al. (2014) showed that 50% of consumers say they buy organic products, but in reality, only 15% do. The debate on this gap is still inconclusive in literature.

5. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Ajzen and Fishbein, (1969, 1980) proposed in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), possible paybacks for the forecasting of intents to execute a conduct founded on personal attitudes and normative beliefs. The model was extended...
to accommodate developments in the variables and the resulting Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The two theories according to Southey (2011) are aimed at exploring the variables that are presumed to be responsible for decision behaviour by individuals (Fig. 1 & 2). However, these theories also have their deficiencies depending on the nature of the decision process of individuals and organizations (Southey, 2011).

Tlou (2009) examined the application of the theories in the health sector to determine whether a theory-based intervention would result in health behaviour change over time and if there would be any significant health behaviour differences among participants who received a theory-based intervention and those who received an information-only intervention. The study found that theoretically, when combined, the theories predicted intent with attitude having the main influence on intention. Significantly, Tlou's study concluded that the interventions based on the theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour did not produce health behaviour change.

While a lot of research has been conducted on the predictive and explanatory value of the theories (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2009; Kim & Chung, 2011 and Agarwal, 2013), little research has been conducted on their application in the design of behaviour change interventions. This study looks at the influence of social responsibility on the intentions and behaviour of consumers of packaged consumables and to see if it will lead to behaviour change in favour of ethical and environmental consumption.

It is proposed that consumer’s perception of social and environmental attributes of packaged products will influence their purchase intentions and hence decisions. It is also proposed that consumer’s perceived value of environmental and green products will affect their purchase intention and hence actual purchases. This is in line with the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour.

6. Consumer Awareness of Ethics and Social Responsibility

Consumer social responsibility (CnSR) has been defined severally as the moral principles and standards that guide the behaviour of individuals as they obtain, use, and dispose of goods and services (Muncy & Vitell, 1992). Consumers have at least two major responsibilities; first, toward other stakeholders, in their daily relationships called consumer ethics and secondly, toward society as, a responsibility to avoid societal harm and even to act proactively for social benefit which may involve all three facets of consumer behaviour—obtaining, use and disposal, called CnSR (Muncy & Vitell, 1992).

The concept holds that buyers are answerable for their behaviour and its effect on the larger society. It is the mindful and thoughtful readiness to perform certain consumption choices founded on individual and ethical beliefs. It is also based on the readiness to evade undesirable external influence that personal consumption produces on society and the environment. (Middlemiss, 2010; Helm, 2011; Russell & Russell, 2010).

Devlinny, Auger, Eckhardt and Birtchnell, (2011) concludes that CnSR shows up in three ways and can be measured as expressed activity with respect to specific causes – such as donations or willingness to be involved in protests and boycotts; expressed activity in terms of purchasing or non-purchasing behaviour; and expressed opinions in surveys or other forms of market research. They contend that buyers are paying more attention to moral constituents of products and business procedures. These anxieties have financial consequences for the businesses involved.

CnSR is therefore multi-dimensional, multi-faceted and consists of various components and seen in many forms. Perception of this concept will therefore be different for people from different cultures. The perceptions of consumers in the western world are widely researched and documented (Quazi et al. 2015). Very little is known about perceptions of CnSR in developing countries, hence this study, to know consumer’s perceptions of the concept in relation to their behaviour.

7. Social and Environmental Purchase Intentions

Behaviour in the context of social and environmental issues are direct actions that have effect on green behaviour (Grob, 1995). Muntaha and Marike (2014) report that some common green practices include recycling, purchasing organic food, using less paper, saving electricity, avoiding aerosols and plastic bags. Consumers are shifting to buying green and willing to pay more for it after their realisation of the effect of green products on the environment (Han et al., 2010). They indicate a gradual increase in consumers’ demand for green enterprises. Extremely conscious consumers might even sacrifice good quality preferences and accept lower levels of performance to save the environment (Han, Hsu and Sheu, 2010; Roberts, 1996).

A positive attitude developed through evaluations strengthens intention and willingness to perform a specific behaviour (Han et al., 2010). Consumers’ thoughts and feelings are known to influence behaviour (Baker and Ozaki, 2008). Hoyer and MacInnis (2004) argue that to change behaviour to eco-friendly practices, buyer attitudes must be altered. Perceived level of responsibility (where consumers believe that businesses are not playing their role in production of eco-friendly consumption products) is also an attitudinal variable that determines consumers’ level of environmental consciousness (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo (2001).

Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), have been considered a strong predictor of behaviour, and used to analyse consumer’s pro-environmental behaviour focusing on psychographic characters such as knowledge, awareness, values, attitudes, perceptions and concern for the environment which have come out more reliable than demographic characters (Oliver, Volschenk and Smit, 2011). Muntaha and Marike (2014) indicated that social influence, environmental awareness and price, positively influenced individual attitudes towards green products. They also found positive effect of attitude on buying behaviour hence consumers with positive attitudes towards green products is more likely to purchase green products.

