



Emerging Practices of Ethical Consumption to Affirm Sustainability: A Literature Review

Amrita Nandy*

¹Department of Business Administration, BGC Trust University Bangladesh, Chandanais-4381, Chattagram, Bangladesh

Abstract: “Ethical consumerism”, which mostly centered on marketing practices from early times, is currently evolving in every aspect of the business. “Sustainability” conversely, is a burning concept of the modern arena, as current business is facing diversified challenges ranging from natural calamities to man-made unethical crises. In this paper, a promising trend of business has been discussed in detail that bridges two concepts “ethical consumption” and “sustainability”. By reviewing the literature, a growth pattern in the application of ethical consumption at many spots of business has been identified and a gap has been observed in a unified concept of “ethical consumption” and how it renders sustainability. Thus, this study will contribute to constructive scrutiny for academicians to develop further models and theories on this topic. As an added advantage, this research will further encourage managers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to imply ethical strategies aiming at the sustainable performance at every stage of business. Confinement within the literature is the main limitation of the study which again bestows empirical research opportunities in the future.

Keywords: *Ethical Consumption; Sustainability; Ethical Sourcing; Ethical Human Resource Management; Market Promotion of Corporate Ethics.*

Introduction: With time, the core business competition has shifted from pricing to quality, from quality to superiority, while at present it has reached the edge of promoting sustainability. In recent years, consumers have become more aware of the drastic impact of industrialization. Adverse natural calamities like drought, extreme heat waves, global warming, frequent earthquake, etc. pushed people to think about sustainability. Now, global citizens have become progressively conscious of how their spending patterns reflect their values and influence organizations to act accordingly. People from diversified backgrounds follow sustainable consumption and environmentally ethical behavior as a means of “magic formula” or fashionable terms in various contexts [1]. In another way, through their money consumers are voting for environmental protection, safety at the workplace, supply chain transparency, fair labor practices or avoiding animal products, etc. which pressurize the business to consume or act ethically. Again, firms’ several ethical measures are reflected via branding through certain certifications shown on the package like Fair trade, Organic, etc. Apart from commodities, a company can also campaign its ethical consumption through financing. For instance, major investors are at present investing in renewable energy sources or in organic production. And this good number of such investments is known as socially responsible investing (SRI). In short, tenacious challenges of market penetration are pressuring managers to emphasize more on ethical behavior. Despite recent rise of ethical practices at vigorous industries, yet lack of conceptual clarity can be identified over the topic. Absence of unified approach over ethical measures is identified where firms simply prioritize environmental sustainable measures as a role of being ethical. Besides, stakeholders are vastly unaware about the concealed impacts or urge of ethical measures of the organization. Thus, rationale of this study is to provide a systematic insight into the concept of “ethical consumption” by analyzing the current literature and relevant contemporary issues and to evaluate its role in sustainability.

Literature Review:

Ethical Consumption: Ethical consumerism is an ideology that emphasizes that each consumption has an impact on the planet. Therefore, consumers must follow the footprint of the products, how they were made, and how these would be disposed of. [1] denotes ethical consumption as a way of mutual living style where a social link is being established between individuals emphasizing solidarity. Ideology of ethical consumption sets clear connections between a product (product origin, context, etc.) and the customers. Ethical consumption enables consumers to adopt such a consumption pattern or lifestyle that gradually creates awareness among others, in communities as well as in the environment. According to [2], it is the practice of purchasing such products and services that are produced by minimizing social and/or environmental damage and eliminating any negative impact on society or the environment.

Article history:

Received 19 March 2023
Received in revised form 22 July 2023
Accepted 16 October 2023
Available online 15 November 2023

Corresponding author details: Amrita Nandy

E-mail address: amandy2509@gmail.com
Tel: +8801989122437

Copyright © 2023 BAUET, all rights reserved