

# **Environmental Concern and Government Regulations Roles in Influencing Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Environmental concerns have increased dramatically in recent decades. Individuals have become more concerned with their purchasing behaviour and the impact on the environment. As a result, marketers tend to be more committed in responding to the needs and desires of these individuals in a more responsible manner, considering possible environmental damages that may occur. This study pursued to establish the relationship between young consumers and ecologically conscious consumer behaviour (ECCB) by analysing their green environmental concerns (EC) and government regulations (GR) variables. The scope of the study was UiTM's students ages between 18 to 30 years old pursuing their undergraduate studies. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 is applied to study the hypotheses. The results from the linear multiple regression analysis indicated that both EC and GR had a positive relationship on ECCB. Moreover, the overall results have confirmed that the government regulations have a strong direct influence on ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. Thus, the findings could offer important young consumers' perceptions and views on environmental sustainability.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental Concern, Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour, Government Regulations, Sustainability, Young Consumers*

## **INTRODUCTION**

At present, the environmental problems have become world problems that include problems such as global warming and climate change. Consequently, there has been a drastic change in quality and quantity in all life, not only human life, but also the economic and social conditions of people (Maichum, Parichatnon, & Peng, 2016). Many countries in the world have adopted a sustainable green life concept to mitigate the adverse side effects of development and modernization that has directly caused pollution and deterioration of the natural resources.

Areas in Asian countries have also adopted the 'go-green' power as to curb the ecological threat that interferes with local governments and the people (Lee, 2008). According to Desan (2009), the Malaysian Green Technology Policy (2009), which is also known as 'Green Malaysia' has outlined five strategic areas: - (i) firming up the frameworks of the authority body, (ii) offering an encouraging environment for green technology development, (iii) increasing work force

development in green technology, (iv) increasing green technology research and innovations, and (v) handling promotions to enhance society alertness. All these refer to activities that are not polluting the environment, can be recycled, reducing the consumption of natural properties and eradicating the usage of toxic substance and contamination. Therefore, these could be an important starting point to bring the society to be ecologically conscious consumer behaviour and contribute to sustainable development.

Generally, consumers are aware that their behaviour towards purchasing has side effects on global warming, climate change and ecological-related problems. This also causes users to become more aware of sustainable consumption, and their impact on the environment (Prakash & Pathak, 2017). Commonly, people can be divided into two groups when it comes to environmental issues; the one that puts the responsibility on the government and the second group are those that are highly concerned about environmental sustainability and they themselves put the effort to curb the problem. Environmental issues are the responsibility of all. This is because environmental issues are caused by humans as well (Oskamp & Saunders, 2003; Ramly, Hashim, Yahya & Mohamed, 2012). Thus, the society, behavioural resolutions and legislative acts are needed to change these reckless attitudes and behaviours as they are the drivers of sustainable consumption in the future.

The young people are the future generation of the nation. They have different perceptions and behaviours as compared to other age groups (Kanchanapibul, Lacka, Wang & Chan, 2014). They not only consider the present but, also care about the future consequences of their actions and may choose to become green consumer products throughout their lives if being exposed at an early age. At the same time, younger users are more inclined to technology or social media. This allows them to find information online for any purposes. Guided by this information, Kanchanapibul et al., (2014) contended that comprehending the views of young people on green behaviour is very vital as they are the future users and community representatives.

In Malaysia, youths aged between 15 and 30 years make up nearly 30 per cent of the population (DOSM, 2017). As agents of change, they also play a role in shaping the present-day lifestyle of the next generation (Castillo, 2016). As a founding future of policy and practice, they will incorporate sustainable development in the education and learning process. Given the opportunity to be exposed to formal education, they have lived their entire lives in an era where environmental issues have appeared before their eyes. The youth lack of sustainable environmental awareness and concern need to be corrected. The needs to understand and identify the youth awareness, concern, as well as their aspirations for sustainable development are very vital as to ensure the Malaysian Sustainable Development is achievable.