This study is concerned about consumer purchase intentions and preferences for green products, looking at the behavioural processes and attitudes towards such products. The influence of attitude on behaviour have been identified.
by previous studies and is among others, part of the theory of reasoned action and planned behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1985). The influence of attitudes on behavioural intentions has been found to be higher than the influence of attitudes on behaviour. This leads to the conclusion that behaviour is influenced by attitude mainly through the influence of behavioural intentions (Recker and Saleem, 2014). It is therefore proposed that buyer’s environmental intentions will influence green behaviour.

8. Green Behaviour and Marketing in Ghana

Green marketing is a holistic process that predicts, identifies and satisfies in an ecologically sustainable manner, the requirements of the consumers and the general public (Adinyra & Gligui, 2012). Mansvelt (2011) defined green marketing as an emerging advanced system of advertising and labelling of products, goods and services that are advertised by claims of either reduced or abolished negative effects in the ecology.

Green consumption on the other hand, is normally related to environmentally responsible consumption where consumers consider the environmental impact of purchasing, use and disposal of products, or using various green services (Moisander, 2007). Environmentally responsible purchasing is vital as unplanned purchasing of goods can severely damage the environment. Thus, buyers have the ability to stop or decrease environmental harm by purchasing green (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Green purchasing refers to the purchase of environmentally friendly products and avoiding products that harm the environment (Chan, 2001; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). It is the willingness of buyers to purchase green and an influencing reason for green behaviour (Ramayah, Lee, and Mohamad, 2010). It represents a complex form of ethical decision-making behavior, considered a type of socially responsible behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Ghana is still at the onset of a green marketing phenomenon and researchers find a strong green potential in Ghana (Adinyra & Gligui, 2012) both with positive indicators within environmental awareness and consumer behaviour. Furthermore, results show that specific products with greatest potential within Ghana’s green market; green food and body care products showed the highest potential for a prospective green business as reflected in bivariate fit analysis (Adinyra & Gligui, 2012). Awuni, Du and Yiranbon (2016) noted that even though residents of the city in Ghana are keen on adopting green purchasing practices, they are faced with constraints which prevent them from actually doing so.

Current promotions on sustainable consumption activities are mostly based on TV commercials designed to increase knowledge on the consequences of non-environmental practices (Awuni et al., 2016). They report that the mark of a green market is still uncertain in Ghana. They noted that for the past few years, several companies have introduced green marketing in Ghana with the production of eco-friendly products in the country. These products are being exported to different countries in the world like the locally produced basket (bolga basket). Within the country, however, little attention is paid towards green marketing as far as consumers themselves are concerned. From the above, it is clear that Ghana has a green consumption potential but green market is still uncertain.

9. Material and Method

Focused on the constructivist paradigm, the study adopts the qualitative method conducting four focus group discussions comprising 33 consumers selected conveniently. It was to investigate their level of awareness of ethics and CnSR, adoption of green products alternatives, purchase intentions and behaviour and willingness to pay premium for ethical products.

Sharma and Lal (2012) observe that qualitative methods are used to explore specific aspects of consumer behavior and for probing below the surface for effective drivers and subconscious motivations. The use of qualitative research for this study is particularly suited to its purpose, since it involves exploring consumers’ attitudes, intentions and behaviour (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Furthermore, it has been argued that quantitative surveys may not lend themselves well to eliciting consumers’ true opinions in relation to ethical issues (Crane, 1999; Auger and Devinney, 2007), hence the use of qualitative method for this study.

The 33 participants gave their consent out of a total of 40 contacted conveniently and invited officially to participate in the discussion held at different periods. The groups included students from tertiary institutions, with business, marketing and communication backgrounds and some middle working-class consumers (Table 1).
The reason for selecting them was to capture fairly first hand and direct responses from respondents who could speak to the issues and able to contribute to the discussions considerably. According to Krueger (1994) useful data can only be produced if persons in the group are prepared to involve fully in the dialogue and, for this reason, promote the use of similar groups.

Participants were informed in writing about the purpose of the discussion and given consent forms to fill. Their confidentiality was assured. The discussions where held between November 2016 and December 2017. Kruegar (1994) suggest that for a simple research question, the number of focus groups necessary may only be three or four (Burrows & Kendall, 1997). Krueger & Casey (2000) also suggested between six and eight participants, as smaller groups show greater potential. However, the number generally suggested as being manageable is between six and ten participants; large enough to gain a variety of perspectives and small enough not to become disorderly or fragmented.

