

Abstract

The Influence of Normative Factors on Environmentally Friendly Consumer Behavior

As consumer behavior is a type of environmentally significant behavior, it plays a fundamental role in environmental concerns of our time. In the long-term, current consumption and production patterns are not sustainable. The goal of this thesis was to investigate the influence of descriptive social norms on environmentally friendly consumer behavior using a randomized experiment quantitative approach. Data was collected using online surveys. Experiment results show that providing information about the behavior of others has an impact on how we perceive descriptive norms and that a change in descriptive norms influences our environmentally significant behavior intentions. This was, however, only confirmed under the circumstances when respondents identified themselves with a reference group, which was a carrier of descriptive norms. Thus, this thesis broadens our knowledge of the impact of descriptive norms on environmentally friendly behavior, because it was previously assumed that descriptive norms are a significant factor only in situations with strictly defined reference groups. On the contrary, this research shows the impact of descriptive norms even in cases of relatively abstract groups with defined criteria for the identification of individuals with such a group. These results are potentially interesting from a practical perspective and could be applied e.g. in environmental campaigns.

Key words: proenvironmental behaviour, descriptive norms, consumption exotic fruit, bottled water, randomized experiment