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Green Product Management: An Emerging Market Perspective in South Africa

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7.1 Background

Research on green product management in emerging markets such as South Africa has been growing. This green marketing research is focused on diverse areas in green marketing. More specifically, research in green marketing in South Africa (SA) is focused on amongst small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Duffett et al., 2018; Lekhanya, 2014; Maziriri, 2020; Morgan, 2017); as well as within hospitality (Fatoki, 2019); energy (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019; Spencer et al., 2010), the water sector and agriculture, in apparel (Dabija, 2018; Dreyer et al., 2016; Taljaard et al., 2018); amongst black Generation-Y consumers' responses to advertising (Synodinos, 2013); company adoption of green marketing strategy (Isdale, 2016); green consumer behaviour (2016);

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green retail marketing advantages (Allen, 2007); and product and consumer attributes (Dubihlela & Ngxukumeshe, 2016).

Few research studies targeted green product management in SA (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Chikosha, 2018; Dubihlela & Ngxukumeshe, 2016; Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018; Maziriri, 2020; Muposhi et al., 2015). Existing studies on green product attributes do not focus on emerging markets such as SA (D'Souza, Taghian, Lamb, & Peretiakos, 2006; Ishaswini & Datta, 2011; Ismail et al., 2018; Tuten, 2013). This has created a gap for this chapter to investigate the green product management in SA with a more specific focus on the benefits of green marketing in this sector, as well as factors influencing and inhibiting the adoption of green products in SA by emerging market consumers. South African companies have adopted various green product strategies with the emphasis on local sourcing, green packaging, recycling, energy or water-saving eco-labels, e-waste recycling, introducing a green household product range and sustainability of the business. Furthermore, product strategies such as safe food, expanding sustainable product lines, building a resilient supply among others in food and clothing retailers are also adopted (Christelis, 2013; Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018; Maziriri, 2020). Retailers in SA are increasingly accounting for green marketing through eco-labels and enterprise development programmes. However, a lack of green marketing standards and governmental regulation impede the advancement of green marketing in SA (Christelis, 2013).

As companies seek opportunities to grow their businesses, emerging markets have become an attractive destination for green products to ensure their survival and growth. The growing middle classes in emerging markets have presented the opportunity for increased spending on green products and consumption of these products (Deloitte, 2017, p. 4). Companies can no longer ignore the impact green marketing strategies have on their bottom line. Therefore, understanding consumer attitudes and perceptions towards green products, as well as factors influencing and inhibiting consumers' adoption of green products is important for green manufacturers and retailers to formulate appropriate green product strategies. This understanding is also important for them to attract and attain green-conscious consumers. This chapter seeks to identify green products and to determine green behaviour in SA. The chapter further

determines the green efforts in textile and retail industries as well as factors influencing consumers to adopt green products. This chapter is structured to cover the purpose and objectives of this chapter followed by sections on research design, the green economy in SA as well as a section on green marketing, green products and green behaviour respectively. Following these sections will be the discussions on green marketing and the textile industry in SA, green marketing and the retail sector in SA and factors influencing green product adoption in SA. The conclusion will then be drawn from the discussions in the chapter.

7.2 Purpose and Objectives

This chapter purports to determine the factors that influence the adoption of green product amongst consumers

The following objectives are addressed in this chapter.

1. To identify green products in emerging economies.
2. To determine green buyer behaviour in SA.
3. To determine the green efforts of textile and retail companies in SA.
4. To determine factors that affect the adoption of green product management.

7.3 Research Design

The study employed involved a systematic review and synthesis of extant literature and secondary data sources as the research methodology is most suitable for the achievement of the objectives of this study. The analyses of literature sources on green marketing and green products were conducted and presented. This was deemed appropriate to address the objectives of the study and bring to light the green product strategies implemented in SA as well as factors influencing green product purchase in SA. Various sources related to green product marketing were reviewed and cited in this chapter to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the chapter.

7.4 The Green Economy in SA

The green economy in SA has been growing. The SA government has moved to embrace the green economy as an initiative to attain inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and development in the country (TIPS, 2018). Various policies have been developed in the country with the purpose to develop and grow the green economy in the country and include South Africa's National Climate Change Response White Paper (NCCRWP), the National Development Plan (NDP), the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP), each of which is dedicated focus area on developing green industries policies. This was further supported by the establishment of new green industries and the greening of existing, traditional industries (TIPS, 2018).

The SA government joined a global inter-agency United Nations (UN) programme, known as Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). PAGE's main goal is to bring together the expertise of five UN agencies (UNEP, UN [International Labour Organization](#), UN [Industrial Development Organization](#), UN [Development Programme](#) and UN [Institute for Training and Research](#)). The aim of the five agencies is to provide support to countries and regions in reframing economic policies and practices around sustainability. PAGE programmes contribute to better policy coordination and collaboration as well as the development of capacities of government institutions and social partners (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2017).