The discussion guide was adapted from extant literature in the field. It was administered to the participants by the researcher, lasting between 45 minutes to one hour during the four occasions. In the coding of responses and preferences on a discussion guide provided to them for the sake of emphasis. During the interview process, the following specific themes were probed and formed the basis for the discussion

Table 1: Focus Group Description
Source: Field Data, 2020

| Focus Group Code / Date of Group Discussion | Venue of Group Discussion and Status | Number and Description of Group | Gender of Group |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| MUG 1 – 7 (member undergraduate group) November 2017 | Undergraduate students of the University of professional Studies | 7 undergraduate students in their final year of study in business administration. Ages ranged between 18 – 30 years. They gave consent to participate in the discussion | Males – 6 Females - 1 |
| MPG 1 – 10 (members of Post graduate group) November 2016 | Post graduate students of the Ghana Institute of Journalism in Accra – | 10 post graduate students of with marketing and communication backgrounds. They also gave their consent for the discussion. Ages range from 31 - 54 | Males – 6 Females - 4 |
| MWC 1 – 7 (member working class group) December 2017 | First batch of Local staff of a diplomatic mission in Accra – first degree and post graduate degree holders | 7 middle class local staff diplomatic mission in Accra. They gave their consent to participate in the discussion Ages range from 39 - 59 | Males – 4 Females - 3 |
| M2WC 1 - 9 (member second working class group) November 2017 | Second batch of Local staff of a diplomatic mission in Accra– first degree and post graduate degree holders | 9 middle class local staff of a diplomatic mission in Accra. They gave their consent to participate in the discussion Ages range from 31 - 56 | Males – 4 Females - 5 |

10. Data Analysis Method

Data collected was transcribed, coded and analysed using the Thematic Analysis for recognising, analyzing and recording patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It minimally organizes and describes data set in detail and deduces numerous features of the research topic.

Thematic data analysis technique is the most popular data analysis technique used in qualitative studies. It entails identifying, examining, and documenting recognizable patterns or themes within qualitative data set (Creswell, 2003). The emphasis in this form of analysis is on themes relevant to the description of phenomena and associated with specific objectives of the study (Dawson, 2002).

The guide by Braun and Clarke (2006) for conducting thematic analysis was used in the coding of themes for this study. Thematic analysis is recommended by researchers for such studies (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Creswell, 2003, Saunders, 2009; Krueger & Casey, 2000). They point out that the analysis should be systematic, sequential, verifiable, and continuous. The data was analysed also using tables and graphs to show percentages and the trend of responses to describe phenomenon.

Findings and Discussion

The average age of the group was between 31 – 50 years, with a total of 20 males (60%) and 13 females (40%). About 60% of the group already hold post graduate degrees or pursuing post-graduate degree programmes, while the rest were already degree holders (30%), High School, Vocational and Diploma holders formed the rest (12%). On profession,
33.3% said they worked in media related professions either as journalists/broadcasters, editors, producers among others. Another 33.3% work in business related professions as sales managers, marketing managers, accounts officers among others, 15% were national service persons, 12.2 were teaching assistants, while the rest worked either as self-employed business persons or artisans (Table 1). Consumption behaviour among participants range from 20 to 40 years of engaging in consumption. Krueger (1994) suggests again participants should share similar characteristics: gender group, age-range, ethnic and social class background.

