Survey Assignment
Patagonia, Inc.

Group 4 | Woah! Communications

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Background

The overall issue Woah! Communications is addressing for Patagonia is if their brand identity and use of cause marketing strategies appeal to the key public of young adults. To explore this issue, our survey explored young adult interests, everyday activities and consumer habits, defining the different groups of people who purchase Patagonia. This survey builds on prior findings by taking in a larger sample size of young adults and also offering a quantitative look at their purchasing behaviors. It also specifically examines what types of advertising and cause marketing strategies our key demographic is most likely to respond to. This information will aid Woah! Communications in attempting to answer the research question of how cause marketing strategies impact consumer behavior among the young adult demographic.

Method

We developed an online survey using Qualtrics. It was open for a total of 8 days, opening Monday, November 4, 2019, and closing at 5 p.m. on Monday, November 11, 2019. The questions we asked helped group respondents into three groups: outdoorsy, environmentally conscious, and classic "Fratagonia," generally used to refer to people with a higher income and preppy style. From there, we asked questions to measure their responsiveness to possible cause marketing strategies. We recruited participants through each of our group members' respective organizations that we are involved in, including Greek life, Order of the Bell Tower, Carolina Union Activities Board and others. We also reached out directly to our friends through Instagram and traditional text messaging and iMessage. There was 203 total number of participants, 79.77% identifying as female and 19.08% identifying as male. Based on other demographic questions, all participants were between 17 and 23 years old, making them all fit the young adult demographic. Approximately 3% were 18 years old or younger, 61% were 19 to 20 and 36% were 21 to 23. 77.4% were white, with the next highest proportions being 9.04% Asian and 7.91% black or African American. Over 90% of respondents were not of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin. Notably, 83.05% of participants had a family income over $50,000, with the most substantial proportion of participants, 47.37%, having a family income of $100,000 to $500,000 and thus more considerable purchasing power.

Key questions surround the participants' perspective on Patagonia as well as their behavior regarding both lifestyle and purchasing. Participants first answered: "What word best describes Patagonia?" with freeform answers. For those who had purchased Patagonia, they had to say why they purchased, choosing from "price, quality, convenience, trendiness and other." To gauge lifestyle, they were asked: "On a scale of 1-10 how environmentally conscious are you?" and "How much do you consider yourself an outdoorsy person?" with answers ranging from a great deal to a lot to a moderate amount and a little to not at all. For behavior, the questions were "Are you more likely to purchase from a company that markets themselves as sustainable?" with answer choices including yes, no and maybe. We also asked participants to choose what they feel more compelled by when purchasing "advertisements displaying the things that a company is selling" or news coverage of what the company is doing."

Results

One question we were attempting to answer was about peoples' purchasing behavior for Patagonia. When we measured whether or not participants had heard of Patagonia, 97% said that they were familiar with the brand. We also asked participants is they were owners of Patagonia gear. Almost 58% of those who were familiar with the brand admitted to owning Patagonia gear. Approximately 89% of the participants who own Patagonia items own apparel. Only 10% of the participants own Patagonia's outdoor gear, and less than 1% own Patagonia accessories. Five items that illustrated why participants purchased certain items showed a negative attitude towards quality and trendiness. The scale was anchored by 1 (negative) and 5 (positive). The means for the items were as follows: quality ($M = 1.32$), trendiness ($M = 2.44$), convenience ($M = 3.33$), price ($M = 3.38$) and other (4.53). The results showed us that 33% of people had purchased Patagonia in the past 1 to 2 years, and another 31% of people have purchased within the last year.

When the participants were asked if they own separate clothing items for outdoor activities, approximately 67% of them said yes. We also found that it is common practice for 53% of our participants to browse websites before purchasing a product. When asked what brands participants were most likely to buy outdoor apparel and gear from, we gathered a variety of results. Patagonia, The North Face, Columbia, Nike, Chaco and Orvis were some of the brands that participants repeatedly mentioned. North Face was listed 61 times, and Patagonia was recorded 69 times. However, The North Face and Patagonia were mentioned together as one answer from participants 37 times. Furthermore, when asked about word association with the brand, responses fell into the realm of three distinct categories: (1) outdoorsy/environmental, (2) quality/durability, (3) preppy/fratty/expensive.

