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Responsible Ethical Consumer Decision-making Processes: The Influence of Consumer Social Responsibility

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Abstract:

Some studies have concluded that existing consumer decision making processes including those for ethical decision making are not well suited for all consumers and have not led to the desired consumer purchase behaviour. For the ethical, green and socially conscious consumer, it is obvious that a comprehensive model is required to cater for their needs as a segment. This paper merges and extends the normal and ethical decision-making processes to derive the responsible consumer decision making processes by introducing consumer social responsibility at each of the known stages to serve as a catalyst and a factor in decision making. This is in response to calls for proactive ways of reaching the ever-growing numbers of ethical, green and socially conscious consumers. The paper also examines the influence of consumer social responsibility on the aggregate of the processes. Consumer Social Responsibility positively related with the Responsible Ethical Decision-Making processes in a regression analysis. The results indicate that the regression model explained 14% of the variance in the proposed decision-making processes and was a significant predictor of consumer social responsibility. Understanding the processes and the ability to influence ethical, green and socially minded consumers will guide the operations of organizations to reach specific segments and result in some positive outcomes for consumer purchase behaviour in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: *Consumer decision making processes, consumer ethical decision-making processes, consumer social responsibility, consumer purchase behaviour, ethical, green and socially minded consumers*

1. Introduction

Studies on Consumer behaviour have received much attention over the years. It comprises activities directly involved in gaining, consuming and disposing of merchandise, including the decision processes that pave way for those activities (Engel et al, 1995). The Consumer decision making processes consist of the behaviour patterns of consumers, the procedure, determination, and following up on the decision process for the acquisition of needs, satisfying products, ideas or services (Du Plessis et al, 1991).

Consumption behaviour is the style and process of consuming and possessing, collecting and disposing of consumer products and services including the resultant change of feelings, moods and attitudes toward the products and services (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000).

The beginning of consumer purchasing behavior is the need for acknowledgement. If there is no need, there is no purchase! Therefore, reinforcing a need in the consumers' mind to trigger the buying behavior has a fundamental importance for brands (Bhasin, 2010; Tahseen, Morande & Veena, 2017). The process is explained as need recognition, information search, Evaluation of Alternatives. Purchase Decision and Post Purchase Evaluation (Lamb, et al., 2010; Stankevich, 2017). The advantage of this model is that it has made it easy for marketers to decide on how to satisfy the customers' expectations (Erasmus, et al., 2001; Stankevich, 2017).

This model has however been criticized because it considers all customers to be the same who go through the processes as stated at all times in the particular order to satisfy their expectations when they go to purchase (Dhar, Huber & Khan, 2007; Solomon et al. 2006). There are various scholars who have said that there are products for which the customer does not have to think a lot and does not have to choose from various alternatives. There are situations where the customer at times does not engage in all the stages of the consumer decision making process (Stankevich, 2017). Additionally, the model also assumes that all customers go through all stages while purchasing any product (Dhar, Huber & Khan, 2007; Solomon, 2006). The automatic method is criticized to be too preventive to sufficiently house the diversity of buyer choice circumstances ((Erasmus et. al., 2001). They have suggested the need to extend the decision-making models in bid to overcome some of the challenges especially with ethical consumers in view of the fact that sensitive deliberations and the role of heuristics are not well provided for through the rational method (Erasmus et. al., 2001).

Bray (2008) concluded that with insufficient distinguished omissions, the part of morals, social responsibility and unselfishness have been mostly overlooked by the models and philosophies studied and proposed the need for further examination endeavoring to assimilate such thoughts to make appreciated inputs.

Based on the above, the paper proposed the following objectives:

- To merge the traditional decision making and ethical decision-making theories
- To explore the Responsible Ethical Decision-Making Processes (RCEDMP) by introducing Consumer Social Responsibility as a component of the processes
- To investigate the influence of Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR) on the RCEDMP.

The following research questions were answered:

- What is the link between the traditional and Ethical decision-making processes.
- What is the relationship between the components of the RCEDMP and CnSR?
- What is the influence of CnSR on the RCEDMP?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Consumer Decision Making Models

About 300 years ago, Bernoulli developed the first formal explanation of consumer decision-making. It was later extended by von Neumann and Morgenstern and called the Utility Theory (Richarme, 2005). This theory proposed that consumers make decisions based on the expected outcomes of their decisions, viewed as rational actors, able to estimate the probabilistic outcomes of uncertain decisions and select the outcome which maximized their well-being.

