

## Effect of Green Brand Positioning, Knowledge, and Attitude of Customers on Green Purchase Intention

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### Abstract

Nowadays, customers are more conscious of environmental problems and have started to purchase green products. The purpose of conducting this study is to evaluate the impacts of green brand positioning, green brand knowledge and attitude towards green brand on green product purchase intention. Data were collected from 162 respondents in Johor by using snowball sampling technique and online survey. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Multiple regression was used to test the relationships between green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brand and green product purchase intention. The results show that the green brand positioning and green brand knowledge have significant and positive relationship between green product purchase intention. The study found that green consumer knowledge is the strongest predictor in green product purchase. However, consumers' attitude toward green brand is not related to green product purchase intention. The findings of the study are important to green marketers to provide high availability of access to increase the demand of green products. This is due to most of the consumers purchase green product because it is environmental friendly and it has more environmental benefit than other products. Also, green marketers should emphasise on quality, price and advertisement in order to increase the demand of green products.

**Key words:** *Green Brand Positioning, Green Brand Knowledge, Attitude towards Green Brand, Green Product Purchase Intention.*

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### Introduction

In order to face severe problem of environmental degradation, Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) was established on 9 April 2009 to promote consumption of eco-friendly products and utilize green technology in Malaysia. KeTTHA aims to address global issues such as environmental pollution, global warming and ozone depletion (Malaysia Central, 2017). According to Puvanasvaran, Zain, Al-Hayali, and Mukapit (2012), Malaysian government provides a full commitment and support to KeTTHA in green foreign direct investment (FDI), which in turn would enhance the economy of Malaysia.

On the other hand, Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia implemented Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices (MyGAP) on 28 August 2013 to reduce environment pollution and assist in developing an environmentally friendly and sustainable national agricultural industry

(Ministry of Agriculture & Agro-Based Industry Malaysia, 2017). Clearly, Malaysia is actively implementing green strategies to minimise environmental risks.

According to Yadav and Pathak (2016), many studies have been conducted on green marketing, such as green buying behaviour and green branding in western countries and also in developing countries including Malaysia. In order to boost and to develop the knowledge of green product among consumers in Malaysia, a further research should be conducted (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). According to Suki (2016), consumers have limited knowledge on the reliability of green products and sceptical about the quality of the green products. Therefore, it is important to educate consumers about going green for sustainability. Also, companies need to increase the green brand knowledge of consumers about their products and provide green information accessibility to consumers in order to increase the demand of green products (Suki, 2016). Green products are important to environment for energy conservation, carbon footprints minimisation and reduced pollution.

As such, this study aims to achieve the following objectives: (1) to measure the relationship between customers' green brand positioning and green products purchase intention, (2) to examine the relationship between customers' green brand knowledge and green products purchase intention, and (3) to investigate the relationship between customers' attitude towards green brand and green products purchase intention.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Green Consumer Behaviour***

Leonidou, Leonidou, and Kvasova (2010) stated that green consumers demonstrate an interest in product's characteristic such as recyclability and chemical content. Also, green consumers tend to have favourable discriminating consumption towards products that are organic, energy efficient or have biodegradable packaging. This is due to the increased awareness of environmental issues and green marketing in developed economies as well as in emerging economies (Jain & Kaur, 2006). According to Chen (2010), consumers who have a concern about the environment and world are inclined to keep old stuffs and pay more attention to protect the environment from being polluted. They are willing to purchase a green product in order to save the polluted environment.

Green customers can be described as consumers who buy green products from green companies (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015). Consumers who have experience in purchasing any green brand product might have the tendency to purchase another green product in the future. Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo (2001) found that consumers tend to search information and gain knowledge related to the ingredients contain in green product before purchasing it. The information and the knowledge that the consumers have found would be shared with their friends and they would learn from each other about the content of the green product before consuming. In fact, green consumers are willing to purchase any green product even though the product is at higher price (Barber, Taylor, & Strick 2009).

It is important to define the green products that are available in market so that it is easier to investigate the attitude of consumer towards the green products. Green products include organic egg, organic vegetables, solar panels and LED television (Suki, 2016). According to Gurau and Ranchhod (2005), green products use toxic-free ingredients, are manufactured in strict environmentally-friendly procedures and the products are certified by International Organization for Standardization in order to be sellable in green market. For example, automobile industry has produced environmental friendly cars using green technologies to save fuel such as hybrid car (Marcus & Fremeth, 2009). Green products are closely linked to green brands. Green brand is a brand that is able to attract consumers who have high awareness to protect the environment (Grant, 2008). Also, green brand companies should have strategies to position their brand in consumer's mind in order to stay competitive in the market of green product and become sustainable. In addition, green brand is a set of traits and environmental impacts that will leave a positive vibe among consumers regarding environment conservation (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2006).

