

GREEN MARKETING MIX ON PURCHASE OF GREEN PRODUCTS IN MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: *The purpose for this study was to investigate the relationship of the factors of green marketing mix affect the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products. This research has explored at the various factors of green marketing mix affect the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products namely product, price, place, and promotion. Specifically, a university in Kedah state was chosen as the study location. A total of 160 respondents were sampled using quota sampling technique. The research instrument being used in this research was questionnaire and the results obtained were analyzed using frequency analysis, reliability analysis and multiple linear regression. The findings of this study will be to identify the main and important factors of green marketing mix affect the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products. It would help practitioner, researcher and marketer to understand which factors of the green marketing mix are most important, and can be apply to their future research, apply to their business strategy in order to be success in the green marketing field.*

Keywords: *Green Marketing Mix, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing, Green Products, University Students*

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1. Introduction

Corresponding to the World Commission on Environmental Development, companies today are migrating their processes towards sustainable development. Sustainable development is a very common concept amongst companies today to ensure it meets the current needs of the consumers without conceding the capability of the future generations. This strategy is about the economic integration and ecological considerations in the decision-making process, creating the policies that enhance the environmental protection and also conserve the quality of the development of agricultural for the present and the future generation. As part of the migration process, companies are seriously reviewing their processes to ensure they abide by the

sustainable development mode. In doing so, most companies are now looking at their marketing process. Most companies are adopting the green marketing process to join the global sustainable development bandwagon.

Conceptually, green marketing is defined as the process of marketing products in an environmentally friendly manner. Green marketing comprises of activities such as packaging, changes to production processes, product modification, increase awareness of compliance marketing, and advertising strategy. In 1975, AMA (American Marketing Association) established its first ecological marketing process and by 1980, the first green marketing concept was introduced in the market. These changes were influenced by the policies and practices of a company that contributes to the quality of the environment which in return reveals the company's responsibility towards the society. This action is considered as the promotion of environmentally friendly products (Henion, 1976). The rising consciousness in environment friendly products and consumer's intention to pay for these products has raised involvement by companies to alter their process. However, due to the misinterpretation of green marketing by various stakeholders has caused the definition to be very crucial and not an easy task to undertake. Even the term green marketing is called differently by various stakeholders for example green marketing is also known as environmental marketing, ecological marketing and green marketing. (Polonsky, 1994). There is no general definition of green marketing until today.

Green marketing process comprises of environmental elements in their attempt to market their products. Based on the information provided by companies, customers are can clearly decide on which product to purchase. The current trends see consumers being more environmentally conscious of their purchase behavior. Studies indicate that some consumers reject products that are harmful to the environment (Laroche, 2001). Hence this clearly explains why companies are moving towards producing products that are environmentally friendly (Rex, 2007). Although the trend towards green purchase behavior seem trending in the current business setting, the concept of greening and campaigns to encourage buying for green products are still far from reality in the case of Malaysia (Golnaz, Phuah, Zainalabidin and Mad Nasir, 2013). The green market in Malaysia is still at an infancy stage.

In Malaysia, the consumers have different knowledge about the green concept and product than the consumers in western countries. In western countries, the consumer view green products as less harmful to the environment and will cause less pollution, while Malaysia consumers view green products as highly priced and is consumed or purchased by a specific group of people with higher income level (Shahnaei, 2012). In general, Malaysian consumers utilize their salary to purchase common household items and healthcare products. However, there are some consumers to seek to purchase environmentally friendly products as they want to be role models to others while solving environmental deterioration (Hallin, 1995). These types of consumers believe that they have the ability to protect the environment (Gan, 2008). Although there is a high chance of consumers to be motivated to convert to be a green consumer by having an intention to purchase green products, hence the actual behavior does not reflect this intention. As much as consumers are convincing to go green, it does not show in their purchase behavior. Therefore, this research has explored at the various factors of green marketing mix namely product, price, place, and promotion affect the consumer behavior towards purchasing of green products in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Behavior

