

THE DETERMINANT FACTORS OF GREEN CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The environmental problem becomes a global concern nowadays for the whole human community. Thus, ecological awareness has arisen worldwide; a need for environmental protection has become necessity. With the rise of globalization, the increasing in products usage occur at the same time. People are educate to become more aware on the importance of environmental protection. The consumption level among the consumers is identified as the main reason for the environmental problems. The developing countries like Malaysia facing many challenges to ensuring the balance between the country developments and save and protect the environment from being destroyed. Among the environmental problems that are faced by Malaysia is reduced of urban air and river quality, deforestation, and hazardous waste and house waste. Green consumption behavior plays an important role in order to save our earth from any pollution. Nowadays, there are a lot of unethical usages of chemical that will cause lots of harm to earth. Therefore, green consumption behavior is encouraged among the consumers in minimizing this unhealthy problem for sustainable environment. The responsible body like, government already make some solutions to curb this problem but still do not succeed. The level of awereness among the consumers towards this action is still scarce. There are a lot of factors that influence consumers towards green consumption behavior. Hence, the objective for this study is to investigate two factors as suggested by the literature, which are product quality and environmental attitudes, and also to identify the most influential barrier towards green consumption behavior. 384 respondents from the public in Kota Bharu, Kelantan will be selected by using a convenience sampling method. Then, data will be analyzed using SPSS.

Keywords : Green consumption, ,green consumer, product quality, environmental attitude

Introduction

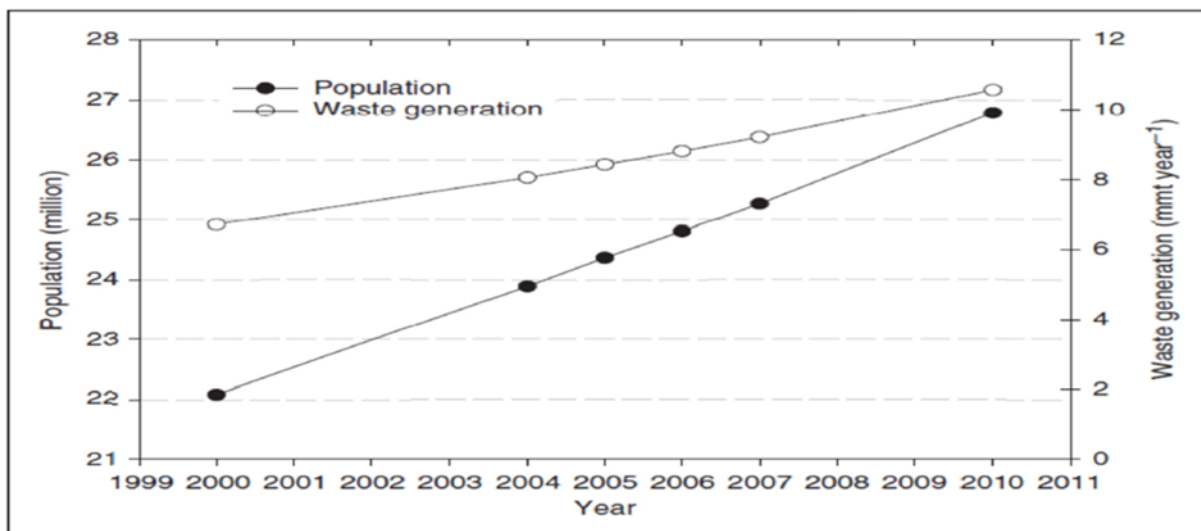
Green issue has been a worldwide issue. This issue has become important to both companies and consumers during the twenty-first century. The term of green consumption covers a full range of activities in both production and consumption fields (China.org, 2012). These activities would cover the green products, recycling of materials, and the protection of the environment and preservations of species. Many countries had been actively promoting sustainable green living concept. In China there are around 200 Chinese enterprises that had obtained environmental labeling certification. They sold the necessity products such as refrigerators, soft drinks, TVs, computer, air-conditioners and detergents (China.org, 2012). Nowadays, consumers become more environmental friendly and they are aware on the sustainable problems ocured. Therefore, the demanding towards ecologically friendly products are increased dramatically for the purpose to reduce their impact on the environment. Changes of climate around the world and environmental catastrophes urged consumers to become more aware on the environment issues. This is because of unethical consumption will impact on the eco-system such as it may harm damage to any living organism, cause deterioration of the environment during process of manufacturing or usage, over consumption of non renewable energy among the consumers, animal cruel testing or human subjects (Elkington, 1994). Besides, the European Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO) reported that 255 domestic product types give impacts on pollution, human and environmental health risk, and greenhouse gas emissions where about 70% - 80% of this impact relate to food and drink; housing (including construction and maintenance impacts, and domestic energy use); and transport (including commuting, leisure and holiday travel). While the remaining impacts are mostly from water use, equipment (appliances, computers, and home entertainment), furniture, clothing and shoes (Tukker A. et al., 2005 as cited in Peatite, 2010). Basically, green products will give many benefits to consumers. In addition, it also will help our earth. Using non green products will lead to environmental pollution compared to using green products such as degradable plastics and recycle bottles. Other than that, it will also improve the housing environment especially in terms of air quality and sound of the appliances. For example, the washing machine with low noise and compound floorboards will improve the housing environmental. Besides, green product also will improve human's health, by reducing the radiations from TVs and computer that will cause cancer. Green or environmental marketing has been viewed as a tool towards sustainable development and for strengthening brand image (Banyte et al., 2010). It can be said that green product has been a commercial product brand around the world and it will give a lot of benefits to us besides protect our earth from pollution, like, gaining competitive advantage to companies and care of our health.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The past decades are characterized by the increasing consumers' consumption worldwide. This causes rapid environmental damage due to depleting of natural resources (Chen & Chai, 2010). In 2011, the daily amount of solid wastes produced in Malaysia reached about 30,000 tons and 70% of these amount was reported to be collected while 95% (which is 75% of waste generated) of them are disposed of in landfills and only 5% from that amount has being recycled (Agamuthu et al., 2009b). In terms of recycling, unfortunately, the performance of Malaysia households is still low which is 5.5% as compared to Singapore and Vietnam which are 56% and 22% respectively (Azilah et al., 2013). Besides, more than 70% of 28.5 million of its population

