

Influential Factors Shaping Consumer Purchase Intentions for Organic Personal Care Products

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Abstract: This study investigates and unveils the purchase intentions of Malaysian consumers regarding organic personal care products. This study aims to explore the factors that shape consumer purchase intentions which are social media influencers and product packaging towards organic personal care product, focusing on the northern regions. The study employs a quantitative method of questionnaires and purposive sampling techniques were employed in this study. Data were collected using online questionnaire survey of 382 Malaysian consumers. The data were analysed using Social Statistical Package (SPSS) and employed descriptive analysis. The findings of this study provide valuable empirical evidence and quantitative insights, this research significantly contributes to the knowledge base of industry stakeholders and marketers. With a better understanding of the factors that influence consumer purchase intentions, strategic decision-making in the competitive organic personal care products becomes more informed and precise. This understanding is particularly valuable for developing targeted marketing strategies that engage the unique demographic of the northern regions and foster brand loyalty in the dynamic landscape of the organic personal care products.

Key words: Purchase Intention, Social Media Influencer, Packaging, Organic Cosmetics.

1.0 Introduction

The global market for organic products, including the food, fashion, and cosmetics sectors, has grown significantly due to increased consumer awareness of environmentally friendly practices and the harmful effects of synthetic chemicals (Noorita, 2019). This shift towards organic products is part of a broader trend towards a healthier lifestyle, driving demand and supply in the organic market (Ghazali, Soon, Mutum & Nguyen, 2017).

Specifically, consumers perceive organic personal care products, such as skin care, hair care, oral care, cosmetics, feminine hygiene products, deodorants, and toiletries, as having a lower environmental impact (Ghazali et al., 2017). These products, made from natural agricultural ingredients and free from chemical additives or synthetic fertilizers, contribute to environmental protection and promote a healthier lifestyle (Schifferstein & Ophuis, 1998). According to Noorita (2019), organic personal care products are defined as high-quality products with minimal chemical usage, and features such as eco-friendliness, biodegradability, and ethical considerations like being free from animal testing and animal by-products (Noorita, 2019). Increased consumer awareness of health care has led to a rise in demand for organic personal care products (Aste, 2017).

In Malaysia, previous researchers have conducted numerous studies on the organic food industry in general. However, studies on organic personal care products, especially cosmetics, are still relatively limited (Noorita, 2019). This is supported by Ghazali et al., (2017); Atta, Hafiza & Abbas, Bushra &

Syed, Faheem Uddin. (2021) also mentioned that scant study was carried out to investigate the purchasing behaviour of consumers in relation to organic personal care products in Malaysia. This is happened due to many people are still not concerned and have doubts about purchasing organic products, especially in local brands (Shafira, A., & Mayangsari, L., 2020). Consumer knowledge about the benefits of organic products is also insufficient, which may affect their willingness to pay premium prices for these items.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the purchase intentions of Malaysian consumers regarding organic personal care products, considering the emerging trends and market potential in eco-friendly personal care. Purchase intention refers to the extent to which consumers are willing to buy a desired product or service (Batra, Nandini, Ruhee Mittal, 2022). This study will investigate factors such as product packaging which consists of color, font style, material used, design and printed information and the influence of social media influencers on purchasing decisions regarding organic personal care products. The goal is to identify the determinants and factors that influence the purchase intentions for organic personal care products.

2.0 Literature Reviews

Purchase Intention for Organic Personal Care Products

The personal care product industry encompasses a wide range of products focused on health and beauty, such as perfumes, sunscreen, hair and skincare products, cosmetics, and toothpaste. Organic personal care products are made with a high percentage of organic ingredients, including organic herbal and plant extracts, and are free from sulphates, parabens, phthalates, artificial colors, and artificial fragrances (Kim, Hee, & Chung, 2011). Purchase intention refers to the decision-making process of buying a specific product or brand (Shah et al., 2012). Understanding and meeting the needs and desires of target consumers is crucial for marketing professionals and cosmetics manufacturers. Evaluating consumers' purchase intention for cosmetic products helps identify their expectations. Consumers with a strong desire to purchase a product are more likely to have a higher purchase intention (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). Purchase intention plays a significant role in the consumer's decision-making process. People who desire a product or have a specific motivation are more likely to choose and purchase it. When selecting a cosmetic product, consumers consider factors such as brand, price, and quality based on their preferences. These factors influence their perception of the product and ultimately their decision to purchase. The consumer's overall perception of a product is known as perceived value, which greatly impacts purchase intention. Manufacturers can use perceived value to adjust their products and increase consumer's purchase intention.