Azrina characterizes shopper as any people or family units by using good and services that are created inside of the economy. (Azrina, 2011) Numerous studies (McEachern, 2008; Hartlieb, 2009; Liang, 2008; Donoghue, 2009; Thomas, 2006; Chartrand, 2005; Coulter, 2005; Dommeyer, 2003) demonstrate that buyers' awareness and learning force noteworthy effect on different sorts of compelling customers' practices. For instance, Hartlieb underlines the significance of ethical labeling for acculturating business images (Hartlieb, 2009). A consumer's purchase intention is referred to the individual's expectation to purchase a specific brand which they have identified after doing a thorough investigation and gathering of information. Studies show that there are many variables which could lead consumers to have a purchase intention. Amongst others are brand, cost and quality which will help consumers to decide what product to purchase after investigating the detail of the product in the market (Laroche, 1996, Hafeez, 2012, Teng, 2007).

Along these lines, powerful consumer behavior must be appeared within consciousness. Knowledge can impact human choices or activities (McEachern, 2008; Liang and Xiangyu, 2008). The connection among learning and consumer behavior can be explained by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior, which about the person states of mind and trust are created by knowledge. There is a research that investigate the effect of knowledge on human behavior is verifiable foundation of Planned Behavior Theory. By explanation of McEachern and Warnaby (2008), knowledge can be segregated into system knowledge, action related knowledge and effective knowledge. Every type of knowledge prevents mistake measure of impact on human decision making. "System knowledge" refers to the knowledge of how frameworks or procedure works; "action related knowledge" associated with the behavioral choices or feasible courses of activities; and "effective knowledge" refers to knowledge of potential advantages or several practices. To the limit of consumer rights are concerned, all form of knowledge (system, action-related or effective knowledge) can influence customers' defensive behaviors. Insensible in any type of knowledge can break down purchasers' ability to practice their rights and additionally not able to constrain traders to act in consistence with necessity of customer protection act and the other way around.

2.2 Product

The product incorporates "the whole package of services procured by purchasers in the trade process" (Blackwell, 2006). The value of an item, its package, its purposes, and its form are characteristics that representing the most essential elements in the product mix (Van Waterschoot, 1992). In this research we will focus on the package of green products and its quality.

2.2.1 Product Quality

The American Society for Quality Control describes quality as "the totality of components and attributes of a product or service that bear on its capacity to fulfill expressed or suggested needs" (Kotler, 2009). As per stated by Ottman (2002), the people assumed that green products do not function as traditional ones" (Vernekar, 2011). Furthermore, based on the prior research on 238 persons, 80% of them affirms that they "will purchase green products that are low quality compared to other products" and 74% of them said they

"will buy those products which are ordinary quality that will cause less environmental pollution". This study assures the fact that customers are not ready to alter their purchase behavior by buying alternate product due to their concern for environmentally friendly products. However, the same study shows a negative relationship between "I never doubt the natural value of the domestic products" and the "purchasing intention of inadequacy products" (Purohit, 2011). Consumers are not ready to purchase lower quality products although their impact on the environment is low, in fact the argument relating the guarantee of the environmentally friendly is not much convincing to make consumers buying low quality green products.

2.2.2. Packaging

There is a decision making of the five stages namely issue acknowledgment, information search, assessment of options, product selection and result. In fact, some of the consumer making decision to buy a product not based on the five stages, but on instinct, his decision is covered with "environmental cues", known as the "behavioral influence perspective". For this scenario the information on packaging has an essential part to capture the consumer's attention. For example, scenario, several vendors like L'Oréal and Procter & Gamble are currently seen to further invest in producing environmentally friendly products. These producers have also reduced their packaging size and focused to save cost on the packaging, therefore, they are offering their toothpaste in just with the tube instead of with a cardboard box (Solomon, 2010).

2.2.3 Types of eco-friendly products

Consumer purchase green products which have a high effect on nature (Rhabar, 2011). In 2010, a research studied on Malaysian consumer showed that the responses from the consumers that purchased more green products and indicated cleaning items or pesticides to be considered as non-ecofriendly. Besides, Chitra (2007) carried out a study on 60 customers that among buying green products like nutrition, woman beauty products, medicines, furniture, daily products and more, the results showed that majority consumers are "completely aware of eco-friendly food, and partially aware of 'medicine and cosmetics' related products. However, the study will concentrate on green products sold in grocery store, for example, food, cosmetic and healthcare products, cleaning products and others. The product performance, quality, image and taste are indispensable to the green consumer particularly detergent eco-friendly products; the greenness alone is not satisfactory to impact the customer attitude to purchase. Highlight the advantages offers quality to the products and can focus buyer's decision (Wong, 1996).