Brosekhan and Velayutham (2008) state that there are three major comprehensive models for consumer decision making proposed by Nicosia (1966); Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968); and Howard and Sheth (1969). These models attempted to trace the psychological state of individual consumers from the point at which they become aware of the possibility of satisfying some physical essentials by acquiring items for consumption to their ultimate assessment of the penalties of having doing so.

According to Agarwal (2013), the preceding theorists have developed 'Grand Models' of consumer behaviour which have been subsequently utilized or transformed by authors interested in the tourism choice process. The Howard – Sheth model recommends three levels of consumer decision making according to Abdallat and El-Emam (2001), discussing the buyer decision process using four major sets of variables, inputs, perceptual and learning constructs, outputs and exogenous or external variables, emphasizing that the process occurs at three input stages, that is Significance, Symbolic and Social stimuli (Darko, 2012).

The Nicosia Model (Nicosia, 1976) is concerned with the connection between the organization's promotion message and its possible buyers, the qualities of the buyers, their decision processes including hunting and assessment procedures to the real choice made (Agarwal, 2013). The organization in this model, impacts the buyer's choices and vice versa.

According to Darko (2012) the Nicosia's model exhibited a number of disadvantages for its wholly acceptance. It did not contemplate clarifying the inner issues that may impact the buyer's disposition and how the numerous outlooks and involvements are instituted concerning the product.

The Engel – Kollat – Blackwell (EKB) model was fashioned to define the cumulative, wanton rising information about buyer behaviour. It stresses on four constituents that have emotional impact on the buyer's behaviour: information processing, central processing unit, decision process and ecological effects. Engel et al., (1968) submitted that the outcome of a high participation with a product is a prolonged solution process which begins with problem acknowledgment to information hunt, substitute assessment, acquisition and after effect activities (Brosekhan & Velayutham, 2008).

The EKB model comprises numerous issues that could impact a consumer's buying choice but nevertheless unsuccessful in elaborating the issues that outline the reasons why dissimilar buyers make different choices at dissimilar ecological circumstances.

Thus, acquisition decision is defined as the phase at which the purchaser really buys the product (Kotler et. al., 1999). Darko (2012) argue that, the buyer will acquire the utmost favored variety. Berkowitz (1994) however proposed five phases in normal purchase decision - need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase behaviour.

Similarly, Jones (1991) and Cohen and Bennie (2006) also proposed the ethical decision-making procedures to cater for ethical decision making and decomposed them into four discrete steps - ethical awareness ability to make ethical judgment, ability to establish ethical intent and finally engaging in an ethical action or behaviour. Cohen and Bennie (2006), further contended that the features of moral issues influence every step of the process. Jones (1991) also observes that six precise features collectively describe an issue's level of ethical intensity and it has been confirmed by studies that the advanced an issue's ethical intensity, the further probable the individual will trail the moral decision-making process.

In view of the similarities in the steps of the two decision making processes, normal decision-making processes and the ethical decision-making processes, the study proposes to merge the two and to suggest five common processes that can be adopted for normal and consumer ethical decision making (Table 1.) termed Responsible Consumer Decision Making Processes (RCEDMP). The steps consist of recognizing a need and ethical awareness of issues, information search and making ethical judgment, evaluating alternatives and establishing ethical intent, engaging in ethical behaviour and Purchase Decision and Socially responsible and post purchase behaviour.

Steps	Normal Buyer Decision Processes - Five Steps by Berkowitz And Harley (1994)	Ethical Decision-Making Process – Four Steps by Jones (1991) And Cohen And Bennie (2006)	Responsible Ethical Consumer Decision Making Process – Five Steps Proposed, by Researcher, 2020
1	Need recognition	Recognizing ethical issue (ethical awareness or knowing the issue)	Recognizing a need and ethical awareness of issues
2	Information search	Making ethical judgment (knowing what must be done)	Information search and making ethical judgment
3	Evaluation of alternatives	Establishing ethical intent (Deciding what will be done)	Evaluating alternatives and establishing ethical intent
4	Purchase decision	Engaging in ethical behaviour (engaging in the behaviour)	Engaging in ethical behaviour and Purchase Decision
5	Post purchase behavior	-	Socially responsible and post purchase behaviour

Table 1: The Merged Stages of the Normal and Ethical Decision-Making Processes to Propose the Responsible Ethical Consumer Decision-Making Model

