
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sustainable Marketing: Studying the Effects of Environmental Consciousness and Involvement Degree on Purchasing Behavior of Consumers

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| ABSTRACT

Concerns and consumers' awareness of the environment has increased significantly, and their perception of environmental concerns now represents one of the major factors in consumer decision making. The main aim of this study is to determine the relationship of environmental consciousness and involvement degree on consumers' purchasing behavior. Factors affecting environmentally friendly behaviors will be explained within the context of attitude, intention, and behavior with a holistic approach. TRA Model (Theory of Reasoned Action) will be expanded by adding variables that express individual consumer characteristics. Besides, the data will be gathered via an online survey from various participants who live in Metro Manila, where people from different socio-economic backgrounds are thought to be heavily dispersed and located. Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used to study the relationship and analyze the connection between variables. Results of PLS-SEM revealed that environmental consciousness ($\beta = 0.38$; $p = 0.001$) and involvement degree ($\beta = 0.311$; $p = 0.001$) have significant effects on respondent's attitude in purchasing eco-friendly products. Moreover, both the environmental consciousness ($\beta = 0.423$; $p = 0.001$) and involvement degree ($\beta = 0.46$; $p = 0.001$) have direct significant effects in respondent's behavior in purchasing eco-friendly products. Based on the statistical analyses, this paper offers some further research directions to advance the extent of the literature. This study offers valuable insights for eco-friendly brands that offer products by indicating two important dimensions, which are the environmental consciousness and involvement degree of consumers upon purchasing.

| KEYWORDS

Consumers; Environmental Consciousness; Involvement Degree; Marketing; Purchasing Behavior; Sustainability

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1. Introduction

Having a sustainable lifestyle is one of the things that many people nowadays want to do for a change that can help to improve their lifestyle but also can help our environment. Sustainable marketing is having to sell and promote environmental awareness to the consumers. This may help the business in having to sell products that can help their customers and also the environment. As the world has rapidly been changing, consumers tend to be more conscious as to what they purchase and consume. Environmental consciousness is a state of a person where it shows its concern for the environment. Many consumers nowadays tend to buy green products, natural, or cruelty-free products because of the ingredients themselves, which may not be harmful to them and the environment.

Businesses that are concerned with environmental issues nowadays are increasing. Many companies have found that consumers can and willing to change their behaviors and attitudes in order to help the environment and shift to buying environmentally friendly products. Going green has had an impact on the attitude and behavior of every consumer, not just to consumers but also to the environment, in aspiration on living in harmony with nature, which results in people becoming more ecological at any level. The demand for environmentally friendly products is getting high to promote the consumers' purchasing behavior. Being environmentally conscious of consumers may be complicated, but it can interpret those people who are worried about the environment and what products they purchase and consume. (Farrag, 2017).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Environmental Consciousness

A person who takes into consideration the social and environmental implications of one's behavior in purchasing can be summed as a socially responsible consumer (Mataraci and Kurtulus, 2020). Anand (2017) has stated that prior research has gained the attention of scholars contributing to the improvement of awareness among consumers about environmental concerns. Environmental-conscious consumers are more concerned about environmental issues and problems, and they tend to buy more environmentally friendly and organic products. Perceived food quality affects the environmental consciousness and organic food product purchase intention of consumers (Wang et al., 2020).

Moreover, consumers are being more environmentally conscious and buying more green products, resulting in many companies applying green marketing and raising green awareness. The green concern is each one of individuals' knowledge and awareness of what is happening to our environment and their willingness to solve the environmental problems that we are facing right now. (Apaydin and Szczepaniak, 2017)

Environmental and social issues played a noticeable role in the purchasing behavior of consumers. This growth has been increasing in numbers in different countries, and the level of being environmentally conscious has made the customers an important factor in the promotion of sustainable products. With the emergence of environmentalism and information being available everywhere, customers do not only become willing to purchase products that help the environment, but they have been more concerned about it (Vafaei et al., 2019).

It is hypothesized that:

H1: The level of the consumer's environmental consciousness affects positively the attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products.

H2: The level of the consumer's environmental consciousness affects positively the behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products.

