

Why Do Consumers Love to Use Lululemon's Reusable Shopping Bags?

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Introduction

It is undeniable fact that plastic is inflicting harm on our environment. Over the past 50 years, the production of plastics has continued to increase, reaching 287.5 million tons by 2015 alone (Le Guern, 2018). Shockingly, it was estimated that one-time use products accounted for half of approximately 600 billion pounds of plastic in a single study (Freinkel, 2012). Plastic bags distributed at grocery stores are an example of plastic waste that could be reduced. Reusable shopping bags are an alternative form of shopping bag that could combat this issue. A handful of apparel retailers (e.g., Nike and Urban Outfitters) have employed the use of reusable shopping bags, one of which being Lululemon (Smith, Cho, & Smith, 2016). Customers are using Lululemon's reusable shopping bags, but we do not know all of the reasons why they use it. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate possible reasons with regards to the practice of reusing Lululemon shopping bags by consumers, allowing for insight on the sustainable practices.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

In the present study, Ajzen & Fishbein's Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was used as a framework to develop a part of the proposed research model and hypotheses. The Theory of Reasoned Action posits that attitudes and subjective norms lead to behavior intention, which ultimately leads to the act of such behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In addition to the TRA's variables, multiple other variables were considered that may answer our question of why consumers are choosing to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags. Based on the extant literature, the following research question and hypotheses were developed to explain such behavior.

RQ1: Why do Lululemon customers reuse their reusable shopping bags?

H1: Positive attitude towards Lululemon has a positive influence on the intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H2: Positive attitude towards using reusable shopping bags has a positive influence on the intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H3: Subjective norm has a positive influence on the intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H4: Intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H5: Personal environmentalism has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H6: Brand consciousness has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H7: Brand loyalty to Lululemon has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H8: Perceived convenience has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

H9: Positive perceived aesthetic of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags has a positive influence on the use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags.

Methods and Data Analysis

An online survey was used to collect the data. The survey was distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT). The survey included 5-point Likert-type scales containing items adapted from existing scales to measure each of the research variables. Additionally, there was one semantic-differential scale to measure one variable and one open-ended response question. Lastly, demographic information was collected. SPSS software was used to run reliability analysis, correlations, multiple regressions, and descriptive statistics.

Results

The total useable sample was 210 participants. Of these participants, the average age was 32 years old (62.4% female, 35.7% male, and 1.9% preferred not to specify their gender). The Cronbach's α for the research variables (i.e., attitude towards Lululemon, attitude towards using reusable shopping bags, subjective norm, intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags, personal environmentalism, brand consciousness, brand loyalty, perceive convenience, perceived aesthetic of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags, and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags) were .88, .90, .80, .68, .82, .83, .85, .76, .81, .84, and .74 respectively. All of them satisfied the threshold ($\alpha = .70$) required for internal consistency except for subjective norm ($\alpha = .68$) which marginally satisfied the criteria. Most of the variables were found to be correlated. In running multiple regressions, it was found that there were positive significant relationships between attitude towards Lululemon and intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.260, t = 3.926, p = .000$), attitude towards using reusable shopping bags and intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.344, t = 5.224, p = .000$), intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.703, t = 12.934, p = .000$), brand loyalty and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.125, t = 1.984, p = .049$), perceived convenience and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.457, t = 7.297, p = .000$), and perceived aesthetic of Lululemon's reusable shopping bag and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.130, t = 2.052, p = .041$). There were no significant relationships found between subjective norm and intention to use Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.078, t = 1.244, p = .215$), personal environmentalism and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags ($\beta = 0.014, t = 0.289, p = .773$), and brand consciousness and actual use of Lululemon's reusable shopping bags

($\beta = 0.034$, $t = 0.524$, $p = .601$). Thus, among the hypotheses, there was support for H1, H2, H4, H7, H8, and H9, and there was no support for H3, H5, and H6. Open ended responses added additional insight revealing that consumers use these reusable shopping bags for reasons such as style, quality, environmental benefits, display of the Lululemon brand, specific uses like grocery shopping, their ease in use, and free cost.

Implications

Some significant implications of this study relate to theoretical contributions, adding to existing literature, shining light on a specific behavior, and environmental outlook. The present study tests the Theory of Reasoned Action's (TRA) possible role in the behavior of using reusable shopping bags to help address the rationale as to why consumers are choosing to participate in a specific sustainable practice. Knowledge was gained by analyzing the behavior and allowing for new insights. Importantly, reasonings addressed by the sample as to why they participate in the sustainable behavior of using reusable shopping bags brings forward essential knowledge on how to influence consumers to behave in more eco-friendly ways.

References

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