The green market can be divided into different segments based on the needs of the consumer in order to expand the green brand positioning and designing a green marketing mix (Chen & Chang, 2012). Therefore, green companies should implement strategies to market their green products, so the

consumer can easily differentiate the green product in green market if compared to the competitor product in conventional market.

### ***Green Products Purchase Intention***

According to Cheng and Chayapa (2011), consumer purchase decision can be defined as consumers have the knowledge about a product, and they are willing to search information about the product and seek feedback from other consumers in order to make decision for the product purchase. On the other hand, Oliver and Lee (2010) defined green product purchase intention as a desire of a consumer to purchase a green product after the consumer has knowledge about the green product. Also, Suki (2016) stated that consumers have intention to purchase a green product that is less harmful to the environment and to the society.

Schiffman and Wisenblit (2014) found that positive image and the feeling towards a green brand might be the main reason for a consumer to purchase the green product brand compared with the other product that is not environmental friendly. According to Chen and Chang (2012), most of the consumers have the intention to purchase a green brand product because they have the environmental knowledges that make them to choose green product instead of the non-green product. In this study, green products purchase intention is measured in terms of consumers' willingness to buy green products in future due to environmental concern, environmental benefits and happiness (Suki, 2016).

### ***Green Brand Positioning***

Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) defined green brand positioning as the attributes of green brand products that are environmentally friendly and have significant value to consumers. Wang (2016) found that many researchers emphasize about the green brand positioning for the brand to meet green consumers' expectation on valuable attributes. Green brand positioning is important to position a brand in consumer's mind in order for the company to sustain in green product market. As stated by Suki (2016), green consumers who have a positive experience in purchasing green or ecological products and have some environmental knowledge about the green product, would have a higher tendency to repeat purchase due to brand positioning. According to Hartmann and Ibanez (2006), green brand positioning can be defined as value or quality that the green brand product could provide which means the attributes of the product is based on eco-friendly that significance to the consumer. Green brand positioning is about how the company uses green image to represent the company that would be perceived by the market and the customers (Saha & Darnton, 2005). The green image that is perceived by the market or the consumer as the green image is the green brand positioning. Cretu and Brodie (2007) highlighted that a green positioning or a green image comprises a mental picture or description for consumers to describe about the company. The consumers would be attracted by the company's attributes and its offering. Therefore, it is vital for green company to achieve green sustainability by making its firm's attributes more significant (Gwin & Gwin, 2003). Also, firms could utilize advanced marketing efforts and advertisements to enhance the traits of their green brands to order to attract more green customers (Huang, Yang, & Wang, 2014).

### ***Green Brand Knowledge***

Smith and Paladino (2010) found that consumers who have information or knowledge about an organic food or product tend to purchase the product in future. This is due to positive attitude about the brand on how the brand delivers the environmental knowledge to the consumers (Chang & Wu, 2015). According to Suki (2016), green brand knowledge is how a company provides knowledge or the information about its product's uniqueness through the attributes of its brand. It is about a promise that the company will provide to the consumers and environment. Customer expects to receive maximum information that are reliable in order for them enhance their knowledge about the green product and to purchase the green brand product for environmentally friendly purpose (Keller, 1993). Connel (2010) found that if consumers lack of information or knowledge about a green product or green brand, this would negatively influence their intention to purchase a green product. Consumers who have high level

