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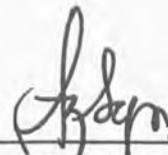
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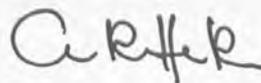
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**THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERS'  
PERCEPTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS ON  
GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION**

**KONG TIAN SOON @ WILSON**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
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## DECLARATION

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

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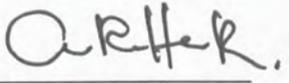
## CERTIFICATION

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## ABSTRACT

### **THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS ON GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION**

The purpose of this study is to examine the influences of consumers' perception of green products on green purchase intention among Sabahan consumers. A modified framework adapted from D'Souza, Taghian, Lamb and Peretiatkos (2006) was used for this study. Individual consumers aged above 18 years old were the unit of analysis of this study. By using questionnaires survey, a total of 208 returned questionnaires were collected throughout Kota Kinabalu area. However, only 159 questionnaires were valid and used for data analysis. The findings of the present study confirmed that green corporate perception, eco-label and green product value have positively significant influences on green purchase intention. The results of the study also revealed that eco-label and green product value make the largest contribution in influencing consumer green purchase intention among Sabahan consumers. In contrast, both green advertising and green packaging have no significant impacts in influencing green purchase intention among Sabahan consumers.



## **ABSTRAK**

*Kajian ini dijalankan dengan tujuan untuk menyelidik perkaitan di antara persepsi pengguna mengenai produk hijau (green products) dan tahap keinginan untuk membeli produk hijau (green purchase intention) di kalangan pengguna di Sabah. Kerangka kajian (research framework) yang telah digubal daripada D'Souza, Taghian, Lamb dan Peretiatkos (2006) telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Sementara itu, unit analisis untuk kajian ini adalah pengguna individu berumur 18 tahun ke atas. Dengan menggunakan kaedah soal selidik, sebanyak 208 jawapan telah diperolehi di sekitar kawasan Kota Kinabalu. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya 159 jawapan adalah sah dan boleh digunakan untuk analisa data. Hasil daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa persepsi hijau korporat (green corporate perception), label-eko (eco-label) dan nilai produk hijau (green product value) mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap keinginan untuk membeli produk hijau. Keputusan daripada kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa label-eko (eco-label) dan nilai produk hijau (green product value) merupakan kriteria yang paling besar dalam mempengaruhi keinginan untuk membeli produk hijau di kalangan pengguna di Sabah. Sebaliknya, pengiklanan hijau (green advertising) dan pembungkusan hijau (green packaging) didapati tidak mempunyai sebarang impak signifikan dalam mempengaruhi keinginan pembelian produk hijau di kalangan pengguna di Sabah.*

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<b>AIO</b>	Attitude Interest Opinion
<b>EMS</b>	Environmental Management System
<b>FAMA</b>	Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GHG</b>	Green House Gases
<b>PET</b>	Polyethylene Terephthalate
<b>PS</b>	Polystyrene
<b>SIRIM</b>	Standards and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USDA</b>	United States Department of Agriculture



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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

From fashion clothing to foods and beverages, from household groceries to daily transportations, the terms such as “green”, “eco”, “environmentally friendly”, “100 percent natural” or “organic” have begun to populate and gain more and more attention from consumers within the last decade. As unusual climate changes, global warming, health concern and environmental issues continue to gain interest, consumers are starting to behave ‘green’ in their purchasing decisions (Do Paco and Raposo, 2009; Barber, 2010; Okada and Mais, 2010).

With rising concerns on environmental issues including green consumerism since the early 1990s, the demand for green products has increased significantly. A recent market report released by Global Industry Analysts, Inc. (2012) unveils that the global market for green marketing products is projected to reach USD 3.5 trillion by 2017. This is mainly driven by the competitive and regulatory pressures to adopt eco-friendly products and processes around the world. Likewise, in a recent global online survey conducted by Euromonitor International reveals that the global organic packaged food and drink is anticipated to reach USD 36.0 billion of sales in 2015. The United States of America (USA) market continues to dominate the global market with USD 16.1 billion of forecasted sales, while other developing Asian countries like China and India are deemed as the most dynamic market with tremendous growth rate of 171.6 percent (China) and 105.3 percent (India) over the forecast period in 2010 (Euromonitor International, 2012). Furthermore, the emergence of green consumerism signifies that some consumers are willing to pay premium price for green products (Vlosky, Ozanne and Fontenot, 1999; Sammer and Wustenhagen, 2006; Haytko and Matulich, 2008; Okada and Mais, 2010; Litvine and Wustenhagen, 2011).



