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FACTOR AFFECTING PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR ON GREEN COSMETIC PRODUCT IN MALAYSIA: MEDIATING ROLES OF PURCHASE INTENTION

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Abstract:

This study investigates the factors influencing consumers' purchase behaviour toward green cosmetic products in Malaysia by integrating the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with additional variables, namely environmental concern and green trust. Despite increasing awareness of sustainability and strong governmental support through initiatives such as MyHIJAU, the adoption of green cosmetic products remains relatively low, highlighting a gap between consumers' purchase intention and actual behaviour. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to Malaysian consumers, with a minimum sample size of 384 respondents. The study examines the effects of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, environmental concern, and green trust on purchase intention, as well as the influence of purchase intention on actual purchase behaviour. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used to analyse the relationships and test the mediating role of purchase intention. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence on key psychological and environmental determinants shaping green cosmetic purchasing behaviour. This research contributes to extending the TPB framework within the context of green technology cosmetics and offers practical insights for marketers to design effective green strategies, while supporting policymakers in promoting sustainable consumption and environmentally responsible behaviour in Malaysia.

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Attitude, Environmental Concern (EC), Green Cosmetic Product, Perceived Behaviour Control (PBC), Purchase Behaviour, Purchase Intention, Subjective Norms, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TBP), Theory of Reason Action (TRA)

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Introduction

In recent years, Malaysia has strengthened its national commitment to sustainable consumption and production through green technology initiatives and circular economy policies. One of the key initiatives is MyHIJAU Mark. MyHIJAU Mark is Malaysia's official green recognition endorsed by the Government of Malaysia, bringing together certified green products and services that meet local and international environmental standards under one single mark (MGTC, 2025). According to a report on Global Green Technology & Sustainability Market by Kenneth Research, Global green market is valued approximately USD 6.9 billion in 2018 and expected to grow with a 27% over the forecast period of 2019-2026 while Malaysia Green Technology Market itself valued at 12.26 Bn in 2025, is projected to grow at a CAGR of 10.35% from 2026 to 2033, ultimately reaching 22.14 Bn by 2033. However, despite the positive development in the green technology sector, the adoption of green cosmetic products remains relatively low compared to conventional cosmetics in Malaysia (Rahman & Noor, 2022). The Malaysian cosmetics industry continues to expand rapidly, driven by rising beauty consciousness, wellness trends, and sustainable consumption awareness yet consumers' actual purchases of environmentally friendly cosmetic products do not appear to align with their positive environmental attitudes and intentions (Ng, Tan, & Lim, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2023). The gap between purchase intention and behaviour suggests the presence of unaddressed factors influencing consumers' final decision to buy. In addition, empirical evidence examining how environmental concern interact with TPB variables to shape purchase intention and behaviour in Malaysia's green cosmetics market remains limited. This gap poses a challenge for green cosmetic manufacturers, who face rising production costs for sustainable packaging, ingredients, and certification while consumer demand remains inconsistent (Rashid & Omar, 2021). Addressing this issue will not only advance theoretical understanding of consumer behaviour toward green technology cosmetic products but also support the Malaysian government's initiatives under the Green Technology Master Plan 2017–2030 and MyHIJAU certification program to promote green innovation and responsible consumption.

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Literature Review

There are five points will be discussed in LR which are Green Cosmetic Product, Consumer Purchase Behavior, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Environmental Concern, and Consumer Purchase Intention.

Definition of Green Cosmetic

A green technology product refers to any innovation, system, or device that uses environmentally friendly processes and materials to minimize negative impacts on the natural environment while promoting sustainability. These products are designed to reduce pollution, conserve energy and natural resources, and support cleaner production and consumption practices (IBM, 2024). As for the green cosmetic, it is defined as beauty products made using natural components, crafted to lessen their environmental footprint (Limbu and Ahamed, 2023). While green product always referred to a product using natural components, green cosmetics is also defined as being a multifaceted construct for the preservation of the environment, minimisation of pollution, responsible use of non-renewable resources, and animal welfare and species preservation (McEachern and Mcclean 2002).

Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Consumer purchase behaviour refers to the decision-making process and actions individuals take when selecting, buying, and using products to satisfy their needs and desires (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019).