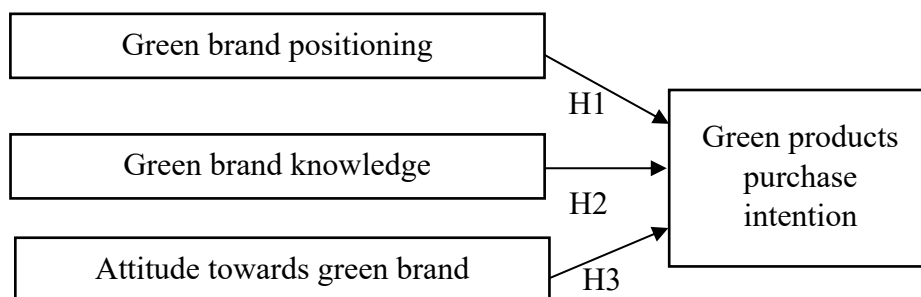
of knowledge about the environmental protection would have high consumption of their own or their family (Huang *et al.*, 2014). Andres and Salinas (2007) also found that green consumers will have green product consumption. In order for consumers to increase their knowledge about a specific brand or product, the company should provide reliable green information for its consumers to learn and purchase the brand or product (Ganapathy, Natarajan, Gunasekaran, & Subramanian, 2014). If the consumers who are knowledgeable about the environment and know how to protect the earth, they are more likely to purchase green brands or green products (Chen & Chang, 2012; Suki, 2016).

### ***Attitude towards Green Brand***

Any green brand should meet the consumer expectation in order for the brand to be positioned greatly in the market and for the customers to connect with the valuable attributes of the green brand (Wang, 2016). According to Hartmann and Ibanez (2006), green brand attitude can be divided into two categories: green brand positioning that focuses on functional attributes while the other one is focusing on emotional benefits. Teng (2009) stated that a brand attitude means a preference of a consumer to evaluate the brand itself. Attitude is about the like and dislike of a consumer (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2009) and it is affected by the environmental attitude of a consumer (Mostafa, 2007). Solomon (2014) found that the consumer preference and the full package of the green brand are mostly related to their green brand attitude. Mostafa (2007) found that the attitude is an important factor for consumer behaviour and the intention of the consumer to purchase a good. Most of the customers get influences from family, friends and colleagues to buy green brand products. Also, positive image of a green brand and the feelings of consumers provide a big impact for them to consume and purchase the green brand product. This means that the customer's attitude will affect the purchase intention of green product

### **Research Model and Hypotheses**

Figure 1 shows the relationships between green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brand and the green products purchase intention.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

Suki (2016) found that some green attributes through an active communication campaign could boost perception of consumers towards green product. According to Lin and Chang (2012), consumers that have the experience from the past purchase of eco-friendly products and have some knowledge about the environmental tend to possess higher willingness to purchase the green product due to the good green brand positioning. Suki (2016) found that the tendency of a consumer to purchase a green product is based on the consumer's product usage and his or her awareness about the green brand that being positioned in the market. Huang *et al.* (2014) found that green brand positioning affect the green product purchase intention significantly. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** *There is a positive and significant relationship between green brand positioning and green products purchase intention.*

Many studies have reported that purchase intention and the actual purchase intention can be influenced by the environmental knowledge (Mostafa, 2009; Chen & Chang, 2012; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Based on the findings of Smith and Paladino (2010), consumers who have the knowledge on organic or green food would directly purchase organic products. Also, Connell (2010) found that consumers who have less information about a green brand product would refrain from buying the green product. Huang *et al.* (2014) accentuated that consumers display high intention to purchase and consume green products if they have the environmental knowledge and favourable better attitude towards the green brand. As such, this study proposed the hypothesis as follows:

**H2:** *There is a positive and significant relationship between green brand knowledge and green products purchase intention.*

Oliver and Lee (2010) found that green product purchase intention and the actual intent for consumers to purchase an environmental friendly product are closely linked to the green awareness. Gupta and Ogden (2009) mentioned that the foundation for a consumer to decide to purchase a green product is due to the attitude of the consumer towards the environment. Also, Teng (2009) found that the positive attitude of a consumer towards a green brand is strongly related to the purchase intention of a green product. According to Chang and Wu (2015), the intention of consumers to purchase the green product is influenced by their positive and favourable attitude towards the green product itself. Also, Mostafa (2007) found that if consumers have favourable attitude towards the green brand, they would show stronger green products purchase intention. Based on the above discussion, H3 as follows is proposed:

**H3:** *There is a positive and significant relationship between attitude towards green brand and green products purchase intention.*

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

This study used quantitative research method through questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents using Google form. Quantitative method is widely used in research for data collection. A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the consumer's level of agreement about the questionnaire statements: 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', and 'strongly agree'.

### ***Population and Sample***

The population of the study consisted of consumers who have the intention to purchase green products. Snowball sampling technique was used to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who had green product consumption. After they have completed the survey, they would pass the survey to their friends who had similar purchasing behaviour using a Google link. According to Malhotra (2012), a sample size of 150 is enough to conduct a research. Therefore, a total of 162 respondents were involved in the study and they spent 5 to 10 minutes for the survey.