Youth can lead the way to sustainable consumption. Firstly, explain to them the main attributes of the current society, social and ecological behaviours that will impact the world of consumerism. Secondly, the opportunity and the potential for sustainable consumption in providing substitutes to the conventional lifestyles. Finally, the mammoth prospect for youth to develop skills in pressuring authorities towards unhealthy consumption and to creating different methods of living in the world (Fien, Mathew & Bentley, 2008). Youth as the key stakeholders with a unique contribution to make towards sustainable development is very essential (<http://www.way.org.my/mpac-2015-2019>).

Furthermore, the issue of the environment has attracted the attention of Malaysian legislators and the people over the last two decades (Haron, Paim & Yahaya, 2005). Ahmad and Judhi (2008) strongly supported the government's diligent determinations and policies in generating an environment for Malaysia's sustainable consumption and development. Among the policies that have been implemented include education on the environment in schools and creating environmental concerns among the society over ecological issues in ensuring the sustainable consumption practices (Mat Said, Ahmadun, Paim & Masud, 2003; Tan & Lau, 2010; Ahmad & Judhi, 2008; Haron et al., 2005; Kianpour, Anvari, Jusoh & Othman, 2014). Indeed, the gap between environmental concern about ecological biodiversity and the government's role in implementing policy and regulations needs to be bridged as to cultivate sustainable consumption among Malaysians, particularly the youth.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Sustainable Consumption**

The purpose of sustainable consumption is to minimize the environmental, social and economic negative impacts encountered. Consumption activates include population growth, economic activity, technology choices, social values, institutions and policies. Thus, consumers must adopt environmentally responsible consumption behaviours and lifestyles in concordance with sustainable consumption concepts.

Sedlacko, Martinuzzi, Røpke, Videira, Antunes & Pisano, (2012) found that sustainable consumption strategy is crucial for economic development in meeting the needs of the people and at the same time protecting the environment. It is a strategy that uses new techniques that can manage demand for economic, environmental and social. Therefore, there are urgent changes required in human behaviour and cultural practices to minimize the effects of overconsumption. Basically, the concept of sustainable consumption is about a person's attitude in deciding, possessing and discarding of goods and services in an environmentally friendly way that will advantage the society and the environment. Changes in unsustainable consumption patterns require emphasise in use of resource optimisation and minimisation of waste in industries, households and individuals.

Principally, government needs to monitor activities in the industrialized areas, those are enormously dangerous to the environment and identifies inept and improvident in the industrial development processes. This means that the main task of the government is to avoid any unsustainable patterns. Furthermore, efficiency in production is pivotal in achieving environmental quality and sustainable development.

Undoubtedly, to achieve a sustainable lifestyle, especially policy makers need to understand the relationship between the purchase behaviours and elements of individual habits. Everyone has his own particular qualities of behaviour and attitude that connect in different ways in sustainability. The sustainable behaviour can be achieved if behaviour change tools are practiced and that include commitment and dedication. Generally, people are aware of what is happening to the environment and ecology. Yet, they admit that their knowledge of their choice of consumption and its ramifications for the environment is insufficient (Khare, 2015).

## **Environmental Concern (EC)**

As to date, everyone is talking about environmental concern. Concern towards the environment and society has increased rapidly, and it involves everyone in the society. The public needs to be informed that they are the problem of the environmental disaster. Indirectly, this will make individuals become more aware that their individual behaviour has a direct impact on the environment and on future generations of life. The growing concern about environmental issues is also reflected by the increasing demand for environmentally-friendly products and the pressure on companies to conduct their business socially and ecologically.

Yeung (2005) purported that environmental concern as an imperative trait that illustrates an individual's empathy, likes, and hatreds, and anxiety about the surrounding and it arrays from very unconcerned to extremely concerned (Dagher, Itani & Kassar, 2015). Environmental concern factor able to impact on individuals' motivation to act in a way that can lessen environmental problems (Seguin, Pelletier & Hunsley, 1998). The higher the level of the environmental concern will enhance the level of green behaviour. Accordingly, environmental concern is positively related to behaviours favouring the preservation of natural resources and furthermore, for people with greater environmental concerns attitude has a greater effect on intention (Kranz & Picot, 2011).