Source: Developed For Study, 2020

2.2. Responsible Consumer Ethical Decision-Making Processes (RCEDMP)

The first step of the RCEDMP is the Problem Recognition consisting of internal and external information search representing the early stages of the consumer decision making process. Although these procedures often proceed sequentially, they can also occur simultaneously or in a different order (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010). In knowing moral issues, individuals initially possess moral awareness about a principled issue. According to Rest (1989) choices that involve moral issues, need moral principles to evaluate several replacements determined by beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

According to Vitell (2003), the Hunt and Vitell (1986) model is the calmest to apply to buyer's moral behaviour since it recognizes the individual's ethical viewpoint as the main reasons in explaining the variance between the moral verdicts and behaviours of individuals.

The Second step is Information Search and Recognizing Ethical Issues. This begins with an internal search in which is stored information, feelings and experiences that are relevant to a product or service situation and recalled from long-term memory. Internal search is a critical aspect of the judgement and decision-making process because the consumer has limitations on their capacity or ability for processing information and the memory traces can delay over time (Berkowitz & Harley, 1994; Cohen & Bennie, 2006; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010).

The degree of internal search can only vary widely from the simple recall of only a brand name to more extensive searches through memory for relevant information, feeling and experiences. If the levels of involvement, perceived risk, or need for cognition is high, consumers will be more motivated to engage in effortful internal search (MacInnis, 1997).

The third step is the Consumer's Evaluation of Alternatives and Making Ethical Judgment. Here, generally, as the motivation to process information increases, external search will be more extensive characterized by more participation and risk taking, weighing of cost and benefits and the nature of contemplation and level of inconsistency among others (Berkowitz & Harley, 1994; Cohen & Bennie, 2006; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010).

The fourth step is the Purchase Decision / Establishing Ethical Intent. Berkowitz, et al (1994) notes that the buyer makes a choice following the scrutinizing of replacements in the evoked set, which is a group of brands in the product class of which the consumer is aware (Darko, 2012). Compulsion purchasing however happens habitually in the course of the purchase decision stage, an advantage to marketers (Ngolanya, 2006).

The final step is the post-purchase behaviour of the consumer. After acquisition, the buyer associates the real experience with the anticipations and may be contented or disappointed. A disgruntled consumer will probably reduce purchase of such product, while a contented consumer will have a high probability of re-purchasing that brand (Berkowitz & Harley, 1994; Cohen & Bennie, 2006; Hoyer & MacInnis, 2010). In the post purchase assessment stage, buyers gain knowledge and make assessments based on whether or not their expectations were met. Consumers have a predetermined standard against which to compare the outcome (Gabbath & Hogg, 1994).

2.3. Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR)

Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR) is the mindful, considered readiness to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs and on a preparedness to avoid negative external effects that the individual consumption has towards society and the environment (Helm, 2011). It is the ethical values and ideals that guide the behaviour of individuals as they acquire, use and discard goods and services (Devinney, Eckhardt & Belk, 2006). CnSR is seen as a concept that places interest on consumer's accountability for their consumption behaviour and their effect on the larger social good (Middlemiss, 2010).

It has been suggested that CnSR be seen as one of the decision-making processes (Devinney et. al. 2011). In this paper, it is considered as a factor in the various steps of the responsible decision-making process and more so in the evaluation of alternatives and selection of the best solutions during the consumer's decision-making process. Thus, it is proposed that the level of awareness of the consumer's social responsibility, will influence their moral and ethical orientation towards taking a decision to purchase. The awareness of their obligation will go a long way to influence their

evaluation of alternatives and the selection of purchases based on their ethical and moral beliefs as well as personal choices to avoid negative external effects on the environment with their consumption.

The demand for communal, moral and ecologically aware consumption for sustainability is also firmly advanced in numerous parts of the world, Africa included and according to Carrington, Neville and Whitwell (2010) the impact of principled consumption has broadened over the last era. Investigators have pursued the comprehension of this societal alteration by developing models on ethical consumer behaviour drawing on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour to propose that the buying intention of principled consumers are determined by personal values, moral norms, internal ethics, and other similar factors (Ajzen, 1985; Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Smith, 2007). Albayrak, Caber, Moutinho and Herstein (2011) observed that ecologically sensitive behaviour involves an individual's efforts to limit negative actions which may be harmful to the natural and physical environment.

