

The Attitude of Young People Towards Environmental Issues and Green Products

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Abstract—The main objective of this study was to analyze the attitude of young people towards environmental issues and green products, using gender as control variable. This research was conducted in the Faculty of Economics and Business, Trisakti University, where the students represented the Indonesian young people. Simple random sampling technique was adopted, followed by data collection using field research questionnaire, and analysis involved the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The study suggests the absence of any significant differences between men and women, with regards to attitudes toward the environment, as well as green products. In addition, there was a significant relationship between attitudes towards environmental care and green products, followed by a negative association between attitudes towards environmental protection and green products. Conversely, no significant relationship was established between personal norms and attitudes towards green products.

Keywords—attitude, young people, gender, environmental issues, green products

I. INTRODUCTION

There is need to encourage the consumption of environmentally friendly products, therefore supporting movements for nature conservation and its sustainability, which is a practice that is essential for meeting the living needs of future generations [1,2]. Furthermore, green products are defined as ecological or environmentally friendly commodities based on the reduced impact of their content or packaging on the surrounding [3]. A number of observations have reported a growing trend in the market's concern for environmental sustainability and sustainable development [4]. However, as stated by the World Wide Fund (WWF), reluctance is observed on the part of producers, in affiliation with the creation of green or environmentally friendly products, due to its limited market [5].

These brief descriptions highlight the discrepancies in claims by stakeholders, although it is necessary to not delay the demands for environmentally friendly behavior from all parties. This is based on contributions towards the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations (UN), with one of the global aims of responsible consumption and production. Hence, there is a need to study attitudes and behaviors towards the environment and green products, especially among young people, considering their large number [6]. Environmentally aware and empowered youths are potentially the greatest agent of change for the long term protection and stewardship of the environment [7]. The Central Statistical Agency (BPS) projected 2020-2035 as the onset of demographic bonus era enjoyment, where the population of productive age is expected to reach its' highest in history, which is about 64 percent of the total 297 million people [8]. Furthermore, demographic factors are implicated in related attitudes and behavior, evidenced from numerous study outcomes, including [3].

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Indonesian Demographic Bonus

BPS published a report in 2016, which stipulated the domination of Indonesia's population by people of the productive age group (15-34 years), showing the country's entry into the era of demographic bonus. This is features their adequate involvement in endeavors that increase development, and this condition was estimated to reach its peak in 2020-2035.

B. Attitudes towards the Environment

In the theory of planned behavior, it is stated that attitudes (towards certain behaviors), subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control can be used to predict intentions to perform a certain behavior with high accuracy [9,10]. Community attitudes towards the environment, both individually and as consumers, according to several studies indicates a positive trend, which shows growing awareness and concern for its sustainability [11,12]. The occurrence of an increase in ecologically beneficial consumer behavior growth, which was due to the current environmental degradation problem [2,13,14].

C. Environmental Care Attitude

Environmental care refers to an individual's awareness level on issues related to attributes that affect others, in order to appreciate the ecology better, and also to ensure possible impacts in the future [15]. Environmental concerns is described as the level of emotional involvement in associated issues, and the role of individual affective response to its protection [3]. Meanwhile, attitudes towards the environment are rooted in self-concept as well as the extent of self-perception of being an integral part of the natural ecosystem [16], which is also similar with societal attitudes as consumers. This was also described by Chen and Chai [3], where it was designated a representation of what consumers like and dislike, which forms a basis of product purchasing decisions. Environmental awareness of environmental problems affiliate with the understanding of various forms of related sensitive behaviors, including "green buying" [13], while consumers' buying behavior had significant influence towards green products [17].

D. Environmental Protection

Previous studies showed an enhanced level of consumer awareness in the aspects of environmental protection, based on increased concerns for the adoption of a green lifestyle [18]. This is seen in the number of store outlets and retailers that offer the necessary products or services, although the practice is perceived as a new challenge that is not always easy to tolerate. Therefore, numerous community groups chose to be brave and willing to tackle these issues.

There are positive developments indicating the general awareness people towards the protection and preservation of nature and its contents [19]. On the community level, environmental protection is perceived as the responsibility of the government, companies, institutions and the consumers. Previous study characterized ecologically friendly behavior as a moral demand, where users feel morally obliged to its protection, making attempts to save the limited natural resources on earth [20].

E. Personal Norms

Personal or subjective norms are individual beliefs about the anticipation of others, concerning what is expected of them [13], collectively known as functions of normative theories. In this case, people desire feedback or encouragement from certain individuals and groups to perform in a specific manner. It is reported the positive influence of subjective norms on the purchase intention of green products, further indicate the strong effect of self-motivation or inspirations from the social environment in Denpasar City [15]. This was in accordance with a number of study outcomes conducted in different years, stating the positive impact of subjective norms on a product purchase intention [7,21]. Even so, there is study that state that personal norms did not influence consumers' green buying behavior [22].