Theory Of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TBP) established a theoretical framework for predicting and understanding consumer behaviour. The theory consists of three factors (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) and integrates them into a conceptual model. The theory implies that consumers' behaviours are clear expressions of their intentions. In the context of green technology product, many studies have relied on the TPB to predict intentions and green product purchases. Previous research has largely relied on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to explain green purchase decisions (Ajzen, 1991; Al Mamun et al., 2018). TPB emphasises attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control as primary predictors of intention, which in turn shapes behaviour. However, studies in the Malaysian green product context reveal that intention alone does not fully translate into purchase action, indicating the need to explore additional psychological and trustrelated variables that may influence this relationship (Kanchanapibul et al., 2014; Yusof & Ariffin, 2020). Emerging literature suggests that environmental concern and green trust play crucial roles in strengthening the link between intention and behaviour (Chen & Chang, 2012; Alamsyah et al., 2020).

Attitude

According to Ajzen (1991), attitude toward the behavior refers to the "degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behaviour question". It includes judgment on whether the behavior under consideration is good or bad. In a context of purchase behaviour of green product, attitude refers to the consumer's positive or negative evaluation of such

purchase behaviour contribute to environmental protection or reduce energy costs (Han et al., 2010). Supporting this, a recent study on Malaysian consumers demonstrated that a positive attitude toward green skincare products serves as a significant predictor of their purchase intentions (Mamun et al., 2020).

Subjective Norms

Second determinant in the TPB is subjective norm. The term subjective norm is defined as the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). According to Umeh, K., & Patel, R. (2004), People will get information and evaluations from neighbors, relatives, and other close or aspirational people. In purchasing green technology product, subjective norms represent social pressures or expectations from family, friends, or society to engage in environmentally responsible consumption (Paul, Modi, & Patel, 2016).

Perceived Behaviour Control (PBC)

The term PBC refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behaviour control reflects how easy or difficult consumers feel it is to purchase green products, which depends on factors like affordability, availability, and product knowledge (Yadav & Pathak, 2017).

Environmental Concern (EC)

Environmental concern refers to the degree to which individuals are aware of environmental problems and their willingness to contribute to solutions by changing their consumption behavior (Schlegelmilch, Bohlen, & Diamantopoulos, 1996). Consumers with high environmental concern are more likely to evaluate the environmental impact of their purchases and prefer products that minimize harm to the environment (Biswas & Roy, 2015). When consumers perceive that their buying choices can positively contribute to environmental protection, they develop a stronger intention to purchase green products (Joshi & Rahman, 2017).

Consumer Purchase Intention

Consumer purchase intention refers to a consumer's planned or anticipated decision to buy a particular product or service in the future. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), it represents the likelihood that a consumer will make a purchase based on their attitudes, perceptions, and external influences. When applied to sustainability, the intention to purchase a green product is deeply linked to the attitude towards that purchase, which stems from a consumer's conviction about its expected consequences. Aligning with this theoretical framework, empirical evidence confirms that the intention to purchase green skincare products significantly predicts actual buying behavior. This notion is in line with findings reported by Al Mamun et al. (2018) demonstrating that a strong intention to purchase green products consistently strengthens actual green product purchase behavior.

Theory of Reason Action

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) aims to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviors within human action. The theory is used to predict how individuals will behave based

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on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this study, TRA is used to understand the underlaying basic motivation to performed act of buying green cosmetic product by understanding the relation between consumer attitude and subjective norms.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, Perceived behavioural control, and Environmental Concern toward green cosmetic products in Malaysia. While awareness of sustainability and positive attitudes toward green products are increasing, there remains a significant gap between consumers' purchase intention and their actual purchasing behaviour. This indicates that intention alone is insufficient to drive behavioural outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and environmental concern highlights that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control play important roles in shaping purchase intention. In turn, purchase intention acts as a critical mediating factor that links these determinants to actual purchase behaviour. Additionally, environmental concern strengthens consumers' willingness to engage in environmentally responsible consumption, making them essential variables in explaining green purchasing decisions. The findings suggest that addressing the intention–behaviour gap requires not only enhancing consumer awareness but also improving trust, accessibility, and perceived ease of purchasing green cosmetic products. From a practical standpoint, for industry practitioners, this implies the need to develop credible, transparent, and accessible green products supported by effective marketing strategies. For policymakers, the results reinforce the importance of continuous support through sustainability policies and awareness campaigns to encourage green consumption.

Overall, this study contributes to academic literature by extending the TPB framework within the context of green cosmetic products and offers practical implications for promoting sustainable consumption in Malaysia in line with national green initiatives.

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