It is proposed that the social responsibility of the consumer can influence the consumer's attitude and intentions in these evaluative criteria and the paper seeks to find out the effect of consumer social responsibility on the proposed responsible decision-making process of the consumer in patronizing packaged food and drinks.

2.4. Ethical, Green and Socially Minded Consumers

Albayrak, Caber, Moutinho and Herstein (2011) observed that environmentally sensitive behaviour involves an individual's efforts to limit negative actions which may be harmful to the natural and physical environment. This could be done by decreasing resource and energy usage, by using anti-toxic materials or by decreasing waste production (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). One type of environmentally sensitive behaviour is "green purchase behaviour" which can be observed in those consumers who scrutinize labels, who use biodegradable garbage bags and biodegradable soaps and natural detergents, who purchase goods with biodegradable packaging and who refuse to purchase from restaurants where Styrofoam packages are used.

Therefore, consumers are becoming more sensitive in their environmental attitudes, preferences and purchases (Sarigollu, 2009). Consumer green purchase behaviour has become one of the most popular research topics among academics, especially in the last three decades.

For the environmental and socially conscious and responsible consumer, evaluation criteria will be greatly influenced by their beliefs, ethics and values towards the environment. The evaluation is also affected by beliefs and attitudes of the consumer. Beliefs are the degree to which in the mind of the consumer, a product possesses various characteristics, while attitudes are the degrees of liking and disliking of a product and this is dependent on the evaluative criteria used to judge the products and the beliefs about the product measured by those criteria. Ethically minded consumers feel a responsibility towards the environment and to society. They will seek to express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behaviour (De Palsmacker et al., 2004; Shui, 2002).

It is proposed that the social responsibility of the consumer can influence the consumer's attitude and intentions in these evaluative criteria and the paper seeks to investigate the effect of consumer social responsibility on the proposed responsible decision-making process of the consumer in patronizing packaged FMCG consumables.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Proposed Consumer Responsible Ethical Decision-Making Process and the Influence of Consumer Social Responsibility Adopted from Berkowitz and Harley (1994), Jones (1991) and Cohen and Bennie (2006)

The different stages of the Consumer Decision making Process (CDP) can be discussed in relation to consumer's green purchase behaviour (Munhata & Marike, 2014). The first step involves the Need Recognition and Awareness of the Purchase Problem that is to be solved or the needs and wants that are to be fulfilled (Bloch et al., 1986). Information Search in CDP can be external or internal (Byron, 2005). The information base for green consumption taken from internal search such as consumers feelings and past experiences is very low (Baker and Ozaki, 2008).

To retrieve extended information on green products high external search activities are advised. Information search leads to the pre-purchase Evaluation of Alternatives where consumers compare and choose the one that best fulfils the need or solves the purchase problem (Byron, 2005). If the preferred product has been found leading to Purchase and consequently consumption, this step is referred to as the Green Purchase Behaviour. Finally, the CDP ends as Post-Purchase Evaluation which explains the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction achieved after usage of the product or service (Byron, 2005). If consumers are fully satisfied this might result in an intention to repurchase or becoming loyal to

the brand (Byron, 2005). Consumer social responsibility is seen as one of the decision-making processes and can be considered as a factor in the evaluation of alternatives and selection of the best solution during the consumer's decision-making process. Evaluation may be thought as a system and the evaluation or choice criteria, leads to beliefs which leads to attitudes and which also leads to intentions. This system can be seen as dimensions used by consumers to compare or evaluate products or brands. For the environmental and socially conscious and responsible consumer, evaluation criteria will greatly be influenced by their beliefs, ethics and values towards the environment. The evaluation is also affected by beliefs and attitudes of the consumer

3. Materials and Methods

A survey was conducted among consumers of packaged Fast moving consumables in Accra, Ghana to collect data on the antecedents of the responsible decision-making processes in a cross-sectional study. The choice of Accra is justified because of its cosmopolitan nature. A convenience sample of 641 consumers successfully completed the survey instrument administered to them in December 2018. The instrument used was adapted from extant literature and tested in a pilot study to ensure that the items provide the actual meanings for participants.

The population consisted of 322 males and 306 females. Majority of the respondents fell within the ages 18 – 50 (84%), while most of them had attained higher level or tertiary education (46%), with majority (76.6%) professing Christianity. The data was collected using the Likert scale interpreted as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree and 5 = don't know (Manning & Munro, 2006), meaning the lower the score the more agreeable the response to the item. The data was cleaned, translated and checked for normality, reliability and validity using SPSS 21.