Purchase intention is a concept derived from the study of intention in social science (Tan et. al., 2017). In marketing, purchase intention is a recognized variable that explains consumer behavior in decision making (Khalid et. al., 2018). Factors like culture and sub-cultures influence purchase intention and consumer behavior. It's important to differentiate between intention and attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Intention guides a person to act in specific ways and implies phrases like "I should do," "I will do," and "I am going to do" (Triandis, 1977). Purchase intention refers to the likelihood of a consumer purchasing a particular item or service. It represents a desire to take a specific action and is commonly referred to as buyer purchase intention in consumer behavior and marketing research (Khalid et. al., 2018). Additionally, purchase intention is an essential element in consumer behavior for predicting future purchases, including specific products or brands (Su & Huang, 2010).

Social Media Influencer and purchase Intentions

The term "influencer" originates from marketing, referring to individuals engaged by a brand to connect with target consumers, convey brand messages, and fulfill brand objectives. According Rosara, & Luthfia, Amia. (2020), influencers possess the ability to sway others' opinions due to their position, authority, knowledge, or perceived relationships. Social media influencers leverage social networks to "create authentic personal brands" and "grow" their influence, thereby generating "celebrity capital" that businesses and advertisers can utilize to reach consumers (Gretzel & Sigala, 2018).

In essence, an influencer is someone who can significantly impact others' purchasing decisions. Typically, influencers use social media and have a substantial number of followers. Previous studies have shown that Irish millennial males are not accustomed to traditional advertising because they live in an era where the internet and social media play a crucial role in daily activities. Millennial consumers have diverse opinions, ideas, and interests when engaging with social media influencers. This engagement fosters a deeper relationship between millennials and social media influencers, who are profoundly interconnected (Rosara, & Luthfia, Amia, (2020)

Product Packaging and purchase Intentions

Product packaging plays a dual role in promoting a product and protecting it from environmental factors (Raheem, Ahmad, Visnu & Imamuddin, 2014; Khan, Marium & Waheed, Sidra & Ahmad, Nawaz, 2018. According to Khan, Marium & Waheed, Sidra & Ahmad, Nawaz. (2018), consumers often rely on packaging to assess the quality of a product. Consequently, product packaging, especially at the point of sale, significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions. Previous research has highlighted that packaging is crucial in product promotion and in encouraging purchase intentions

(Rundh, 2007). The design, content, and color of packaging also play a vital role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions (Raheem, Ahmad, Visnu & Imamuddin, 2014). Furthermore, packaging is considered the most prominent feature of a product, aiding in product differentiation for customers.

3.0 Methodology

This study employs a quantitative method, utilizing an exploratory survey and non-probability purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or expert sampling, is a type of nonprobability sampling. The main objective of purposive sampling is to generate a sample that can reasonably be considered representative of the population (Lavrakas, 2008; Shafira, A., & Mayangsari, L., 2020). The population for this study is from Kubang Pasu, Kedah. Data were collected through an online questionnaire survey to assess purchase intentions for organic personal care products. The collected data were processed using SPSS ver. 26 software. The dependent variable in this study is purchase intentions, while the independent variables are social media influencers and product packaging (refer to figure 1).

The data collection techniques used a questionnaire that was measured using a Likert Scale. The questionnaire consisted of 33 items, which were measured using a 5-point Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree). Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 377 received responses from the respondents. A total of 382 responses were gathered, and the data was analyzed using SPSS version 26.

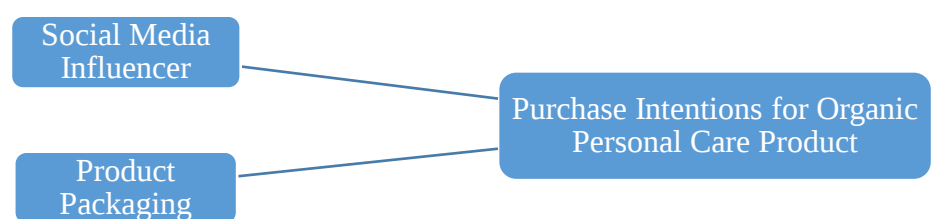


Figure 1: Research Framework

4.0 Data Analysis and Findings

Data are analysed using SPSS version 26. For section A, demographic profile, frequency and percentage were used. For descriptive analysis, mean score interpretation was used.