The rising concerns for organisations to be environmental conscious have led to the emergence of sustainability and corporate responsibility as two of the most prevalent themes to have emerged in the last decade internationally. This is owing to environmental social responsibility having the ability to ensure that future generations are provided for, particularly with the rise of social, environmental and economic inequality and adversity (Petrini and Pozzebon, 2009).

According to TIPS (2018), a green economy enables the country to achieve resource efficiency and clean production. Green economy also enables the country to reach its overarching goal of sustainable development with the economy, environment and society. It is enshrined in the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which requires that companies adopt green business methods. Christelis (2013) describes green business as an all-encompassing responsibility that requires that all levels of management, product and process are green. Christelis (2013) further states that green business encompasses corporate social responsibility, corporate environmental responsibility, the adoption of natural capitalism and the end goal of sustainability, which are all concerned with global-warming issues. The example of green business includes the global-warming crisis such as the climate change, global warming, deforestation, pollution and depletion of the ozone layer which have had a severe and negative impact across the world (Juwaheer, 2005).

Green marketing is one sub-area of green business. 'Green marketing' is used interchangeably with 'sustainable marketing', 'ecological marketing' and 'environmental marketing' (Govender & Govender, 2016). Green marketing in SA has moved from niche to mainstream marketing due to the level of awareness consumers have about green marketing as well as the demand for more social responsibility by consumers. This has resulted in environmental practices being the core responsibilities of the business and being used by organisations as a competitive advantage (Ottman, 2011). Environmental concerns have also become a key part of consumer decision-making, especially for consumers in middle and high-income categories, thus forcing companies to incorporate green marketing as part of their business and marketing strategies. Evidence shows that the low-income groups in SA are actively involved in recycling (Green times, 2019). However, low-income consumers are not the main target market for green products in SA since they are still perceived to be highly priced and not affordable to low-income consumers (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019; Smith, 2013). This income group benefit from government projects focusing on greening the low-cost housing. According to Isdale (2016), the main target market for green products in SA is the higher-income group (living standard measure—LSM 8-10) and the millennials. The LSM 8-10 are the affluent consumers who are willing to pay a high price to satisfy their green solution interest while the millennials have the high level of social awareness and high interest in protecting the environment (Isdale, 2016).

Consumers are being driven by the environmental crisis, including water and energy shortages, as well as pollution, among others, to opt for green or greener product alternatives that offer them environmental benefits (Hur et al., 2013), making environmental sustainability an important business practice (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011). South Africa emits about 50% of Africa's total greenhouse gas (GHG) and 1.4% of the world's GHG. Eskom and Sasol are the country's worst polluters in SA. Pollution and emission impact the demand for goods and services, forcing companies to manage the emissions (Ganda & Milondzo, 2018). It is therefore important to understand green consumer behaviour as well as factors influencing green products adoption.

7.5 Green Marketing, Green Products and Green Behaviour

Green marketing was defined by Bukhari (2011) 'as the means of selling products and/or services founded on their environmental advantages, where the product or service may in itself be considered as environmentally friendly or perceived in an environmentally friendly manner'. It is a commitment by an organisation to act in a green socially responsible manner, which involves developing safe, eco-friendly goods and services. This requires organisations to employ recyclable and easily decomposed packaging, better pollution prevention methods and a more efficient use of energy (Mukonza & Swarts, 2019). Green products are regarded as products with green design, green labelling, green packaging and green procurement (Smith et al. 2010). They are the products that meet customers' requirements by being socially acceptable. Green products are manufactured in a sustainable way and have a minimal impact on the environment (Kataria et al., 2013).

Green products make use of raw materials, product designs, production and packaging that is eco-friendly (Arseculeratne & Yazdanifard, 2013; Eneizan et al., 2016). Because some organisations do not produce tangible products, their efforts to support sustainability using less energy and efficient waste disposal are important in green marketing endeavours

(Kotler, 2011). This would involve paying attention to all aspects of getting the product to the market and include supply chain efficiency, sustainable and efficient production system, production processes, packaging, distribution and discarding of used products are important (Smith, 2013). In SA, companies are expected to present sustainability report during financial year reporting, which ensure that they account for their environmental behaviour.

The green product adoption in SA has been on the rise, with more and more consumers becoming green-conscious. The green-consciousness of consumers influences what they consider when evaluating products and services. While traditionally consumers would evaluate the products for its price, quality and durability, attributes related to environmental friendliness have become the focus of the evaluation. Consumers assess the green behaviour of companies before they make the decision of which products to buy and from which company to buy. Companies have had to reformulate their marketing and product strategies to ensure that they meet the consumer needs for green products. The need for saving the environment by acting in environmentally friendly ways has resulted in consumers purchasing green products and supporting green initiatives.

