การรับรู้ความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม ความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว และอิทธิพลกำกับของตัวแปรอิทธิพลจากคนรอบข้าง: หลักฐานเชิงประจักษ์กลุ่มเจเนอเรชั่นวายในภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย

Perceived Environmental Responsibility, Intention to Purchase Green Products and the Moderating Effect of Peer Pressure: Evidence from Generation Y Consumers in Southern Thailand

นฤบาล ยมะคุปต์
Narueban Yamaqupta

คณะพาณิชยศาสตร์และการจัดการ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์ วิทยาเขตตรัง
Faculty of Commerce and Management, Prince of Songkla University, Trang Campus
Email: narueban.y@psu.ac.th

บทคัดย่อ

ในปัจจุบัน การตระหนักรู้ของสังคมต่อการบริโภคผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียวและการเป็นผู้บริโภคที่มีความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม ในขณะเดียวกันความรับผิดชอบและตระหนักรู้ดังกล่าว ส่งผลต่อแนวโน้มที่ผู้บริโภคมีความเต็มใจที่จะซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว การศึกษาครั้งนี้ จึงมุ่งวัดอิทธิพลของการรับรู้ความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมที่มีต่อความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว นอกจากนี้ได้ทำวัดการวัดอิทธิพลจากบุคคลรอบข้าง ในฐานะตัวแปรกำกับ ที่มีอิทธิพลต่อความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างการรับรู้ความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมและความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว การศึกษาในครั้งนี้ใช้แบบสอบถาม กับกลุ่มตัวอย่างจำนวน 384 ใช้วิธีการเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างอย่างง่าย กับกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่มีภูมิลำเนาอยู่ในพื้นที่ภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย และมีอายุอยู่ระหว่าง 18-34 ปี

ผลจากการวิเคราะห์ความถดถอยแบบเชิงซ้อน ได้ผลสรุปว่า ความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว มีอิทธิพลมาจากการรับรู้ความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม โดยมีอำนาจในการอธิบายความแปรปรวนของความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียวได้ร้อยละ 42.4 (R^2 =.424) ที่ระดับนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.001 และพบว่าอิทธิพลกำกับของตัวแปรอิทธิพลจากคนรอบข้าง ส่งผลให้ความสามารถในการอธิบายความแปรปรวนของความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียวเพิ่มขึ้นเป็นร้อยละ 49.0 (R^2 =.490) อย่างไม่มีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ 0.05 การอภิปรายผลการศึกษาตลอดจนข้อเสนอแนะทั้งในทางทฤษฎีและทางปฏิบัติ ที่ได้จากการศึกษาได้ถูกนำเสนอในงานบทความชิ้นนี้

คำสำคัญ: การรับรู้ความรับผิดชอบต่อสิ่งแวดล้อม ความตั้งใจซื้อผลิตภัณฑ์สีเขียว อิทธิพลจากคนรอบข้าง

Abstract

Nowadays, there is a call for society to be mindful about the consumption of green products and be responsible consumers which contributes to the tendency for consumers to be more willing to buy green products. This study, aimed to gauge the effect of perceived environmental responsibility on the intention to purchase green products. In addition, the impact of peer pressure was also explored as the moderating variable affecting the primary relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and the intention to purchase green products. Using convenience sampling technique, a total of 384 responses to a survey questionnaire were collected from participants between 18-34 years of age who from various geographic locations in Southern Thailand. The results from the hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that perceived environmental responsibility significantly influenced the intention to purchase green products with an explanation power of 42.4% (R^2 =.424) and a 0.001 level of significance. In addition, peer pressure's moderation of the relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products was found to be insignificant at a 0.05 level of significance and an explanation power of 49% (R^2 =.490). Plausible reasons for the findings are discussed within the

context of the study. Practical and theoretical contributions, as well as recommendations for future research, are also addressed.

