

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE PURCHASE INTENTION OF HOUSEHOLD WATER-SAVING PRODUCTS IN LANZHOU, CHINA

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to identify the critical factors affecting consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions with respect to household water-saving products in the city of Lanzhou, China. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, people living in several selected condominiums in Lanzhou who had never bought household water-saving products before. Descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation were used for analysing the data. The findings of the study reveal that attitude, product characteristics and subjective norms can be critical predictors of purchase intention with regard to household water-saving products. The results also suggest that consumers' attitude toward purchases can be influenced by ecological affect, ecological knowledge and product familiarity.*

**Key words:** *Purchase intention, attitude, product characteristics, and ecological issues.*

## 1. Introduction

According to McCarthy and William (1984), an organization aims all its efforts at satisfying its customers. As a result, all its activities hinge upon its regular customers and also upon attracting new ones. In its effort to develop its customer base, a company will also pay particular attention to consumers at large - its potential customers. Specifically, it will look at consumers' wants, needs and purchase intentions, all of which will then become very valuable information for the company. As Armstrong et al. (2000) argued, purchase intentions are likely to provide better forecasts of future sales than a simple extrapolation from past sales trends. Thus, predicting purchase intention and identifying the critical factors affecting it is very important for a company especially in terms of new product marketing.

Berger et al. (1994) recommended that managers' efforts be focused on altering consumers' attitudes before guiding their behavioural decisions. Clearly, consumers' attitudes toward a new product or toward buying an existing product will determine to a large extent their purchase intentions and decisions. Some researchers have argued that in green marketing the degree of social pressure felt by consumers with regard to their behaviours has a direct impact on their purchase intentions (e.g. Stavros, Michael, Robert and Markos, 1999). Moreover, product characteristics as intrinsic product cues are one

of the most important factors consumers considered when evaluating a product before purchasing it (Zeithaml, 1988).

Water shortage problems have emerged as one of the most important environmental issues facing many countries in today's world, most notably India, China, a host of African nations. In China, because of the severity of the water shortage in recent years, the government has taken measures and implemented policies designed to improve the overall situation. In large cities in every province, the most efficient and relevant measure adopted by the government to solve water shortage problems has been to impose the use of water-saving products. In addition, many companies have been encouraged to introduce innovative water-saving products into the market (<http://gb.cri.cn/1321/2007/08/29/1569@1738737.htm>, 10/10/2010). Still, even though China has recently been experiencing severe water shortage problems, water-saving products have yet to be accepted by most people, who simply ignore their existence or in many cases do not even know about their existence. This lack of familiarity with these products may be due to insufficient communication with the market. This study primarily aims to investigate the latter through the exploration of the antecedent factors affecting the attitude and purchase intentions of household water-saving products.

## 2. Literature Review

*- Ecological Affect, Ecological Knowledge and Purchase Intention*

The concepts of ecological affect and ecological knowledge have been developed by

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