was reported to be living in the urban area (Johari et al., 2014). This rapid development has resulted of contribution greater amount of municipal solid waste (Badgie et al., 2012; Fauziah & Agamuthu, 2012).

Figure 1.0: Relationship between population growth and solid waste generation (Abushamal et al., 2010)



Based on this situation, a lot of study is needed on green consumption in minimizing this problem. Unfortunately, the study on the factors determine the green consumption is limited as previous study focus more on green consumers' attitude and green marketing (Kalita, 2014). Besides, most of the studies related to green consumerism have been conducted in well developed countries and lack in number of studies in developing country (Cherian & Jacob, 2012) such as Malaysia.

People realize about green or this sustainable consumption but they still have a lack of support and practices towards achieving this mission. It is true that even if consumers are concerned about environmental issues, they will not necessarily purchase green products (Mc Eachern and Carrigan, 2010 as cited in Solomon et al., 2010). Chen and Chai (2010) stated that the problems of green marketing in Malaysia is due to the absence of information on green purchase intention and green behavior of Malaysian consumers.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To investigate the relationship of product quality and environmental attitude on green consumption behavior.
2. To examine the effects of demographics (age, working experience, education level and sectors) on green consumption behavior among the consumers.
3. To identify the most influential barrier towards green consumption behavior.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the relationship of product quality and environmental attitude on green consumption behavior.
2. What are the effects of demographics (age, working experience, education level and sectors) on green consumption behavior among the consumers.
3. What is the most influential barrier towards green consumption behavior.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Green consumers

Green consumers are defined as consumers who have environmental concerns, take initiatives to consider the environment in purchasing decisions and convert their behaviour to environmentally friendly behaviour (Rahman, 2013).

Green Consumption Behavior

GCB refer to consumer behaviours and purchase decisions that are related to environmental and resources-related problems and are motivated not only by a desire to satisfy individual needs but also by a concern for the welfare of society in general (Antil, 1984).

Environmental Attitude

Environmental attitude can be defined as the individual's value judgement of environmental protection which taps the individual's cognitive assessment of the value of environmental protection (Lee, 2008).