Keywords: Perceived Environmental Responsibility, Intention to Purchase Green Product, Peer Pressure
Paper type: Research

1. Introduction

In today's Thailand, boosting sustainable consumption by Thai consumers is imperative, as can be seen in several plans and strategies developed by the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) which are aimed at promoting increasing the consumption of green products. Concerns about environmental sustainability have thus become part of Thailand's long-term economic goals in its 20 Year National strategy (2017-2036). Several Thai scholars have striven to prove that consumption of green products is part of perspective of the mainstream Thais (Atttachariya, 2012; Kantatasiri,Jaroenwanit & Brown, 2014; Vantamay, 2018). The aforementioned studies have postulated that Thai Consumers are willing to buy green products and have positive attitudes towards the consumption of green products.

According to Mostafa (2007), consumers' positive attitudes towards green products influence their intentionality to purchase green products. Several previous studies have concurred, concluding that the effect is significant on consumer intention (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Azizan & Suki, 2013). Additionally, there is evidence that peer influence plays a role in the purchase behavior related to green products (Lasuin & Ching, 2014; Sharaf & Md. Isa, 2017).

Globally, generation Y, which is currently 20-35 in age, is now the world's largest demographic, and accounts for 38.8% of the world population. In Thailand, generation Y accounts for more than 32 percent of the Thai population of about 68 million (Howe & Strauss, 2009). Generation Y is the group that has the most potential green consumers, so they have the power to lead the country to toward sustainable consumption (Maichum, Parichatnon & Peng, 2017). This is possible because they have plenty of ideas, knowledge, and attitudes about green consumption (Sullivan & Heitmeyer, 2008) and they also possess tremendous potential spending power (Ordun, 2015).

People located in southern Thailand encounter a numbers of environmental problems. This is because there are many activities that cause environmental problems, such as intensive farming, wastes generation, deforestation, and heavy flooding caused by torrential rains (Ping, 2011). These factors led to the aims of this study to focusing primarily on the southern provinces of Thailand.

2. Research Question

This paper aims to investigate the interrelationships among perceived environmental responsibility, intention to purchase green products, and peer pressure. The selected context of the study is generation y consumers located in southern of Thailand. The specific research questions are:

2.1 Does perceived environmental responsibility effect the intention of generation y consumers to purchase green products?

2.2 Does peer pressure have an effect as a moderator variable on the relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products among generation y consumers?

3. Literature

Perceived Environmental Responsibility and Intention to Purchase Green Products

Previous studies have noted that consumers with an attitude of social responsibility regarding environmental issues tend to exhibit green purchasing behavior (Oyewole, 2001). This is because the perceived environmental responsibility of consumers leads to the intention to purchase green products (Lai, 2000) due to the fact that they have an intention of being less harmful to the environment and they are becoming conscious purchasers (Johri & Sahasakmontri, 1998).

There are a numbers of studies which point out that intention to purchase green products is influenced by many factors, including environmental attitudes (Chekima, Wafa, Igau, Chekima & Sondon, 2016; Maichum, Parichatnon & Peng; 2017) and price (Sharaf & Md. Isa, 2017). However, perceived environmental responsibility tends to be the most suitable variable for the context of this study since it was postulated by Johri and Sahasakmontri (1998) that in consumers in Asian countries are becoming more conscious about environmental issues. This is especially

among generation Y consumers, which is the group of consumers that have the greatest impact on the consumption of green products (Tan & Lau, 2009). Environmentally responsible consumers are willing to purchase, and pay more for, green products (Kim & Damhorst, 1998). Environmental concern is also a predictor of purchasing environmentally friendly products or green products (Ellen, Weiner & Cobb-Walgren, 1991; McCarty & Shrum, 2001). Thus, the first postulation for this study is that intention to purchase green products is dependent upon perceived environmental responsibility. The first hypothesis is:

H1: There is an effect of perceived environmental responsibility on intention to purchase green products.

The Moderating Effect of Peer Pressure

A moderator variable is a variable on which the relationship between two other variables is contingent – that is, if the moderating effect is present, the theorized relationship between the two variables will hold good, but not otherwise (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekeran, 2001). That means the presence of the third variable (the moderating variable) could modify the original relationship between the independent and the dependent variables (Sekaran, 2007).

Peer pressure is the impact a group of people have on consumers. The peer group consists of friends, family educators, employers, professional colleges, experts and the media (Klobas & Clyde, 2001). A number of studies have determined that peer pressure has a role in the intention to purchase green products (Öhman, 2011; Soonthonsmai, 2001; Sharaf & Md. Isa, 2017). Social influence through peer pressure can cause changes in a person's attitudes and behaviors which can be influenced by another person's actions (Delamater & Myers, 2007).