Due to the relationship that exists between ECs and the demand of the consumer for environmentally friendly products, a new concept of marketing has emerged and known as green marketing. Past studies have identified how environmental concern influenced green behaviour such as Hanson (2013), signified environmental concern has a positive association with the attitude towards green consumers in Canada. Similarly, in India and Thailand, the environmental concern also significantly stimulates the youth consumer attitude towards green products (Yadav & Pathak, 2016; Maichum et al., 2016). Apaydin and Szczepaniak (2017) indicated that young Polish aged 18 to 35 years, despite their high environmental awareness of green issues, they are not concerned about protecting the environment. Paying more for eco-friendly products and services were not their concern. The young Polish perceived that economic development is much more important than protecting the environment. They also assume a person's behaviour is not enough to contribute to environmental improvement. Therefore, they do not show interest to engage in environmental activities and do not support the environmental movement and they show a moderate level of green habits. Mainly the respondents in this group were male with a high level of environmental knowledge.

## **Government Regulations**

Bélgica and María José (2016) designated that citizens who are concerned about the environment, are certain that environmental protection is the government's role. Therefore, in protecting the environment, the government must play an important responsibility. Although, for decades, the government has played a role in upholding social interests through laws and regulations (Wood, 1991), protecting the environment and edifying sustainable consumption by employing strategies and guidelines (Tan & Lau, 2010; Myers, 1997), but still insufficient, because Banerjee (1998) emphasized that more different rules and various environmental strategies are required to raise environmental concerns to ensure behavioural change among the public.

In fact, governmental officials must try to persuade people to consume correctly, use regulation and improve society consideration to foster consumer consciousness and concern regarding the environment (Ghazali, Abdul-Rashid, Aoyama, Tontowi & Sakundarini, 2017). At the same time, the legislation also puts pressure on businesses to be more environmentally friendly (Barakat & Cairns, 2002) and this suggests that the government's legislative policy is crucial as a catalyst in promoting higher environmental responsibility among the people (Dummett, 2006). In order to create ecologically conscious behaviour, the government should consider enforcing intense prisons for polluters either to organizations or the public. For organizations, including pricing strategies to prevent the use of heavy sludge, mandatory environmental feasibility studies for projects and polluting the cost of cleaning.

Almost a decade ago, Young et al., (2010) have identified that there has been a growing interest in informing consumers about the environmental aspects to consider when buying products. In order to support these tasks, government should make a concerted effort to examine the relationship between production and consumption, environment and demographic factors which initially will assist government in developing new concepts of sustainable growth and prosperity. Eventually, these new concepts of wealth and prosperity would lead to higher standards of living through changed lifestyles that are less dependent on the limited resources of the earth.

Being the main authority in the nation, government needs to stringent the law and regulation regarding the environment. Yes, fundamentally Malaysian government all well occupied by law and regulation regarding environmental. However, all these laws and regulations required forceful enforcement. Sharom (2008) uttered that if law and environmental enforcement is improved in this country, then the nation could be said working towards that goal. However, the word sustainability development was just being applied as a trendy term but never really acted on it. The government must take decisive action and enforcement to achieve the country's sustainable development program. Impose severe penalties for those that violate this law. In fact, the call for the forward movement is not the government alone, it is also in the public. He also agreed that penalties in environmental law should be reviewed and revised.

### **Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour (ECCB)**

Stern (2000) defined ecological conscious consumer behaviour as a behaviour with the intention to change or benefit the environment. Consumers exhibit their environmental concerns through purchasing patterns by buying eco-friendly products progressively (Paco & Raposo, 2009). While several of the citizens label themselves as environmentally aware, yet, in fact, their actions do not show much ecology (Tamuliene, Kazlauskiene, & Pileliene, 2016). Ecologically conscious behaviour is an individual effort that will limit their activities, which may cause negative (harmful) effects to the environment. The behaviour of individuals who are ecologically conscious may be influenced by the level of ecological knowledge, which is owned by individuals (da Silva Tamashiro, da Silveira, Merlo & Ghisi 2013). Nevertheless, environmentally conscious consumers are a very important target market segment for whom environmental considerations are important purchasing drives (GMA and Deloitte, 2009). The need to understand the level of environmental awareness among consumers will be an effective refresher criterion for market segments (Paco & Raposo, 2009).

