Exploring the Significance of Malaysian Consumers' Intentions to Purchase Green Products

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Abstract **- The trend toward environmental sustainability is already gaining traction, and it is becoming more common in developed and developing countries. Consumers are becoming more aware of sustainability's importance and making more conscious choices about the products they purchase. The Malaysian Government is also promoting green technology by offering incentives and subsidies to companies producing eco-friendly products, also known as green products. Additionally, the Government is introducing regulations to reduce the carbon footprint of businesses and industries. On the other hand, the Government has signed the SDGs and is struggling to achieve them by 2030. Consumption and production are the primary focus of the 12th Sustainable Development Goal. A limited number of studies have been conducted to investigate the consumers' intentions toward purchasing green products in the Malaysian context, particularly on SDGs. Green products are available in the open markets in Malaysia, but consumers' behaviors and their intentions toward such products are considered low. This study is therefore conducted with the aim to investigate the level of consumers' intention towards purchasing green products. Using a 7-point Likert, 385 valid responses were collected from respondents in Selangor, Perak, and Johor. The study found that Malaysian consumers have a medium level of intentions when it comes to purchasing green products. This could be due to the fact that green products tend to be more expensive than their non-green counterparts, and many people are not willing to pay the extra cost. Also, there could be various factors influencing consumers' intentions to buy green products, which future studies can investigate.**

Keywords **–** *SDGs, level of purchase intention, green products, Malaysian consumers, descriptive analysis*

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I. Introduction

Global warming has accelerated the environmental situation around the globe rapidly. The temperature of the Earth's atmosphere has been rising since the Industrial Revolution, leading to several climate changes (Mei, Wai, & Ahamad 2016). These changes have caused an increase in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, the melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, and rising sea levels (Mei et al., 2016). Conventionally manufactured products, also known as non-green products, have adverse effects on the environment, resulting in the shift towards environmentally friendly products, also known as green products or sustainable products (Rehman et al., 2022). These products are described as green since they are human and environmentally friendly. Companies are increasingly focusing on green technology and products, investing in sustainable practices, and using renewable sources of energy (Khaled Saifullah, Kari, & Ali 2017). This shift is helping to reduce the

environmental impact of traditional manufacturing and helping to protect the environment (Al-Swidi & Saleh 2021).

Moreover, the environment and issues related to it have become increasingly important in recent decades. This is due to a greater public awareness of the impacts of human activities on the environment and the realization that we must take greater responsibility for the planet we inhabit (Pacheco-Blanco & Bastante-Ceca, 2016). This has been driven by growing awareness of the impact of human activities on the planet and the need to find solutions to mitigate the damage caused (EU-Environment, 2019). Governments and organizations around the world have implemented policies and initiatives to help reduce the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation (Mei et al., 2016). In the Malaysian context, the Government established the "Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources", formally known as the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water, in 2009 (Kettha, 2017). In order to encourage public use of green technology and green product consumption, the Ministry was established to promote and spread awareness about the use of green technologies (Kettha, 2017). The Ministry has since implemented several initiatives, such as the "Green Technology Master Plan" (GTMP) and the "Green Technology Financing Scheme" (GTFS), to promote green technology in Malaysia (Tan et al., 2017). These initiatives have been successful in increasing the public consumption of green products in the country. In addition to GTMP and GTFS, Malaysia is a signatory to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 (DOSM, 2018). In general, the Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 global goals intended to address several social, economic, and environmental challenges around the world (Osborn et al., 2015).

By signing on to the SDGs, Malaysia has committed to working towards achieving these goals by 2030. The goals cover a wide range of areas, including poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and more (EPU, 2020). One of these 17 goals, Goal 12, is concerned with ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, which are crucial to maintaining the living standards of current and future generations (EPU, 2020). The Malaysian Government has made efforts to align its policies, programs, and initiatives with the 12th Sustainable Development Goals (DOSM, 2019). At various levels, Malaysia has been integrating the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals into its policies and practices to realize sustainable development's benefits. It has resulted in the appearance of many green products in open markets, and consumers are making purchases of them (Myhijau, 2018). From the literature, it is evident that green products are available on the open markets in Malaysia, and the Government is working on a green consumer pattern in the country (Chuah & Lu, 2019; Lim et al., 2019; Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2019; Rajadurai et al., 2018). The Government is actively promoting green products and services to encourage environmentally friendly practices (Nezakati & Hosseinpour, 2015; Yusliza et al., 2020). Consumers are encouraged to purchase green products. This is helping to create a more sustainable future for Malaysia (Yusoff & Asmuni, 2021). Therefore, the latest study is needed to investigate Malaysian consumers' intentions toward purchasing green products. For this purpose, this study was conducted to investigate the level of Malaysian consumers' intentions towards purchasing green products.