F. Attitudes towards Green Products

There is need to elevate the awareness and attitudes of the public towards environmentally friendly products, and also request every business actor in various fields to implement the concept of sustainable development. This encourages the development of markets for green goods and service in several countries worldwide, including Indonesia, and on the part of the producers, it is perceived as an opportunity, a challenge, as well as social and environmental responsibility needed to promote relevant strategies for sustainability [23]. Attitudes towards green products is described as a form of intentions towards the purchase of green products were influenced by subjective (personal) norms [15,24]. Moreover, a research conducted by Chen and Chai [3] reported the role of government and personal norms as a significant contributing factor, in contrast with environmental protection attitudes, towards consumer preference for green products.

G. Demographic Factors and Attitudes to the Environment and Green Products

Demographic factors include attitudes and behaviors towards the environment and green products, as observed in studies conducted by Suki [18], Nguyen et al., [25]. The results showed a significant correlation between the variables of age and gender with consumer behavior towards ecological awareness. Conversely, there was also a gender based significant difference in attitudes towards the environment, which was relatively negative for men as women were more likely to buy environmentally friendly products. However, it was reported on the absence of any significant differences between the parameters [3,18,22].

H. Hypothesis Development

A study by Chen and Chai [3], demonstrated the absence of gender based differences in attitudes towards the environment, although some cited research stated otherwise [25,26]. The study also reported an increased in the negative attitude of men in contrast with women. However, some studies showed that demographic characteristics, attitudes and behavior have little or no relationship with the environment, due to its less explanatory power, as against psychographic variables [1]. Previous study outcomes have not met an agreement regarding gender factors in explaining attitudes towards the environment and the preference for green products, therefore, hypothesis 1 is stipulated as follows:

H1: There are significant differences between men and women in their attitudes towards the environment.

A study by Chen and Chai [3], Suki [18] established the absence of any significant differences in gender based attitudes towards the adoption of environmentally friendly products. This was in agreement with the results from other study, which was based on green labels [25]. It was also reported on the increased propensity for women to buy green products, based on the belief that they were better for the environment [3,18]. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is stipulated as follows:

H2: There are significant differences between men and women in their attitudes towards green products.

According Naratama and Nurcaya [15], a positive attitude towards environment tends to influence the preference for green products. Individual attentiveness to environmental problems is the first step towards understanding the various forms of affiliated sensitive behaviors, including the purchase of green products [13]. The significant influence of environmental care on the consumers purchase preference was recorded by Barber et al., [21]. Hence, hypothesis 3 was stated as follows:

H3: There is a significant relationship between attitude towards environmental care and green products.

A study by Chen and Chai [3], demonstrated the absence of any significant relationship between a consumers' attitude towards environmental protection, the preference for environmentally friendly products, and their participation recycling activities. Purchasing green food is influenced by the positive attitude towards environmental protection, while ecologically friendly behaviors were defined as a moral demand, characterized by a consumers' feeling of being ethically obliged to protect and save the earths' limited natural resources [27].

H4: There is a significant relationship between attitudes towards environmental protection and the preference of green products.

The effects of subjective norms on the intentions toward green products (vehicles) were not found to be statistically significant [11]. But, the study conducted in Denpasar city by Naratma and Nurcaya [15], stated the positive influence of subjective norms on the intention to purchase green products, which was in agreement with the investigation by Chen and Chai [3]. This was also proven in the report, which demonstrated its value, alongside the importance of moral obligations, as a basis for the disposition of pro-environmental

behavior [25]. Subsequently, personal norms were reported as the most imperative contributing variables to the dependent variables, including consumer attitude. Thus, hypothesis 5 is created as follows:

H5: There is a significant relationship between personal norms and attitudes towards green products.

III. METHODS

This study is focused on young people, represented by students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Trisakti University. Using a simple random sampling technique, data were obtained directly from the respondents, through the distribution of questionnaires, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method was adopted for analysis. Furthermore, the 150 students were targeted, and a total of 133 responses were obtained, which was determined as sufficient.