Green products are about the impact products have on the environment and the best approach to reduce any negative impact and protect natural resources (Rex & Baumann, 2007). This approach requires that companies formulate appropriate green products strategies. Product strategies in SA emphasise local sourcing, green packaging, recycling, low-energy use, water-saving eco-labels, e-waste recycling, introducing a green household product range, sustainability of the business, safe food, expanding sustainable product lines, building a resilient supply food and clothing retailers (Christelis, 2013). Retailers in SA are increasingly accounting for green marketing through eco-labels and enterprise development programmes (Christelis, 2013). The textile industry is one of the most affected industries that require green product management strategies. This chapter reviews the literature on the textile and the retail industries in SA to address the objectives of the study.

7.6 Green Marketing and the Textile Industry in SA

The textile industry in South Africa has been declining, making it almost impossible, or very costly, to work within an environmentally sustainable framework. The industry is a major impediment in the implementation of environmental sustainability in practice (Smal, 2016). South Africa has one of the biggest clothing markets (Van den Berg, 2017) and consumption is growing steadily, for example, as a result of an increasing number of shopping malls (Euromonitor International, 2015).

The product's life cycle within the clothing industry, from raw material extraction to production processes, care and maintenance, as well as the disposal of used products, needs new and innovative ways to reduce its environmental footprint (Business for Social Responsibility, 2009). The three major environmental challenges facing the clothing industry are high carbon footprint, excessive water usage and extensive waste (Business for Social Responsibility, 2009). The industry needs to improve its green product strategies. According to the Textile Exchange, (2012), nearly 20% of all textile products result in waste thus increasing the environmental footprint for clothing products. Clothing retailers are forced to adopt green-based product strategies to capture the attention of environmentally friendly consumers (Dabija, 2018).

New innovative models of practice are needed in the clothing industry to reduce its environmental footprint. The environmental footprint is severe in every phase of the product's life cycle, from raw material extraction to production processes, care and maintenance, as well as disposal of used or waste products (Business for Social Responsibility, 2009).

The textile companies are facing an array of scandals and challenges caused by environmental pollution and exploitation of workers, which compels them to rethink their strategies in compliance with environmental governance, and to implement specific measures aimed at environmental protection and preserving resources. By adopting green-based strategies to reach their target segments, retailers seek not only to capture the attention of different consumer generations, but also to inspire loyalty and encourage them to revisit stores (Dabija, 2018).

South Africa has the biggest clothing market in Sub-Saharan Africa (Euromonitor International, 2015). The consumption of clothing products grows steadily, for example through the increasing number of shopping malls (Euromonitor International, 2015). The sale of clothing products in South Africa experienced record growth in 2014, despite restricted consumer spending due to the high cost of living (Euromonitor International, 2015). Thus, SA is an interesting target for global brands due to a fast-growing market for clothing. This could create a challenge for green products since international products would be more expensive due to the high exchange rate, excluding the majority of SA consumers who cannot afford to pay higher prices.

As reported in the Sunday Times (2019), only a handful of clothing producers in SA are leading the 'green charge' and are producing green products. For example, local brands such as Akina, Pichulik, Sitting Pretty and Lunar take environmental and social issues into consideration in their product, while Maxhosa by Laduma and Lukhanyi Mdingi use natural, homegrown mohair and merino wool. The new independent labels like Rista and Louella are produced from sustainable and ethically produced raw materials (Sunday Times, 2019). There are few producers which make it difficult for the industry to reduce the impact of clothing on the environment.

The campaign 'Who Made My Clothes' was established by Fashion Revolution, which established with the aim to create awareness of the plight of workers and improve standards of safety as well as general working conditions. This was after a disaster in which 1129 garment workers were killed and 2500 injured in 2013 Rana Plaza (Sunday Times, 2019). In SA, the clothing industry is faced with a high rate of imported clothing, which sells at much lower prices than locally made ones, high unemployment rates and labour unrest, which makes it challenging to sell green products competitively. The retail industry in SA is another industry that has been responding to environmental changes in the market, thus adopting green product management.

7.7 Green Marketing and the Retail Sector in SA

The retail industry is under pressure to adopt green product strategies. This is because some consumers are aware and knowledgeable about the impact that the products they buy have on the environment and demand actions from retailers to reduce the damage to the environment. The green initiatives implemented by retailers in SA vary from one retailer to another. Various organisations within the industry, for example the Menlyn Park Shopping Centre in Pretoria, are implementing green initiatives. Menlyn Park Shopping Centre is SA's largest green retail space that lowers the utility and operational costs to the benefit of owners and tenants. The centre also maintains healthy and attractive indoor environments incorporating natural daylighting and greenery (Bizcommunity, 2019).

Woolworths is one of the retailers in SA that has taken green retailing more seriously. One of its store branches, Woolworths Palmyra, received the 5-star rating certified by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA) (Supermarket and Retailer, 2017). In addition to this achievement, the store is equipped with energy-saving innovations, including automatic doors; energy-efficient LED; natural gas refrigeration; closed-door refrigeration; vents; under-floor heating that uses recycled waste heat from refrigeration and screens which show real-time energy usage (Supermarket and Retailer, 2017).