According to Krajhanzy (2010), the ECCB component is a pro-environmental purchasing behaviour, pro-environmental post purchase behaviour (e.g. recycling) and pro-environmental activities. Pro-environmental behaviour is a behaviour that is generally judged in the context of a society that is considered as a mean of protecting the environment or respecting a healthy environment. Consumers that are aware of the environmental concern understand how product development, creation, delivery, use and disposal processes result in heavy environmental impact and lead to additional spending (Omar, Osman, Alam & Sanusi, 2015).

Basically, ecological awareness concentrates on a certain element of consumer behaviour that known as consumer purchase intentions and their readiness to pay higher prices for biological merchandises (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). Environmental behaviour can be caused by aspects such as the wish to save money (shown by the reduction of energy and water use), and other psychological elements (when consumers feel it is the right way to act). It has two categories of ecological users: (1) those who are confined to receiving ecological behaviour (e.g. price increases determine the decline in consumption), and (2) those who are ready to pay more for ecological products (Laroche et al., 2001).

### **Relationship between Environmental Concern and Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour**

Concerns about the environment have developed in the past. In the twenty-first century, businessmen and politicians have been using environmental issues as a source of competitive advantage as to gain community concerns. In fact, the link amongst attitude and behaviour has been investigated in various aspects. In general, the link was confirmed to indicate as having a positive direction (Roberts and Bacon, 1997). Furthermore, ecological and environmental concerns are often used as proxies for social responsibility. Therefore, it is pertinent to show a strong association between ecologically conscious consumers and environmental behaviour (Roberts, 1996).

Bamberg (2013) estimated that the level of environmental concern consumers has a direct and significant impact on how they behave about recycling and energy-saving, purchasing environmentally friendly or travelling method choice (Bamberg, 2003). Furthermore, the more highly concerned people with environmental issues, the more they will buy environmentally friendly products compared to those that are less concerned (Kim & Choi, 2005). Fundamentally, one's level of environmental concern should be linked to the possibility of performing multiple ECCBs. Bronfman, Cisternas, López-Vázquez, de la Maza and Oyanedel (2015) highlighted environmental concerns for having a strong attitude to protect the environment. Roberts (1996) suggested that individuals with higher environmental concerns are more likely to engage in ECCB that directly explains the readiness of users to act in an ecologically positive way. Thus, this signified environmental concerns is an important predictor of ECCB (Roberts, 1991, Ramly et al., 2012). The concept of environmental concern and the ECCB is closely interrelated, and if one whom is more concerned about the environment, these concerns could lead to more ECCB (Dagher, Itani & Kassar, 2015; Antil, 1984). Following the above-described environmental concern and the relationship with ecologically conscious consumer behaviour, this study hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between EC and ECCB

## **Relationship between Government Regulations and Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour**

Reducing consumption is the best and most effective method to condense carbon emissions and tackle climate change issues. Regrettably, the human consumption of natural resources is increasing. Recent research shows that the world needs the equivalent of 2.6 earths to support the consumption demand by 2050 (Gorrie, 2018). While there is an urgent need for the international community and countries to address the consumption of the individual to avoid dangerous and potentially catastrophic climate change, traditionally there is a reluctance to use the law to do so (Gorrie, 2018). Previous studies have shown that there are at least three approaches to promote responsible consumption. First, public policy forms one type of governance where the regulation forms the behaviour of the public through incentives or penalties (e.g. Albareda, Lozano & Ysa, 2007). Second, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer free advice, information and advocacy aimed at influencing government policies, firm practices and consumer behaviour (e.g. Konga, Salzmännb, Stegerb & Ionescu-Somersb, 2002). Finally, corporation's backup business choices that produce business returns that can be measured with the credence what benefit the business is excellent for the society, perhaps indirectly (e.g. Russo and Fouts 1997).