| Variables          | Categories                          | Male       |       | Female      |       | Total       |       |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
|                    |                                     | N   | %    | N   | %    | N   | %    |
| Age                | 18 – 30                             | 6   | 30   | 3   | 23.1 | 9   | 27.2 |
|                    | 31 – 40                             | 4   | 20   | 3   | 23.1 | 7   | 21.2 |
|                    | 41 – 50                             | 8   | 40   | 5   | 38.4 | 13  | 39.4 |
|                    | 51 – 60                             | 2   | 10   | 2   | 15.4 | 4   | 12.2 |
|                    | > 60                                | -   | -    | -   | -    | -   | -    |
| Total              |                                    | 20  | 100  | 13  | 100  | 33  | 100  |
| Education          | High sch. / vocational             | -   | -    | 1   | 7.7  | 1   | 3    |
|                    | Diploma                            | 2   | 10   | 1   | 7.7  | 3   | 9.1  |
|                    | First degree                       | 6   | 30   | 4   | 30.8 | 10  | 30.3 |
|                    | Second degree                      | 12  | 60   | 7   | 53.8 | 19  | 57.6 |
|                    | Other                              | -   | -    | -   | -    | -   | -    |
| Total              |                                    | 20  | 100  | 13  | 100  | 33  | 100  |
| Profession         | * Media/Public relations /protocol officer | 6   | 30   | 5   | 38.4 | 11  | 33.3 |
|                    | * Accountant /administrative officer | 3   | 15   | -   | -    | 3   | 9.1  |
|                    | * Lecturer /Teaching assistant      | -   | -    | 2   | 15.4 | 2   | 6.1  |
|                    | * Sales/project/developmental officer | 1   | 5    | 3   | 23.1 | 4   | 12.2 |
|                    | * National service/student          | 6   | 30   | 2   | 15.4 | 8   | 24.2 |
|                    | * Other                            | 4   | 20   | 1   | 7.7  | 5   | 15.1 |
| Total              |                                    | 20  | 100  | 13  | 100  | 33  | 100  |
| Years of           | Total                               | 20  | 100  | 13  | 100  | 33  | 100  |
| consumption        | 1 – 10                              | 5   | 25   | 2   | 15.4 | 7   | 21.2 |
|                    | 11 – 20                             | 4   | 20   | 4   | 30.7 | 8   | 24.2 |
|                    | 21 – 30                             | 5   | 25   | 2   | 15.4 | 7   | 21.2 |
|                    | 31 – 40                             | 3   | 15   | 2   | 15.4 | 5   | 15.1 |
|                    | 41 – 50                             | 1   | 5    | 1   | 7.7  | 2   | 6.1  |
|                    | N/A                                 | 2   | 10   | 2   | 15.4 | 4   | 12.2 |

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants
Source: Field Data, 2020

11. Consumer Purchase Behaviour

The groups spoke about their experiences, disappointments, purchase decisions and what informed their preferences. All discusants buy packaged food frequently with 40% indicating that they usually buy from street vendors, 30% from shops and stores with only 10% buying from shopping malls.

Giving reasons for their choice, those who purchase from street vendors indicated they prefer to buy cooked food packaged in local packaging materials, e.g. leaves, because of the assumption that it is healthier, tastes better and more traditional. Those who buy from stores and shops indicated that beverages and dairy products are readily available anytime around their local stores, thus convenient and affordable in smaller quantities.

Reporting on their positive experiences, 40% of the group attributed it to convenience and neatness of packaged food and drinks, another 40% indicated Hygiene and easy of handling or carrying, while 10% attributed their experiences to swiftness of obtaining products. Disappointments were varied with fairly distributed reasons including expired products, deceptive qualities and quantities of packaged food and drinks, compromised taste, food poisoning (strange particles in packaged food/drinks) and bad packaging respectively. One respondent stated specifically that:

"... Most of the packaged foods are expired and sometimes the expiry dates are altered to deceive the consumer, the packages are broken and cracked sometimes soiling hand bags when it is food, some of the packaged food and drinks are deceptive in terms of quality, while others have led to food poisoning in some cases reported" MUG8.

Participants indicated generally that producers and distributors of packaged food and drinks take advantage of consumers’ habits of not checking expiry dates and ignorance of contents of products they buy and this is a disappointment to more than 50% of them. In conclusion, all respondents reported that they do engage in purchase
behaviour with 40% buying from street vendors and the rest buying from stores and shopping malls. They cited reasons of convenience, neatness and ease of handling as reasons for the way they behave.

Dudovsky (2013) contend that consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of final consumers, both individuals and households, who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Kumar, 2010). Consumer purchase behaviour is expressed as retail patronage measured in many ways (Shim and Kotsiopoulos, 1992; Osman, 1993; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006).

Patronage behaviour according to Ivan-Damir (2010) is the purchase behaviour of the consumer with respect to individual's preference for a particular retailer for purchasing products. Once the consumers decide to purchase the product in a certain store, they will be driven by their intention. However, purchase intention might be altered by the influence of price, quality perception and value perception (Zeithaml, 1988; Grewal et al., 1998). In addition, consumers will be interrupted by internal impulse and the external environment during purchasing process. Their behaviour will be driven by the physiological motivation that stimulates their response which brings them to the retail store to fulfil their need (Kim and Jin, 2001).

In this study, consumers indicated their willingness to purchase from local street vendors and corner shops. They prefer products packaged locally, with local packaging materials like leaves, because they perceive it to be safe, and more environmentally friendly. Thus, cultural influence and normative pressures leads them to conform to demands of society. Socially, more consumers are being sensitised to buy packaged food from traditional packaging materials which they perceive to be more hygienic, recyclable than the polystyrene packaged materials for instance. Economically, the traditional packages used to preserve and contain food and drinks, for instance paper and leaves, are seen to reduce the cost of the products compared to other packaging materials.