SA's leading food retailers (e.g. Food Lovers Market, Pick n Pay, Shoprite Checkers, SPAR and Woolworths) discussed and agreed on strategies to reduce food waste in their stores in line with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal. The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals are to halve global food waste by 2030, which is in accordance with the World Resource Institute's Food Loss and Waste Reporting Protocol (GreenCape, 2019). This is a step in the right direction since it will help retailers reduce the impact of food waste on the environment. The retailers will also work together in promoting green behaviour among their consumers.

SA retailers are plagued by local issues like load-shedding and water shortages, which require green solutions. This has led to some retailers installing solar PV panels to produce many hours of renewable energy a year, accounting for 60–80% of the building's daily electricity needs. Some retailers are also introducing more natural daylighting (Bizcommunity, 2019). Another initiative in the retail sector is Greenpeace Africa, which outlines the state of renewable energy investments and commitments, energy transparency, commitment to renewable energy, greenhouse gas mitigation and lobbying for clean energy by Pick n Pay Shoprite, Woolworths, Spar and Massmart. Woolworths was reported to be leading the way, followed by Massmart and Pick n Pay, while Spar and Shoprite were reported to be making less effort in these initiatives (Fin24, 2016).

Another effort in the retail sector is the establishment of the eco-friendly (green stores) stores—both brick 'n mortar and online stores. The purpose of green stores is to promote green products consumption by encouraging consumers and retailers to use natural, plastic-free, chlorine-free biodegradable packaging alternatives to traditional plastic alternatives. Green products also encompass various product categories from food, to clothing, to building supplies. The different product categories allow consumers to live the green product lifestyle without being limited by the unavailability of products and services should they choose to become green warriors. In support of the above discussion, it is argued to be important to determine the factors influencing green product adoption in SA, which is covered in the next section.

7.8 Factors Influencing Green Product Adoption in SA

Earlier researchers proposed the use of consumer behaviour models to determine the influence of consumer behaviour towards green products (De Freitas, 2018; Isdale, 2016). Factors that have been used to determine consumer adoptions of green products are varied and include factors like the environmental knowledge (Lee, 2009; Uddin & Khan,

2018); social influence (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Cheah & Phau, 2011; Taljaard et al., 2018; Uddin & Khan, 2018); environmental awareness (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Govender & Govender, 2016; Mkhize & Ellis, 2018; Taljaard et al., 2018); eco-labels (Muposhi, 2019; Struwig & Adendorff, 2012); green promotion (Govender & Govender, 2016); cost of green products, product quality and availability (D'Souza, Taghian, Lamb, & Peretiakos, 2006; Isdale, 2016; Mkhize & Ellis, 2018). These factors have not been studied from the emerging consumers' perspectives. It is important noting that these factors relate to green marketing mix elements: product, promotion, price and distribution. The next section discusses these factors to portray how they influence consumer behaviour towards green products.

7.8.1 Product

Green-conscious consumers search for green products and want to be satisfied that the products have no negative impact on the environment, it's recyclable and preserve the environment. Consumers that buy green products value benefits associated with these products such as superior freshness and taste, the promise of safety and health and savings on energy costs (Manget et al., 2009). Green products producers should consider the materials sourced, ingredients used as well as the manufacturing of green products. This includes the use of natural and organic materials as well as sourcing local and through fair trade suppliers. It further includes utilising environmentally friendly materials and using lean manufacturing and distribution methods that minimise a company's carbon footprint. SA companies are accountable for this and have to report on the materials used as well as sustainable behaviour on their sustainability living report. For example, Pick n Pay Sustainable living report (2019) provides a view on how they respond to responding to social and environmental by reporting how the company promotes healthy living, being environmentally responsible, building an inclusive ethical value chain and doing well in the community.

Companies in SA are also expected by the department of Environment affairs in SA to report on their Sustainable consumption and production

in manufacturing. Companies in productive sectors such as mining, mineral processing, manufacturing and others use technical, economic and environmental strategies to reduce their impact on the environment. They also report on sustainable consumption and production in water resources with the aim of encouraging companies to conserve water by also recycling water for production purposes. The SA Breweries is one of the companies in SA that recycles water they use in the production (Venter & Janse van Rensburg, 2009).

7.8.2 Packaging from Recycled Material

Green packaged was described by Mohamed (2016) as packaging using manufacturing methods and materials with minimal environmental and consumption impact. Packaging performs various roles in marketing products. Its purpose is to store the products as well as identifying, describing, protecting, displaying, promoting and making the product marketable (Govender & Govender, 2016) and has long been used by marketers to influence the buying decision of consumers (Agyeman, 2014). Environmental friendliness is one aspect of influencing consumers' choices. Packaging that has an impact on the environment influences consumer behaviour towards the products. This is because of consumers' concerns of packaging and products, which involves having to dispose of products that may have excessive influence on their environmental assessment (Tobler et al., 2011). Green packaging includes packaging that uses hard-to-decompose materials, low-energy consumption packaging and environmentally friendly (Tuwanku et al., 2018). It also includes packaging made from recycled material, incorporating low sulphur levels and healthiness. Green packaging involves the use of packaging that is environmentally friendly and is sustainable, which result in the improved sustainability of the products the packaging protects (Chiellini, 2008; Kumar et al., 2017).

