
Green Marketing and its Effect on Consumers' Purchase Behaviour: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract – Over the years, environmental concerns have been extensively discussed. Natural resources are increasingly being diminished for the unscrupulous benefits of business profitability, resulting in an inherent need for alternative solutions. Following this, an application of green marketing concept could be warranted in pursuit of an augmented awareness on environmental conservations. This study aims to investigate the extent to which green marketing tools, namely, eco-brand, eco-labelling, eco-packaging and environmental advertisement affect consumers' purchase behaviour towards green-related products or services. Using a non-probability sampling technique, a total of 300 survey questionnaires were distributed to targeted respondents. However, only 189 feedbacks were usable for further statistical analyses. Regression result revealed that only eco-packaging and environmental advertisement had significant effects on consumer purchasing behaviour. Eco brand and eco labelling proved otherwise. Several managerial implications are further discussed.

Keywords - *Green Marketing, Environment, Eco-brand, Eco-labelling, Eco-packaging, Environmental advertisement, Purchase Behaviour*

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I. Introduction

Environmental issues such as climate change, water scarcity, natural resources and other ecological challenges are some of the most debated and critical issues faced by current global policy makers, businesses, consumers and society in general (Tan, Ojo & Thurasamy, 2019; Asmara, Avicenna, & Meideline, 2020). Challenges in an environmental sustainability has also been continually discussed in global political agenda over the past decades, and it has been recognized as a key driver of innovation (Dangelico & Vocellelli, 2017).

Human factors play a massive role in impacting the environment, particularly in relation to consumption. These days, consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious (Teo, 2016). As such, business organizations need to be more sensitive by becoming more environmentally friendly in their business approaches. By integrating business activities and other environmental issues, it would create a better and effective business strategy that could potentially lead towards higher business performance and good green business practices. Pathak (2017) mentioned that most governments need to protect significant stakeholders such as consumers and society at large. This concept of protection has significant green marketing implications. As such, relevant governmental regulations are established and designed to control business firms' production of hazardous wastes.

Green marketing is inevitable, to which it reflects an increasing market for products and services that are sustainable and socially responsible (Pathak, 2017; Karunaratna, Bandara, Silva & De Mel (2020). Govender and Govender (2016) also stated that green marketing has become an area of interest for marketers, as it provides opportunities for competitive advantage. Hence, it is imperative to investigate this issue in an attempt to address the dearth of research in understanding the extent to which green marketing can impact consumers' consumption behaviour. Subsequently, it could contribute towards an overall conservation of natural environment resources via the appropriate usage of green marketing tools to develop effective business strategies. In essence, this study aims to examine whether green marketing tools have significant effects on consumers' purchase of green products and services. The following section highlights discussion on relevant literature review.

II. Literature Review

Green Purchase Behaviour

Consumer behaviour involves a study of people and relevant activities undertaken to search, select, purchase as well as consume goods and services in order to fulfil their consumption needs. It reflects all thoughts, emotions and actions that a person has or takes prior to or during the purchase, and consumption of any product, service or concept. Goh and Wahid (2014) mentioned that the behaviour is influenced by several factors such as culture, value, orientation, knowledge, attitude, and demographic forces. Meanwhile, Ajzen and Fishbein (2000) postulate that behaviour is a result of an individual's propensity to adopt a particular act. On the other hand, Ajzen (1991) in his seminal work of Theory of Planned behaviour (TPB), states that intention is likely to play a crucial role in controlling the motivational factors that will be contributing to an actual behaviour. If the intention to deal with behaviour is stronger, there is a higher possibility that an actual behaviour would be performed.

Intention is a relevant dimension in marketing literature, used by companies to not only predict sales of innovative or new products, but also purchase and repurchase of existing products (Diallo, 2012). Intention serves similar contention with an actual behaviour to which it reveals consumers' trend of buying goods and services for own household consumption (Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000). Purchasing a green product satisfies the consumers' needs that will not contribute to environmental damage in the long run (Ariffin, Mohd Yusof, Putit, Mohd Izwan, 2016). The consequences of this act could contribute towards a more sustainable world (Seyrek and Gul, 2017). Further to that, Joshi and Rahman (2015) also stated that acquiring green purchasing behaviour reveals an amalgamation of moral decision-making actions and generally perceived to be a socially responsible form of output. Drawing from the TPB, purchase behaviour in this study reflects a consumer's willingness to acquire goods and services based on cognitive or emotional decision making