Table 1: Respondent's Profile

characteristics		Number of Respondent (n=382)	Percentage
Gender	Male	150	39.3
	Female	232	60.7
Race	Malay	226	59.2
	Chinese	94	24.6
	Indian	43	11.3
	Others	11	2.9
Age	18 – 22 years old	226	59.2
	23-27 years old	94	24.6
	28-32 years old	43	11.3
	33-37 years old	11	2.9
	38 – 42 years old	8	2.1
Occupation	Government	140	36.6
	Private	176	46.1
	Others	66	17.3
Income	RM 2,500 and below	180	47.1
	RM2501 – RM3500	95	24.9
	RM3501 – RM 4500	49	12.8
	RM4501 – RM5,500	20	5.2
	RM 5501 and above	38	9.9

A total of 382 respondents were involved in this study, with the majority being female (60.7%) and 39.3% being male. 59.2% of the respondents were aged 18-22 years old. Most of the respondents identified as Malay (59.2%) and worked in the private sector (46.1%). The majority of the respondents had a monthly income of RM 2500 or below.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability coefficients for each item in the questionnaire are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficient for Each Section of The Questionnaire

Questionnaire	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Section B:		
Social Media Influencer	11	0.774
Packaging	24	0.721
Section C:		
Purchase Intention	6	0.812

In Table 2, the purchase intention variable exhibits the highest coefficient alpha value of 0.812, reflecting strong internal consistency. The social media influencer variable follows with a coefficient alpha value of 0.774. Although the packaging variable's coefficient alpha value is slightly lower at 0.721, it still indicates an acceptable level of reliability, albeit not as high as the other two variables.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in Table below. Means interpretation score for this study interpreted based on Moidunny (2009).

Table 3: Interpretation of Mean Score

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 -1.80	Very Low
1.81-2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.20	Medium
3.21 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very High

Source: Moidunny (2009)

Based on Table 3, the mean scores are categorized into five criteria. A score of 1.00 to 1.80 indicates a very low level. Scores from 1.81 to 2.60 fall into the low category. Scores between 2.61 and 3.20 are considered medium. Scores from 3.21 to 4.20 are classified as high, and scores from 4.21 to 5.00 are classified as very high.

Table 4: Mean Score Interpretation Table

Variable	Mean	Interpretation of Mean Score
Social Media Influencer	3.82	High
Product Packaging: Colour	4.26	High
Font style	4.33	
Material	4.23	
Design	4.31	
Printed information	4.30	High
Purchase Intention	4.33	

Table 4 shows that social media influencers have a significant impact on consumer purchase intentions for personal care products, with an average influence score of 3.82. This finding is in line with earlier studies conducted by Batra, Lipi & Garg, Nandini & Mittal, Ruhee (2022). People tend to follow influencers who share the same interests as them and whom they can relate to. This means that the use of social media influencers is able to change the lines of communication between consumers and companies (Nurhandayani, A., Syarief, R., & Najib, M. (2019). Glucksman (2017) mentioned in their study that marketing communication through social media influencers has proven to significantly change the way a product interacts with customers in a positive manner. Previously, communication was established with only one direction where consumers only received information about the product or services through advertisements displayed on television, magazines, or company websites. Now, consumers can obtain information from both company advertisements and social media influencers.

In terms of product packaging, several elements are crucial for attracting and influencing consumers. The mean scores for packaging components are as follows: color (4.26), font style (4.33), material used (4.23), design (4.31), and printed information (4.30). These findings emphasize the crucial role that packaging plays in shaping consumer appeal and purchase decisions and they clearly show how important it has become for many businesses to use packaging as a vital tool for sales promotion. The findings of this study are consistent with research by Yeo, Sook Fern, Tan, Cheng Ling, Lim, Kah Boon, and Khoo (2020), which also discovered that packaging colour, material, and graphics substantially influence purchase intentions.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, the impact of social media influencers and product packaging on consumer purchase intentions for organic personal care products were examined. The findings revealed that both factors have a positive effect on purchase intentions. Social media and the influencer of social media are able to influence consumer behaviour and lifestyle. Thus, in order to increase the demand for organic personal care product, the marketers need to plan the strategy, target audiences and work in collaboration with influencers to create worthy marketing campaign.

Besides, product packaging which the elements such as packaging color and font style plays critical roles in shaping consumer decisions. Therefore, the packaging industry should determine the factors of packaging that can enhance to customers' purchase intention. There are certain limitations for this study. Firstly, the respondents were exclusively from Kubang Pasu, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, the study focused solely on organic products. Thus, for future research, this study may explore cross-cultural differences, considering how various cultures impact consumer preferences and purchase intentions. Researchers might also delve into innovating packaging designs, authenticity of social media influencers, emotional appeals and many more. These avenues offer exciting opportunities to advance the understanding of consumer behaviour and decision making in the context of organic personal care products.

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