12. Consumer Purchase Intentions and Preferences

Participants reported on their intentions and preferences, choosing from a list of options, the most influential factors in their purchase decisions. The options were Price/Affordability (P/A), Convenience/Availability (C/A), Perceived Effectiveness/Usefulness (PE/U), Health Benefits (HB), Environmental benefits (EB), Social Benefits (SB), and None of the above. They also responded to several other questions. They were to choose as many options as they wanted beginning from the most influential factor in the order of preference by indicating what influences their purchase decision.

Health benefits ranked first with 65% followed by P/A, with 60%, PE/U, 3rd (45%) and 4th (50%) respectively. Environmental benefits and SB ranked 5th and 6th. These indicated that HB were the main bases for people’s decisions to purchase packaged food and drinks. Attractive packaging which was not an option emerged as one factor that influenced the consumers’ purchase decision with about 20% choosing it. Factors HB & H ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd accounting for 42.4%, 34.3% and 22.5% respectively for what consumers look out for in their purchases, the two factors also accounted for 40% of consumer’s decision to purchase packaged products, followed by EB, SB and Attractive Packaging (AP) ranking 3rd, 4th and 5th scoring 25% each.

The three things important to consumers when purchasing packaged food and drinks were HB, P/A followed by C/A and hygiene issues. Convenience and expiry dates of products were also cited as important reasons for purchasing packaged food and drinks. When asked to indicate three most important things that were important to them when they go purchasing, the first things most of them chose was health and hygiene reasons (39%), followed by PA (36.3%) and then 9% were concerned about expiry dates.

The second important things they chose were still HB and hygiene issues and C/A which both recorded 21.2% each followed by expiry date with 18% indicating that as the second most important thing they look out for when they go shopping.

The third most important things consumer’s look out for was topped by PA (27.2%) followed by HB & H (22.7%) and AP (13.6%). To conclude this, health and hygiene issues constituted the fore most important issues consumers look out for when they go out to buy packaged food and drinks, followed by price and affordability issues. Expiry dates and attractive packaging accounted for the third most important issues. Social and environmental concerns were negligent.

It was also found that 84.9% of the groups had at a point changed brands of packaged products. Availability of substitutes, convenience, health and taste were reasons for change in brands. Others stated that high cost/price, recommendation of substitute products and advertisements caused them to try out new products. For those who never changed brands (15.1%), they indicated that there were just no substitutes or they had limited choices.

Consumer’s attitude, assessment and external factors make up consumer purchase intention, a critical factor in predicting consumer behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Intention measure the possibility of a consumer to buy a product. The higher purchase intention, the higher willingness is to buy a product (Dodds, et al., 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000). Purchase intention indicates that consumers will follow their experiences, preferences and external environment to collect information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchase decisions (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Yang, 2009). Monroe and Krishnan (1985) submitted that perceived value and quality influences intention. The more perceived value and quality, the higher intention. Zeithaml (1988) Wee, Ismail and Ishak (2014) state that basically, purchase intention represents what consumers think they will buy (Blackwell et al 2001).

Brown (2003), reports that consumers with intentions to buy certain products will exhibit higher actual buying rates than those who demonstrate no intentions to buy. This is supported by Wee et al., (2014). They contend that intention is the first step in developing demand for organic products. Empirical evidence shown that intention to buy organic products is influenced by consumer’s perception. Krissoff (1998) reported that consumers purchase organic products because of a perception that such products are safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly than...
conventionally produced alternatives (Smriti, 2007). The result of the study is supported by previous work by the following researchers

(Wee, Ismail & Ishak, 2014; Recker & Saleem, 2014; Shamsollahi, Chong, & Nahid, 2013). Wee et al., (2014) found that intention was significantly influenced by consumer's perception of safety, health, environmental factors and animal welfare of the products. However, there was no significant effect of consumers’ perceived quality of organic food products on their intention to purchase the products. Recker & Salem (2014) found that consumers' environmental literacy, past experiences and values including environmental, health consciousness and animal well-being concerns have significant positive effect on their attitudes towards purchasing organic products. It also had significant positive effects on their purchase intentions while environmental literacy was found to affect purchase intentions negatively.

Shamsollah et al., (2013) demonstrated that health is more important for Malaysian consumers and environmental concerns are the reason for their purchases. This is in supports of findings of this study. Their responses show that health is more important to consumers than environmental reasons for engaging in purchase behaviour confirming the findings of this study.

13. Awareness of CnSR and Ethics

The groups reported on their awareness and understanding of CnSR, and whether they considered themselves socially responsible, based on the lead by Devinney et al., (2011). It focused on various dimensions like whether or not they participated in action(s) to demonstrate/protest against unethical behaviour or ever volunteered to participate in polls/surveys. In all 75.7% said they know about CnSR. Of this, 30.7% said it meant the role of the consumer in contributing to the social and environmental good. Another 19% said it meant consumers performing ethical responsibilities. The rest (11.7%) equated CnSR to various issues - helping to improve organizational performance, engaging in product boycotts if harmful to the environment while others equated it to CSR or consumer. The other respondents, 24.2% said they did not know about the concept nor heard of it.