Green Marketing

Nowadays, the concept of green marketing has become a vital focus for most businesses and communities alike. It is similar to the conventional marketing orientation, albeit with modifications being observed in the various marketing activities, which are considered to be environmentally safe, and able to fulfil consumers' environmental needs (Ansar, 2013). Govender and Govender (2016) mentioned that green marketing elements include green products, green prices, green places, and green promotion. This supports Diglel & Yazdanifard (2014) who defined green marketing as a range of activities that include a shift in the production process, modification of product lines and advancement in packaging, as well as changes in advertising activities. Asmara et al (2020) further indicated that today's users are becoming more concerned about environmental and health issues as they begin to appreciate the green marketing efforts by focusing on green product purchases instead.

Historically, the term green marketing has evolved from its early concepts which has been divided into three different eras with different changing characteristics. There are several important differences between the first era, known as ecological green marketing, followed by the second and third era named green environmental marketing and as a sustainable green marketing respectively (Nadanyiova, Gajanova & Majerova, 2020). By

understanding the similarities and differences between these earliest concepts, the development of green marketing can be further appreciated. The ecological green marketing era was initially formulated in the early 1960s to 1970s, to which attention towards pollution was given much thought. The second era focused on clean technological development, environmental sustainability as well as attracting consumers towards clean concepts in marketing, services and product manufacturing (Dennis, Peattie & Crane, 2005). The authors further mentioned that the third era of sustainable green marketing, was introduced with a focus on empowering stricter state rules. Delafrooz, Taleghani, & Nouri, (2014) stated that with continual advances in technologies, there is an increased interest of businesses such as Toyota, to embed the 'environmental technology' in their product line assembly in response to consumers' demand for an electric-combustion hybrid car concept. Most of the sustainable development efforts in the arena of marketing had an influence towards economy (Delafrooz et al, 2014).

Recent developments on sustainable technology have led to a major interest in several marketing tools for green marketing purpose. Eco-label, eco-brand, eco-packaging and environmental advertisement are part of the green marketing tools which can increase market awareness and influence consumers' perception towards eco-friendly product attributes (Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas, 2020; Delafrooz, et al, 2014, Ranjan & Kushwaha, 2017). The choice of these features is pertinent to encourage consumers towards purchasing environmentally friendly products. This, in turn, decreases the impact that non-natural products have on the natural environment (Delafrooz et al, 2014; Ariffin et al, 2016; Karunarathna et al., 2020). Wu & Chen (2014) found that consumers' green marketing awareness of both energy-saving lamp and an environmental cleanser mainly influences their perceived quality and perceived value, which in turn influences purchase intention.

Eco-brand

For consumers to have positive perceptions towards a particular product or service, established brands matter (Putit & Abdullah, 2019). Nevertheless, consumers who are conscious of environmental conservation and recycling concepts would form different viewpoints (Teo, 2016). Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020) stated that any product considered harmless to the environment is referred to as either an eco-brand or a green brand. It may include a symbol, design and name of the product. According to Chen and Chai (2010), eco-branding attempts to promote sustainable consumption patterns by employing environmental protection as a selling proposition technique. The effectiveness of an eco-branding technique has been exemplified in a study by Wustenhagen & Bilharz (2006) that revealed both German and American consumers' positive response towards eco-branded products such as Green energy and Body Shop brands. According to Belz and Peattie, (2009), the main objective of eco-brands is to create brand loyalty by positioning green products in line with the target market's environmental concerns. In other words, there would be a sense of balance between business profit and concern toward the environment.

Applying eco-brand label may help consumers to differentiate green products from others, thus facilitating them to buy eco-friendly merchandises (Delafrooz, et al, 2014). Consumers will purchase eco-friendly products that exhibit highly positive environmental impact. Rahbar and Wahid (2011) mentioned that Malaysians consume chemical products that are widely used for household cleaning such as aerosols and plastics-based components that have permanent harmful effects on the environment. Eco-brand label, in contrast, may potentially contribute to the increase of positive perception towards environmental labels amongst consumers, hence increasing their brand equity. Brand equity refers to the value given to a particular brand that impacts on a consumer's purchasing decision (Kotler et al, 2018). Companies may apply eco-brand labels in order to increase their product value proposition and recognition amongst consumers sourcing for a substitute of non-green products (Govender & Govender, 2019). Green brands also assist consumers in making purchasing decision, to which a clear distinction could be observed between green brands and non-green brands. In addition, consumers who recognized themselves as environmentally responsible individuals would be more likely to select green products in their actual purchase to meet their emotional desires (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). Following the above, it is postulated that eco brand significantly affects consumers' purchase behaviour.