2.3 Price

AMA describes the cost is the value and the amount of cash which is determined for a said product or services and is eventually expected to acquire the product. Some consumers perceive the price of green product to be more expensive than non-green product (Chang, 2011). In order to convince consumer to pay more for the green products, firstly marketer must convey a trust that products or services will protect the environment and earth, so consumer would like to spend additional cost because they feel it deserved. An investigation is made in 27 European nations on 27,000 respondents, around 75% of the respondents are willing to pay more for green products where else in another study a similar pattern was seen where 92% of the respondents were additionally prepared to pay more for eco-friendly products and the Swedish have one of the most astounding rates: 88.8% (Pirani, 2011). However as indicated by another review made on a sample of 808 Belgian buyers (understudies, scholarly staff and chairmen of Ghent University) just 10% of the sample is willing to pay a 27% value premium (De Pelsmacker, 2009).

Regardless of the possibility that shoppers create positive behavior toward ethical products, their conduct does not change much, for example buying decision. Moreover Mandese (1991) demonstrated that "developing green business sector does not necessarily show that shoppers would endeavor to buy eco-friendly products at higher costs (Purohit, 2011). In reality even, green buyers are sensitive to pricing. So, there is a willingness to pay more for green product yet till a level, in review additionally say this willingness to pay more however as our sample is made out of 11 students and different shoppers, for example, employed or unemployed individuals with diverse levels of wage, the discoveries could be more summed up to the population. Cost is seen by purchasers as an indication of value (Kotler, 2009). This conviction about the presence of a value quality relationship is pervasive in fact that it is not generally true that the more a buyer pays for a product the more it is a decent quality product, without a doubt the cost is not only about the attribute of a product (Solomon, 2010).

2.3 Promotion

As per Kotler and Keller (2009) promotion includes public relations, direct marketing, advertising, and sale promotion. In this study, the promotion factor will focus on advertising in relation to purchase behavior and purchase intentions. Advertising is a component of marketing communication mix. It can be categorized as any kind of presentation, ideas or even labels in merchandises (Kotler, 2009). Advertisements help organization spread information to buyers and bring it to the consumer's attention to products. Promotion includes the method for an organization corresponds with its target group and partners to its product or an overall of an organization (Patrick, 2010). Consumers are concerned about the promotion of green products. Consumers believe that promotion on green products is the reason deserving to control the environmental preservation (Ann, 2012). Green advertising takes place when the green product is promoted in a way that declares the advertised product or services to be natural and environmentally friendly. Green advertisement also indicates that the production process maintains or reduces resources and energy (Chang, 2011).

The promotion on green products helps to improve consumer's awareness on the go green concepts. This can indirectly help consumers find the relevant green product that they are looking for. Promoting customer's purchase decision and also where to purchase it is important because it develops green products interest and the willingness to purchase. Green advertising plays a pivotal role especially when organization looks after the natural environment, products which are environmentally friendly. These can help improve the corporate images campaign and give more importance on the environmental certification of the organizations (Hartmann, 2009). From the perspective of a consumer, an organization's corporate image is seen as a desired feature of that organization (Bathmanathan & Hironaka, 2016).

Advertising supposes essential part in the green marketing. This research was conducted based on the consumer's perception on the role of advertising in influencing consumers' green purchase behavior. Advertising is a strong tool used by organizations to help enhance the features of green products to be more environmentally friendly compared to other traditional products. The advertising on the appeal is important in fact that it would attract the attention of the targeted purchasers to the green products. Another study made on Malaysian consumers, results showed there is no relationship between environmental advertisements and purchase intention of green products (Rahbar, 2011). Unquestionably consumers pay attention on green commercial which allow them to get more information about the green products, but it do not motive them to purchase intention. This study just viewed 250 Penang consumers in Malaysia, which does not represent the

overall consumer behavior.