Using green packaging was found to be favoured by consumers who view it as a more viable green marketing strategy, from a customer-centric perspective by Heyns et al. (2014). The use of reusable shopping bags, for example, was a strategy to discourage the single-use of plastic bags in SA

(Dikgang et al., 2010). Green packaging has been described by Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012) as involving the reuse, reduction, refilling and recycling of packaging materials, which encourages the recycling of packaging materials. It also encourages the reduction of the materials used in the package, which involve using stronger and thinner materials (Rao & Bhargav, 2016).

In SA, various green packaging initiatives have been launched at the retail store and industry levels. For example, Pick n Pay launched its 'Make Plastic Bags Extinct' campaign in 2008. The company introduced its PnP green range packaging that is fully recyclable. Woolworths rolled out paper straws and wooden cutlery at its in-store cafés in 2018. Woolworths launched the Earth Friendly green product range which is fully recyclable and with packaging that features notable firsts such as household cleaning in South Africa with no metal elements. This also included the dog bags for the laundry and dish wash pods which are produced from a single source polymer (polyethylene), which are fully recyclable. The retailer also offers household cleaning range, including products packaged in green plastic (high-density polyethylene) HDPE bottles. Green plastic is plastic that does not use ethylene gas from fossil fuel (i.e. oil) to make the polyethylene. Instead, it uses sugar cane extracted ethylene; therefore it is no longer dependent on a non-renewable resource but is instead 100% renewable (IoL, 2019). The company also introduced low-cost, reusable bags to more stores across the country, as well as increasing the number of 'plastic shopping bag free' stores (IoL, 2019).

Whilst plastic-free stores have been introduced in SA; these stores seem to target high-income earners who are green-conscious and can live plastic-free. For example, Pick n Pay introduced dedicated plastic- and packaging-free zones across 13 stores in South Africa, more than half of which are in Cape Town. Pick n Pay customers have an option to purchase either Pick n Pay's new reusable-netted fruit-and-vegetable fresh produce bag or bring their own transparent and sealable reusable bag for loose-selling produce (Capetownetc, 2019).

As of 2020, a new initiative, the SA Plastics Pact, was established with the main aim of tackling the plastic pollution in the economy and to keep

them out of the environment. The World Wide Fund developed the SA Plastics Pact for Nature (WWF-SA), in partnership with the South African Plastics Recycling Organisation (SAPRO) and the UK's WRAP, and will be managed and delivered by GreenCape. Its founding members are the Clicks Group, Coca-Cola Africa, Danone, Distell, HomeChoice, Massmart, Myplas, Nampak Rigids, Pick n Pay, Polyoak, Polyplank, Shoprite Group, SPAR, Spur Corporation, TFG, Tigerbrands, Tuffy, Unilever, ADDIS, Waste Plan and Woolworths. Other organisations include Fruit South Africa, SAPRO, the Polyolefin Responsibility Organisation, the Polystyrene Association of South Africa, the PET Recycling Company, the Southern African Vinyl Association, the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa, the National Department of Environment, Forestry, Fisheries and the City of Cape Town (Supermarket and Retailer, 2020).

From the above initiatives, it is clear that recycling is playing a key role in influencing consumer behaviour to adopt green products. For example, the launch of green bags by some retailers is an indication that consumers are willing to change their behaviour and adopt green packaging. This initiative will go a long way to help reduce pollution in SA. There are also many cooperatives in SA, especially in townships that specialise in recycling. Some of the cooperatives operate as businesses that specialise in recycling materials. Members of the cooperatives collect various types of recyclable materials and take them for further processing in exchange for money, which has served as a motivation for recycling efforts in the country. However, the shortage of suitable land to dispose of waste in South Africa limits people from recycling. According to Statssa, millions of tonnes of general waste produced in South Africa still end up in landfills (with the majority of people involved in recycling being those living in urban areas and very few coming from rural areas). Recycling in rural areas was found to be more common in households on farms than households in traditional areas.

7.8.3 Use of Eco-labels

Eco-labels are labels or seals that symbolise approval and which are added to product labels or packaging. These labels or seals communicate the environmentally friendly attributes of the green products in question (Bratt et al., 2011). The purpose of the labels/seals is to help consumers make more informed purchase decisions by gaining knowledge and understanding conveyed through product information (D'Souza, Taghian, & Lamb, 2006). Eco-labels have been cited as the reason why consumers purchase green products, and their absence also serves as reasons for not buying green products (Mkhize & Ellis, 2018). With eco-labels, environmentally friendly consumers can identify green products with verified environmental attributes (Shingrup, 2013). A study conducted by Struwig and Adendorff (2012) reported that SA consumers are unaware of eco-labels and that they were unable to verify the environmental claims made by green products.