Although the role of peer pressure's influence on purchase intention has been found to influence the intention to purchase specific goods, such as halal products in the study by Ali and Kushi (2017), that attempted to include peer pressure as a moderating variable which could strengthen the relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products were limited and are still questionable. Due to this, the second hypothesis is:

H2: There is a moderating effect by peer pressure on perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products.

4. Conceptual framework

The underlying under the backbone of the conceptual framework of the current study is the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), because that the performance of specific behaviors is determined by the intention to perform the behaviors. It is conceptualized as follows:

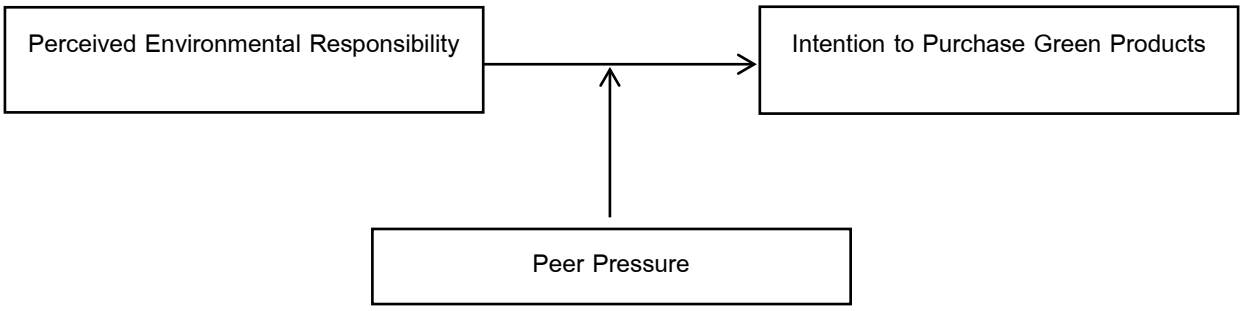

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 illustrates that there is an effect of perceived environmental responsibility on the intention to purchase green products and that there is a moderating effect by peer pressure on their relationship.

5. Methods

5.1 Participants and sample size

The study used a quantitative survey approach and convenience sampling. The study population in this research is generation Y consumers between 18-34 years of age from various geographic locations in southern Thailand. Data collection started in December 2017 and took place over a 1 month period. The respondents were requested the complete a questionnaire. A total 768 questionnaires were distributed to the target population in one of the two ways: directly by hand by the researcher in Trang province or through a network of colleagues in Songkhla and Pattani provinces. Participation was voluntary since the questionnaires were written in English, as the language that the questionnaire used in this study was originally written in, and because the researcher trusted that respondents who volunteered within this generation would be, knowledgeable and familiar enough with English language to complete the questionnaires. Prior to answering the questionnaire, the respondents were asked confirm that their hometown was located in the southern provinces of Thailand.

The sample size for this study was derived from the suggestion by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) cited in Sekaran (2007) which reads that, if a population number is higher than 100,000 the sample size should be 384. Thus, researcher considered this number returned questionnaires as being.

5.2 Instrumentation

The items were based on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from (1), “strongly disagree” to (5), “strongly agree”. The questionnaires are divided into two parts; the study variables and the demographic profile. The questions on intention to purchase green products and peer pressure are adopted from Sharaf and Md.Isa (2017) and those for perceived environmental responsibility from Paco and Rodrigues (2017). In total, there are 16 items related to the studied variables. In addition, 30 sets of questionnaires also distributed as a pilot test prior to the actual data collection to ensure that the respondents are could clearly understand the questions and ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

6. Findings

A total of 384 usable questionnaires were completed. The majority of respondents were female (66.1%). The participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 34 years old. The biggest group of respondents were aged between 18 to 23 years old (69.0%), followed by 24 to 28 years old (19.5%), and 29-34 years old (11.5%).

As noted in Table 1, it was observed that only one component extracted with explained 51.74% of the variance. All seven statement items of on perceived environmental responsibility had communalities greater than .50, which achieved the basic criteria for the utilization of factor analysis, and the KMO score was .847 (meritorious), which indicated that factor analysis was appropriate. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant at a level of .000. All items had factor loadings greater than .50. The result of the reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach’s alpha value of .842.

