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PROPOSING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR GREEN PURCHASING INTENTION AMONG GENERATION Y IN KUALA LUMPUR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ATTITUDE

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Abstract:

Green purchasing intention has emerged as an important area of research as consumers are encouraged to make environmentally responsible consumption choices. However, environmental awareness alone does not explain how consumers form an intention to purchase green products. For Generation Y consumers in Kuala Lumpur, the conceptual problem concerns how economic, environmental and social considerations are translated into purchasing intention through attitude. This paper proposes a framework linking price perception, environmental concern and social influence to green purchasing intention, with attitude towards green purchasing positioned as a mediator. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the framework proposes both direct relationships and indirect relationships through attitude. Its contribution lies in integrating the three selected antecedents within a common attitudinal pathway for a defined urban consumer group. A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational survey is proposed for future empirical validation, using a structured self-administered questionnaire and analysis of direct and indirect relationships. No primary data are collected or analysed in this conceptual paper. The framework is expected to contribute to green consumer behaviour literature by specifying how the selected considerations may shape attitude and intention. It also provides a basis for future research and, subject to empirical validation, may inform pricing communication, green marketing and sustainable consumption initiatives.

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Keywords:
Attitude; Conceptual Framework; Generation Y; Green Purchasing Intention; Theory Of Planned Behaviour

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Introduction

Environmental concerns have encouraged research into more sustainable consumption choices (Peattie, 2010). In this paper, green products refer to products intended to reduce environmental harm relative to conventional alternatives. Green purchasing intention (GPI) concerns consumers' willingness or plans to purchase such products; it is distinct from an actual purchase. Research on green perceived value, risk and trust demonstrates the relevance of examining consumers' evaluations when explaining purchase intention (Chen & Chang, 2012).

The research problem concerns how environmental concern and other purchasing considerations are translated into intention. Malaysian evidence provides a useful starting point: Aman et al. (2012) reported that attitude partially mediated the relationship between environmental concern and green purchase intention among consumers in Sabah. However, that finding does not establish the strength of green purchasing intention among Generation Y consumers in Kuala Lumpur or explain how price perception and social influence operate alongside environmental concern in this specific context.

Generation Y is the focal consumer group in this paper. For the proposed study, this cohort is operationally defined as individuals born between 1977 and 1994 who live or work in Kuala Lumpur. The geographical and cohort boundaries provide a specific context for examining green purchasing intention; they do not imply that all members of this group share the same attitudes, purchasing power or access to green products.

Price perception, environmental concern and social influence are selected to represent economic, environmental and social considerations, respectively. A consumer may care about environmental protection but also question the price of a green product or consider the views of important others. The proposed framework therefore examines how these considerations relate to intention and whether attitude helps explain the proposed relationships.

The conceptual gap addressed here is the integration of these three selected antecedents within a common attitudinal pathway for Generation Y consumers in Kuala Lumpur. The paper does not claim that attitude has never been examined as a mediator. Instead, it builds on earlier mediation research (Aman et al., 2012) and broader conceptual work on green purchasing (Kaufmann et al., 2012) to specify a focused set of direct and indirect relationships for future testing.

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Accordingly, this paper has three objectives: to propose relationships between price perception, environmental concern, social influence and GPI; to explain the role of attitude towards green purchasing; and to specify the indirect relationships between the three antecedents and GPI through attitude. These objectives concern framework development rather than the reporting of empirical findings.

Literature Review

This literature review covers six key areas: the Theory of Planned Behaviour, green purchasing intention, price perception, environmental concern, social influence and the mediating role of attitude. These areas provide the foundation for the proposed conceptual framework.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) identifies attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control as determinants of behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude concerns whether performing the behaviour is evaluated favourably or unfavourably. This paper draws on that evaluative role to explain intention towards green purchasing.

The proposed framework is a focused adaptation informed by TPB, rather than a test of the complete original model. It includes attitude and a broader social influence construct but does not include perceived behavioural control. Social influence overlaps with subjective norm when it concerns perceived expectations of important others, although broader interpersonal influence should not automatically be treated as identical to subjective norm. This scope limits what the framework can explain about the full TPB model.

