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## **DO GREEN SKINCARE PRODUCTS INSPIRE GEN Y PURCHASE INTENTION?**

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**Abstract:** *Several past studies focus on eco-friendly preference and eco-friendly product quality due to increasing awareness of environmental issues among consumers. Still, more research on the overall concept of green products is required for further investigation to understand the changing attitudes of consumers towards green products. To be specific, in Malaysia, skincare products command the largest market share. However, there is limited empirical evidence examined on consumers' purchase intention towards green facial skincare products. Consider that the present paper has attempted to clarify the situation by employing environmental knowledge, environmental consciousness, environmental attitude and, cause-related marketing as the main predictors to stimulate purchase intention among Gen Y in Malaysia. Total of 220 questionnaires distributed to the respondents with purchase intention towards green facial skincare products, which yielded 160 complete usable responses. Smart PLS software and SPSS utilised to analyse the data. As expected, the results indicate that environmental knowledge, environmental consciousness, and cause-related marketing had a significant direct impact on purchase intention. Surprisingly, environmental attitude does not directly influence the purchase intention. The outcome created an insight into the scope of consumer behaviour and accommodate information for marketers to increase market share through appropriate marketing strategies.*

**Keywords:** environmental knowledge, environmental consciousness, environmental attitude, cause-related marketing and purchase intention.

## **1. Introduction**

The concept of green has a positive vibe in everything. Green products define as environmentally friendly products that have minimal effect on the environment (Gurusamy, Princy, & Senthilnathan, 2013). In the current marketing trend, most skincare products are aligned to the green concept to embrace opportunities. Similarly, supporting sustainability business in skincare products through green strategy plays an exceptional role for marketers. As one of the fastest-growing sectors worldwide, green skincare products can increase environmental awareness and motivation to use it (Chin, Jiang, Mufidah, Persada, & Noer, 2018). Recent work by Hutahaeon & Kurnia (2020), also has indicated that green products development is a way to execute green marketing. Gardyn, (2003) past study has reported that consumers with adequate environmental awareness phenomenon have no obligation towards intention to purchase green products. However, trend-setting disparity due to misleading and false information from companies has increased the consumer scepticism towards green concept products that need further exploration study intensely.

Therefore, considerable effort is required to investigate on skincare products that claim “green concept” in the market specifically on the reasons that inspire the purchase intention among Generation Y (Gen Y) who generally emphasise on image-driven possessions.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Purchase Intention (PI)**

Purchase intention gives a hint on prediction to perform actual purchase behaviour. The most prominent study by Ajzen (1991) has indicated that consumer motivation induces purchase intention that leads to purchase behaviour. Aaker (1997) relate it as a state of reflection of an individual mindful purchase act. Besides, three types of purchase intention are focus on unintended purchase, partially intended purchase and fully intended purchase (Engel et al. ,1995). Likewise, a study by Zeithaml (1988) also has mentioned that purchase intention may happen in three possibilities circumstances which consist of “possible to buy”, “intended to buy” and “considered to buy”. Despite some remarkable discoveries on purchase intention in various studies, green skincare products are yet to delve into depth understanding to acquire clarity on individual concept either they are more conserving towards the environment or not.

## **2.2 Environmental Knowledge (EK)**

Environmental knowledge refers to the perception of an individual concerning the ecological issue (Yadav & Pathak, 2016). One of the factors that influence green purchase intention is due to environmental knowledge (Ooi,2012). A study done in India has revealed that consumer knowledge of the environment is the main predictor in evaluating the quality of green products (Jaiswal & Kant,2018). Previous research by (Khaleeli & Jawabri, 2020; Heo & Muralidharan, 2019; Jaiswal & Kant,2018) has proven that environmental knowledge has a significant effect when consumer considering to purchase green products. However, studies conducted in Malaysia (Yogananda & Nair, 2019; Lim, Perumal, & Ahmad, 2019) revealed that environmental knowledge has an insignificant relationship with purchase intention on green products. These contrasting result from the mainstream finding of previous researchers indeed emphasizes on the importance of consumer environmental knowledge. Thus, this study further initiates to explore the Gen Y perspectives in purchasing green skincare products in Malaysia.