Table 1

Factor Analysis and Reliability Test Result on Perceived Environmental Responsibility

Perceived Environmental Responsibility	Factor Loadings
	Factor 1
I should be responsible for protecting our environment	.748
Environmental protection starts with me	.736
I think I have responsibility in protecting the environment in country	.733
I have taken responsibility for environment protection since I was young	.722
I'm willing to take up responsibility the environment in Country	.720
Environmental protection is the responsibility of my government, not me*	.709
Environmental protection is the responsibility of the environment organizations, not me*	.663
Cronbach's Alpha	.842
Eigenvalues	3.622
Variances Explained (%)	51.744
Cumulative (%)	51.744
The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling adequacy. .847	
The Barlett's test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square 920.823	
df 21	
Sig. .000	

Note *Reverse coded

Only factor loadings > .50 are shown.

Only those items that loaded on the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are shown.

In Table 2, which contains the items related to peer pressure, it was observed that only one a single component extracted with explained 70.39% of the variance. All 5 statement items had communalities greater than .50, which achieved the basic criteria for the utilization of factor analysis, and the KMO score was .873 (meritorious), which indicated that the factor analysis was appropriate. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at a level of .000. All items had factor loadings greater than .50. The result of reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of .894.

Table 2

Factor Analysis and Reliability Test Result on Peer Pressure

Peer Pressure	Factor Loadings
	Factor 1
I am encouraged to buy green products by people who are important to me	.841
My friends think that I should purchase green products.	.835
My family thinks that I should purchase green products.	.846
I learn a lot about environmental friendly products from my friends.	.843
I always share information regarding environmental friendly products with my friends and family.	.830

Peer Pressure	Factor Loadings
	Factor 1
Cronbach's Alpha	.894
Eigenvalues	3.520
Variances Explained (%)	70.397
Cumulative (%)	70.397
The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling adequacy.	.873
The Barlett's test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	1060.946
df	10
Sig.	.000

Note Only factor loadings > .50 are shown.

Only those items that loaded on the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are shown.

In Table 3, the factor analysis and reliability test for intention to purchase green products indicated that there was a single component extracted with explained 72.36% of the variance. All 4 statement items had communalities greater than .50, which achieved the basic criteria for the utilization of factor analysis, and the KMO score was .871 (meritorious), which indicated that factor analysis was appropriate. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at a level of .000. All items had factor loadings greater than .50. The result of reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of .871.

Table 3

Factor Analysis and Reliability Test Result on Intention to Purchase Green Products

Intention to Purchase Green Products	Factor Loadings
	Factor 1
I am willing to buy green products	.846
It is very likely that I will buy green products in the future	.883
I am willing to continuously buy green products	.880
I am willing to pay more when purchasing green products	.790
Cronbach's Alpha	.871
Eigenvalues	2.893
Variances Explained (%)	72.326
Cumulative (%)	72.326
The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling adequacy.	.817
The Barlett's test of Sphericity	
Approx. Chi-Square	774.061
df	6
Sig.	.000

Note Only factor loadings > .50 are shown.

Only those items that loaded on the factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 are shown.

7. Test of Hypotheses

To test hypotheses H1 and H2, hierarchical regression analysis was utilized. This analysis was used to gauge the prediction power of perceived environmental responsibility on intention to purchase green product, as well as to test the moderating effect of peer pressure on perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products.

Prior to testing the hypotheses, as mentioned earlier, the data was examined to confirm that the assumptions for testing the hypotheses were met. The major assumptions examined were: normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2006). The evaluation of these assumptions revealed no significant violations. The outliers were deleted. The skewness and kurtosis were acceptable ranges. The histogram and the normality probability plot (P-P plots) of the regression standardized residual also indicated that the normality was verified. The tolerance value and variance inflation factor (VIF) were checked to identify any problem with multicollinearity and it was found that the tolerance values for all variables and the VIF were within the rule of thumb criterions, which indicated that there was no problem with multicollinearity. The linearity, homoscedasticity and the independence of the error terms were examined by investigating the scatter plot of the residuals, and it was determined that there was no clear relationship between the residual and the predicted value, which confirmed the linearity, homoscedasticity and the independence of the residuals.