2.2 Involvement Degree

Each consumer has a different value of worth that they impose on a certain product that is often varied by factors that have shaped their attitude and intention. The measurement of involvement degree in the evaluation of the importance that the person places on the product was highlighted (Mataraci and Kurtulus, 2020). The study of Amid et al. (2018) states that social and effective marketing factors surrounding the environmental consciousness have brought a positive contribution to consumers' perception towards purchasing green-related products.

In the study of Sahni and Osahan (2019), they have assumed that green product manufacturers can build green lifestyles and satisfy consumers by making use of taglines such as "Save the Earth," which helps build emotional appeal to the product. Chang et al. (2018) study the consumer's readiness to purchase green products, concerns of consumers, manufacturers, retailers, and government towards environmental sustainability have increased. During this time of the pandemic, green food purchase intentions had increased because consumers nowadays are more health-conscious, but because of the outbreak, it reduced. Having a high purchase intention resulted because of having the issues of price, unavailability, and panic. (Environ, 2020)

Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H3: The level of the consumer's involvement degree affects positively the attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products.

H4: The level of the consumer's involvement degree affects positively the behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products.

2.3 Purchasing Behavior

Consumers have been gaining environmental awareness through education; it has become a global trend that has made consumers reassess and change their purchasing decisions based on the green promotions of a certain product. Consumers have the tendency of opting for and committing to products and services that are environmentally friendly, which leads them to have the willingness to pay more in order to consume and experience these products (Jaderná and Přikrylová, 2018).

Promoting consumer purchase behavior of eco-friendly products will be a big help in reducing the environmental issues and promoting environmental sustainability. Food safety concerns, health consciousness, and information about the products played the most important role in the attitude of young consumers on purchasing organic foods. Also, the product label, high price, and availability have a role in the purchasing behavior of young consumers. (Pham et al., 2019).

A consumer who has established more concrete factors in purchasing decision tend to be more favorable in sustainable products. The existence of ecological seals and certifications is a possible way to attract consumers and make them purchase products from

the firms that do such. Aside from social media influence and word of mouth, a consumer's inclination towards green products is based on their environmental consciousness and how they will benefit from the product (Zahid et al., 2018).

It is hypothesized that:

H5: The attitude of consumers towards purchasing eco-friendly products affects their intention to buy positively.

2.4 Sustainable Marketing

The study of Neil (2018) involves maintaining the balance between social, environmental, and economic dimensions. As a result of which, marketers have started realizing their social responsibilities towards environmental issues in the corporate domain, and all this has resulted in the emergence of a concept called sustainable marketing.

In the Indian economy discussed in the study of Neeru (2020), various sustainable initiatives have been undertaken, which are highly influenced by the concept of recycling, reuse, and refuse. This initiative led to some significant developments in different sectors in India. Sustainable consumption is having the use of products and services which enhance the quality of life with the use of natural products and non-toxic materials. Sustainable consumption aims to have an improvement in technology and economic processes. (Zralek and Burgiel, 2020).

Hassan et al. (2016) state that corporate sustainability is acknowledged to be the quality that maintains the economy, climate, and society for a long-term goal; it is a complex condition that exists as an organization produces an objective that values the state of the environment.

It is hypothesized that:

H6: Consumers' intention to buy eco-friendly products has a positive impact on purchasing behavior.

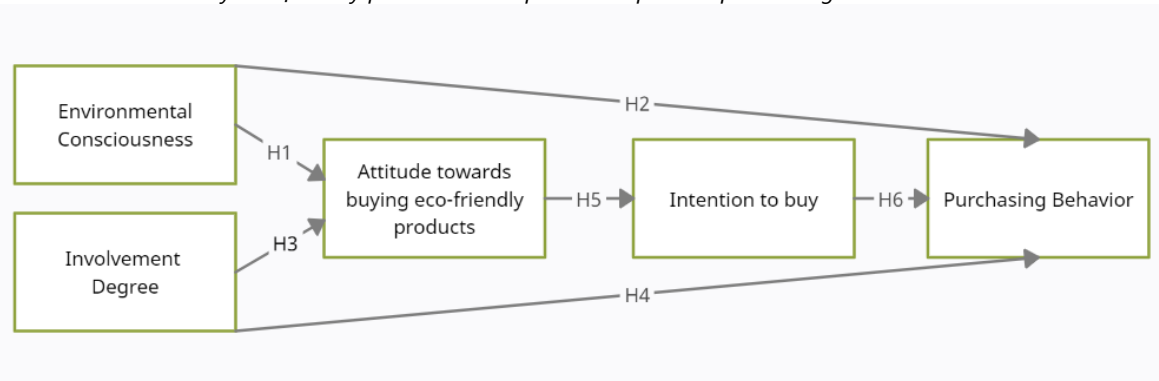


Figure 2.3 Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Subjects and Study Sites