The six retail chains, Clicks, Food Lovers Market, Pick n Pay, Spar, Shoprite and Woolworths collaborated with WWF, to use the same recycling labelling system across their stores (Sadan, 2019). This was after the [labels on South African shelves were found to be confusing](#), with consumers perceiving that packaging was destined for recycling when it was not. The new label is known as the 'On Pack Recycling Labels' (OPRLs) and indicates whether the packaging can or cannot be recycled (Business Insider, 2019a). With the new label, consumers are able to determine whether the product is environmentally friendly or not. The labels are designed to depict that the package is recyclable and shows the type of recyclable package, for example plastics or paper. The eco-label is used in various food and non-food item, as well as household items such as clothing or décor accessories. Some materials have material identification codes that identify the material, whether plastic, bottle, paper and so on. This is important for waste collectors and recyclers, but not for consumers (Sadan, 2019).

Packages that are not recyclable have the same sign with a line through the label to denote that it is not recyclable.

Another eco-label is EcoStandard. EcoStandard is the first eco-label for building and construction materials in South Africa. It was developed in 2009 and launched at the end of 2013. The purpose of this eco-label is to provide independent verification and reward for responsible design and manufacture of products in the building sector. The purpose of EcoStandard, as is with the case of other eco-labels, is furthermore to provide easy identification of products which are environmentally friendly in terms of their sources of materials, manufacturing processes, as well as use and end-of-life design qualities, that is ease of disassembly for reuse or recycling. Businesses also use the label to authenticate the use of eco-materials and eco-methods for specific products (Milner et al., 2017).

SA does not have many eco-labels made in SA; however, there are international eco-labels that are used by SA companies. Most of these eco-labels are unknown to local consumers.

The Australia, China and all over the world.

The Global GreenTagCert™ comprises a number of certifications, verifications and declarations for different purposes: (Global Green Tag International, n.d.)

LCARate™ helps manufacturers market and end users understand the complexity of sustainability with simple graphics, real metrics and usable LCA data, using tiered LCARate Marks, Product Scorecards and Environmental Product Declaration (EPDs) with unique Life Cycle Benefit Analysis to power the Circular Economy. It is a unique comparative LCA (Life Cycle Assessment) based, product rating and certification system that compares the product under study to a 'worst case business as usual (BaU) product in common use'. The assessment that goes well 'beyond LCA' using robust scientific metrics to rate the whole of life performance of products using Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum rating Marks or 'Tags';

Environmental Product Declarations are part of Global GreenTag's ISO 14025 and EN 15804 LEED® and BREEAM® compliant EPD Program Operation also using unique Life Cycle Bene_t Indicators, to measure Net Positive and Circular Economy benefits.

GreenRate™ is for all products and projects requiring recognised provider 'Sustainable Product' Certi_cation in a variety of speci_c international rating tools and programs. GreenRate is recognised for a key WELL™ Feature;

Product Health Declarations (GreenTag PhDs) are unique WELL™ recognised and LEED® compliant material health transparency/optimisation reports that also come with HealthRATE™ rating Tags;

HealthRATE™ ratings are a unique 'Healthiness in Use' assessment that provides BronzeHEALTH™, SilverHEALTH™, GoldHEALTH™ or PlatinumHEALTH™ rating Tags;

CarbonRATE™ Tags are an option for products with LCARate assessments based on '% Saved', 'Net Zero' and 'Carbon Credit % (Bene_t)' claims;

Best Environmental Practice PVC (BEP PVC) is for vinyl products seeking recognition under Green Star®, Defence Australia and Lend Lease projects, among others.

Manufacturer Claim Verifications (McV) are single-issue verification Tags for environmental and health claims marketing support and risk management. (Global Green Tag International, *n.d.*)

Although various eco-labels have been launched, very few of them are known or recognised by consumers (Struwig & Adendorff, 2012). This implies that companies are spending efforts and resources developing eco-labels, but less is done to create awareness of the eco-labels in question. The establishment of one common label by the large retailers in SA, for example, would help overcome this challenge, although it will require some marketing effort by these retailers to ensure consumers are aware of the eco-labels the retailers have developed.

