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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
2012
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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30TH AUGUST 2012
ABSTRACT

CONSUMPTION VALUES, ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN THE CONTEXT OF GREEN PRODUCTS

The purpose of this study is to examine the consumption values, environmental concern and attitude on purchase intention in the context of green products. The study have been examining relationships between consumption values and environmental attitude, environmental concern and attitude, attitude and purchase intention and lastly, the direct relationship between consumption values and purchase intention. The study has conceptualized consumption values as a multidimensional construct which consists of six dimensions of values (i.e. Functional Value-Quality, Functional Value-Price, Social Value, Emotional Value, Conditional Value and Epistemic Value). The study involved 300 respondents throughout East Malaysia (i.e. Sabah and Sarawak) to gather data and findings on. The multiple regression analysis is used to test the relationships between the independent variables (i.e. Consumption Values and Environmental Concern), dependent variables (i.e. attitude and purchase intention). The results of the study have found that there are significant relationships in all of the assumptions or hypothesis of the study except consumption values and attitude. The customers’ lack of awareness of green products, the unaffordable prices set for green products, and finally, the inability to measure the effectiveness of these green products in saving the environment in the Malaysian context are found to be some issues arising from the study. For future research, the study suggests that there should be in-depth study on predicting factors that contribute to influencing customers’ consumption values towards attitude in the context of green products.
ABSTRAK

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

Developed countries today are now alarmed by how the economy and policies have been affected by environmental deterioration (Ramayah, Wai, Mohamad, 2010). Numerous researchers have found that the issues concerning environmental degradation were identified to be relating to worsening of climate change and pollution (Ramlogan, 1997). Aini, Ahmadun and Masud (2003) have argued that the environment condition today will affect the quality of life of both present and future generations. Chang and Fong (2010) have also pointed out that due to these environmental issues, corporate social responsibility has started to gain more attention. Moreover, Tan and Lau (2011) believe that the impact of environmental deterioration has influenced many firms in becoming more socially responsible in producing their outputs to cater for the environmentally concerned consumers. Furthermore, the conservation and preservation of the environment could be one of the means to overcome the issue.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability development began to gain more attention and became one of the main talked about issue of the century (Chang and Fong, 2010). Thereafter, companies were urged to review their industry’s profile and business portfolios to make necessary changes to conform with the consumers new needs (Ottman, 1992). Several researchers have also initiated concepts such as environmental consumerism which has been defined as, how a consumer’s purchase behaviour is influenced by environmental concerns, in order to understand the new wave in green customer purchase intention (Shrum, McCarty and Lowrey, 1995).

Attitude and purchase intention for green products and services then developed into a sort after subject by scholars, academicians, firms and policy makers (Easterling, Miller and Weinberger, 1995). The main issue of these studies
were emphasizing on the awareness of the public and how these issues have not been able to draw the attention of the government (Chukwuma, 1998). Furthermore, as the worsening of weather patterns and environment depletes, consumers are beginning to change their behaviour and it has been found that environmental knowledge is one of the determining factors in consumers’ decision process (Laroche, Bergeron, Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

Presently, as consumers became more converse and proficient in their purchase of green products, it has tremendously changed their mindset into being greener, and due to this, the lifestyle in terms of choices and behaviour of these consumers have changed since the last twenty years ago (Stisser, 1994; Barber, 2010). As a result, due to these theatrical shifts, green consumers are now more focused in their product performance and how it impacts the environment; and marketers are pushed to seek for new product innovations and focus on the current new needs of these green consumers (GFK, 2007; Ottman, 1993).

All together, organizations now have a greater role especially in moving along the sustainable development in the green consumers market, and their responsibility now is aiming to educate and influence more consumers to change and behave in a greener manner (Hart, 1997). In the organizational context, the growth on green awareness has urged organizations to change their strategies and begins to respond to the new needs and demands of green consumers (Kim and Choi, 2005; Kohl, 1990). Thus, to explore and discover characteristics of these green consumers and their influences of purchasing green products is one of marketers’ current sort after study.