The study will focus on every consumer who has a healthy lifestyle, is health-conscious, and is environmentally aware of the concerns and issues present today. Since there is a heightened restriction due to the pandemic, the survey will be conducted online via online survey platforms. The study site will be located in the comfort of the participant's homes to ensure their safety. The same as the on-site survey, customer privacy must be protected, and they will not be disturbed by any means. Only those respondents who will agree to participate in the study will be the research participants. The location of the potential participants will only be located at Metro Manila, and people outside this location will not be entertained. This has been chosen as it has a varied culture, and it is composed of 12,877,253 people living within the vicinity. The participants will be relatively distributed among 16 cities present in Metro Manila to ensure varied and differentiated results. The maximum number of participants is 300 respondents, male and female that ages 18 to 55 years old. In total, 200 responses will be retrieved from the online survey.

3.2 Research Instruments

The main research instrument used in the study is a questionnaire that will be conducted online and will be answered by a total of 200 respondents. As the study comprises a mixed method to conduct, the questionnaire consists of both the quantitative and qualitative questions relative to the topic (see Appendix B). The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part includes the respondent's profile, namely: name, age, gender, and income. This section consists of choices that relate subjectively to the respondents' experiences or thoughts. Besides, Section B and C of the first part discusses environmental concerns and consumers'

behavior in purchasing sustainable products. The second part of the questionnaire has various scenarios where consumers decide whether they disagree or not. It is to be answered using a Likert Scale, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2= Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree). With these choices, the researchers can gather the information needed that is related to the study.

3.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers will first prepare the instruments needed in gathering the data. One major data collection technique used in this study is the use of an online survey questionnaire. Due to the distance of data collectors from respondents with heightened protocols and restriction of physical interaction, administering survey questionnaires constructed through google forms will be distributed to the respondents via online communication platforms such as messenger and email. The online survey is a method in which respondents are to answer a set of questions constructed by the researchers relevant to the study aimed at the objective through the internet. To ensure the safety of the respondents and researchers, this was particularly chosen to make data gathering procedures. Moreover, it is highly encouraged to conduct it online where the participants of the study are available, and it reduces the cost of travel, printing, and collection of data. Before the final consideration of the questionnaire, pilot testing will be carried out using 20 randomly selected consumers consisting of various individuals from different age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and social status classes in Metro Manila, Philippines.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study utilized Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Model, which is a quantitative method used to study the relationship and analyze the connection between variables. It will be used to determine the relationship between the consumer's perspective of sustainable marketing and their purchasing behavior. Each independent variable will be tested using this model in order to identify whether there is a relationship between the variables in the study that can be further utilized in the future. As the study is under mixed methods consisting of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the qualitative data are constructed from the participant's demographics and descriptive statistics, which provides an accurate and detailed description that can be used as the basic features of the data in the study. In the questionnaire present in the study, there is a section that observes the respondent's behavior and attitude towards Sustainable Marketing. From this point, the data collected will be analyzed through different measures. To evaluate the reliability of the study's findings, Cronbach's alpha will be used to demonstrate consistency between the variables. Furthermore, the researchers will assume a level of significance that can be equal to 0.05 or sometimes 0.01 with a confidence interval of 95% or 99%.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations below will be strictly followed because the researcher value and respect the privacy of the respondents.