Product quality

Product quality is means to incorporate features that have a capacity to meet consumer needs (wants) and gives customer satisfaction by altering products (goods) to make them free from deficiencies or defects (Akrani, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Green consumers

Green consumers are defined as consumers who have environmental concerns, take initiatives to consider the environment in purchasing decisions and convert their behaviour to environmentally friendly behaviour (Rahman, 2013). The number of green consumers is increasing and consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about taking care of the environment by considering the products that they consume (Rahman, 2013). Furthermore, green consumers always think about environmental problems and their own responsibility to take care of the environment well (Wong et al., 2012). Moreover, green consumers are more internally-controlled as they believe that an individual consumer can be effective in environmental protection (Boztepe, 2012). Based on the statement, it shows that green consumers have innovative and protective thinking than others. They are being more serious about the environment, either on its effect or its importance. When there have green consumers, there should also have a green product. Green product is a product which contributes to a more sustainable world by protecting and preserving the natural habitat and will not pollute the earth or deplete natural resources (Shamdasami et al., 1993). Chan & Chai (2010) defined green products as a product that uses less toxic materials and can be recycled or uses less packaging to reduce its environmental impacts. A few examples of green products are: free range eggs, energy efficient light-bulbs, clothing and make-up which are produced under environmental friendly circumstances and an eco-friendly washing machine. Green products can be categorized into some groups, such as recycled paper products, green detergents, energy-efficient products, recycled packaging products, nonhazardous metal-free electric and electronic products, non-toxic plastic packing materials and biodegradable products (Harizan et al., 2013), organic food, chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-free aerosols, biodegradable soaps or vehicles (Azizan & Suki, 2013), general green products, recycled paper products, products not tested on animals, environmentally friendly detergents, organically grown fruit and vegetables, ozone-friendly aerosols, energy-efficient products (Lee, 2008) and green products (Chen & Chai, 2010; Ali et al., 2011). In 2012, a total of 1,508 green products were available in Asian markets, but there was still a moderate level of purchases (Harizan et al., 2013).

Green consumption behavior

Long and Murray (2012) define green consumption behavior or in other word is ethical consumption behavior as a political, religious, spiritual, environmental, social or other motivations for choosing one product over another. Meaning that it refers to the behavior of consumers in purchasing and consuming the products that are related to environment in satisfy their needs but at the same time concern about the welfare of the society. While Mostafa (2007) defined green consumption behavior or environmental friendly buying behavior is the consumption of products that are benevolent/beneficial to the environment, recyclable or conservable, sensitive/responsive to ecological concerns. Wang (2014) stated that green purchasing refers to purchasing products that focus on the production, distribution, consumption and disposal of products that have a less detrimental impact on the environment and are considered environmentally friendly. The study of green purchase behavior and factors influence on that is commonly investigated in prior researches. Lee (2008), Chan and Lau (2000) and D'Souza et al. (2006a) had conducted studies on factors influencing green purchase behavior. For example, Lee (2008) in her study on young Hong Kong consumers' green purchase behavior had used seven variables: environmental attitude, environmental concern, perceived seriousness of environmental problems, perceived environmental responsibility, perceived effectiveness of environmental behavior, concern for self-image in environmental protection and social influence. Laroche et al. (2001) were examining on the variables of demographic, values, knowledge (eco-literacy), attitude (such as severity of environmental problem) and behaviors (such as considering environmental issue when making a purchase). Studied done by Turcotte et al. (2010) shown that women are more likely than men to exhibit environmental values and behavior, and particularly in the Scandinavian countries, to purchase products with a view to ethical or social considerations. In Malaysian context, Nabsiah et al. (2011) found that the gap still existed between environmental knowledge, intention and behavior, even among Malaysian teachers as proven through the study by Said et al. (2003). Even though, there was a positive correlation of environmental knowledge with environmental attitude and behavior in the study of Haron et al. (2005), the magnitude of the correlation was low. Also, even employees who had a vast knowledge on green products in ISO 14001 certified organizations not necessarily would purchase green products, based on a recent study by Rashid (2009).

Therefore, studying on factors that would influence consumers on green behavior is important to grasp their green purchase behavior and make them the embassy in encouraging others towards green consumption. Green consumption is a way to achieve sustainable development (Nabsiah et al., 2011).