The validity test result of all independent and dependent variables studied demonstrated a factor loading value that was ≥ 0.40 , hence all statement items and their indicators were considered valid, while the reliability test showed Cronbach Alpha values ≥ 0.60 . Based on the results of goodness of fit analysis, it was established that this model met the criteria of goodness of fit with the normed chi square criteria on Parsimonious Fit Measure, which was particularly obtained by identifying the normal value of chi square, being 0.792 (meeting the requirements of ≥ 0.50). Therefore, the model is declared a good fit for use in confirming the theory that was built based on existing observational data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

This research proposes 5 hypotheses with results of tests conducted shown in table 1 as follows:

TABLE I. HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Hypothesis	Coefficient	p-value	Influence	Description
H1: There are significant differences between men and women in their attitudes towards the environment (SL)	SPL : 0.012	0.915	Positive, not significant	Rejected
	PL : 0.009	0.911	Positive, not significant	
	NP: -0.017	0.222	Positive, not significant	
H2: There are significant differences between men and women in the preference of green products (SPH)	-0.102	0.147	Negative, significant	Rejected
H3: There is a significant relationship between the environmental care attitude (SPL) and the preference of green products (SPH)	0.446	0.000	Positive, significant	Accepted
H4: There is a significant relationship between attitudes towards environmental protection (PL) and the preference of green products (SPH)	-0.256	0.008	Negative, significant	Accepted
H5: There is a significant relationship between personal norms (NP) and preference of green products (SPH)	0.165	0.054	Positive, not significant	Rejected

Source: processed data

B. Discussion

Testing results of H1 showed that it was rejected, which indicates the absence of any significant differences between the personal attitude of men and women towards the environment (SL). This was in line with the study outcome of Chen and Chai [3], where measurement required the utility of three dimensions, encompassing attitudes towards environmental protection, the role of government and personal norms. These results further indicate the presence of similar gender based perception among young people in Indonesia, with emphasis on personal views expressed while discussing about global warming or recycling activities.

Testing results of H2 showed that it was rejected, which indicates the absence of any significant gender based differences concerned with preferences for green products (SPH). This was also in line with the report by Chen and Chai [3], despite the fact that a number of cited studies stated the opposite, hence it was established that young people in Indonesia possess similar perceptions while engaging in discussions concerned with the desire to utilize green products.

Testing results of H3 showed that a significant relationship exists between environmental care attitude (SPL) of young people and their preference for green products (SPH). This further implicates the importance of encouraging the use and consumption of environmentally friendly commodities in developing the necessary care attitude.

Testing results of H4 showed a significant negative relationship between the attitudes displayed towards environmental protection (PL) and the preference for green products (SPH). However, the correlation was observed to not be unidirectional, as awareness was and the desire to use ecologically friendly products has not been properly aligned. These study outcomes also indicate that this particular attitude had not been practiced in real life, hence the need to take steps that encourage broader awareness, causing substantial impacts on their individual willingness.

Testing results of H5 shows the absence of a significant relationship between personal norms (NP) and the preference for green products (SPH). This is not in line with a previous study that notably state the opposite [3,13,28]. Hence, personal norms are recognized as merely attributes that have not fully been internalized, characterized by the inability to practically influence attitudes and behavior.

V. CONCLUSION

This study was aimed at analyzing the attitudes of young people towards the environment and the preference for green products. Based on their large proportion in the Indonesia population (demographic bonus), the next generation is expected to possess awareness and consequently demonstrate care towards the importance of its preservation. This is required for both personal advantages and also to ensure better living in the next generation, while studies on young people, represented by students, had not fully demonstrated. Based on

gender, the results of this research showed the absence of any significant differences between men and women in inter-personal attitudes towards the environment, indicating that young people possess relatively the same knowledge. This was also similar with the disposition towards green products, implicating similarities in personal desires. The relationship between attitudes towards environmental care and green products was proven to be substantial. However, relationship that is not unidirectional was observed with environmental protection. Subsequently, tests showed the inability for personal norms to facilitate the required attitude from young people, due to the fact that they were described as merely attributes that has not been maximally internalized. This leads to a deficiency in the ability to practically influence choices and preferences products.

The results of this study apply to policy making, as it distinguishes the gender factor in the formulation of policies or decisions that are related to the environment and green products. In addition, the attitude of young people is affiliated with the desire for adopting inter-personal environmental care dispositions, promoted by further encouraging their consumption. The necessary steps are in the form of massive environmental awareness campaign, and providing additional materials related to its importance in lectures. Furthermore, there is also a need to encourage the practical involvement of young people in these programs, and observe measures to effectively internalize the necessary personal norms, in order to avoid being limited to normative knowledge. Subsequently, a successful performance is expected to ensure an implementation effectiveness in daily life, and also influence the practically of attitudes and behavior towards green products.

The limitations in this study are based on the restriction of the research scope to the Faculty of Economics and Business, Trisakti University. Hence, the research object ought to be expanded, characterized by the involvement of more variables, related dimensions and indicators. In addition, it is necessary to also enhance the comprehensiveness of this study, particularly considering the knowledge factor and peer groups, and then the triangulation approach is required in order to obtain a better picture of attitudes and behavior towards the environment and green products [13].

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