Part of our survey was to address the overall environmental awareness and sustainable habits and purchasing behavior of the UNC-Chapel Hill study body. When asked about current sustainability practices, of the 203 participants, 177 (87%) identified that they recycle, 159 (78%) use reusable products (ex. Bags, straws and reusable food containers), 119 (58%) control their water usage, 115 (56%) manage their electricity consumption, and 68 (33%) make a point to buy local. Eight of the participants identified that they participate in various sustainable practices such as public transportation, veganism, vegetarianism, composting, and buying resale clothing to avoid fast fashion. Awareness around environmental issues ranged between zero (low awareness) and ten (high awareness) with a mean of 6.82. On a scale of one to ten, the mean level of environmental consciousness was 6.77.

When asked about previous sustainable clothing purchases, 51.65% of participants identified that they had purchased sustainably while 48.35% had not. In regards to how recent these purchases were, 11.7% identified within the last month, 23.4% in the previous few months, 45.74% in the last year, 13.83% one to two years ago, 2.13% two to three years ago, and 3.19% over three years ago. When asked why they had not purchased sustainably marketed clothing items in the past, 6.32% identified that they did not like the style, 36.21% believed the clothing cost too much, 50.57% had not seen sustainably marketed clothing options, and 6.9% identified another reason. These submissions predominantly included a lack of information about sustainability clothing choices. Some responses included not needing the clothing or that the desired item was out of stock. When asked whether purchasing sustainably was part of their routine, 57.6% of participants said no, 8.84% said yes, and 33.7% said that it is sometimes part of their shopping routine. When asked about whether they are more willing to purchase from sustainably marketed brands, 41.8% of participants said yes, 8% said no, and 36.45% said maybe.

When asked about what marketing they felt more compelled to purchase after viewing, 66.1% of participants said that they were more compelled by advertisements that displayed what a company sells versus 33.9% were more compelled by news coverage of what a company is doing.

Discussion

Our survey provided us with insights that other methods, such as interviews and focus groups, did not. Through our study, we were able to collect copious amounts of quantitative data, while our other methods of research provided mostly qualitative data. Because the purpose of our survey was to determine participant behavior patterns, our questions reveal underlying reasons behind Patagonia purchases made by college-aged students and overall sustainable purchasing behavior. Based on our survey results, the typical Patagonia purchaser fell into one of three categories, including the outdoor enthusiasts, the environmentally conscious, and the "Fratagonia" style icons. Overall, our most useful question was asking why our survey participants purchased their Patagonia items. Throughout our research, our group has wondered if these purchases were motivated by trendiness or Patagonia's branding and messaging. However, on a scale of 1 (negative) to 5 (positive), trendiness had a mean of 2.44, which was the second-lowest mean of our response options for this question.

Additionally, our survey revealed that our participants had purchased Patagonia items much more recently than we anticipated. 33% of people have purchased Patagonia in the past 1 to 2 years, and another 31% of people have purchased within the last year. These two results of our survey conflict with some of our prior research. Specifically, in our focus group, we found that a majority of our participants purchased and wore Patagonia in their middle school years. At the time, they wore the apparel for trendiness reasons. However, our prior research did correlate to our survey findings regarding the environmental insights. The majority of our survey participants practice some sustainable habits in their daily routine, whether that be recycling or using reusable products.

Additionally, on a scale of one to ten, the mean level of environmental consciousness was 6.77. However, with these statistics under consideration, when asked about previous sustainable clothing purchases, only 51.65% of participants identified that they had purchased sustainably. Although our survey participants are aware of environmental issues and practice sustainability, this does not significantly impact their purchasing decisions. This means that their motives to buy from Patagonia are not necessarily due to their environmental marketing and sustainable aspects of the brand.