### ***Research Instrument***

Research instrument is one of the most important tools for conducting a research and data collection. The questionnaire was developed into two parts: Section A is about respondent background and Section B includes questions about green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brand and green products purchase intention. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

## Data Analysis

### Profile of Respondents

A total of 162 respondents were involved in the study. There were equal distribution of both genders participated in the study: 82 female (50.6%) and 80 male (49.4%). Most of the respondents aged 25 and below (37.0%), followed by 25 to 35 (21.0%) and 36 to 45 years old (17.3%). The result shows that 56.2% of the respondents had a bachelor degree and 22.8% had diploma or STPM. Majority of the respondents earned RM1,000 and below (23.5%) followed by RM3,001 to RM4,000 (22.8%), RM2,001 to RM3,000 (19.1%), RM4,001 to RM5,000 (14.8%), RM5,000 and above (13.0%) and RM1,001 to RM2,000 (6.8%). A large portion of respondents had experience to purchase green products 1 – 5 times for the past 3 months (37.0%) and most of them were influenced by family member (29.1%), friends (28.4%), social media (25.3%) and neighbours (8.6%) for the green product purchase.

**Table 1:** Profile of Respondent

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage %
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	82	50.6
Male	80	49.4
<b>Age</b>		
25 and below	60	37.0
26 – 35	34	21.0
36 – 45	28	17.3
46 – 55	26	16.0
56 – 65	11	6.8
65 and above	3	1.9
<b>Educational level</b>		
SPM	8	4.9
Diploma / STPM	37	22.8
Bachelor Degree	91	56.2
Master	14	8.6
PhD	12	7.5
Others	0	0.0
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
RM1,000 and below	38	23.5
RM1,001 – RM2,000	11	6.8
RM2,001 – RM3,000	31	19.1
RM3,001 – RM4,000	37	22.8
RM4,001 – RM5,000	24	14.8
RM5,000 and above	21	13.0
<b>Frequency of green purchased for the past 3 months</b>		
1 – 5 times	60	37.0
6 – 10 times	27	16.7
11 – 15 times	40	24.7
More than 15 times	35	21.6
<b>Source motivated to buy green product</b>		
Family member	47	29.1
Friends	46	28.4
Neighbours	14	8.6
Social media	41	25.3
Government	2	1.2
School / university	12	7.4

### Reliability Test

Based on the Table 2, all of the variables (green brand positioning, green brand knowledge, attitude towards green brand and green product purchase intention) are reliable with Cronbach Alpha > 0.7. The value of Cronbach Alpha value for green brand positioning (BP) is 0.819, green brand knowledge (BK) is 0.917, attitude towards green brand (AG) is 0.936 and green products purchase intention (PI) is 0.916.

**Table 2:** Reliability Test

Variables	No of item	Cronbach Alpha
Green brand positioning	6	0.819
Green brand knowledge	5	0.917
Attitude towards green brand	5	0.936
Green product purchase intention	3	0.916

### **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses and to explore the strength of a relationship among variables. Table 3 found that green brand positioning and green brand knowledge have significant and positive relationship with green products purchase intention at p-value less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, there is no positive and significant relationship between attitude towards green brand and green products purchase intention because the p-value is 0.471 which is greater than 0.05.

Among the green brand positioning and green brand knowledge, green brand knowledge has the highest beta value (0.680); this means green brand knowledge is the strongest predictor for green products purchase intention, followed by green brand positioning with beta value of 0.190. The Table 3 also shows the multicollinearity test where the multicollinearity problem occurs when a variable's tolerance value is less than 0.10 (tolerance  $< 0.10$ ) and VIF is greater than 5 (VIF  $> 5$ ). The results found that no tolerance values less than 0.10 and VIF values are greater than 5. Therefore, there is no evidence of multicollinearity problem in this study.

**Table 3:** Multiple Regression

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistic	
				Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.459	0.647		
	Green brand positioning	3.167	0.002	0.389	2.573
	Green brand knowledge	8.663	0.000	0.226	4.422
	Attitude towards green brand	0.723	0.471	0.228	4.389

As found in the Table 4, the study found that the adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.776. This means approximately 77.6% of the green products purchase intention could be explained by the green brand positioning and green brand knowledge.