Price perception and environmental concern are introduced as additional antecedents, while social influence is proposed to relate to both attitude and intention. The underlying argument is that consumers may evaluate the acceptability, environmental relevance and social desirability of green purchasing before forming an intention. Attitude is therefore proposed as a mediator of the selected relationships; this mediation structure is an extension developed in this paper, not a relationship automatically established by TPB.

Previous Malaysian research provides support for considering such a pathway: Aman et al. (2012) found partial mediation through attitude for environmental concern and green purchase intention. That evidence motivates examining the proposed mediation relationships but does not establish that attitude mediates price perception or social influence in the present population.

The framework retains direct paths from all three antecedents to GPI alongside the indirect paths through attitude. Future empirical research would therefore assess whether an indirect association is present while accounting for the corresponding direct association.

Green Purchasing Intention

Green purchasing intention (GPI) refers to an individual's willingness or plan to purchase products with environmental benefits. It represents a prospective decision rather than evidence of a completed purchase (Chen & Chang, 2012).

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
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In this paper, GPI is positioned as the outcome of the proposed conceptual framework. The focus is on intention rather than actual behaviour because intention reflects consumers' psychological readiness before making a purchase decision. This is particularly relevant in green consumption, where consumers may express concern for the environment but may not always translate this concern into purchasing action.

The formation of GPI among Generation Y consumers may be shaped by selected economic, environmental and social considerations. Price perception may influence whether green products are viewed as acceptable or too costly. Environmental concern may shape the extent to which consumers feel responsible for supporting environmentally friendly products. Social influence may affect how consumers respond to expectations or encouragement from people around them.

These considerations provide the basis for understanding how GPI may be shaped directly and indirectly through attitude towards green purchasing. Therefore, this paper positions GPI as the final outcome of a conceptual framework in which price perception, environmental concern and social influence may shape consumers' attitudes and, subsequently, their intention to purchase green products.

Price Perception

Price perception refers to consumers' subjective evaluation of a product's price in relation to what they expect to receive. It is distinct from the objective price and from the broader construct of perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). In this framework, a favourable price perception means that the price of a green product is considered fair, reasonable and acceptable relative to its expected benefits.

When consumers judge a price to be excessive relative to the expected benefits, they may evaluate green purchasing less favourably. Conversely, a price viewed as reasonable and justified may support a favourable attitude. This is the conceptual argument underlying the proposed positive relationships, rather than evidence that those relationships have already been established in the target population.

Price perception represents the economic consideration in the framework. Higher scores must indicate a more favourable evaluation of price for the positive hypotheses to be interpretable. Items measuring expensiveness or financial burden would require appropriate reverse coding or a different directional hypothesis. The proposed measure should therefore distinguish price acceptability from price sensitivity and willingness to pay a premium.

H1: Favourable price perception is positively associated with green purchasing intention.
H5: Favourable price perception is positively associated with attitude towards green purchasing.

Environmental Concern

Environmental concern reflects the importance an individual attaches to environmental protection and the extent of their concern about environmental problems. Broader ecological

beliefs, as examined by Dunlap et al. (2000), provide relevant background, but environmental concern should be operationalised separately from factual environmental knowledge.

Environmental concern may encourage consumers to evaluate green purchasing as a responsible choice. Aman et al. (2012) found that attitude partially mediated the relationship between environmental concern and green purchase intention in their Malaysian sample. This supports considering both direct and indirect paths, while recognising that the proposed relationships require testing in Kuala Lumpur.

In this conceptual framework, environmental concern represents the environmental consideration that may shape consumers' attitude towards green purchasing and their intention to purchase green products. Consumers with stronger environmental concern may be more inclined to develop favourable attitudes towards green purchasing because they perceive such behaviour as consistent with their concern for environmental protection. Therefore, environmental concern is positioned as one of the key antecedents in the proposed conceptual framework.