In the Malaysian context, the concept of environmental friendly or green marketing is still new and developing. In regards to previous studies conducted, it has been found that there are factors which motivates green consumers to behave in a greener manner, and it has also contribute in influencing their beliefs that they are helping in reducing environmental issues (Ellen, Weiner and Cobb-Walgren, 1991).
Thus, this study aims to use a theory introduced by Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) which explains the prediction, description and explanation of the influences in consumers’ consumption behaviour to study the Malaysian green consumers’ behaviour in their purchase intention towards green products. In addition, this study also aims to examine an extended theoretical model of Lin and Huang (2012), and focus on the study of consumption values, environmental concern, and attitude in influencing green consumers’ intention to purchase green products.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT
The increasing concern on environmental issues has drawn attention of various members related to the industry. The crucial purpose of creating green products generally is to reflect the environmental degradation cycle whereby impacts, solutions and improvement on the issue is being focused on (OECD, 2009). Looking into the consumer perspective, it has been reported that 30% of the consumer population are still weak in mirroring their concerns into purchasing behaviour (Young, Hwang, McDonald, Oates, 2009). Challenges began rising and firms started facing difficulties relating to motivation factors that contributes to consumers intention towards purchasing green products (Mainierie et al; 1999; Tan and Lau, 2010).

Minton and Rose (1997) in their study have found that consumers whom are environmentally conscious are more willing to adjust their attitude towards green product purchase. However, there were also literatures that disagreed on the relationship that exists between environmental concerns and intention to purchase green products (Hines, Hungerford and Tomera, 1987). Product expectations, lacking in awareness and product performance are often the factors that results in negative perceptions of consumers on the green concept (Chen and Chang, 2012). Thus, in order to reduce these pessimistic attitudes regarding the environment, it is important for marketers and researchers to study and address the attitude-behaviour gap (Lin and Huang, 2012).
Based on the discussion of the issue above, Tan and Lau (2010) suggested that the importance of addressing the attitude-behaviour gap will enable policy makers and marketers to create green products according to the needs and wants of the market. Schiffman and Kanuk (1997) suggested that intention to be forecaster however, Ramayah et al. (2010) stated otherwise whereby, in their opinion, intention will not be able to provide a clear pathway to the consumers mind towards purchasing environmental sound products. Marketers in their exploration of the consumers market generally need firm justifications and verification on the determinants that influences the consumers’ purchase decisions (Ramayah et al. 2003).

Additionally, information dissemination to consumers is also deemed to have influential impacts on consumers purchasing decisions and marketers are anticipated to be having this information available (Chen and Chang, 2012). However, in relation to the weak translation of environmental concern into green consumers’ purchasing decision, due to lacking in study towards the issue, there are still arising questions with regards to the issue (Gupta and Ogden, 2006). Therefore, to summarize, this study aims to fill the gap that has raised between factors that influences the consumers’ attitude in their purchasing green products.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION
This research main question is to find out could consumption values and environmental concern about green products has an influence on purchase intention. This question then leads to several research questions of the study are as follows:

- Do consumption values have a positive relationship with attitude of purchasing green products?
- Does environmental concern have a positive relationship with attitude of purchasing green product?
- Is there any relationship between attitude towards green product and purchase intention?
- Is there any relationship between consumption values and purchase intention?
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE
The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To examine the effect of consumption values on attitude of purchasing green products.
- To examine the effect of environmental concern on attitude of purchasing green products.
- To analyze the effect of attitude on purchase intention.
- To analyze the effect of consumption values on purchase intention.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY
Malaysia, in the midst of developing stages, however still does face challenges in the sustainability of business profiles (Said, Ahmadun and Masud, 2003). As these challenges focused on the imbalance between development and sustainability, therefore, this research is aimed to conduct an in-depth study of the Malaysian consumer behaviour especially in the green marketing industry. The focus of this study will be on the dimensions of consumption values unto the attitude of consumers towards their intention to purchase green products. The functional, social, emotional, conditional and epistemic values role in the study is to highlight different perspectives in which consumers conform to behave.

This study uses Green Air-Conditioner as a green product to be studied and this product has been chosen due to its current rank as one of the most sort-after green product in Malaysia, and it is also known to be a higher-end green product. This study have also targeted lecturers to be major respondents of this study and these lecturers would be individuals selected from respective local universities in East Malaysia which consists of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (Kota Kinabalu), Universiti Teknologi Mara (Kota Kinabalu, Kuching) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Kuching). In addition to that, local consumers are also respondents of this study as to further study the variability in the action-value gap of green product purchase intention in Malaysia. As stated earlier, consumption values and environmental concern of influencing attitude in consumers' green purchase intention will be the main focus in this study.
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The findings of this study aims to assist academicians and policy makers in the industry in understanding the associations linking consumption values, attitude and purchase intention in the context of green products. The objective of recent research conducted relating environmental issues are always contributing towards the knowledge on consumers’ actions and intentions (Chamorro, Rubio and Miranda, 2009). Theoretically, the study aims to provide input towards the study on consumer behaviour through its findings and empirical evidence to support the relationship between consumption values, attitude and intention to purchase in the Malaysian context. Furthermore, the study will be focusing on providing an in-depth understanding on the influence of consumption values.