The “going-green” trend is now extending to the Asian region, as the impacts of development and environmental threats are becoming more and more alarming to the local governments and citizens (Lee, 2008). As such, Malaysia has pledged to reduce up to 40 percent of greenhouse gases (GHG) emission per Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2020 compared to the level in 2005 during the 2009 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (Chin, 2012). In recent years, there has been increasing commitment from the Malaysian government to consistently uphold environmental sustainability. For instance, the New Economic Model presented in 2010 puts sustainability as one of the three goals of the economic transformation programme and aspires to place Malaysia as a green hub all the way along the business development process, ranging from research to design to manufacturing to commercialization (Najib, 2010).

Additionally, the government is committed towards developing of eco-labelling programme for environmentally friendly products and services to enable easier identification by consumers through a series of eco-labelling programmes such as Standards & Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia (SIRIM’s) “Eco-label”, Energy Commission’s “Energy Efficiency Star Rating”, and Department of Agriculture’s “*Skim Organik Malaysia*” label for organic foods. Nevertheless, the Malaysian Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water have launched its “Malaysia Online Green Directory” through Malaysian Green Tech Corporation (GreenTech Malaysia) on Jan 2011. The directory offers customers listings of leading-edge green products available in Malaysia and a clear explanation of the varieties and characteristics according to their product categories (Chin, 2012).

Based on discussion of the above backgrounds, it is apparent that the Malaysian government and consumers have begun to acknowledge the importance to strike a balance between economic development and environmental preservation. In general, the Malaysian consumers are more willing than before to favour green concepts (Tan and Lau, 2010; Punitha and Azmawani, 2011). Emerging markets for green products in Malaysia means promising opportunities for green marketers. Hence, it is imperative for business or policy maker to understand the consumers’ perceptions towards green products, and how their perceptions could influence

their purchasing behavior. Yet, it is noted that the field of study is still relatively scarce in Malaysia.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

According to Polonsky (1994), there are five major reasons why a firm engaged in green marketing, namely:

- a. Perceived green marketing as an opportunity to achieve its corporate objectives;
- b. As a manner in corporate social responsibility;
- c. To react to government policies or legalized rules or regulations;
- d. To remain competitive in the industry as a result to competitors' environmental activities; and
- e. Cost factors associated with waste disposal, or reductions in material usage forces firms to modify their production process.

Irrespective of the reasons underlying to their decisions, to become 'green' is both a need and an opportunity for most firms nowadays (Dangelico and Pontrandolfo, 2010). In this regard, the development of green product is becoming more and more relevant in the business environment today. Hence, it is anticipated that the number of companies to embark in marketing green product is expected to manifold over the next years.

A recent survey conducted by AC Nielsen in 2011 showed that while Malaysians displayed great concern for the environment impacts, only one in five or 20 percent of consumers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products (The Edge, 2011). The Nielsen Global Online Environmental and Sustainability Survey was conducted in 51 countries worldwide and sampled over 25,000 consumers. Among the countries surveyed, Malaysia ranked ninth in terms of consumer worries about the impact of air pollution and global warming. Nine out of ten Malaysians are aware of the impact of environmental issues. This implies that despite most Malaysians expressed great concern over environmental issue, but they are still not willing to change their buying behavior towards environmentally friendly products.

Thus, the above finding is consistent with those of Nor Azila Mod Noor, Norsiah Mat, Nor Azwa Mat, Che Zuriana Jamaluddin, Hayatul Safrah Salleh and Azli Muhammad (2012) who found that the green purchase behaviour among Malaysians is not encouraging. In their study which tempted to identify the green consumer profiles and their green buying behaviour in Malaysia, it was discovered that only 30 percent of the total respondents can be categorized as green product buyers and have had experience in purchasing green products before.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the past on green consumerism in Malaysia, particularly on the predictor variables such as consumers' demographic profiles, consumers' environmental attitudes, consumers' environmental threats, perceived consumer effectiveness, perceived behavioural controls (Tan and Lau, 2010; Punitha and Azmawani, 2011; Tan, 2011; Tan and Lau, 2011; Teng, Rezai, Zainalabidin Mohamed and Mad Nasir Shamsudin, 2011). However, studies to unveil the relationships between consumers' perception of green products and green purchase intention are still relatively less in Malaysia (Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid, 2009; Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid, Kamaruzaman Jusoff and Kamsol Mohamed Kassim, 2009; Elham Rahbar and Nabsiah Abdul Wahid, 2011). Yet, there is much uncertainty among firms on the product dimensions to be considered when developing green products.

In a study performed by Mohd Rafi Yaacob and Azman Zakaria (2011), respondents were found to be aware and posed positive attitude towards green products in Pahang, Malaysia. Though their study has offered an understanding on consumers' awareness and perception on future prospects of green products in Malaysia, it was, however limited to only a few determinants yet general consumers' perception on green products. In fact, their study which focused on the consumers' perception and future prospects of green products has remained a query regarding consumers' green purchasing intention.