H1: There is an effect of perceived environmental responsibility on intention to purchase green products.

As shown in Table 4, in the first step, a significant F value of 281.176 (p < .001, R^2 of .424) indicates there is a linear relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products. Thus, the model is considered good. The R-square value of .424 implies that 42.4% of the variance in the intention to purchase green products can be explained by perceived environmental responsibility (R^2 .424, adjusted R^2 .422). Meanwhile, the remainder of 57.6% is determined by other factors were not investigated by the study. Thus, the hypothesis H1 is supported.

H2: There is a moderating effect by peer pressure on perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products.

In step two, the multiple linear regression of the effect of perceived environmental responsibility and peer pressure on intention to purchase green products, revealed a significant F value of 180.604 (p < .001, R^2 of .487) which indicates there is a multiple linear relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and peer pressure on intention to purchase green products. Thus, the model is considered good. The R-square value of .487 implies that 48.7% of the variance in the intention to purchase green products can be explained by perceived environmental responsibility and peer pressure (R^2 .487, adjusted R^2 .484).

When the moderator was added to the model in the third step, it had an insignificant effect. Perceived environmental responsibility and the moderating role of peer pressure contributed to 49% of the variance in intention to purchase green products. However, it was found that there was only an increase of the 0.03% R^2 from step 2 to step 3. Therefore, the hierarchical regression analysis rejects the existence of a moderating effect by peer pressure as a moderating variable on the relationship between perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products. Thus, hypothesis H2 is not supported.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Using Peer Pressure as a Moderator in the Relationship between Perceived Environmental Responsibility and Intention to Purchase Green Products

Variables/DV	Intention to Purchase Green Products		
	Std Beta		
	Step1	Step2	Step3
IV			
- Perceived Environmental Responsibility	.651***	.412***	.415***
Moderator			
- Peer Pressure		.346***	.362***
Interaction terms			
- Perceived Environmental Responsibility x Peer Pressure			-.060
F	281.176***	180.604***	121.658***
R^2	.424	.487	.490
Adjusted R^2	.422	.484	.486
R^2 change	.424	.063	.003
F change	281.176***	46.524***	2.419

Note *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

8. Discussions

The current study provides insight into the understanding of the interrelationships among perceived environmental responsibility, peer pressure, and intention to purchase green products. According to the findings, hypothesis H1, the effect of perceived environmental responsibility on intention to purchase green products, is supported which in line with the study by Hessami and Yousefi (2013). Therefore, it is considered true that consumers having concern for the environmental is a significant predictor of purchasing green products, as found in previous studies research by Ellen, Weiner and Cobb-Walgren (1991), and McCarty and Shrum (2001). However, hypothesis H2, it is not supported because peer pressure cannot be considered as a moderator of perceived environmental responsibility and intention to purchase green products. Nevertheless, peer pressure still exhibits an impact to generation Y consumers because they love to show that they are an expert or leader among peers and receive a lot of information from their peers, as mentioned in a previous study by Parment (2013). Therefore, generation Y purchasing behaviors are significantly influenced by their peers' opinions and perceptions, therefore, impact plays a significant role in the purchase decisions of generation Y. Ultimately, their consumption patterns reflect their way of life and self-image (Werff, Steg & Keizer, 2013).

9. Recommendations and Conclusions

This current study expands the body knowledge about intention to purchase green products in the context of generation Y consumers in southern Thailand. Based on the study's findings, government and policy makers goal of bolstering the consumption of green products and boosting environmental sustainability for the country would tend to be easily achieved, because there is evidence that consumers, especially in generation Y, have a sense of environmental responsibility. On the other hand, for entrepreneurs, the study indicates that there are plenty of business opportunities for green products. Demand for green products is favorable and there is optimism about the future growth in the green market.

For future study, it is imperative to perform further depth research on perceived environment responsibility and peer pressure in various contexts, locations, regions, and with a wider range of respondents throughout the country. In addition, the results indicate that there are other factors involved which were not investigated by this study which need

investigation. Thus, future research should be conducted to explore additional variables that could intention to purchase green products. This could bring us the better understanding and expand the existing body of knowledge.

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