7.8.4 Environmental Awareness/Green Promotion

The lack of awareness of green products could result in consumers not purchasing green products. This call for organisations to create awareness of green products can be achieved by using various communication tools. The use of eco-labels is considered one of the best tools to communicate green product attributes, which in turn can build green product familiarity (Isdale, 2016). Creating awareness for green products could also assist marketers to change the negative perception some consumers have about green products, such as that green products are expensive, are of inferior quality and that they are artificial products (Mints, 2011). Some of the negative perceptions consumers have about green products are because of

organisations that mislead consumers about the benefits of green products, which is known as green washing (Isdale, 2016). Dubihlela and Ngxukumeshe (2016) found that eco-friendly product consumption by South African consumers is aimed at protecting the environment. When consumers are unaware or have insufficient information about green products, they rarely consider buying them, which makes green awareness an important aspect of green product marketing (Dreyer et al., 2016).

According to Synodinos (2013), green promotion is important to convey the green image of the organisation to its target market(s) and a tool needed to create green product awareness and environmentally friendly behaviour. Govender and Govender (2016) state that advertising green products is effective when creating awareness of challenges facing the environment. Heyns et al. (2014) reported that green products certification is a form of promotion that differentiates green products from each other, and it brings the element of tangibility (and hence authenticity) to bear on the social responsibility image of businesses. The study by Taljaard et al. (2018) found that awareness of green products influences consumer behaviour towards green products, which supports the need for green promotion of green products. Synodinos' (2013) study found that green promotion influences consumer's environmental concerns and environmental behaviour. As part of green promotion, organisations could establish partnerships with communities to promote environmental awareness and educating people on environmental issues (Arseculeratne & Yazdanifard, 2013).

Increasing the level of awareness is important especially in the retail industry since increasing consumers' understanding of the recyclability of a particular type of packaging such as plastics influences their behavioural towards the use of plastic packaging, which is necessary to stop the flow of plastics in nature (Business Insider, 2019a). The introduction of the On Pack Recycling Labels (OPRLs) was necessary to reduce SA consumers' confusion about recyclable and non-recyclable packaging. Some consumers perceived that packaging marked with a number in a triangle could be recycled, which misled consumers into buying non-recyclable products (Business Insider, 2019b). Therefore, the use of uniform eco-labels in the retail and construction sectors, especially in the food and clothing sectors, helps consumers identify recyclable packaging.

Companies in SA have adopted various strategies to create green awareness. These strategies included advertising, use of social media, collaboration with local municipalities, sponsorship of branded bags for recycling dry goods such as paper and cardboard for kerbside collection of municipal waste. Products are also being enclosed in sustainable, green packaging to promote waste separation from the home to municipal collection points (Themediaonline, 2017).

Within SA, there are some organisations whose responsibilities it is to promote green awareness, for example eLabel and Carbon Protocol. eLabel was developed to share information about products and services in respect of environmental, humanitarian and animal welfare concerns. It serves as a platform for civil society organisations to share valuable information to consumers. It also serves as a tool that registered users can use to find out more about products than is provided on the physical label (Ecospecifier, n.d.).

The Carbon Protocol established to raise awareness and facilitate the transition to a climate-resilient society, by maintaining and managing a Carbon Neutral Logo for members. It was established as a collaborative entity of concerned and interested parties within South Africa (Ecospecifier, n.d.). Parties include residential consultants or those who want to green their homes and offices, to those dealing with water and energy resources and want to manage the efficiency of these resources, as well as others (Ecospecifier, n.d.).

Shopping centres and office buildings in SA also keep large bins for recycling purposes, which helps educate consumers on the need for recycling, as well as reducing environmental waste, as shown in Fig. 7.1.

In addition to the above, municipalities across SA were also involved in the green initiatives through a campaign that promoted recycling and encouraged communities to 'reduce, reuse and recycle' packaging and products. Some municipalities went to the extent of handing out refuse bags that consumers should use to store goods for recycling. This was a valuable effort to create the level of awareness needed for consumers to recycle (The Citizen, 2018).



Fig. 7.1 Framework of Green IMC. (Source: Own picture)

7.8.5 Environmental Knowledge

Environmentally knowledgeable and concerned consumers purchase green products to minimise their impact on the environment and do so even when the product is of inferior quality (Gleim et al., 2013). Organisations producing green products need to create awareness of green product attributes to influence consumer attitude and behaviour towards green products. This is because of the positive link between environmental knowledge and environmental behaviour (Tanner & Kast, 2003). Companies need to develop environmental consciousness among consumers so that they can consume green products purposefully (D'Souza, Taghian, & Lamb, 2006). This will serve as a reason for consumers to learn about and use eco-labels (Thøgersen et al., 2010).

Some consumers are unaware of the impact of their behaviour on the environment; creating environmental knowledge will help these consumers to change their behaviour and attitudes towards the environment. Woolworths recently launched environmentally friendly (green) products and has expanded its product range to include 24 eco-cleaning and 7 plastic-alternative household items. The purpose was to take advantage of latest advances available to formulate highly effective cleaning products free of potentially harmful substances such as chlorine, phosphates, dyes or parabens, triclosan and artificial colourings (IoL, 2019). These

efforts go to show that consumers are knowledgeable about green products and actively search for these products, which is why retailers such as Woolworths stock them in their store shelves. There has been a trend in SA where consumers have been shown to be buying organic products (USDA, 2019), which supports that consumers are knowledgeable about green products and chose green products despite the perception that they are higher priced than other products.