- Researchers must show and promote the value of collaborative work.
- Researchers must promote original knowledge to avoid miscommunications and errors.
- Agreements with the participants of the study must be clear and fair.
- Protect any information that the participants will share on the research.
- The objectives of the research must be clear to all the researchers to avoid conflicts and errors.
- Since the survey will be conducted online, the identity of the participants must be protected.
- Researchers will uphold the Data Privacy Act of 2012 or Republic Act 10173.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Validity and Reliability

The survey questionnaire has been validated with the use of Cronbach's Alpha. This model was used to determine if the questions set before each construct is reliable to be used in the study. Cronbach's Alpha should be at least 0.70 to be valid. The independent variables in the study, which consists of Environmental Consciousness (EC) and Involvement Degree (ID) of consumers towards purchasing eco-friendly products, were validated. Three (3) items that identify respondent's environmental consciousness (Section A) yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.874, which is highly consistent. Three (3) items for involvement degree yielded a result of 0.877, which is highly consistent as well. The other three dependent variables, namely the attitude of consumers towards purchasing eco-friendly products, intention to buy, and purchasing behavior that consumers possess, yielded a value of 0.873, 0.772, and 0.869, respectively.

A. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Items	Loadings	Ave. Variance Extracted	Composite Reliability (CR)	Convergent Validity (CV)	Reliability Interpretation
Environmental Consciousness	EnvCons1	0.903	0.799	0.923	Yes	Yes
	EnvCons2	0.899				
	EnvCons3	0.880				
Attitude on Eco-friendly products	EcoFriend1	0.944	0.891	0.942	Yes	Yes
	EcoFriend2	0.944				
Involvement Degree	InvDeg1	0.853	0.799	0.922	Yes	Yes
	InvDeg2	0.908				
	InvDeg3	0.919				
Purchasing Behavior	PurchBeh1	0.902	0.814	0.898	Yes	Yes
	PurchBeh2	0.902				
Purchase Intention	Intent1	0.912	0.794	0.92	Yes	Yes
	Intent2	0.925				
	Intent3	0.832				

Note: For Convergent Validity, all loadings should be $\Rightarrow 0.50$ and all AVE should be $\Rightarrow 0.50$

Post data gathering, a validity and reliability test was run to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items. All questionnaire items from environmental consciousness up to purchase intention of respondents were unaffected as all their loadings is greater than 0.50 and AVE being > 0.50 . Environmental consciousness posted CR = 0.923, AVE = 0.799; attitude on eco-friendly products posted CR = 0.942, AVE = 0.891; involvement degree posted CR = 0.922, AVE = 0.799; purchasing behavior posted CR = 0.898, AVE = 0.814; and purchase intention with CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.794. Thus, composite reliability and convergent validity were achieved and all questions from each construct is valid.

Construct	Environmental Consciousness	Discriminant Validity Interpretation
Environmental Consciousness	0.894	Yes
Attitude towards Eco-friendly Products	0.944	Yes
Involvement Degree	0.894	Yes
Purchasing Behavior	0.902	Yes
Purchase Intention	0.891	Yes

Note: The 1st row shows the square root of average variance extracted (SRAVE), while the 2nd row shows the correlation between constructs. To establish discriminant validity, the SRAVE of environmental consciousness should be higher than the correlation. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.0001$

Discriminant validity, also known as divergent validity, is a measure to test whether the respondents understand the difference between the variables and if they can distinguish one variable from the other. In order to achieve divergent validity, the square root of the Average Variants Extracted (AVE) should be greater than the correlation of the constructs. The table above presents the square root of the AVE for the five constructs in the study. Environmental consciousness is 0.894. This is greater than the correlation of the constructed environmental consciousness and the other four constructs, which are 0.629, 0.81, 0.636, and 0.686, respectively. Overall, all the other four constructs like attitude towards eco-friendly products, involvement degree, purchasing behavior, and purchasing intention have a higher square root of the AVE, which is interpreted as valid constructs fit for the study.