H2: Environmental concern is positively associated with green purchasing intention.
H6: Environmental concern is positively associated with attitude towards green purchasing.

Social Influence

Social influence refers to the perceived pressure and impact arising from important others, including family members, friends, peers and broader social networks, that shape an individual's attitudes and intentions toward a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In the context of green purchasing, social influence reflects the extent to which consumers are encouraged, supported or influenced by people around them to consider environmentally friendly products.

Social influence is particularly relevant among Generation Y consumers because this group is frequently exposed to interpersonal and media-driven influences. Encouragement from family, friends, peers or social networks may shape how consumers evaluate green purchasing. When environmentally responsible consumption is supported or positively viewed by important social groups, consumers may be more likely to develop favourable attitudes towards green purchasing (Lapinski & Rimal, 2005; Rahman et al., 2023).

Previous studies indicate that social influence can contribute to green purchasing intention, although the strength of this relationship may vary across contexts. In some settings, social influence may directly encourage consumers to consider green products, while in other contexts, its effect may operate through attitude. This suggests that social influence may shape consumers' evaluations before influencing their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products (Han et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2017).

In this conceptual framework, social influence represents the social consideration that may shape consumers' attitude towards green purchasing and their intention to purchase green products. Positive social influence may encourage consumers to view green purchasing as acceptable, desirable and socially supported. Therefore, social influence is positioned as one of the key antecedents in the proposed conceptual framework.

H3: Social influence has a positive relationship with Green Purchasing Intention.
H7: Social influence has a positive relationship with attitude towards Green Purchasing.

The Mediating Role of Attitude

Attitude towards green purchasing reflects an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation of purchasing green products. The attitude–intention relationship follows the broader distinction between evaluations and behavioural intentions in the reasoned action tradition (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). This paper proposes that attitude helps explain how the selected antecedents relate to GPI.

Price perception, environmental concern and social influence may not always influence green purchasing intention directly. Instead, these factors may first shape how consumers evaluate green purchasing. For example, consumers who perceive green products as reasonably priced may develop a more favourable attitude towards green purchasing. Similarly, consumers who are concerned about environmental issues may view green purchasing as a responsible action, while positive social influence may encourage consumers to see green purchasing as socially acceptable and desirable.

In this conceptual framework, attitude is positioned as the mediating variable linking price perception, environmental concern and social influence with green purchasing intention. This means that the selected antecedents are conceptually expected to shape consumers' attitudes, which may subsequently influence their intention to purchase green products. The mediating role of attitude therefore provides a psychological pathway for understanding how economic, environmental and social considerations may translate into green purchasing intention among Generation Y consumers in Kuala Lumpur.

The contribution is the integration of three proposed mediation pathways in one framework. Existing evidence for mediation involving environmental concern (Aman et al., 2012) provides a relevant foundation, while mediation involving price perception and social influence remains a proposition for future testing in the specified population.

H4: Attitude towards green purchasing is positively associated with green purchasing intention.
H8: Attitude towards green purchasing mediates the relationship between favourable price perception and green purchasing intention.
H9: Attitude towards green purchasing mediates the relationship between environmental concern and green purchasing intention.
H10: Attitude towards green purchasing mediates the relationship between social influence favouring green purchasing and green purchasing intention.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the proposed framework. Price perception, environmental concern and social influence are the independent variables, attitude towards green purchasing is the mediator, and GPI is the dependent variable. H1–H3 represent the direct paths to GPI, H5–H7 represent the paths to attitude, and H4 represents the attitude–intention path.

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H8–H10 concern the indirect relationships through attitude and are represented by the corresponding combinations of paths in Figure 1. All paths are proposed for future empirical validation. The figure does not represent estimated coefficients or confirmed relationships.