## **2.3 Environmental Consciousness (EC)**

Generally, environmental consciousness consumers will influence towards environmentally friendly products. Chen & Chang (2012) define environmental consciousness as an individual mindset that reflects their fundamental value about the consumer's environmentally concepts. Recent work by (Kumar, Prakash, & Kumar, 2020) pointed out that environmentally-conscious consumer willing to alter their behaviour to support the environment. Also, a study by (Van den Bergh, 2013) viewed environmental consciousness as a factor that drives consumers towards purchase intention. Similarly, past research has proven that a greater environmental consciousness uncovers a more prominent purchase intention of consumers (Angel & Rock,2009). Meanwhile, it is worth noting that (Prakash, Singh & Yadav, 2018) study mention the support towards the environment among young Indian consumers has reflected optimistic intention to purchase green products. In line with this, more effort is needed to understand Gen Y environmental consciousness towards green skincare products purchase intention in Malaysia.

## **2.4 Environmental Attitude (EA)**

Consumer attitude towards the accelerating consideration to protect the environment has gained tremendous attention immensely. Consumer attitude refers to the favourable or unfavourable evaluation process by consumers towards behavioural intentions (Maio et al., 2018; Yadav & Pathak, 2017). In a study by (Mark & Law, 2015; Zaremohzzabieh, Ismail, Ahrari, & Samah,2020), they stated that environmental attitude involved consumers conviction towards environmental ongoing matters and challenges. The previous study by (Nguyen et al., 2018; Akroush, Zuriekat, Al Jabali, & Asfour, 2019) revealed consumer attitudes have an impact on purchase intention. Although, most studies have proved the consumer attitude is a vital predictor in purchase intention however a study conducted in Malaysia by Wahid, Rahbar, Shyan, & Ramayah (2011) concluded that there is insignificant relationship between consumer attitude and consumer purchasing green products. Thus, by exploring further on consumer environmental attitude, it may enhance and improve the inconclusive findings of previous studies.

## **2.5 Cause-Related Marketing (CRM)**

Many marketers are engaging in cause-related marketing to influence consumers to purchase their brands in a competitive market. Cause-related marketing (CRM) define as a strategy used by marketers to convince customers to purchase products through social cause (Furman & Maison, 2020). Study shown that cause-related marketing campaign or activities increases consumers intention to purchase (Mendini, Peter & Gibbert, 2018). Past studies in Pakistan indicate cause-related marketing play a role in consumer intention to purchase (Qamar, 2013; Shabbir, Kaufmann, Ahmad & Qureshi, 2010). In fact, consumer scepticism on cause-related marketing activities will lead consumers to unsuccessful purchase intention (Anuar, Omar, & Mohamad, 2013). Pursuant to this, the importance of cause-related marketing in green skincare products purchase intention will be expanded further.

Hence the following hypotheses were proposed based on the literatures presented:

- H1: There is a relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention of green skincare products
- H2: There is a relationship between environmental consciousness and purchase intention of green skincare products
- H3: There is a relationship between environmental attitude and purchase intention of green skincare products
- H4: There is a relationship between cause-related marketing and purchase intention of green skincare products.

## **3. Methodology**

A self-administered questionnaire had adopted for this quantitative approach study. Questionnaires statements on purchase intention, environmental knowledge, environmental commitment, environmental attitude, and cause-related marketing adapted from previous works of literature (Maichum, Parichatnon, & Peng, 2017; Yadav & Pathak, 2016) respectively. The dependent variable, purchase intention (PI) consists of five questions, followed by the first independent variable, environmental knowledge (EK) consists of five questions, the second and third variables which are environmental consciousness (EC) and environmental attitude (EA) consists of three questions in the survey and finally, the fourth variable, cause-related marketing (CRM) adapted four questions. This section provides information that helps researchers to determine the relationships among each variable. The questionnaires have designed on a rating scale which is five points Likert scale. All key variables were measured by multiple statements, as this would afford greater degrees of freedom when partitioning the data into groups. It would also allow for adjustment of measurement error, thus increasing their reliability and predictive validity (Hair, et al., 2014).