Maloney (2015) recently explored this topic, stating that the role played by law at present is minimum in regulating the consumption of which is directly related to the ECCB. Maloney firmly advocated that the implications of environmental (and social) implications are very important so that the legal system plays a role in setting guidelines and rules for sustainable consumption. Indeed, Connell (2011) agreed that legislative strategies are key indicators of environmental attitude and similarly Qader & Zainuddin, (2011) also concluded that environmental legislation affects consumer environmental attitudes. Furthermore, researches have testified that the government role in environmental protection certainly influences consumer attitude of the consumers toward ecological merchandizes (Norazah, 2016). Recently Chen, Chen & Tung (2018) discovered that environmental awareness/concern and role of the government vitally and absolutely influenced environmental for sustainable consumption. Having the backdrop discussion, the study hypothesizes that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between GR and ECCB

## **UNDERPINNING THEORY**

Motivation–Ability–Opportunity (MAO) framework by Olander and Thøgersen (1995) was used in this study as the underpinning theory in understanding consumer behaviour. MAO model has two paradigms - ability and opportunity, as the essential pre-conditions to green consumer behaviour. The ability paradigm combines both habit and task knowledge, while the opportunity paradigm integrates facilitating or 'opportunity' situation to carry out the behaviour. The framework indicated that the positive attitude of the consumers will motivate them to the wanted behaviour given that they possess the ability and opportunity to act on that wanted behaviour. Additionally, this study also applied Phipps et al. (2013) the theory of reciprocity deterministic in understanding the sustainability consumer behaviour. They emphasized the important roles of past behaviour as a future barometer of sustainable behaviour. This framework showed that individual elements for example attitudes, together with sustained behaviour and past socio-cultural environment, will

affect the upcoming sustainable behaviour. So, it can be concluded from the above argument that consumer behaviour is not only stimulated by attitude, but also through many individual factors and circumstances. In this study, the circumstantial factors are the government regulations. Furthermore, these elements would reinforce or decline the strength of attitude-behaviour association.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Data Collection and Measurement Scales**

This study was conducted online using a quantitative approach of a self-reported survey questionnaires that were published on the website. An invitation with an attachment of the hyperlink to the questionnaire website was sent to the UiTM Melaka students using the convenience sampling method. 18 items were adapted from established instruments and were operationalized using 7-point Likert scales, measuring from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to identify the reliability testing of the scales and answer the hypotheses by using the multiple regressions. Overall, 211 responses were obtained. The questionnaire comprises of three (3) sections that are clarified below.

#### **Environmental Concern**

The first section of the questionnaire refers to questions about environmental concerns containing eight (8) questions from Roberts and Bacon (1997) where researcher examined the level of respondents' concerns that they have towards ecological conscious consumer behavior. The questionnaire was designed to identify whether the respondents were concerned about the environmental issues that had taken place around them as well as what was happening in the world today.

#### **Government Regulations**

The second section of the survey instrument is to evaluate the views of the public as Malaysian citizens while dealing with the government on regulations related to environmental issues. There are five (5) questions adapted from Greendex (2010) that measured by the environmental impact of the respondent's consumption patterns. In this study the respondents were asked to evaluate the regulations implemented by the Malaysian government in curbing environmental problems.

#### **Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour**

The third section of the questionnaire consists of five (5) questions also adapted from Roberts and Bacon (1997) with the primary intention to determine the level of practice that the public has for ecological conscious consumer behavior. Questions were to identify how the respondents behave as the citizens on consumption attitude.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

### **Respondent Characteristics**

Table 1 showed the demographic profile of the respondents by gender, age, education, status and residing. Most of the respondents were female with 154 as compared to male with only 57. Most respondents (54 %) were from the age group between 21-30 years old. They are about equivalent of tertiary education backgrounds with 104 with a diploma and 107 with a degree. From Table 1, 141 respondents were from urban area and 70 were from rural area.