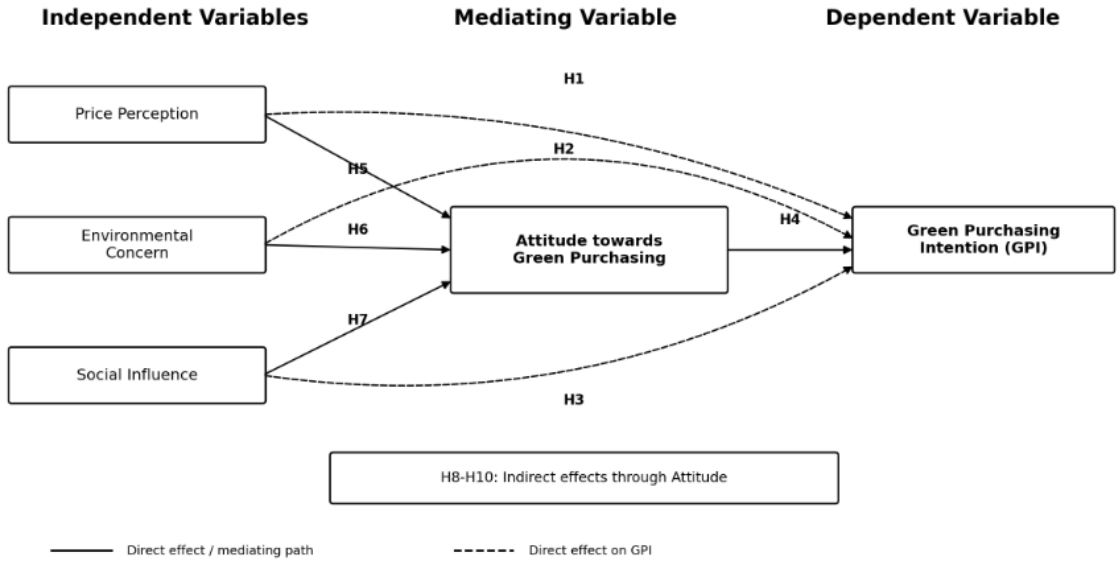


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

Methodology and Proposed Empirical Validation

Research Design

This paper develops a conceptual framework through a narrative synthesis of selected theoretical and green purchasing literature. It does not report a systematic review, primary data collection or statistical testing. The quantitative procedures below are proposals for a subsequent empirical study, rather than methods already implemented for this paper.

A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational design is proposed to examine the direct and indirect relationships. A structured self-administered questionnaire would measure the five constructs. Survey research enables standardised information to be collected from respondents, while a quantitative design supports statistical examination of associations (Ponto, 2015; Apuke, 2017). A cross-sectional study would not, by itself, establish causal effects or temporal ordering.

Population and Sampling

The proposed target population comprises Generation Y consumers, operationally defined in this manuscript as individuals born between 1977 and 1994, who live or work in Kuala Lumpur. Screening questions would establish birth year and geographical eligibility before respondents proceed to the substantive questionnaire.

A target of at least 400 usable responses is proposed. Cochran's (1977) formula for estimating a population proportion yields approximately 384.16 observations under a 95% confidence

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level, a 5% margin of error and maximum variability (p = 0.50), conventionally rounded up to 385. This provides a planning benchmark only. It does not establish a 5% margin of sampling error for the non-probability sample proposed here.

An a priori power analysis should also be conducted for the final analytical model (Faul et al., 2009). The GPI equation contains four predictors: price perception, environmental concern, social influence and attitude. The power assessment should reflect this specification and the anticipated indirect effects, rather than relying on a three-predictor calculation. Approximately 500 eligible individuals could be invited with the aim of obtaining 400 usable responses, although this would depend on the achieved response and data-quality rates.

Purposive screening followed by convenience recruitment is proposed. Respondents would first be screened against the birthyear and geographical criteria, and eligible individuals would then be recruited according to accessibility and willingness to participate (Etikan et al., 2016; Zikmund et al., 2010). Recruitment should reach different settings to reduce reliance on a single social network. Nevertheless, the absence of random selection limits population representativeness and the generalisability of the findings.

Proposed Research Instrument and Measures

The proposed questionnaire would contain four sections. Section A would cover eligibility and demographic information. Section B would measure price perception, environmental concern and social influence. Section C would measure attitude towards green purchasing, and Section D would measure GPI.