These values will enable the increase of knowledge in understanding consumers’ attitude and intention in purchasing green products. Additionally, the findings of this study will provide empirical findings to the available literatures in impacts of ecological concerns (Minton and Rose, 1997). As an extending model to the study by Lin and Huang (2012), this study will provide an extensive provision of facts on environmental concern studies. Moreover, the results of this study will an assistance tool to policy markers, and marketing experts particularly the ones involved in creating awareness and finding ways to promote green marketing. Practically, findings of the study will enable creative innovations of marketing plans and campaigns in creating the right consumer mindset.

These factors relating to the understanding of consumers behaviour are crucial for the marketing practitioners as green marketing is gaining more attention nowadays. The closer they move towards the consideration of what causes consumers to behave in an environmentally concern manner and willingness to pay for these products the easier the process of generating tactics to capture these consumers (Laroche et al. 2001). Therefore, this study is essentially important to provide valuable information to the marketers of green products that involves in attracting consumers towards the purchase of green products.
1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The definition of terminologies used in this study is as below:

1.6.1 Green Marketing
Green Marketing is defined as the efforts by organization to produce, promote, package and reclaim products in a manner that is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns (American Marketing Association, 1975).

1.6.2 Green Consumer
Green Consumer is defined as consumers who are eager to accept green products when their primary need for performance, quality, convenience and affordability were met and furthermore, their level of acceptance would also increase when they understood how a green product could help to solve environmental problems (Ottman, 1992).

1.6.3 Green Product
Green Product is defined as ecological and environmental friendly produced that integrates greener strategies in terms of packaging and lesser use of toxic materials which help reduce natural environment impact (Chen and Chai, 2010).

1.6.4 Consumption Values
Consumption Values is defined as goals and values that are normally achieved through activities and actions such as social interaction, economic exchange, possession and consumption (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991).

1.6.5 Functional Value
Functional Value is defined as, the perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance. An alternative acquires functional value through the possession of salient functional, utilitarian or physical attributes. Functional value is measured on a profile of choice attributes (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991)
1.6.6 Social Value
Social Value is defined as, the perceived utility acquired from an alternative's association with one or more specific social groups. An alternative acquires social value through association with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socioeconomic and cultural-ethnic groups. Social value is measured on a profile of choice imagery (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991)

1.6.7 Emotional Value
Emotional Value is defined as, the perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity to arouse feelings or affective states. An alternative acquires emotional value when associated with specific feelings or when precipitating or perpetuating those feelings. Emotional value is measured on a profile of feelings associated with the alternative (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991)

1.6.8 Conditional Value
Conditional Value is defined as, the perceived utility acquired by an alternative as the result of the specific situation or set of circumstances facing the choice maker. An alternative acquires conditional value in the presence of antecedent physical or social contingencies that enhance its functional or social value. Conditional value is measured on a profile of choice contingency (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991)

1.6.9 Epistemic Value
Epistemic Value is defined as, the perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge. An alternative acquires epistemic value by questionnaire items referring to curiosity, novelty, and knowledge (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991)

1.6.10 Attitude
Attitude is defined as a learned factor in influencing the individual to react positively or negatively with respect to the situation or product (Schiffman and Kanuk 2010).
1.6.11 Environmental Concern

Environmental Concern is defined as one of a precondition for green purchasing and the small increase in market share for green product has reflected that green consumers are simply not rising (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the overview of the significance of the study on consumption values and purchase intention in the context of green product. Additionally, the chapter outlines overview of the study followed by statement of problems, the study’s objectives and questions, contribution and scope of study, and lastly, the definition of firms used in the study.

Next, chapter 2 provides an extensive literature review on green marketing, green consumer, green products, consumption values (i.e. functional, social, emotional, conditional and epistemic value), attitude, purchase intention and environmental concern. Chapter 3 accordingly outlines the research theoretical framework and hypothesis, the definition of variables used in the study, research design, sampling design that summarize the target population of the study, sampling frame and size, research instrument and measurement, data collection and lastly, data analysis method.

Chapter 4 of this study illustrates the analysis of data which was employed to measure the findings on the research done. The chapter will outline results relating to consumers description details, data collection tools results, and the results of hypothesis testing. Last but not least, Chapter 5 sums up the study by providing the conclusion and discussion on the findings of the study. Perspectives of theoretical and managerial aspects are also taken into consideration and recommendation from the impact of the studied issue unto different settings and future research opportunities is also provided in this chapter.
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