Global Scenario in Green Consumption Behavior

The term of 'Green' become popular in this century. All parties including government, private agencies, consumers and so on trying to implement the concept of green products either in their production or consumption. For example, London government congestion improving the environment by promoting 'Green' products and issues. While Wal-Mart introduced the concept of organic food to the publics. A survey done by McKinsey (2007) showed that 87% of people from various nations like Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the UK and the US have shown an interest in reducing the impact of unethical consumption on the environment.

Referring to the report by Global Industry Analysis Inc. of 2011, it is assumed that the overall market for green marketing increased to \$3.5 trillion by the year 2017. In addition, there was increasing level of awareness on environmental issues among the people, businesses and the governments. Mintel & Stamatiou (2006) in their study clearly mentioned that 12% of the American population actively interested towards green products. Although the green products quite expensive to the consumers as compared to non green products, it will most definitely pay off in the long run. Therefore, the core idea of green consumption is to create awareness among the people towards environmental issues and tell them about their role in helping the environment if they switch over to green lifestyle.

Relationship between product quality and green consumption behavior

Product quality is means to incorporate features that have a capacity to meet consumer needs (wants) and gives customer satisfactions by altering products (goods) to make them free from deficiencies or defects (Akrani, 2013). According to Ottman (1992), consumers accepted green products when their primary needs for performance, quality, convenience, and affordability were met, and when they understood how a green product could help to solve environmental problems. From that, it is understood that the consumers are very meticulous about the quality of products itself. It also can be one of important elements to influence consumer to purchase green products. Moreover, product quality also quite related with customer’s satisfaction. Satisfaction was often used as a predictor of future consumer purchase (Newman and Werbel, 1973; Kasper, 1988; oliver, 1999). Usually, satisfied customer will repeat their purchased. Consumers’ perceived quality has a significant positive influence on repurchase intention, which confirms the findings found in the studies by Choi & Kim (2013) and Wu & Chen (2014). This indicates that when consumers perceive higher product quality, it will lead to stronger repurchase intention (Ariffina et al., 2016). It proved that consumers are more attracted to the features, attributes, and other elements of the green products. A study done by Nee et al. (2014) found having product quality as moderating variable in the model of study effects on the green purchasing behaviours. So it has positive relationship between product quality and green purchase behavior. Asgharian et al. (2012) studied about the relationship between green product quality with consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This study expressed that the green product quality likely influence green customer satisfaction and green customer loyalty. Thus it influences consumers purchasing behavior towards green products. However, it stated that most of common perceptions people have about green packaging products are simply out of date and them unhappy with the quality of green products. Even when the quality of green products, like packaging is demonstrated, tested and proven, customer acceptance can still be a challenge (Salazar, 2009). Some of them feel reluctance to believe the quality of the green products as they think that these green products are recycled and has low quality. In other words, green product itself don’t have quality similar as with non green products. So it will influence their purchase behavior towards these products.

Table 1: Summary of Literature Review of Product quality

Author(s) & Year	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Results
Product quality			
Ariffina et al., (2016)	Product quality	Repurchase intention	Positive relationship
Nee et al. (2014)	Product quality as a moderator	Green purchase behavior	Positive relationship
Asgharian et al. (2012)	Green product quality	Green purchase behavior	Positive relationship
Salazar (2009)	Green product quality	Green purchase behavior	Negative relationship