Eco-labelling

One of the alternative green marketing tools to label eco-friendly product is eco-labelling. This tool aids consumer decision-making process in choosing eco-friendly products (Delafrooz et al, 2014). The labelling of green products is facilitated by using only environmental labels. Part of the product packaging consists of a combination ranging from paper in small pieces to very complex diagrams. Information series on how to use the product or the product's ingredient can be included on the labels. Under certain circumstances, sellers may prefer simple labels, but they are legally obliged to provide more information on such label designs (Delafrooz et al, 2014; Ranjan & Kushwaha, 2017). It would be easier for consumers to differentiate environmentally friendly products over normal standard products with environmental labels. The consumers' commitment to buy is positively influenced by eco-label recognition (Kumar & Kapoor, 2017; Tan et al, 2019). The consumer's

positive green consciousness on eco-labelled products has been proven by many earlier studies in the western nations (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). Kumar and Kapoor(2017) found that the eco-label is a desirable information tool for environmental conscious consumers that influence their purchase decision. Following these concerns, it is hypothesized that eco-labelling significantly affects consumers' purchase behaviour.

Eco-packaging

Safety for individuals and environment relies on the recyclability of eco-friendly packaging (Nguyen, Parker, Brennan & Lockrey, 2020; Orzan et al., 2018). Renewable recycled materials and energy are used as much as possible, resulting in a green packaging or sustainable packaging terminology (Orzan et al, 2018). In comparison, other types of packaging cause more damages than eco-packaging. This is due to its reusability, recyclability and biodegradable features. Orzan et al (2018) further stated that consumer protection is guaranteed based on the food product or non-food product's well-packed packaging (Orzan, et al 2018). The decision to buy ecological packaging can be influenced by two motivational factors, that is, saving by recycling, and also protecting the environment(Nguyen et al, 2020). In other words, consumers do not want to purchase products without any clue of the product usage benefits and high costs of eco-packaging incurred. Hence, it is essential for businesses to educate the consumers on the benefits of using eco-packaging in the long run. In purchasing green packaging, consumers' perception towards the benefits, obstacles and development of strategies for changing consumer habits towards sustainability should be within any business managers' knowledge. Orzan et al (2018) found that the inconsistency identified in consumers' green purchasing behaviour was caused by barriers affecting the purchase of packaged products in organic packaging. In this study, it is further proposed that eco-packaging significantly influences consumers' purchase behaviour.

Environmental Advertisements

Goh and Wahid (2015) stated that the need for sustainable environmental management has been recognised by the Malaysian Government over the past four decades, to which the Environmental Act in 1974 was established. This act is one of the government's initiatives to ensure sustainable protection of resources including air, water, and forest, as well as limiting the occurrences of acid rain and environmental degradation (Goh & Wahid, 2015). Mainstream media has been favoured mostly by environmental advertisements act as a catalyst to generate awareness and to introduce their products to environmentally concerned consumers. This is supported by Dhurup and Muposhi (2017), which revealed a positive relationship between green advertising and behaviour.. This is in tandem with the global green movements and increased society's focus on environmental issues. The green advertisements' goals are aimed at influencing consumers' purchasing behaviour by supporting them to purchase environmentally friendly products and to focus their attention on the benefits gained from their green purchasing behaviour.

Chan (2015) stated that a communications' level of effectiveness of environmental advertising is influenced by the environmental claim type. This environmental claim type and the source country's green image with the significant main effect on the effectiveness of said advertisement, is the demonstration this study provides. Marketers need to apply a situational perspective as part of their environmental claims designs in a particular nation, as this study empirical findings suggested. The customers' perception of eco-friendliness in a relevant source country is critical to the marketers' consideration.

Based on the above extant literature, the following hypotheses are developed and reflected in the theoretical framework as illustrated in Figure 1.1:

- H1: Eco-brand significantly affect consumers' purchase behaviour.
- H2: Eco-labelling significant affects consumers' purchase behaviour.
- H3: Eco-packaging significantly affects consumers' purchase behaviour.
- H4: Environmental advertisements significantly affects consumers' purchase behaviour

The seminal behavioural adoption model, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985 has been acknowledged as one of the best and most widely researched models used in social psychological discipline to predict behavioural intentions (Yadaz & Pathak, 2016). Drawing from both TPB and other relevant marketing tool constructs, this study attempts to understand consumers' purchase behavioural intention as a conscious plan of action, to which customers require a behaviour and motivation to do it (Ariffin et al, 2016). The proposed research framework illustrates the need to achieve environmental sustainability through purchase behaviour.