Descriptive statistics was conducted to know the path of the raw data using the mean and the standard deviations (Garson, 2012). Mean scores recorded for the variables in the construct recorded scores of 2 and below, indicating agreement of the respondents to the items in the variables. (Table 2) The lower the mean score related to a variable, the higher the extent to which respondents agree to it and vice versa. The aggregate mean and standard deviation score for RCEDMP and CnSR are depicted in Table 2. The normality of the data was checked and recorded a Kurtosis of 3.51 for CnSR and 4.37 for RCEDMP (Table 2).

Constructs	Mean	Median	Min.	Max	Std Deviation	Skewness	Std error of skewness	Kurtosis	Std error of kurtosis
CnSR	1.96	1.92	.94	4.71	.559	1.51	.102	3.51	.204
RCEDMP	2.34	2.27	1.00	5.00	.648	1.62	.102	4.37	.204

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive and Normality of Variables

NB: mean scores computed from the sum of indicators of the construct

Correlation analysis was performed to observe the reliability of the apparatuses used in the study and also to measure the degree of association between the variables in the study, the Cronbach alpha delivers a measure of the internal reliability of a test or scale; it is articulated as a number between 0 and 1. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, (1998) Cronbach alpha values should exceed the suggested value of 0.7. Table 3 indicates that the instruments are reliable and there is internal consistency among the variables.

The composite reliability takes note of the fact that the latent variable pointers have different loadings but contributes equally to the construct (Boohene, 2006; Henseler et al, 2009). Composite reliabilities for the variables were above 0.7 meeting the acceptable threshold (Table 3). Those constructs, which internal reliabilities did not meet the threshold of 0.7, were not included in the model. Composite reliability of the construct for RCEDMP showed that 4 variables met the threshold recording more than 0.7. One variable CNREA, failed to meet the threshold and so was taken out.

Antecedents of Responsible Ethical Consumer Decision-making processes (RCEDMP) and CnSR				
Constructs	No. of items in construct	No. of Items loaded	No. of items deleted	Cronbach alpha
Consumer Need Recognition/Ethical Awareness (CNREA)	7	6	1	0.68
Information Search/Recognize Ethical Issue (ISREI)	5	2	3	0.81
Evaluation of Alternatives/Make Ethical Judgment (CEAMEJ)	8	6	2	0.82
Purchase Decision/Establish Ethical Intent (PDEEI)	5	3	2	0.80
Post Purchase Decision/Engage in Ethical Behaviour (PPDEEB)	7	4	3	0.78
Consumer Social Responsibility	22	22	0	0.86

Table 3: Reliability of Constructs

4. Data Analysis and Results

Factor analysis was conducted to identify the interrelationship among the set of variables. The over-all objective is to comprehend to what degree items from a scale may replicate fundamental theoretical concepts, known as factors (Newsom, 2017). Greater inter-item correlations should replicate larger connection in what the items measure, and, therefore, higher inter-item correlations reproduce higher internal reliability. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggested that a correlation matrix of correlation coefficients of over 0.30 is acceptable. Therefore, loadings of 0.3, specifies that the issues account for approximately 30% relationship within the data. Hair, Anderson et. al., (1995) classified the correlation matrix loadings of 0.30 as minimal, 0.40 as important, and 0.50 as practical.

To answer objective one of the studies, the correlation matrix for the variables in the RCEDMP were computed and they recorded correlations above 0.5, significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) indicating positive significant relationships (Table 4). This is important in the conceptualization of the RCEDMP following the results of the item reliability. The Correlation between RCEDMP and CnSR which answered the second research question was also analyzed. It recorded a loading of 0.37 which is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Although minimal, the correlation between CnSR and RCEDMP is significant.

		ISREI	CEAMEJ	PDEEI	PPDEEB
ISREI	Pearson Correlation	1	.657**	.594**	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	640	640	638	636
CEAMEJ	Pearson Correlation	.657**	1	.611**	.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	640	641	639	637
PDEEI	Pearson Correlation	.594**	.611**	1	.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	638	639	639	635
PPDEEB	Pearson Correlation	.581**	.609**	.666**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	636	637	635	637

Table 4: Correlation for Antecedents of RCEDMP
 **. Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

Additionally, simple linear regression was calculated to predict participants' responsible decision-making process (RCEDMP) based on their awareness of consumer social responsibility (CnSR) to respond to research objective three. A significant regression equation was found, $F(1, 617) = 101.763$, $P < .000$, with an R^2 of .142. The results indicate that the model explained 14% of the variance and was a significant predictor of CnSR. with RCEDMP contributing significantly to the model ($B = 0.45$, $p < .000$). Participants' predicted responsible decision-making is $1.458 + 0.446$. It varied by 14% for each increase in awareness of CnSR (Table 2).