Items should be adapted from clearly identified original measures, with the final instrument documenting each item's source and any wording changes. The source of a construct definition should not be treated automatically as a validated scale for the exact construct used here. Price perception items should indicate favourable price evaluations; social influence items should capture support or expectations favouring green purchasing; attitude and intention items should remain conceptually distinct.

A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) is proposed. Respondents should receive a consistent definition of green products, and the instrument should specify the purchasing context and reference period. If more than one language is used, the translation process should be reviewed for conceptual equivalence before fieldwork.

Proposed Questionnaire Review, Pre-Test and Pilot Test

Before full-scale data collection, experts should review the instrument for construct coverage, clarity, wording, structure and response suitability. Their feedback should inform revisions and be documented so that the relationship between each item and its intended construct is transparent.

A pre-test with members of the target population should examine whether the instructions and items are understood as intended. Feedback should identify ambiguous terms, confusing response options and difficulties completing the questionnaire.

International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices
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A subsequent pilot test should assess the practicality of administration, preliminary internal consistency and potential item problems. Any revisions should be justified conceptually as well as statistically. Pilot results would inform instrument refinement rather than establish the validity of the full conceptual framework.

Proposed Data Analysis

Before analysis, responses should be screened for eligibility, missing values, duplicate submissions and response-quality problems. Descriptive statistics would summarise the sample. Structural equation modelling could then be used to assess the measurement model before examining the proposed relationships. Reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity should be assessed using criteria appropriate to the selected estimation method.

The structural analysis would estimate the direct paths and the three specific indirect effects through attitude. Bootstrap confidence intervals should be used to assess indirect effects, with the resampling procedure reported transparently. Direct, indirect and total effects should be reported separately. A significant direct relationship is not a prerequisite for evaluating an indirect effect. Because the proposed survey is cross-sectional, any mediation findings would be interpreted as statistical evidence consistent with the framework, rather than proof of a causal mechanism.

Theoretical And Practical Contributions

The theoretical contribution lies in specifying a focused framework that integrates economic, environmental and social considerations through attitude. It develops a TPB-informed explanation of GPI without claiming to test the complete TPB model or to introduce attitude mediation for the first time.

By retaining both direct and indirect paths, the framework provides a basis for examining whether attitude helps explain each antecedent's association with GPI. Its contextual contribution is the proposed application to Generation Y consumers who live or work in Kuala Lumpur. This remains a proposition until the model is empirically assessed.

For businesses and entrepreneurs offering green products, future findings could inform pricing communication and customer engagement. If favourable price perceptions are associated with attitude and intention, firms could examine how clearly, they communicate product benefits and price justification. If environmental concern or social influence is relevant, firms could evaluate credible environmental messages and appropriate peer-based communication. These applications are conditional on future evidence and should not be presented as proven strategies.

For policymakers and relevant agencies, future empirical findings could inform sustainable consumption education and consumer communication. The present paper provides a framework for investigating these issues; it does not itself establish which intervention would increase intention or actual purchasing.

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Conclusion

This paper proposes a conceptual framework linking price perception, environmental concern and social influence to GPI among Generation Y consumers in Kuala Lumpur, with attitude towards green purchasing as a mediator. The framework specifies three direct relationships with intention, three relationships with attitude, an attitude–intention relationship and three proposed mediation relationships.

The paper's contribution is a focused account of how economic, environmental and social considerations may relate to intention through consumers' evaluations of green purchasing. Its scope is limited to the selected constructs and population. It does not include perceived behavioural control, assess actual purchasing behaviour or establish the strength of any relationship.

Future research should refine the measures, confirm the sampling and power requirements, and test the direct and indirect relationships. Cross-sectional findings should be interpreted as associations; longitudinal or experimental research would be needed to strengthen causal explanations. Subject to empirical validation, the framework may inform green marketing, entrepreneurial decision-making and sustainable consumption initiatives.

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