**Table 4:** Model Summary of Multiple Regression

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
0.883	0.780	0.776	0.374	0.780	186.456	3.000	158.000	0.000

### **Discussions, Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

There are three research objectives of the study. The first research objective is to measure the relationship between green brand positioning and green products purchase intention. The results of the

study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between green brand positioning and green products purchase intention. Therefore, the first objective is achieved and the H1 is supported. This result is in line with the results from previous studies (Huang *et al.*, 2014; Suki, 2016). According to Suki (2016), green brand positioning reacts as one of the important strategies that would give an impact on consumer's intention to purchase green products. A good green brand positioning means that consumers are aware and conscious about purchasing green products. Therefore, it is important for marketers to compete their products using green brand positioning. Green marketers should emphasise on quality, price, advertisement and environmentally green products for consumers to purchase a green product. Also, the green products should match the consumer's personal wants and needs.

The second research objective is to examine the relationship between green brand knowledge and green products purchase intention. The result shows that this objective is achieved and H2 is supported: customers' green brand knowledge is positively related to green products purchase intention. This finding is consistent with the results of Suki (2016) and Chen and Chang (2012). In fact, the knowledge on green brand products could increase the desire of consumers to purchase green products and develop their awareness of environmental protection (Juwaheer, Pudaruth, & Noyaux, 2012). In support, Huang *et al.* (2014) stated that consumers with green knowledge are most likely to purchase green product when they have high level of green awareness. Brand knowledge is the strongest predictor for green purchase intention in Johor. As such, firms should consider green products as a beneficial investment in long term and ensure that the green product's environmental performance should meet consumer expectation. Also, green marketers are urged to provide high availability of access to increase the demand of green products. This is due to most of the consumers purchase green product because it is environmental friendly and it has more environmental benefit than other products.

The third research objective is to investigate the relationship between attitude towards green brand and green products purchase intention. However, the result showed that attitude towards green brand has no significant and positive relationship with green product purchase intention. Therefore, the H3 is not supported. The finding is not aligned with previous studies (Suki, 2016; Huang *et al.*, 2014). The reason might be that the green product's environmental reputation is not one of the critical factors influencing the purchasers' intention for green products. Also, some customers do not consider the green products would keep promises and responsibilities for environmental protection in their purchase decision.

In terms of research implications, businesses can increase their customers' purchase intention using media to educate customers through added value of their products such as energy savings or reduce, reuse and recycle emissions. On the other hand, governmental organizations can raise consumer awareness of environmental protection and negative effects of environmental issues such as pollution and greenhouse effect. Green product purchase intention could be increased if there are high green brand positioning and green brand knowledge.

Throughout the study, there are some limitations that could be improved in future studies. First, the respondents were taken from the state of Johor, thus the result of the study is unable to represent Malaysia. Therefore, future study is urged to extend the sample size to include more states in Malaysia. Second, the study only focused on the three factors (green brand positioning, green brand knowledge and attitude towards green brand) that influence the green products purchase intention. As such, future researchers could investigate other contributing factors such as green trust and green consumption value influencing green products purchase intention.

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**APPENDIX A**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Scale Items</b>
<b>A. Independent variables</b>		
Green brand positioning	Suki (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality is important when consumers purchase green products.</li> <li>2. Price is important when consumers purchase green products.</li> <li>3. I get to know about green branding through advertisement.</li> <li>4. Green products have matched my personal wants and needs.</li> <li>5. Green product always overpriced.</li> <li>6. I prefer to purchase environmentally green products.</li> </ol>
Attitude towards green brand	Suki (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel that green product's environmental reputation is generally reliable.</li> <li>2. I feel that green product's environmental performance is generally dependable.</li> <li>3. I feel that green product's environmental claims are generally trustworthy.</li> <li>4. Green product's environmental concern meets my expectations.</li> <li>5. Green products keep promises and responsibilities for environmental protection.</li> </ol>
Green brand knowledge	Suki (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Going green products could be a beneficial investment in long term.</li> <li>2. Green product's environmental performance meets my expectations.</li> <li>3. Lack of availability of access is a major reason for low popularity and demand of green products.</li> <li>4. I purchase green product because it is environmental friendly.</li> <li>5. I purchase green product because it has more environmental benefit than other products.</li> </ol>
<b>B. Dependent variable</b>		
Green products purchase intention	Suki (2016)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I intend to buy green product because of my environmental concern.</li> <li>2. I expect to purchase green product in the future because of its environmental benefits.</li> <li>3. Overall, I am glad to purchase green product because it is environmental friendly.</li> </ol>