Critical Thinking in Psychology

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**Introduction**

Kaplan, Gelino, and Reed, jointly authored an article in the year 2018, which was published in the journal entitled “*Behavior and Social Issues*.” the article was entitled as “A behavioral economic approach to green consumerism: Demand for reusable shopping bags.” It is evident from the name of the article that it talked about consumer choice and pattern regarding the reuse of the shopping bags and playing their effective role towards green consumerism. In this paper, I will summarize, as well as analyze different parts of the article by Kaplan, Gelino, and Reed (2018) and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article in the light of other articles on the same subject.

**Summary of the Article**

The authors have talked about the importance of behavioral economics, which provides the opportunity of research by utilizing the elements of methodology and framework from the fields of behavioral science, as well as microeconomics. The research conducted in the field of behavioral economics plays an important role in laying the foundation of public policy. The researchers intended to find the demand elasticity of the consumers towards the reusable shopping bags. The hypothesis of the researcher in this particular research article was that the downward sloping demands curve of the consumers' choice of reusable shopping bags will highlight the same pattern of consumer choices, explored in previous studies. The results of the research study highlighted the relation between behavioral economic demand and new ecological paradigm scale (Kaplan, Gelino, & Reed, 2018).

**Literature Review**

In the literature review of their article, Kaplan, Gelino, and Reed (2018) have mentioned that the demand analysis of the consumer products provides the opportunity of analyzing the market fluctuations, as well as highlighting the experiential manipulations. So, the analysis of the demand curve provides insight into the societal issues, while utilizing the behavior analysis to assess the cost framing and targets of the market. The main issue under discussion in the article is the global climate change due to ignorant human practices which add pollution to the atmosphere and become the source harming the atmosphere. The behavioral analysis approach is utilized to explore the behavior, contributions of the human beings towards the global climate change and increased pollution in the atmosphere (Carrete, Castaño, Felix, Centeno, & González, 2012). The authors have mentioned that green consumerism is a comparatively new approach introduced in different societies, in which the consumers are encouraged to reuse the shopping bags, in order to play their effective role in controlling the pollution in the atmosphere. The literature review section of the article also mentioned that few ordinances have been passed in the United States of America to ban the single use of the shopping bags, applying taxes, providing consumer education and distributing the recycling program to ensure the reuse of the shopping bags (Peattie, 2010). The people belonging to the upper class of the society were made to reuse the shopping bags by utilizing the push methods, which was applying taxes and fines on them, while the consumers belonging to the middle class of the society were able to cooperate by getting consumer education (Kaplan, Gelino, & Reed, 2018).

**Methods Section**

The sample size comprised of 76 undergraduates studying behavioral sciences, the age bracket was nineteen to thirty-three years and given the incentive to receive .5% additional credit upon participation. Computerized questionnaires were given where 12 participants were tested at 30 minutes test time. The test was conducted on 18 Dell® OptiPlex processers with flat-panel screens of about seventeen inch. The tasks included simulated questions about purchasing behaviors, and Hypothetical Purchase Task (HPT) was introduced to learn participant’s demands for recyclable bags. After HPT the individuals finished the 15 items the New Ecological Paradigm Scale (NEPS) with a 5 type Likert scale scoring system. In the test higher score was to reflect more reception NEPS (Kaplan, Gelino, & Reed, 2018).

**Results Section**

Exponential demand model was used to measure group and individual data. The equation is Q = Q0 · 10k (e –α · Q0 · C - 1). This equation fit the data well. The result shown clarified that with increased prices the demands for reusable bags decreased. However, another interesting factor was people opted for taking a lot of bags if they were free compared to when the bags were priced, irrespective of their needs. The study was successful in explaining the concepts of behavioral economics to establish a demand for sustainable products. This report has shed light on a study which successfully translated behavioral economic concepts to demand sustainable products (Kaplan, Gelino, & Reed, 2018).

**Discussion Section**

Compared to previous researches on exponential demand model where moderate to the strong relationship was established with regards to the economics of behaviorism, little work has been done with relations do demands and needs in green consumerism. The study aimed to identify not only the demand for the reusable bags but also endeavored to answer the need for it or the lack thereof (Kaplan, Gelino, & Reed, 2018).

**Conclusion Section**

This research aimed to mend the bridge between demand and need when it comes to consumerism in the lights of the behaviorist approach. Even though it had some weaknesses, the research in its totality not only answered two important questions but also highlighted the small ratio of non-green people for whom environmental issues do not play a direct role or they perceive it that way. The sustainability efforts and demands of operant nature are jointly studied and it is no doubt that inquiries as such can expand the green consumerism agenda to greater heights (e.g., Peattie, 2010).

**Analysis of the Article**

**Strengths**

The description of behavioral and pro-environmental strategies is not the only point of focus this study also suggests the possible implications of policies that are in place and offers a different method for marketing specialists to promote sustainable purchases e.g. this study showed the median price 2.00$ as the optimum price till which individuals were willing to pay for the reusable bags. This could offer a new study to ascertain the limit to which individuals are willing to put money to save the planet. This helps target environment-friendly consumers and pushes the agenda of "green marketing" and bring about sustainability.

**Weaknesses**

Nevertheless, apart from these contributions, the present study has a very simple and non-diverse sample, that is also comparatively smaller in size and should mainly just be considered as a conceptual framework. Additionally, it was a simulated shopping not an actual purchasing behavior measurement and so one should understand the absence of real reward might have affected the results. The study also included a scale with statements that maybe be applicable in all cultural contexts hence the scale might need to be made culturally efficient.

**Reflection**

**Supported Opinions**

One of the studies among many is in congruence with the finding and suggests that's making the pricing more consumer-friendly may have multiple beneficial effects when it comes to sustainable consumerism. Recent literature shows that showing more adjustment is pricing structures within companies, help them garner more positive reviews.

**Standards Check**

The analysis of the research article has highlighted that the approach of the consumers is changing towards behavioral economics and they are preferring the use of the green consumerism, reuse of the shopping bags. They consumers have become aware of playing their role in saving the atmosphere and minimize the practices which add pollution to the environment.

**Conclusion**

Nevertheless, the various hypothesis implemented in this study help adjust the data received to fit in the HTP model perfectly. Simply targeting a more diverse demographic with a larger sample size may reaffirm the findings more effectively.

Reference

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