As they considered themselves responsible consumers, 87.7% said "Yes". They gave reasons such as avoiding plastics, buying locally and recycling. Over 12% said they were not aware of the concept. However, they reported engaging in some form of opinion poll, demonstrations or boycotting some products which constitute consumer social responsibility. This shows that the level of awareness of the concept is quiet high in Ghana. While 30% stated they have at a point boycotted product they think were not safe for the society, and had engaged in opinion polls to show their support or dislike for certain practices (such as 'galamsey' i.e. illegal mining). All the participants indicated that they considered themselves socially responsible;

“I ensure buying packaging made up of bio-degradable product; it is reflected in my purchases and I dispose waste properly and I do not purchase packaged products that are rubber or polythene-made”;

“I show my responsibility by buying products that are beneficial to my health and would contribute to the overall health of society”.

This is supported by the work of Muncy and Vitell (1992) which holds that consumers are accountable for their consumption behaviour and its impact on the larger social good (Middlemiss, 2010). CnSR is the conscious and deliberate willingness to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs and on a willingness to avoid negative external effects toward society and the environment (Helm, 2011; Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt and Birchnell, 2011). This is demonstrated by the responses of the groups.

Devinney et al., (2011) notes that CnSR shows up in three ways and can be measured as: (1) expressed activity with respect to specific causes – such as donations or willingness to be involved in protests and boycotts. This is seen in highly publicized developments such as the increasing number protests directed at multinational corporations and international organizations; (2) expressed activity in terms of purchasing or non-purchasing behaviour: the concept can be seen in the low levels of purchasing of “ethical” goods, in contrast to the enthusiasm shown in the first instance, for example, consumer activism and pressure from NGOs; and (3) expressed opinions in surveys or other forms of market research (Devinney et al., 2006). They suggest that consumers are giving increasing consideration to the ethical components of products and business processes and that these concerns have financial implications for the businesses involved.

The outcome of the focus group discussion shows that level of awareness of CnSR is high among participants. Over 70% had engaged in activities that point to CnSR. However, some confuse the concept with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This, points to the need for organizations to be proactive to advocate for socially responsible consumers to reward their efforts at promoting social responsibility.

The advent of CnSR presumes that the accustomed grounds for the conflict of buyer convenience now include social issues of justice, fairness, rights, virtues, and sustainability (Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2013), altering the scope of corporate-consumer relations, to complex socio-moral and political connections (Crane and Matten 2005). The increase in the way consumers view organization’s morally in addition to considerations for other stakeholders is a motivation for CSR (Crane, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen 2004; Vogel 2005). Understanding CnSR and its interaction with CSR (Greenley and Foxall 1996) is an important part of the attitude-behaviour debate.

14. Green/Environmental, Social, Ethical and Health concerns

Participants were asked whether they will consciously choose green products when engaged in purchasing behaviour no matter the cost, 70% said "Yes", 30% said "No". They gave various reasons for their responses:...

"Yes – I buy ‘herbalife’ products, they are healthy".
Another respondent said “No, I hardly buy them; it is not on my mind to buy green products when I go shopping, I apply discretion when purchasing products”. For products that I have acquired taste, if the means is not there, I will not go for it” MCW2.

The responses indicate high willingness to choose green products for which they have acquired the taste and have been exposed to. Green products were adopted by others upon recommendations and so they continue to patronize them. However, there were still others not willingly to choose green products because of several other reasons including financial constraints, high cost of green products and unavailability.

Respondents were asked if they consider norms and values when they engage in purchase behaviour and if they take into consideration ethics. Sixty percent said "Yes". The rest (40%) said "No".

“I think of how to dispose my waste after usage, as to whether it is the norm or not, it is the least on my mind, it does not occur to me”; “I don’t consider it in my purchases, however I mostly shop with cotton bags to avoid rubber bags”;

For those who said "Yes", one stated:

“I would purchase products which have health benefits, are affordable and convenient. Also, I buy what is available".

On ethics, 60% said they do not take it into consideration 40% do not or are not aware of the ethics of consumer behaviour.

“I don’t have any ethical reasons for buying products; when I want to buy or dispose of packaging materials, I just do what I think is right, because I would not purchase products which packaging impacts negatively on the environment or which would not be beneficial to my health”.

The responses show that not many have ethical reasons for their purchase behaviour. Some do not consider norms and values when they purchase but are guided by the social good. This is a clear sign of lack of awareness and education. Environmental literacy or knowledge has been used to describe consumers’ understanding, knowledge, attitudes and involvement with environmental issues (Marcinkowski, 1991).