The target respondents are Gen-Y include working adults and students who stay in Klang Valley at the age of 20 to 35 years old. Respondents are consumers who have the intention to purchase green facial skincare products. Out of the total of 220 sets of survey questionnaires, 60 sets of survey questionnaires are void as respondents did not have the purchase intention towards green facial skincare products. Hence, 160 sets of survey questionnaires used in this research purpose.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Respondent Demographics

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the age group between 26-30 years old of 42.50% contributed the highest among other age range who are 20-25 years old followed by 31-35 years old which made up 41.30 % and 16.20% respectively.

**Table 1: Demographic information**

| Information  | Grouping            | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Age Group    | 20-25 years old     | 41.30          |
|              | 26-30 years old     | 42.50          |
|              | 31-35 years old     | 16.20          |
| Gender       | Male                | 30             |
|              | Female              | 70             |
| Income Level | Below RM 1,000      | 30.63          |
|              | RM 1,000 – RM 3,000 | 23.75          |
|              | RM 3,000 – RM 5,000 | 28.12          |
|              | Above RM 5,000      | 17.50          |

### 4.2 Measurement Model

Table 2 depicts the assessment of construct reliability as well as convergent validity for the variables of this study. The composite reliability (CR) values of 0.916 (EK), 0.89 (EC), 0.922 (EA), 0.901 (CRM) and 0.902 (PI) demonstrate that these constructs have high levels of internal consistency. Similarly, the variables in this study demonstrate good convergent validity. All the constructs achieve the minimum threshold value of 0.5 for average variance extracted (AVE) which is an indication that the items explain more than 50% of the construct's variances (Hair, et al., 2014).

**Table 2: Internal consistency and Convergent validity**

|     | Item | Loading | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|-----|------|---------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| EK  | EK1  | 0.885   | 0.862            | 0.916                      | 0.784                            |
|     | EK2  | 0.883   |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | EK4  | 0.887   |                  |                            |                                  |
| EC  | EC1  | 0.847   | 0.814            | 0.89                       | 0.729                            |
|     | EC2  | 0.835   |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | EC3  | 0.879   |                  |                            |                                  |
| EA  | EA1  | 0.903   | 0.874            | 0.922                      | 0.798                            |
|     | EA2  | 0.89    |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | EA3  | 0.886   |                  |                            |                                  |
| CRM | CRM1 | 0.826   | 0.854            | 0.901                      | 0.696                            |
|     | CRM2 | 0.868   |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | CRM3 | 0.863   |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | CRM4 | 0.776   |                  |                            |                                  |
| PI  | PI1  | 0.863   | 0.862            | 0.902                      | 0.652                            |
|     | PI2  | 0.735   |                  |                            |                                  |
|     | PI3  | 0.85    |                  |                            |                                  |

|  |     |       |  |  |  |
|--|-----|-------|--|--|--|
|  | PI4 | 0.67  |  |  |  |
|  | PI5 | 0.896 |  |  |  |

To assess discriminant validity especially for the case of variance-based SEM, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is used, which is much more reliable in detecting the lack of discriminant validity as compared with cross loadings and Fornell-Larcker criterion. To determine whether there is a problem with lack of discriminant validity, the HTMT values should be smaller than 0.85 or 0.9 (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). Table 3 evident that all HTMT values are lower than the required threshold value, thus all constructs possess adequate discriminant validity, and each of the construct reflects a distinctive concept on its own.