**Table 1 Respondents' Profile**

Demographic variable	Item	Frequency	Percentile
Gender	Male	57	27.0
	Female	154	73.0
Age	18 - 20	96	45.5
	21 - 30 years old	115	54.5
Highest educational level	Diploma	104	49.3
	Degree	107	50.7
Occupation	Student	211	100.0
Status	Single	211	100.0
State Currently Residing	Urban	141	66.8
	Rural	70	33.2

### **Factor Analysis**

For this study, factor analysis (FA), under the extraction method of principal component analysis with the rotation method of varimax with Kaiser Normalization, was used to analyse the scales. Varimax rotation was used, as it minimized the correlation across factors and maximized within the factors (Nunnally 1978). Furthermore, items loadings with more than 0.50 on one factor are taken for next analysis (Nunnally, 1978). Thus, 4 items were deleted from 13 items all together. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) shows that two-factor EC with 5 items and GR with 4 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was recorded at 0.83. These 2 factors explained 50.4% of total variance and had eigenvalues over 1. Reliability were checked for the new constructs: environmental concern (.66), and government regulation (.79). Table 2 is the EFA for all the constructs.

**Table 2 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Factor Loadings**

Items	Factors	
	1	2
EC3 I will not buy products which have excessive packaging.	.70	
EC2 I always look out for ‘Save Energy’ label whenever I shop for household appliances.	.67	
EC5 Whenever possible, I buy products packaged in reusable containers.	.66	
EC4 I use a recycling center or in some way recycle some of my household trash.	.56	
EC7 I only buy products such as toilet paper, face tissues and paper towels that are made from recycled paper.	.55	
GR2 The government must enforce a law requiring all household garbage to be separated into different classes for recycling.		.75
GR1 The government must preserve more land as natural wilderness and excluding it from any resource exploitation and development.		.75
GR5 The government must ban on bug and weed pesticides for lawn and garden use.		.74
GR4 The government must enforce stiff jail sentences for polluters.		.66

### Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was tested to identify the direction and strength of the relationship among the independent variables. Table 3 depicted the internal consistency and correlation that indicated a medium strength of the relationship among the constructs. Furthermore, the results also exhibited the composite reliability value for the two factors were above .60 as suggested by Hatcher (1994). Although the variance extract for EC estimate was below .50, this situation did not cause concern since previous studies showed that it is quite frequent to find estimates below .50 even when the composite reliability is acceptable. Thus, the results indicated that the discriminant validity have been achieved.

**Table 3 Internal Consistency and Correlation Matrix**

Construct	$\alpha$	AVE	GR	EC
Governmental Regulation	.73	.53	<b>.82</b>	
Environmental Concern	.66	.40	.31**	<b>.76</b>

NOTE: \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)  
Composite Reliabilities are shown on the diagonal

### Hypotheses Testing

To test the Hypotheses 1 and 2, multiple regression analyses was conducted. The hypotheses described the relationship between EC and ECB and GR and ECB. The results of the

regression for the first and second hypotheses indicated ( $R^2=.3$ ,  $F(1,209)=3.68$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and ( $R^2=.5$ ,  $F(1,209)=11.38$ ,  $p<.001$ ) respectively. It was found that both EC and GR have a positive relationship with ECCB ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $t = 2.59$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $t = 3.37$ ,  $p<.001$ ) respectively. Thus, based on the results, all the hypotheses are supported (Table 4).