2.4 Place

The marketing mix component helps the organizations choose the best markets to offer their products and how convenient their products could provide (Blackwell, 2006). Kotler and Keller define place in the last marketing mix factor as the location, inventory and distribution channel. It can be further explained as the method used to deliver the product or services from the producer to the end customer (Patrick, 2010). Besides, a point of buying is the area where the buying is made (Kotler, 2009) yet there are two levels of point of purchase and point of sale. Point of purchase is full scale level incorporate the shopping mall, the city, the business sector. Meanwhile, point of sale is the miniaturized scale level incorporates the interior of the store that displays the product. Customers who initially intended to only do window shopping will have the desire or purchase intention when they see the product being displayed in the store. This also helps the remind the consumer of a promotion he or she had seen before which leads them to purchase the product (Blackwell, 2006).

Previous studies mostly concentrated on shops or places that supports eco-friendly products that consumers prefer to buy (Wanninayake, 2008; Purohit, 2011). However, this study will look into products that are displayed in stores instead of only eco-friendly distribution channels. The purpose of this is to see if consumers will effortlessly consider purchasing green products in these stores in the event that the products are available. The consumer behavior on the point of purchase and store contributes strongly when consumers look for products from the common brands and they add additional information to the customers when preparing to purchase in the store (Anselmsson, 2007).

3. Methods

For this study, the target population for this research are the students who studying in a university at Kedah. Following Roscoe's rule of thumb (Sekaran, 2003), a sample size that is larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most researches. So for this research, the sample size estimated to be 160 students in the respective university. 240 questionnaires were distributed, to account for any lost, damaged, or incomplete forms.

4. Result Analysis

There are 75 male respondents, and 85 female respondents took part in this research. There are 13 respondents in between 17-19 years old, 100 respondents in between 20-22 years old, 45 respondents in between 23-25 years old, and 2 respondents are above 25 years old. Most of the respondents are in between 20-22 years old. There are 5 Malay respondents, 121 Chinese respondents, and 34 Indian respondents. Most of the respondents were Chinese and Indian, which consist of 75.60% and 21.30% respectively.

As the results, the Cronbach's Alpha values for product, price, place, promotion are 0.856, 0.766, 0.819, and 0.839 respectively. This shows the internal consistency is in good category. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the consumer behaviour towards purchase of green products is 0.801. This also shows that the internal consistency is reliable.

Table 1. Summary of Results for Multiple Regressions Analysis

Dimension	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Product	.455	.383	4.626	.000*
Price	.453	.383	4.604	.000*
Place	.057	.066	.959	.339
Promotion	.331	.428	6.161	.000*
R = 0.559, R² = 0.313, F = 17.619, *p = < 0.05				

The multiple linear regression data results (Table 1) showed that the relationship between the green marketing mix and consumer behavior are weak. The R^2 is 0.313, means 31.30% of the green marketing mix variables can be explained by the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products. Thus, this shows that not all the green marketing mix will have a very strong effect to the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products. Based on the Beta of each of green marketing mix variable from the test results, there is a moderate relationship to consumer behavior. Promotion scored the highest Beta of 0.428, which is the highest relationship among the factors of green marketing mix. Second highest relationship is product and price, both of these variables scored a Beta of 0.383. Lastly, the place has scored the lowest Beta value which is 0.066. This is the weakest relationship among the factors of the green marketing mix. Therefore, place did not fully affect the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products.

5. Discussion

From the data analysis, promotion has scored a highest Beta of 0.428. This result supported by the previous researcher that indicated advertising contributes highly and plays an important role in the green marketing. Advertising assumes crucial part in the green marketing. Advertising is broad discussion and limit the research onto the purchaser's perspectives and roles promoting play to impact purchasers to buy the green products. Advertising can portray a green product different from the traditional products. Advertising also can stress and portray a green product to have ecological elements and characteristics (Schuhwerk, 1995). As such, advertising is crucial because it can create the attraction on target consumer to the eco-friendly products.