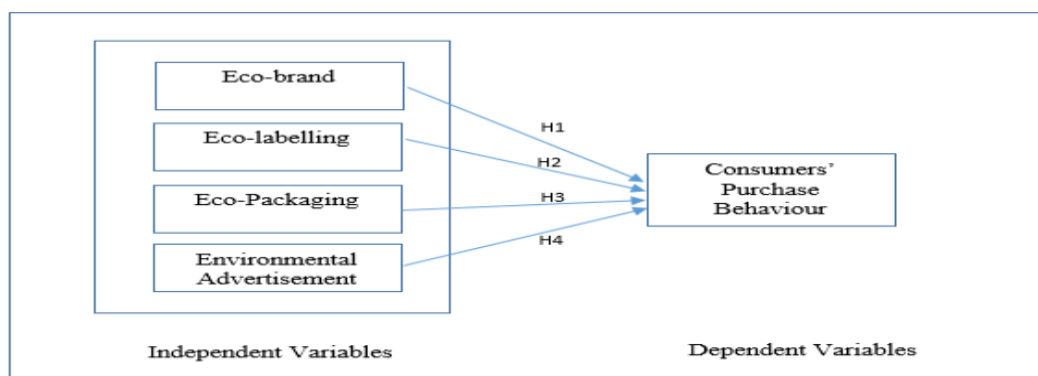


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework

III. Research Methodology

Using a non probability via convenient sampling technique, 300 survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents who were aware of green-related products and services. However, only 189 were usable for further data analyses using SPSS statistical software version 23.0. There were five sections identified in the questionnaire which employed a five-point Likert scale to record the targeted respondents' responses. All item-measurements for the five identified constructs were adopted and adapted from past research. In ensuring reliability, coefficient alpha was computed to measure the five constructs of green marketing tools and consumers' purchase behaviour.

VI. Data Analysis And Findings

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1: Demographic Profile Characteristics

	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	55	29
	Female	134	71
Age	Under 18 years old	3	2
	18 - 30 years old	175	93
	30 - 40 years old	5	3
	40 - 50 years old	3	2
	Above 50 years old	3	2
Marital Status	Single	172	91
	Married	16	9
	Divorced	1	1
	Widowed	0	0
Race	Malay	176	93
	Chinese	9	5
	Indian	4	2
	Others	0	0

Occupation	University / College Students	164	87
	Government Sector	3	2
	Private Sector	11	6
	Housewife	6	3
	Others	5	3
Current Household Income	Less than RM 1,000	169	89
	RM 1,001 - RM 3,000	5	3
	RM 3,001 - RM 5,000	11	6
	Above RM 5,000	4	2

As shown in Table 1, majority of respondents in this study were females with a significant percentage of 71% (N=134) compared to the male respondents which consisted of only 29% (N=55). Many respondents were in the age group of between 18 - 30 years old at 93% (N=175). In terms of marital status, majority of the respondents were single at 91% (N=192). In addition, most respondents were from the Malay ethnic group at 93% (N=176). They were mainly university and college students at 87% (N=164). Majority of the respondents' household income were less than RM 1,000 at 87%(N=169).

4.2 Reliability Testing

In ensuring reliability, coefficient alpha was computed to measure the five constructs of marketing tools and purchase behaviour respectively. Based on Table 2, the items had been tested accordingly and all items were found to be reliable with values ranging from 0.810 to 0.922. The Cronbach's alpha results for tested items were as follows: eco-brand at .725; eco-labelling at .716; eco packaging at .839; environmental advertisement at .883; and purchase behaviour at .777. The overall Cronbach's alpha values for all variables are more than 0.7 which is considered reliable (Cronbach, 1951; Nunnally, 1978).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha Value	N of Items
Eco-Brand	.725	4
Eco-Labelling	.716	4
Eco-Packaging	.838	4
Environmental Advertisement	.833	4
Purchase Behaviour	.777	4

4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

As illustrated in Table 3, a multiple regression analysis was carried out to test the relationship between eco-brand, eco-labelling, eco-packaging, and environmental advertisement and purchase behaviour. The result revealed an adjusted R² value of 0.375, indicating that about 38 % of the variance in purchase behaviour was significantly explained by the four said attributes: eco-brand, eco-labelling, eco-packaging, and environmental advertisement (R² = .375, F (4, 184), p < .001). According to Hair et al., (2010), the larger the F-ratio, the more variance in a dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. In justifying a minimal adjusted R² value, Frost (2018) further explained that studying human behaviours will generally have R² values that are less than 50%. In this context, addressing purchasing behavioural construct involved human consumption activities that were difficult to predict as compared to other predictive constructs of interest.