Relationship between environmental attitude and green consumption behavior

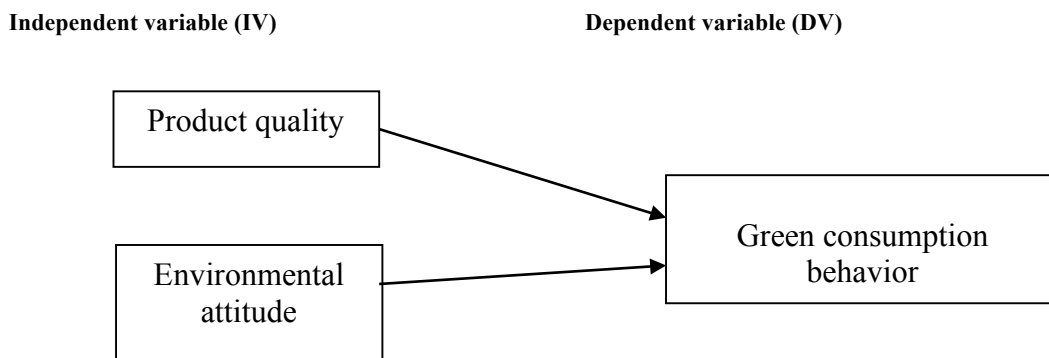
Qader and Zainuddin (2011) defined environmental attitude as —a collection of belief, affect and behavioural intention that a person holds regarding environmentally related activities or issues. This means the consumer’s attitude is more dependent on their belief or intention to be involved in activities that are related to the environment. However, consumer attitudes can be divided into two groups, positive attitudes and negative attitudes. Positive attitudes can cause a benefit to the individual and surrounding people. These kind of attitudes are seen in people trying to save the environment and stop any damage from happening to it. Meanwhile consumers with negative attitudes will cause damage to other people and they will not care about the environment. Zhao et al. (2013) examined the environmental knowledge, attitudes towards green consumption, environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, and external moderators as factors determining green consumer behavior and the result showed attitude has positive relationship and be the most predictor in influencing green consumer behavior. According to Chairy (2012), attitude towards green product reflects overall consumer evaluation on green products. The result showed that attitude is one of important elements for the consumers to purchasing a green product. On the other hand, Hai and Mai (2013) studied the environmental awareness and the attitudes of Vietnamese consumers towards green purchasing activity. They found that consumers with a high level of education are willing to be concerned about the environment and the effect of their consumption activity. The study showed that the highly environmentally conscious consumer has a positive attitude towards the environment and will participate in green purchase activities. They also found that consumers gain more information about the environment from television and the internet than through other media (Hai & Mai, 2013).

Table 2: Summary of Literature Review of Environmental Attitude

Author(s) & Year	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Results
Environmental attitude			
Hai and Mai (2013)	Environmental awareness and attitude	Green purchase behavior	Positive relationship
Zhao et al. (2013)	Knowledge, attitude, environment concern, perceived consumer effectiveness and external moderators	Consumer green behavior	Positive relationship
Chairy (2012)	Consumer attitude	Purchasing green product	Positive relationship

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

Figure 2.0: The relationship between independent variables and dependent variable.



HYPOTHESIS

- H1 : There is a positive relationship between product quality and green consumption behavior among the consumer
- H2 : There is a positive relationship between environmental attitude and green consumption behavior among the consumer
- H3 : There is significant different between demographic factors and green consumption behavior among the consumer

METHOD AND MATERIAL

Sampling technique

In this study, the researcher has chosen to use the non-probability sampling, which is the convenience sampling. Through convenience sampling, the selected sample represents the total population (Umar Sekaran, 2011). Convenience sampling will be used in this study due to the simplicity and convenience. It helps potential participants to join the discussion whenever they are available. The researcher randomly selects the respondents among the public. Questionnaires will be distribute at a few attractive places such as Pasar Siti Khadijah, KB Mall, AEON and Tesco.

Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of elements to be included in the study. Morgan and Krejcie (1970) stated that, for population that is over than 1,000,000 the maximum sample size is 384. Therefore, the sample size for this study is 384 respondents among the public in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Pilot test

It will be conducted among 30 respondents from UiTM Terengganu’s staff. Potential participants will be invited via e-mail. The study is expected to be started by mid of May 2017. Respondents selected randomly from the name list to avoid the biasness .

Analysis/Results

As this is one of conceptual research approach, the result is still in progress.

CONCLUSION

The next stage of this study; the set of questionnaires will be distributed by mid of Jun 2017 for two weeks. Then the data will be analyzed using SPSS.

In overall, this study is conducted to investigate the relationship of product quality and environmental attitude on green consumption behavior. Thus, with better understanding of this relationship, the consumer will increase the level of awareness and behavior towards conservation of environment. This study will be able to fill a gap of knowledge particularly for Malaysian consumers and will extend knowledge about ethical consumption in their daily life.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited to the only two independent variables. Therefore it cannot represent the other factors that still influence the green consumption behavior. Besides, the study only focus on the population in Kota Bharu, Kelantan and it may not portray the population responses of Malaysian as a whole with regard to green consumption behaviour. It is suggested to extend this study to other races and regions in future research. Deeper understanding on the behavior varies from different places and races and this helps marketers in segmenting their products towards them.

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