The term considers all the aspects such as the ability to notice and infer the health of green schemes and to take proper action to uphold, renovate or improve the schemes (Roth, 1992). Recker and Saleem (2014) observe that Environmental literacy comprises the continuous search for connections and interrelations between objects and events as well as the continuous choice among alternatives that have the least impact on the environment.

Environmentalism and awareness about environmental issues exist than ever and studies find environmental literacy to impact pro environmental behaviour (Roth, 1992; Ahmad, Sha, and Ahmad, 2010). Hines, Hungerford and Tomera, (1987) found a strong correlation between environmental knowledge and environmental behaviour. However, Gotschi, Vogel, Lindenthal and Larcher (2009) did not find any relationship between knowledge about the environment and behaviour. This is the case with responses from the focus group in this study. Participants were not aware of green products and environmental concerns and so did not consider such in their purchases. These points to a knowledge gap that needs to be addressed, an opportunity for organizations to be proactive.

15. Price Concerns and Willingness to Pay Premiums

Participants discussed their will to pay a premium for packaged food and drinks. About 80% said "Yes", while the rest said "No". Several reasons were given for and against, mostly unrelated. Those who said "Yes" indicated the following:

“I am willing to pay because they are recommended products; they deliver on the promise”; “green products do not have additives and have health benefits”; “if the organic or green product is worth it, I will pay anything for it; I will look out for what the product will do for me”;

Those who said "No" gave the following indication:

“If green products are expensive, I may not buy them but go in for alternatives if available”; “I can’t afford them. Budgetary constraints will not let me go in for organic food because it is expensive and beyond my ability to purchase", “on a normal day, I don’t even think of organic or green products not even to talk of packaging. I buy what is available.”

The responses indicate the unwillingly of consumers to pay a premium for green products or products that have environmental and social benefits even if they believe it is right. Perceptions that green products are unaffordable, with many alternatives, account for their actions. This supports prior research findings that contend that consumers may not be willing to pay more for green products even if they have a positive attitude towards such products and may engage in recycling on a regular basis, (Hansla, Gamble, Julliusson & Garling, 2008; Muntaha & Marike, 2014).

While devoted conservationists are not concerned with price as a major factor in determining their behaviour (D'Souza et al., 2007), price remains a barrier to green behaviour (Young et al., 2010). Laroche et al. (2001) found that behaviours such as recycling and buying green did not predict willingness to pay more for green products and services. Muntaha and Marike (2014) stated that social and environmental concerns must be investigated in the context of product attributes such as price. But consumers who are most involved with the environment are willing to pay a green premium in comparison to those who are less involved and not willing to pay more (Vlosky, Ozanne & Fontenot, 1999). The severity of harm caused by ecological issues to the environment also encourages consumers to pay higher prices for certain green products (Laroche et al., 2001).

16. Effect of Ethical Purchase behaviour on Organizational Performance

The groups were asked if they see their actions behaviour contributing to the performance of the organizations that produce the packaged food and drinks. Sixty percent said "No". The rest (20%) said "Yes", while another 20% did not know. Reasons given by those who said "No" included:
“some producers have not even come out to seek consumers consent on their products and the impact on the consumers; they change price without consumers consent”; “organic food products or green products are all the time exported from outside the country and so are very expensive to buy locally”;

“there is big competition in Ghana with less switching cost for alternatives”; “consumers are sometimes not consulted because most of the packaged items are imported; consumer consent is absent”;

For those who said "Yes", the following reasons were given.

“Blue Skies company came into the Ghanaian market to compete with foreign brands of fruit juices and although expensive, with time people now respect the product because it is good and serves the health benefits better than the foreign products on the market; purchasing it gives encouragement to the organization to produce more and better”.

Similarly, 30% reported finding satisfaction in the packaged products purchased. However, 70% did not find satisfaction because of several reasons such as low level of satisfaction, damaged packaging, expired products and sometimes deceptive information on the packages. Over 70% of the focus groups reported that social, environmental and ethical issues have not been a big deal in Ghana and that many consumers do not take such into consideration when purchasing.

Shih, Yu and Tseng (2015) found a positive correlation between product attributes and consumer purchase decision. They recorded positive relationship and direct impact for consumer buying behaviour and consumer satisfaction in the beverage industry. Another Study related to the relationship between consumer purchase behaviour and organizational performance looking at indicators such as customer satisfaction and brand extension and role, found positive relationships (Fianto, Hadiwidjojo, Aisjah & Solimun, (2014).