7.8.6 Cost of Green Products, Product Quality and Availability

Green products are perceived to be costly, and, according to Davern (2007), the costs for creating green products are higher since they are not easily available. Because some of the green products are imported, costs can even be attributed to variations on green specifications across countries, which add costs to the product (Lubieniechi, 2002). Price was identified in various green marketing studies as a barrier towards green product purchase behaviour (Young et al., 2010). However, studies have also reported that consumers involved with the environment are willing to pay a 'green premium' than those who are not (Vlosky et al., 1999).

As mentioned earlier in this section, environmentally concerned consumers are more willing to pay a premium price to support retailers/growth and to sponsored green product improvements (Oliva & Kallenberg, 2002). A 2015 Nielsen Global Corporate Sustainability Report shows that majority of the South African consumers are willing to pay more for brands owned by companies committed to positive social and environmental impact, compared to the global consumers (Bizcommunity, 2018). This implies that the less knowledgeable consumers are about green products, and less accessible green products are, the fewer consumers will be willing to pay premium prices. Knowledgeable consumers are more likely to have a better understanding of the costs involved in producing and making available green products, thus influencing their attitude towards paying premium prices for green products. Consumers who are aware of green products and the eco-labels are also willing to pay a higher price for such products because of the perceived

quality, environmental friendliness and credibility of eco-labels (Dreyer et al., 2016). However, the reality is that the higher the prices for green products are, the less affordable they will be for most consumers in SA. For example, a packet of 48, 2-ply, green toilet paper sells for a price range of \$20–\$25 compared to the normal (non-green) price of \$10–\$15 in SA. SA has a high unemployment rate of 30% (IoL, 2020) with the majority of its citizens living in poverty, which implies that green products would be targeted at middle and mostly higher-income earners.

Sonnenberg et al. (n.d.) argue that green products cannot succeed unless they also perform competitively in terms of non-environmental attributes. This means that green products must satisfy consumers in both green and non-green product attributes such as price, branding and quality. The green products in South Africa are believed to be priced high, which excludes certain groups of consumers from purchasing green products, especially the lower-income and some middle-class consumers. The high-price strategy used for green products has been cited as a reason why some consumers do not buy green products (Muposhi, 2019). Perceptions exist among some consumers that green products are not easily made available. Therefore, companies need to ensure that green products are available and that their availability is communicated to consumers. This perception will soon change as retailers continue to launch their own green product ranges, thereby increasing green product awareness and green product availability.

7.8.7 Social and Peer Influence

Various scholars (Anvar & Venter, 2014; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; Taljaard et al., 2018) have researched the impact of social influence on green products purchase. According to Pickett-Baker and Ozaki (2008), social influences promote recycling activities among consumers and that these influences, in turn, influence the behaviour of environmentally conscious consumer towards green purchase behaviour. Taljaard et al. (2018) examined whether social influence determined the adoption of green products and reported that that social influence does not have any impact on consumers' intentions to buy green products. Other studies

such as those of Uddin and Khan (2018), Park and Ha (2014), Anvar and Venter (2014) and Bamberg and Moser (2007), in contrast, found a positive association between intent and behaviour. Other studies support Taljaard et al.'s (2018) findings that social influence does not influence consumer behaviour towards green products (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

The green-conscious consumers are demanding transparency and traceability when buying clothing and fashion products and are often responsible for influencing others to do the same. These are the younger generations who are younger than 40 years of age (Bizcommunity, 2018). The green-conscious consumers are interested in where their clothing was sourced from, how it was made, if the workers in that environment are well taken care of, and if workers are being paid a stipulated and fair wage rate (Bizcommunity, 2018). The social and peer pressure in SA is becoming more visible in recycling and the use of recycled materials such as recycled bags compared to the use of plastics. This is because there have been numerous efforts to promote recycling of products and other materials, which results in consumers influencing each other towards the recycling of products and packages.

7.9 Conclusion

Although there are numerous efforts in SA with respect to green product marketing, not all consumers are aware of green products. While some consumers may be aware of green efforts such as recycling, the shortage of land impact on the recycling efforts of South Africans. There are various other efforts in SA to encourage consumers to recycle the product and packaging that they use. Various stakeholders have also made efforts to educate consumers to, and make them aware of, the need to protect the environment by recycling.

Few of the eco-labels in SA are known, which requires an awareness of eco-labels to be generated among long consumers. Also, green products in SA are often treated as speciality products mostly targeted at high- but also some middle-income consumers, leaving out the majority of consumers from buying green products. However, it is noteworthy that not

all consumers in SA can afford green products since green products in SA are generally priced higher than normal, non-green products, thus excluding the majority of SA citizens from buying these green products.

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