B. Structural Model Evaluation

Structural Path	Estimate	SE	Interpretation
Environmental Consciousness to Attitude	0.38	0.49	H01 Accepted
Environmental Consciousness to Purchasing Behavior	0.423	0.50	H02 Accepted
Involvement Degree to Attitude	0.311	0.50	H03 Accepted

Involvement Degree to Purchasing Behavior	0.46	0.49	H04 Accepted
Attitude to Intention	0.643	0.49	H05 Accepted
Intention to Purchasing Behavior	0.588	0.49	H06 Accepted

Table 4.3 Structural Path Results

As shown in the results of Table 4.3, the effect of environmental consciousness on the attitude of respondents in purchasing eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.38, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . Due to this, the alternative hypothesis (H01), which states that consumers' environmental consciousness affects positively the attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products, is significant ($\beta = 0.38$; $p = 0.001$). Followed by the effect of consumers' environmental consciousness on their behavior in purchasing eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.423, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . Due to this, the alternative hypothesis (H02) which states that the high level of environmental consciousness affects positively the consumer's behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products. ($\beta = 0.423$; $p = 0.001$). For the third hypothesis, the effect of involvement degree on the attitude of respondents in purchasing eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.311, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . Due to this, the alternative hypothesis (H03), which states that consumer's involvement degree affects positively the attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products, is significant. Furthermore, it supports accordingly the probability that per 1 level increase of involvement degree, consumer's attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products increases around 0.311.

As shown in the results for the fourth hypothesis, the effect of involvement degree to respondent's behavior in purchasing eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.46, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . Due to this, the alternative hypothesis (H04), which states that the high level of the consumer's involvement degree affects positively the behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products, is valid. Also, it supports the probability that per 1 level increase of involvement in purchasing behavior, consumer's attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products increases around 0.46. For the fifth hypothesis (H05), the effect of the respondent's attitude to their intention in purchasing eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.643, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . It supports accordingly the probability that per 1 level increase of attitude, respondent's intention in purchasing eco-friendly products increases around 0.643. Lastly, the effect of respondents' intention with regards to their purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly products is significant, where Estimate = 0.588, $p = 0.001$ is lower than < 0.05 . Due to this, the alternative hypothesis (H06) states that consumers' intention to buy eco-friendly products has a positive impact on purchasing behavior. Thus, it supports the probability that per 1 level increase of customer's intention, their behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products increases around 0.588 accordingly.

5. Conclusion

The collective data shows that Environmental Consciousness with three indicators signifies that the majority of consumers are environmentally responsible by becoming cautious and considering the environmental impact of their actions when purchasing something and contemplating whether the product does not harm the environment, which has a significant and positive correlation to the attitude of consumers towards buying an eco-friendly product. This simply means that Environmental Consciousness has a strong effect on consumers' attitudes towards purchasing eco-friendly products.

Similar to Environmental Consciousness, the Involvement Degree of Consumers in purchasing whereby it pertains to how they recommend eco-friendly products to their friends and family, purchase these products on a planned decision in supermarkets, and how they are responsible and involved in buying these products have a positive effect on their attitude towards purchasing eco-friendly products. Subsequent to the result of data with the independent variables, the first dependent variable, which is the attitude and behavior of consumers towards eco-friendly products, is significant to their intention to buy eco-friendly products, which conveys that they are very much willing to learn about environmental issues and are willing to join a group that will help them be reminded of these ecological issues. Thus, consumers' intention to buy eco-friendly has a positive relationship with their purchasing behavior.

After a thorough analysis of the collective data, it showed that all dependent and independent variables included in the study have a significant and positive relationship with the purchasing behavior of consumers. It can be concluded that consumers are familiar with sustainable marketing and know the benefit and values of having a sustainable life. In addition, consumers also have enough knowledge about the cause and effects of their purchasing behavior towards buying eco-friendly products and are aware of how to improve their purchasing decisions.

The researchers gathered data from the respondents to know their insights about the research study using that the survey is only limited to the male and female with ages 18-55 years old respondents that is living inside Metro Manila, and was given to three

hundred (300) people who are interested in finding out the relationship between environmental consciousness and the involvement degree on consumers purchasing behavior. The study was conducted from March of 2021 up to the end of the year.

As for the next researchers, the researchers suggest conducting an interview to let consumers further elaborate their opinions and perspectives towards environmental consciousness. With this, the future researcher will be able to gather information and have an idea on which categories consumer lacks knowledge of and be able to provide a study involving the concern. It will also be convenient for the next researchers to have an observation on certain places where eco-friendly products are available to know how consumers attitude towards the products, and/or have an event wherein they will let consumers watch a video containing the lives of people who manage to have a sustainable life and observe how consumers react to enlightening and informative videos.

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