II. Literature Review

Exploring the purchase process reveals that purchase intention is a fundamental element supporting a person's purchase decision (Erdil, 2018). In addition, green purchasing is primarily based on green purchasing intentions and behaviours. Rashid et al. (2009) define green purchase intention as the willingness of an individual to purchase green products when making a purchase decision. Moreover, Chekima et al. (2016) indicate that green purchase intentions refer to individuals' willingness and distinct kind of environmentally friendly behaviour to choose green products over conventional products to demonstrate their concern for the environment. On the other hand, green purchase behaviour is the actual purchase of green products (Taljaard et al., 2018). It is the result of the individual's green purchase intention. Therefore, green purchase intention is a necessary but not sufficient condition for green purchasing behaviour (Shumaila et al., 2010). This complex process involves ethical decision-making patterns that reflect responsible behaviour. When consumers act as socially responsible individuals, they consider the products they consume, and therefore, they choose green products to contribute to social change (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018). It is essential that consumers understand the implications of their actions and the effects of their decisions on the environment and society (Rehman et al., 2022). When consumers are aware of the potential environmental impacts of their actions, they are more likely to make green purchasing decisions that will support a more sustainable lifestyle (Ahmad et al., 2020). In addition, when they are motivated to make ethical decisions, they are more likely to engage in green purchasing behaviour (Rehman et al., 2022).

Researchers have begun paying increasing attention to purchase intentions as consumers have become more conscious of the importance of purchasing products produced under green operations or environmentally friendly production processes (Chen & Lobo, 2012; Lee et al., 2020; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Despite the prevalence of

studies on green purchase intentions in the literature over recent decades, most studies considered green purchase behaviors other than the green purchase intention perspective or the Malaysian market (Chuah & Lu, 2019; Jalil & Shaharuddin, 2019). This has created a gap in knowledge about the green purchase intention of the Malaysian market (Rehman et al., 2022). Thus, this study seeks to explore the level of Malaysian consumers' intention to purchase green products.

The systematic review conducted by Rehman et al. (2022) indicates that most Malaysian studies have been based on the purchasing behaviour of consumers and are limited to those who have been exposed to green products while excluding those who have not yet experienced them. This lack of information about consumer intention towards green products makes understanding their willingness to purchase such products difficult. As such, there is a need to conduct further research to better understand the behaviour of Malaysian consumers in relation to green products (Rehman et al., 2022). As previously mentioned, intention is the key predictor of individual behaviour. Understanding consumer intention is, therefore, crucial in determining consumer behaviour. If companies are to market green products effectively, they must first understand the behaviour and preferences of their customers. This research could provide valuable insights for companies targeting the Malaysian market.

III. Methodology and Data Collection

Due to the ease of collecting responses from Generation Y respondents, convenience sampling was used in this study as a type of non-probability sampling (Erdil, 2018). The Generation Y generation is considered to be a significant segment of future consumers, whose spending power is expected to be greater than other segments (Erdil, 2018; Pyöriä et al., 2017). A total of 385 Generation Y participants born between 1980 and 2000 were the study population. This age limit is further supported by the research of Rajadurai et al. (2021) and Sidhu (2020) within the context of Malaysian millennials. The study population consisted of 385 Generation Y participants born between 1980 and 2000. Since all survey questions were compulsory to answer, no questionnaire was excluded. The collected data was compiled into Excel spreadsheets for import into SPSS 22 for testing and analysis. The survey items for this study are measured using a seven-point Likert scale from 1 to 7, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Descriptive and univariate analyses were employed to analyze the data. The data were analysed for normality and outliers and found no normality issues.