Understanding consumer behaviour has become a factor that has a direct impact on the overall performance of businesses (Devinney et al, 2011; Kotler & Keller, 2012). It has become crucial especially due to fierce competition in retail industry worldwide (Lancaster et al, 2002; Kotler & Keller, 2012). The authors suggest that increase in consumer satisfaction will lead to increase in profitability hence organizational performance. This assertion is not supported by the results of this study. Most of the focus group participants do not see their purchase behavior contributing to organizational performance. However, a minority (20%) were emphatic that their behavior contributes to organizational performance.

17. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that participants have high knowledge of social responsibility and engage in it. Over 80% reported that they buy locally, take health issues into consideration when they purchase, prefer to purchase products in local packaging materials favourable to the environment, use cotton bags and avoid behaviours that harm the environment. About 20% indicated that they have engaged in the boycott of certain products they think will harm the environment or society and have engaged in opinion polls. All these are classified as actions towards CnSR.

The study confirms the attitude – behavior gap with most participants having positive attitudes towards social responsibility but not engaging in the actual behaviour because of price/affordability constraints and availability of cheaper alternatives. Even though respondents indicated that they are sometimes guided by their ethical beliefs, it appeared that consumer ethics is not a consideration in purchases decisions. This supports the ethical purchasing gap – confirming that despite ethical intentions, ethically minded consumers rarely purchase ethical products. Closing the gap between what ethically minded consumers intend to do and what they actually do at the point of purchase is an important academic, managerial and social objective that organizations must pursue, even though still conclusive in literature.

Culturally, research has shown that the CnSR is not well known in developing countries hence the call for more research in this area. Buying locally, preferring local packaging materials for cooked food and engaging in opinion polls and survey, points to a growth in ethical consumerism and social responsibility in Ghana. Practically, the study confirms the present of consumers prone to environmentalism and green behaviour. Organizations can profile such consumers and target them to reward their efforts at engaging in social responsibility. Theoretically, the study contributes to the body of knowledge in the field with a cultural dimension to further conceptualize it.

A relationship was found between Purchase Intentions and behaviour. This has both theoretical and practical implications. It confirms the findings by previous researchers that purchase intention is an effective tool in predicting purchasing behavior. This influences organizational performance and critical for exploitation by organizations for their benefit. From the responses however, several other factors including price, quality, perceptions, and value still have strong influence on consumer purchases.

About 80% of the participants do not take into consideration environmental and social concerns when they engage in purchase behaviour. Convenience and price concerns still override other factors. Environmental awareness has been ranked as one of the most important predictors of appropriate environmental behavior and it will be important for organizations to invest in environmental awareness to boost social responsibility among consumers. This is recommended because majority of the participants were not aware of green products. Environmental concerns were the list of their purchase considerations. It is necessary for organizations to be proactive to take up environmental literacy further in order to reap the benefits that emerging ethical and environmental/green consumer have to offer.

Finally, participants gave indications they were willing to pay a premium for environmental, social and ethical products but insisted that they would do so if the products offer value, are affordable and available. They will go for suitable and cost-effective alternatives than pay anything more.

This has practical implications for organizations especially those with intents to engage ethical consumers. Efforts towards green production and socially responsible may not be rewarded by consumers and this raises concerns of whether the call on organizations to be sustainable in their production will actually pay off. On the other hand,
organizations can seize the opportunity to be proactive in promoting environmental and green literacy among consumers who are concerned for their health, and reap the benefits.

The implication here is that the attitude-behaviour inconsistency still persists and this is a hurdle organization must overcome. It calls for proactive actions to promote altruistic behavior and CnSR. Consumers, who endorse organizations that promote the environment with the products they churn out, must be able to also reward such organizations by showing their willingness to purchase their products.

18. Limitations and Future Scope of Work

This study represents a cross section of consumer behaviour. There are several other factors that affect consumer ethical or green purchase behaviour. Future studies should be extended to look at other factors to arrive at a holistic outcome. A longitudinal study is also recommended to follow up on consumers purchase behaviour coupled with studying their switching behaviour. This should measure accurately their purchase intentions and behaviour. The study relied on responses of participants which may be flawed with biases. They say one thing but in actual fact do something else and this is a limitation to the study.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, although very useful in predicting purchase behaviour from determination of purchase intention, has not been very successful in changing behaviour towards perceived intentions. This is demonstrated in the responses. Participants were not willing to pay more if they could find alternatives for green products even though they endorse those products. A more upgraded form of the theory may be appropriate to investigate the attitude-behaviour gap.

Quantitative data and inferential statistical analysis are recommended to analyse the relationships between the variables studied. The subjective nature makes it difficult to generalize findings to a larger society. This makes it difficult to predict the direction of the relationships and to explain them. This is a limitation to the study because the level of awareness was not measured on the yardstick of objective inferential statistics but measured using extant literature and the subjective responses of the focus groups.

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