On the other hand, product scored a Beta of 0.383. This supported the previous researchers, stated the quality of a product, functioning of the product, packaging of the product, and designing of the product are the most vital features in the product mix (Van Waterschoot, 1992). There is an importance to know that 50% of the respondents disagree that eco-friendly product has good quality, this shows that marketer must not only to consider how to reduce the production cost by recycled or reused material, they also have to consider about the product quality, to promise and convince the trust of the quality of eco-friendly product.

Besides that, price scored a Beta of 0.383. This supported by researcher whom mentioned about the price, referring to survey conducted in 27 European countries on 27,000 respondents, 75% of the respondents willing to pay extra for green products, for Swedish have the highest percentages of 88.8% (Pirani, 2011). Referring to another survey conducted on a sample of 808 Belgian consumers, there are 10% of the respondents willing to pay a premium price (De Pelsmacker, 2009). From the research conducted in a university at Kedah, 50% students from the university strongly disagree that the price of the eco-friendly product are reasonable, and 70% of the students strongly disagree that pay higher price to the green features of the product.

Meanwhile, place has scored the lowest Beta value which is 0.066. This is the lowest value among all the green marketing mix dimensions discussed in this research. It indicated that, place does not fully affect the consumer behavior towards purchase of green products. Therefore, this area should be least focused and avoid of wasting resources like money and energy to research and build a store to specially selling the eco-friendly products. Except if have the sufficient information of the eco-friendly products to educate the convince and educate the customer, have a very strong promotion and advertising of the eco-friendly products to create an awareness to capture the customer attention, have a variety of eco-friendly products to satisfy the customer needs, then invest to build an eco-friendly concept store just able to create a successful business.

6. Conclusions

Based on the results from this research, it can be concluded that some of the factor of the green marketing mix can be a reliable prediction to understand what the consumer behaviour towards the eco-friendly products. Four factors of the green marketing mix studied in this research are product, price, place, and promotion. After the research conducted, the results showed product, price, and promotion had a significant influence on the consumer behaviour. However, place did not show any significant influence. In order to create an eco-friendly product, at first must identify the customer's environmental needs and develop the product to suit the needs of the customer or develop and innovate environmentally friendly products to have less impact than competitors. To remain sustainable, marketer should provide a wide variety of the eco-friendly products that are made from recycled materials, can be recycled and reused again so it causes less pollution to the environment.

In trying to convince the customers with marketing strategies, organizations should ensure they take all possible measures to inform customer about their green product, the best options available and relevant information in their labeling. By having an eco-label in the product, it will ensure endorsement of having an environmentally friendly product. This will also help consumer decide on purchasing the product if they are skeptical of its function and price. Lastly, it is seen that green products have lower profit margin due to the fact that the process of recyclable and reusable and eco-friendly technologies is dearer than processing traditional products. The impact and benefits of green marketing is not immediate and can only be seen in the long run. Therefore, organization needs to have a long term or strategic plan instead of a short-term strategy. While strategically planning their operations, organization should also ensure they do not resort to unethical practices to make profits. Hence it is crucial for organization to include sustainable elements and shift their focus from shareholder to being responsible (Bathmanathan & Hironaka, 2016).

In conclusion, green marketing is not an easy concept to be implementing. The organization has to have a dynamic marketing strategy by carrying out more research and study the feasibility of implementing green marketing practices as it is still at the infancy stage in Kedah. Implementing green marketing practices may not be an easy task at the beginning. However, by implementing green marketing practices, it will have a positive effect in terms of profitability for the firm. Marketers have to put more effort to educate the customer about the harm of less environmental products to the human and natural ecological system. Organizations should advertise the core features of the environmentally friendly product and services to increase the consumer perception towards the product and services, to let them have a clearer mindset what is it about.

7. Limitation and Future Research

This research was conducted specifically on the university in the region of Kedah. Universities students in different areas might have different perception on their own opinion, for example local students who studying in local university, but differences in rural and urban area which might have different culture and different lifestyle of the students. Besides that, this research was conducted on a private university instead of conducting at both public and private university. This might affect the results of the data because consumer behavior of other public and private university might have different perception on the factor of the green marketing mix. Different types of universities have different culture, so they might have different behavior towards the green marketing mix.

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