**Table 3: Discriminant validity (HTMT Ratio)**

|    | CRM   | EA    | EC    | EK    |
|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| EK | 0.745 | 0.532 | 0.749 |       |
| EC | 0.666 | 0.808 |       |       |
| EA | 0.489 |       |       |       |
| PI | 0.703 | 0.587 | 0.863 | 0.749 |

### 4.3 Structural Model

The outcome of the collinearity test show for each of the constructs is lower than the offending value of 3.3 (Diamantopoulos & Sigouw, 2006), thus suggesting that there is no issue with collinearity in the study. Table 4 illustrates the results of path co-efficient assessment using bootstrapping procedure for each of the hypothesized relationship in the model. The proposed relationships are all significant whereby two relationships are found statistically significant at 99% confidence interval. It was found H1, H2 and H4 are supported.

**Table 4: Path Co-efficient Assessment**

| Hypothesis | Path      | Direct effect (Beta) | Standard error | t-values | p-values | Findings      |
|------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------|----------|---------------|
| H1         | EK -> PI  | 0.206                | 0.102          | 2.023    | 0.04     | Supported     |
| H2         | EC -> PI  | 0.487                | 0.088          | 5.527    | 0.00     | Supported     |
| H3         | EA -> PI  | 0.014                | 0.087          | 0.164    | 0.87     | Not supported |
| H4         | CRM -> PI | 0.192                | 0.081          | 2.356    | 0.01     | Supported     |

\*\*p<0.05 (one-tailed)



## 5. Results and Discussion

EK of the consumers was able to provide a positive influence on Purchase Intention, thus H1 is supported (standardised beta = 0.206,  $p < 0.05$ ). One plausible reason for this maybe green facial skincare products has focused more on pro-environmental campaigns, which educates consumers on the environmental problems. Consequently, this has led to changes in consumption patterns from conventional products to green products, one of which is green facial skincare products.

The findings on Table 4 shows that the EC influences the PI (standardised beta = 0.206,  $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, H2 is supported. The result showed that environmental consciousness and Gen-Y purchase intention towards green facial skincare products has a significant relationship. This outcome consistent with study of Maichum et al. (2017), who argued environmental consciousness have the capability to build a positive attitude and strengthen consumer's habits. This habits to some extent enable to lower the environmental impact and lead them to have purchase intention towards green products.

Moreover, the findings show that EA does not influences PI (standardised beta = 0.014,  $p > 0.05$ ). H3 shows that there is no significant relationship between environmental attitude and purchase intention towards green facial skincare products in Malaysia. It also indicates that environmental attitude is not a factor to draw Gen-Y to purchase green facial skincare products. Perhaps, Gen-Y has the awareness to improve the environment but they refuse to change their attitude accordingly. Therefore, they are not willing to take action to change their attitude in buying green facial skincare products.

Past studies have evident that CRM campaign or activities increases consumers intention to purchase (Mendini, Peter & Gibbert, 2018; Qamar, 2013; Shabbir, Kaufmann, Ahmad & Qureshi, 2010). It implies the importance of CRM in influencing the purchase intention which supports H4. Table 4 shows that the CRM influences the PI (standardised beta = 0.192,  $p < 0.05$ ). The reason for this outcome could be the moral satisfaction and emotional benefit by the participating firm in CRM that helps to develop consumers positive evaluations through their consumption behaviour. Collectively, consumers are interested in cause-related products offered through CRM campaigns which motivate and induce them to an intention to purchase.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has contributed to the body of knowledge on green skincare products emphasizing in the Malaysian context. Meanwhile, there are several study limitations should be addressed. Firstly, the current study used Gen Y as the target respondents to examine the purchase intention. However, it may be appropriate to conduct future studies with a population of other generation cohorts to enhance the validity of the tested conceptual framework. Secondly, no significant direct effect found between environmental attitude and purchase intention. With this regard, future researchers may consider testing the indirect effect relationship between this construct for a better outcome.

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