Model Summary						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1		.376 ^a	.142	.140	.50887	
a. Predictors: (Constant), RCEDMP						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.352	1	26.352	101.763	.000 ^b
	Residual	159.774	617	.259		
	Total	186.126	618			
a. Dependent Variable: CnSR						
b. Predictors: (Constant), RCEDMP						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.458	.089		16.330	.000
	CnSR	.446	.044	.376	10.088	.000
a. Dependent Variable: RCEDMP						

Table 5: Regression Tables for the Influence of CnSR on RCEDMP

4.1. Discussions and Implications

In discussing the results it is obvious that consumers feel an obligation to be accountable for their consumption and there is evidence also that consumer demands for ethical products is on the increase (Mcavoy, 2016). The more consumers become aware of their social responsibility and ethics; it is sure to reflect in their decision-making processes. This means a lot of opportunities for organizations considering ethical businesses, and an advantage to shape consumer behaviour in the direction of social responsibility. According to Degerman (2017), the behaviour of buyers is gradually

shifting towards ethical and principled buying based on consumer's ethical values. A rise in the knowledge of ethical issues and moral values is also a crucial factor in consumer decision making,

There is also another school of thought which argues that price sensitive consumers will actually not be moved by ethical concerns in decision making (Lombart & Louis, 2014; Trapero, De Lozada, & García, 2010). They observed that even though consumers are interested in issues of social responsibility and ethics, majority of them still base their decision making on price and are not actually concerned about awareness of their responsibility during decision making. Other researchers have also concluded that socially responsible and ethical consumers with a readiness to pay more for what they believe in, will base their decision making on social responsibility and go in for such products (Abrantes Ferreira, Gonçalves Avila & Dias de Faria, 2010).

Mohr and Webb (2005) found that social responsibility influences purchase intentions more strongly than price but due to the congruence between ethical intention and ethical behaviour, this requires that the consumer is able to assess valid and vital information, hence the need for organizations to be proactive to provide the needed information to enable consumers make the ethical and principled decisions based on their convictions. There is also the need to resolve the attitude-behaviour gap which suggests that consumer thoughts and their actions at point of sale are very inconsistent (Öberseder, Schlegelmilch & Gruber, 2011).

Ethical businesses must take the various phases of the responsible consumer decision making processes by making consumers aware of their responsibilities in various circles taking ethics and morals into consideration and providing this information to the consumer as they go through the process of decision making. If awareness of consumer social responsibility is able to explain about 37 percent of consumer's responsible ethical decision-making processes as demonstrated in this study, then, it is quite significant to explore more ways of increasing the awareness of CnSR.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study adds on to the consumer decision making models by introducing consumer social responsibility as one of the decision-making processes. It was hypothesized that with adequate information and awareness of social responsibility, the consumer will include this in their information search and rational problem solving by evaluating the consequences of their action. With more information, the consumer can make better ethical judgments and this can have implications for marketers and businesses. This hypothesis was confirmed in this study, with CnSR explaining 37% of the variance in the model developed.

Research concludes that ethically minded consumers feel a responsibility towards the environment and to society (D'Astous & Legendre; 2008; Devinney, Eckhardt & Belk, 2006; Marsh & Bugusu, 2007; Joshi and Rahman, 2015 and Schmeltz, 2012). Consumers will seek to express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behaviour (De Palsmacker et al., 2004; Shui, 2002). From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the level of awareness of social responsibility of the consumer significantly influence the consumer's decision making in respect of their attitude (degrees of liking and disliking of a product) and their intentions (to purchase or to boycott) in this evaluative criterion.

This is significant for marketers and organizations, and requires that consumers be made aware of their social responsibilities. The study demonstrates that organizations with ethical intentions can be rest assured and have the hope of finding ethically minded consumers who will be ready to reward their efforts because they are informed and ready to reward social responsibility. Consumer decision making should be influenced towards social responsibility and this initiative must be spearheaded by organizations.

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