IV. Result

This study aimed to determine the level of intention among Malaysian consumers to buy green products. Based on the respondents' responses, a descriptive analysis of the variable is conducted to determine the mean values. Respondents' intentions to purchase green products were assessed using measurement items based on a seven-point Likert scale. To clearly understand the results, descriptive analysis was used to present the mean values that revealed the consumers' level of intention toward purchasing green products (Pimentel, 2019; Vate-U-Lan & Masouras, 2018). This will facilitate comprehension and interpretation of the primary analysis. An interpretation of Pimentel's (2019) mean values and a seven-point Likert scale are provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Seven-point Likert scale mean values and their interpretation (Pimentel, 2019)

Likert scale	Ranking/mean values	Interpretation
1	1.00-1.85	Extremely dissatisfied
2	1.86-2.71	Very dissatisfied
3	2.72-3.57	Dissatisfied
4	3.58-4.43	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
5	4.44-5.29	Satisfied
6	5.30-6.15	Very satisfied
7	6.16-7.00	Extremely satisfied

Table 4.2 presents a descriptive analysis of respondents' answers regarding their intentions to purchase green products. The highest mean value is 3.99 for the statement, "I would consider purchasing green products if I happen to see them in a store or online." The lowest mean value is 3.20 for the statement "I intend to purchase green products in the near future." The mean value for all the measurement items of intention to purchase green products is 3.71 and is considered neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (Pimentel, 2019; Vate-U-Lan & Masouras,

2018). It is obvious that the mean value of 3.71 is indicative of a generally neutral or slightly positive response to statements relating to green products.

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for intention to purchase green products

Code	Statements	Mean
IPGP1	I consider purchasing green products	3.60
IPGP2	I intend to purchase green products in the near future.	3.20
IPGP3	I would consider purchasing green products if I happen to see them in a store or online.	3.99
IPGP4	I plan to purchase more green products.	3.92
IPGP5	I would recommend green products to my family and friends.	3.64
IPGP6	I will consider purchasing green products because they have less negative environmental impacts.	3.96
IPGP7	I will consider switching to green products for ecological reasons.	3.66
Overall mean value		3.71

V. Level of Malaysian Consumers' Intention to Purchase Green Products

A more detailed analysis of the respondents' intentions regarding purchasing green products is conducted by categorizing their responses into three levels: low, medium, and high, in order to gain a fuller understanding of their attitudes toward purchasing green products. As a common practice in research studies to provide an understanding of the distribution of responses, it is common to categorize the seven-point Likert scale into low, medium, and high levels by using the Seven Point Likert Scale. This categorization allows researchers to better identify patterns in the data. To do so, D'Silva et al. (2010) and Hassan et al. (2011) suggested that for a 10-point Likert scale, the mean value for the low category would be 1 to 3.33, the mean value for the medium category would be 3.34 to 6.67, and the mean value for the high category would be 6.68 to 10. Moreover, for the five-point Likert scale, Alqatawenh (2018) and Noor et al. (2012) used a range of ≤2.33 for low level, ≥2.33, ≤3.66 for moderate level, and ≥3.66 for high level. The calculation for the 5-point Likert scale is as follows:

[4/3 + lowest value i.e. 1] = 2.33 is considered low.
[Highest value i.e. 5–4/3] = 3.67 is considered high
The values 2.34 up to 3.66 are in between and considered moderate

With the use of this method, it is possible to provide greater insight into the distribution of responses and provide a more nuanced interpretation of Likert scale data. As a result, no studies have investigated the distribution of mean values of high, medium, and low levels of engagement on the basis of a seven-point Likert scale, as the authors in this study used a seven-point Likert scale. As a result, the authors followed Alqatawenh's (2018) and Noor et al. (2012) and calculated that the Likert seven-point scale could be divided into three levels, such as 3 for low, 3.1 to 4.99 for medium, and 5 to 7 for high, in accordance with their calculations. This enabled the authors to interpret the results more accurately and draw more meaningful conclusions. The calculation for low, medium, and high is as follows:

[6/3 + lowest value i.e. 1] = 3 is considered low.
[Highest value i.e. 7–6/3] = 5 and above is considered high
Those values, such as 3.1 up to 4.99, are in between and considered moderate or medium (Alqatawenh, 2018; Noor et al., 2012).

The statistical analysis presented in Table 4.2 shows the mean value of 3.71 for each of the measurement items that were related to the intention to purchase green products. There seems to be a moderate level of intention to purchase green products among respondents, based on the results of this study (Alqatawenh, 2018; Noor et al., 2012). The findings indicate that respondents understand the importance of green products but are not willing to purchase them. It indicates that while they may have some interest in purchasing green products, their level of intention is not very high.