A limitation of our survey was that we do not know each participant. For this reason, we do not know the accuracy or truthfulness of individual responses. It is also important to note that our results are based on a relatively small sample. Therefore, the results do not necessarily reflect the behaviors of all Patagonia consumers in the same demographic. Thankfully, going into the survey, our group determined that we wanted our questions to center around consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, the majority of our questions isolated behavior patterns such as individual selection decisions, reasoning behind the appeal of a company, and purchasing time frame. Gaining college-aged participants were feasible in our survey because Woah! Communications consists of college students who could access peers through digital platforms. However, the overwhelming majority of our participants were female, so in the future, our group could strive to find a more gendered balance in participants in case this had any effect on the results.

Appendix

Public Survey

Q1: Have you ever heard of the brand Patagonia before this survey?

- Yes
- No

Q2: What word best describes Patagonia?

Q3: Do you own anything from Patagonia?

- Yes
- No

Q3.1: What category of items describes what you own from Patagonia?

- Apparel
- Accessories
- Outdoor Gear

Q3.2: Why did you purchase?

- Price
- Quality
- Convenience
- Trendiness
- Other (please specify):

Q3.3: When was the last time you purchased anything from Patagonia?

- In the last month
- In the last few months
- In the last year
- 1-2 years ago
- 2-3 years ago
- 3+ years ago

Q4: On a scale of 1-10 how environmentally conscious are you?

Q5: How informed do you consider yourself about environmental issues?

Q6: What current sustainable practices do you participate in? (Select all that apply)

- Recycling
- Using reusable products (ex. Bags, straws, food containers)
- Controlling water use
- Controlling electricity consumption
- Buying local
- Other

Q7: How often do you participate in outdoor activities?

- Daily
- 4-6 times a week
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week
- A couple times a month
- Never

Q8: How much do you consider yourself an outdoorsy person?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount

- A little
- Not at all

Q9: Do you own separate clothing items for outdoor activities?
- Yes
- No

Q10: How often do you browse a website before you purchase a product?
- Regularly
- Somewhat Regularly
- Sometimes
- Almost Never
- Never

Q11: How do you get information about companies?

Q12: What brands are you most likely to buy outdoor apparel and gear from?

Q13: Have you ever purchased sustainably marketed clothing items?
- Yes
- No

Q13.1: When is the last time you did this?
- In the last month
- In the last few months
- In the last year
- 1-2 years ago
- 2-3 years ago
- 3+ years ago

Q13.2: Why have you not purchased sustainably marketing clothing items in the past?
- I don't like the style
- It costs too much
- Haven't seen sustainably marketed clothing being sold
- Other (please specify):

Q14: Is purchasing sustainably a regular part of your shopping routine?
- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

Q15: Are you more likely to purchase from a company that markets themselves as sustainable?
- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Q16: What do you feel more compelled by when purchasing?
- Advertisements displaying the things that a company is selling
- News coverage of what the company is doing

Q17: What specific cause marketing strategies are you most likely to respond to?
- Articles supporting the company’s mission
- Requests for consumer action, like attending rallies, cleanups, etc.
- Round up to the nearest dollar
- Donations with purchases
- Returning used clothing to company to be recycled

Q18: How old are you?

Q19: What is your gender identity?
- Male
- Female
- Transgender Male
- Transgender Female
- Gender non-variant/Non-conforming
- Not listed (please specify):

Q20: What is your race? (select all that apply)
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (please specify):

Q21: Are you of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin?
- Yes
- No

Q22: Political Spectrum Scale

Q23: What best represents your family's socioeconomic status/income level?
- Less than $20,000
- $20,000 to $34,999
- $35,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $74,999
- $75,000 to $99,999
- $100,000 to $500,000
- More than $500,000