Table 3; Model Summary

Model Summary										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.622a	.387	.375	.52724	.387	29.044	4	184	.000	1.711
a. Predictors: (Constant) Eco-Brand, Eco-Labeling, Eco-Packaging, Environmental Advertisement										
b. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Purchase Behaviour										

4.4 Standardized Beta Coefficients

Table 4 illustrates the respective standardised coefficient values of green marketing tools and consumers' purchase behaviour. It reveals that eco-packaging is significantly affecting consumer's purchase behaviour at beta value of .308 and significant at less than or equals to .005 level, hence accepting H3. In addition, environmental packaging was also found to significantly affect purchase behaviour, at a beta value of .068 and is significant at less than or equals to .10 level. Thus, H4 is accepted. Eco labelling and eco branding, however, have no significant influences on consumers' purchase behaviour.

Table 4: Standardized Beta Coefficients

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.751	.302		2.487	.014
	POEB_MEAN	.096	.095	.085	1.006	.316
	POEL_MEAN	.119	.119	.107	1.007	.315
	POEP_MEAN	.335	.119	.308	2.826	.005*
	POEA_MEAN	.201	.110	.188	1.833	.068**

Note – Levels of Significance are at .005* and .10**

a. Dependent Variable: Consumers' Purchase Behaviour

V. Discussion and Conclusion

In essence, this study was carried out to examine the influence of green marketing attributes on consumers' purchase consumption behaviour. Identified independent constructs such as eco-brand, eco-label, eco-packaging and environmental advertisements were the determining factors in predicting consumers' purchase behaviour towards green related products and services. From the findings, it was revealed that, eco-packaging and environmental advertisement had significant effects on consumers' purchase behaviour, while eco-brand and eco labelling stated otherwise.

The significant impact of environmental advertising on consumers' purchase behaviour supports past research (e.g. Chan, 2015; Dhurup and Muposhi, 2017), which revealed a positive significant relationship between green advertising and behaviour. Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of credibility and trustworthy in structuring environmental advertising messages to the customers (Atkinson and Rosenthal, 2014). As for eco-packaging, its significant effect on consumers' purchase had also shown support to past research. Nguyen et al., (2020) for example, has shown significant results between eco packaging and purchase behaviour by stressing the importance of packaging materials used to manufacture eco-friendly packaging, manufacturing technologies, and market appeal respectively. Other factors such as the economical packaging material sources, packaging durability and its useful packaging content also play important roles in consumers' purchasing behaviour (Orzan et al., 2018).

These results further imply that all predictors only manage to explain about 38% of customer purchasing behaviour. This indicates that businesses or marketers have to explore other antecedents that may further account for 62% of customer purchasing behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2020). In addition, the predictors for purchase behaviour of green products may be affected by other factors such as price and demographic background (Ansar, 2013). Teo (2016) further stated that the level of customer awareness on the environmental issues could be a critical consideration in addressing consumers' green buying behaviour.

Several marketing implications are observed in this study. Firstly, it has provided some insights on the appropriate tools used in regards to enhancing green marketing efforts by business organizations. As shown in the findings, the consumers were more concerned about the product packaging and the effectiveness of green advertisement. Hence, more efforts should be focused on identifying precise and attractive packaging concepts in attracting consumers to buy the green products. In addition, effective advertisement strategy is also important to spread more awareness of green product to the consumers. Such efforts should be supported by the government of every nation in an attempt to inform its citizens about eco product benefits and its market availability, and thus ensuring continued conservation of the natural environment.

Several limitations were observed. Although this study has also provided extant literature on green marketing attributes and purchase behaviour, it could be potentially replicated for future studies within different research settings. Also, future research may require further identification and investigations of other predictive constructs that may influence green consumption behaviour. Last but not least, a qualitative methodological approach could be further applied in future research to provide potentially richer data in addressing the said issues.

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