**Table 4 The Relationship Between EC and GR with ECCB**

		t- value	p - value	Result
Hypotheses 1				
EC	ECCB	2.59	.01	Supported
Hypotheses 2				
GR	ECCB	3.37	.001	Supported

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study revealed that there was a statistically significant linear regression, which indicated a strong relationship between environmental concerns and government regulations with ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. Behaviour that does not care about ecology is the result of human attitude having the right to dominate nature. For those, (as in this study the youth) who are aware that nature has reached a critical level, make ecological adjustments that are encouraging in their behaviour. When the components of environmental attitudes are the determinants of composite ecology behaviour, external circumstances (as in this study - government regulations) identified as the most important factor in influencing the ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. The youth in this study showed having a good attitude that leads to ecologically conscious consumer behaviour. They also supported and agreed that government should play an important role in ensuring that the public is aware of ecology user behaviour as well.

In line with empirical research, it is defined that ecological conscious consumer behaviour creates two dimensions: behaviour and attitude. In this study, environmental concerns are understood as respondents' responses in purchasing products that can mitigate the environmental problems that will lead to an increase in green behaviour. The products mentioned are those that save energy and / or use recyclable, environmentally friendly and products that were produced using fewer natural resources and environmental preservation. The respondents' recognized the effect of their purchasing behaviour to the environment. Thus, the environmental concern factors are exposed as consumer actions, while giving priority to the purchase and consumption of ecological products.

The role of the government is to facilitate environmental protection. Government organizations can increase consumer awareness of environmental protection by promoting activities or videos. Knowledgeable consumers are aware that when green products are purchased, it will benefit the environment. Hence, environmental awareness influences consumers' assessment of their environmental benefits and their priorities for green products. The result from this study confirmed that the youth are aware of the consequences between good environmental concern behaviour and the environment. Therefore, government body should

involve more of the young people in increasing their environmental concerns by educating them by sponsoring environmental-related media advertisements and conducting environmental protection related activities.

These activities will help young people understand how important it is to become ecologically conscious consumers even though at an early age. Besides, businesses can also play their part by providing product and environmental information on their website or via mobile software knowing that youth is a techno-savvy. This can enhance their understanding of green concept and better yield results that generate environmental benefits. Basically, the awareness of the human environment is closely related to personal attitudes and values. Given the abundant source of information and the study of what causes environmental problems as well as a sustainable marketing policy for green products to future consumers will further enhance the level of environmental awareness among consumers especially youth.

As mentioned, the role of the government in creating an environment for sustainable use to thrive and the need to implement strategies to meet the challenges of sustainable use and development is important. One of the strategies that has been introduced by the government was the 3R - Reduce, Reuse & Recycle. In fact, too many websites and blog pages explained these 3Rs and yet many are still unaware or stubborn or unobtrusive. Due to age factor, the elderly play stupidly - they will not live longer, middle age is idiocy because busy chasing wealth and ignore the importance of the Mother Nature and the younger generation is ignorant because they never disclosed or be educated by their parents or their teachers about the 3Rs.

Therefore, integrate environmental education and cultivating ecological consciousness among the public (particularly youth) is important to ensure that sustainable consumption achieve its objectives. Almost two decades ago, this has also been supported by Mat Said et al., (2003) that as to ensure sustainable consumption take place in Malaysia, one of the strategies that government must emphasis was assimilated education and fostering environmental and ecological awareness amongst the citizen. Apart from educating the young through education, the government could encourage households and the public to make environmentally sound purchasing decisions by providing information on the consequences of their consumption choices and behaviour. Also the government could embolden healthy lifestyles by means of ensuring consumers are aware of the environmental impact of the products they purchased and consumed. Frequently and constantly use the social media as the channel to disperse this information.

## **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES**

The limitations of the study are discussed as followings. Firstly, the sample size is too small. Therefore, future studies need to increase sample size and collect data from different universities, so that the results will be more accurate. Also, include not only public universities, but also private universities so that comparisons can be made in term of race differences. Moreover, future studies should observe more precise behaviours, such as the readiness to pay more for green products and bring their own consumer food bags. Upcoming researches can also investigate the effects of parents' green behaviour of their children. Finally, future studies should empirically inspect the impacts of elements such as personality characteristics as the modifiers or mediators in the relationship between environmental attitudes, concerns and green purchasing behaviour to better understand ecological conscious consumer behaviour.

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