VI. Discussion

Despite Malaysia's status as a developing country, the country is grappling with the idea of promoting green consumerism and has signed the Sustainable Development Goals (Chakrabarty & Das, 2019). However, the Government is struggling to achieve these goals by the year 2030. As one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, the 12th Goal is mainly related to sustainable consumption and production patterns, and the Malaysian Government is working on making Malaysia a green consumer pattern by 2030 and making the country a model of sustainable consumption patterns (DOSM, 2019). By investigating Malaysian consumers' intentions and behaviours toward green purchasing, many studies have been conducted which greatly contributed to the literature in terms of Malaysian consumers' intentions and behaviours (Chuah & Lu, 2019; Mohd Suki, 2018; Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2019; Ogiemwonyi & Harun, 2020; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Similarly, this study is conducted with the intention of investigating the level of Malaysian consumers' intention toward purchasing green products. Based on the analysis of the data, it is evident that Malaysian consumers, particularly Generation Y, are proactively concerned with the environment. They have experienced climate change, environmental degradation, and the depletion of natural resources. They have also seen how the overuse of resources such as water, electricity, and fuel has caused air and water pollution and land degradation. In spite of this, the study found that Malaysian consumers have a medium level of intention towards purchasing green products. This could be due to the fact that green products tend to be more expensive than their non-green counterparts.

Additionally, there may not yet be enough education and awareness about the importance of green products and their environmental benefits. In the future, it would be interesting to examine how a variety of factors influences Malaysian consumers' intention to purchase green products. Doing so will contribute to increasing consumers' intention to green purchasing. Such research can help identify the motivations and barriers to green purchasing, which in turn can inform policymakers, government bodies associated with with SDGs, and green marketing strategies. Additionally, it can provide insights into how businesses can encourage sustainable consumer behaviour.

VII. Conclusion

This study is intended to investigate the level of Malaysian consumers' intention to purchase green products. It has been noted that the Malaysian Government is struggling with green consumer preferences, although green products are readily available on the Malaysian market. Furthermore, a great deal of research has been conducted in order to determine how Malaysian consumers interact with green products and their behavioural intentions. Despite this, there is still a need for the study to investigate the level of consumers' intention toward purchasing green products, and this motivated the authors to conduct this study. This will help determine whether there is a need to incentivize the purchase of green products or if there are other ways to influence consumer behaviour. Generation Y respondents were surveyed in Selangor, Perak, and Johor (three states with a higher population density), indicating they are moderately inclined to purchase green products. The findings indicate that the respondents have a good understanding of the importance of green products. There is a need to increase awareness and education on this subject in order to motivate more individuals to become green consumers.

VIII. Implications

The findings of this study can be very helpful for green product manufacturers in terms of focusing on their products' attributes and increasing consumers' intentions to purchase these products in the future. By understanding the attributes of green products that are most important to consumers, manufacturers can focus on improving these attributes and increasing the appeal of their products. This, in turn, will lead to higher sales and more successful green product launches. Moreover, the study is beneficial for marketers to use the results as a guide to develop more effective marketing campaigns and target the right audience. They can also use the data to improve their green product offerings, making them more attractive to consumers. This study is of great value to the Malaysian Government from the standpoint of policy associated with SDG 12th Goal, as it provides the Government with a clearer picture of the interest of Malaysian consumers in purchasing green products. Furthermore, the findings can help to shape the Government's environmental policies and objectives. In the context of academics, the study provides new insights into Malaysian consumers' intentions to buy green products since there could be a variety of factors involved in why Malaysian consumers have a medium level of interest in buying green products. Future studies should focus on what other factors can influence consumers' intention to purchase green products. Factors such as environmental knowledge, environmental attitudes, environmental

values, perceived consumer effectiveness, and perceived risk could all be studied to gain insights into how consumers make purchase decisions when it comes to green products.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest between the authors and co-author.

Author's Contribution

Dr Zahoor Ur Rehman wrote the first paper draft, whereas Dr Noor Aslinda Abu Seman reviewed it and added the results and discussion sections. Upon the second review, Dr Amran Harun revised the draft and added the conclusion and implication sections.

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