Hence, the current study is vital in filling the current literature gap about green consumerism in Malaysia. For that reason, it contributes to the problem

statement of **to what extent will consumers' green purchase intention would be influenced by consumers' perception of green products.**

### **1.3 Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the research questions are as follows:

- a. What is the relationship between green corporate perception and green purchase intention?
- b. What is the relationship between eco-label and green purchase intention?
- c. What is the relationship between green advertising and green purchase intention?
- d. What is the relationship between green packaging and green purchase intention?
- e. What is the relationship between green products value and green purchase intention?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of this study are:

- a. To investigate the relationship between green corporate perception and green purchase intention;
- b. To investigate the relationship between eco-label and green purchase intention;
- c. To investigate the relationship between green advertising and green purchase intention;
- d. To investigate the relationship between green packaging and green purchase intention;
- e. To investigate the relationship between green products value and green purchase intention.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is to investigate the relationships of consumers' perceptions of green products on green purchase intention among Sabahan consumers. Due to time limitation, the sample of this study will encompass consumers across Kota Kinabalu area, Sabah. The target respondents of this study are individual consumers aged above 18 years old, with the assumption that this group of consumer is familiar with purchasing of products and are also independent in their own decisions for choosing the right products between many available choices (Elham Rahbar and Nabsiah Abdul Wahid, 2011). The research object of this study is referring to any green products available on the market. No specific green product would be examined in this study. This study is a cross-sectional study.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Academic Implications**

As earlier mentioned, numerous studies related to green consumerism in Malaysia have been conducted in the past, particularly on the predictor variables like consumers' demographic profiles, environmental attitudes, environmental threats, perceived consumer effectiveness and behavioural controls (Tan and Lau, 2010; Punitha and Azmawani, 2011; Tan, 2011; Tan and Lau, 2011; Teng *et al.*, 2011). However, studies pertaining to the consumers' perception of green products are still relatively less in Malaysia (Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid, 2009; Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid *et al.*, 2009; Elham Rahbar and Nabsiah Abdul Wahid, 2011). Therefore, it is hoped that this study may contribute to the growing body of literature on green consumerism in Malaysia, particularly on the overall consumers' perception of green products.

### **1.6.2 Marketing Implications**

It is predicted that the demand for green products would develop and diversify over the next few years, coupled with continuous changes in consumer behaviours, thus companies embarking in green products would have to double up their efforts to overcome the increasing marketing challenges related to green consumerism. Hence, it is essential for green marketers to thoroughly understand the overall

consumers' perception towards green products in order to be fully successful in their marketing efforts and the weight of each dimension. This would be particularly substantial in Malaysia as the concept of green products is still in its infancy stage (Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid *et al.*, 2009; Teng *et al.*, 2011). Hence, it is hoped that this study may make useful contributions to marketers in forming their distinctive marketing strategies in green consumerism.

### **1.6.3 Policy Making Implications**

Finally, hopefully this study may provide useful guidelines for the relevant government agencies in formulating public policies towards a sustainable environment that is beneficial to the public. While the country is geared towards building its economic, there is also a need to promote eco-responsible lifestyles to the people of the country. Without full commitment from the government, it would be difficult for the general public including business owners to become fully aware on the negative effect of economic growth to the country's ecological system.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Green Corporate Perception** is defined as a consumers' perception towards a corporate strategy or reputation by way of being socially responsible and responsive to environmental concerns (D'Souza, Taghian, Lamb, Peretiatkos, 2006).

**Eco-Label** is defined as an effective way of communication tool to the customer on the specific benefits and characteristics of the products and the safety claim of green products. Eco-labels are either displayed by using environmentally safe symbols or messages. The information is displayed with the primary aim to influence consumers' decision making, plus to enable the corporation to position themselves as an environmentally concerned firm (D'Souza *et al.*, 2006). Even so, other terms such as green-label or environmental certified label are often used interchangeably to describe a product with such environmental characteristics.

**Green Advertising** is defined as an activity used by an organization to influence consumers' behaviour by encouraging them to buy products that are not harmful to the environment and to direct their attention to the positive consequences of their purchase behaviour, for themselves as well as the environment (Elham Rahbar and Nabsiah Abdul Wahid, 2011).

**Green Packaging** is defined as any packages that used less material to produce, made from reliable source of materials, safe to use throughout its life cycle, reusable or recyclable and able to meet market criteria for performance and cost (The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment, 2009).

**Green Product Value** is a consumers' perceived value he would have when buying a green product, namely its functional benefits and its environmental safety aspect (D'Souza *et al.*, 2006).

**Green Purchase Intention** is the probability and willingness of a person to give preference to products having eco-friendly features over other traditional products in their purchase considerations (Nik Ramli Nik Abdul Rashid *et al.*, 2009).

## **1.8 Summary**

In short, Chapter 1 outlined the Overview of the study, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Research Objectives, Scope of the Study, Significance of the Study and Definitions of each variable been tested in the study.

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