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## THE IMPACT OF CONSUMPTION VALUES ON HOUSEHOLD'S BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS GREEN GROCERY PRODUCTS

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### Abstract:

This study aims to examine the impact of consumption values on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. Concern for healthy lifestyles among households has created a high demand for environmental-friendly or natural products. This has shown that the green products market has the perspective to grow. In order to have an effective marketing strategy, there is a need for marketers to understand the buying behaviour of households towards green grocery products. The theory of consumption values was used to explain the household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. Five variables from the theory, namely functional value, emotional value, social value, epistemic value, and conditional value were included in the research model to explain household buying behaviour towards green grocery products. A total of 200 households were recruited using a convenience sampling approach. Data were collected with a set of self-administered questionnaires. The variables were validated and tested using Structural Equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings have shown that both conditional value and functional value positively influence household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products with the exception of emotional value, social value, and epistemic value. This study has thus indicated that elements such as quality, price, and promotion of the green grocery products are important in the marketing strategies planning in attracting more consumers. This study has also provided an insight into the household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products in Malaysian context.

**Keywords:**

Consumption Values, Household's Buying Behaviour, Green Grocery Products

**Introduction**

Human activities have caused negative impacts to environment such as alarming global warming, pollution, degradation of quality on soil, air, water and so on. Ritter et al. (2015) highlighted that consumption of environmentally friendly products such as green products will have positive impact on the environmental quality. Green product is an environmentally friendly product which grows without pesticides and chemical manure, non-toxic materials such as organic food or biocosmetic (Liobikienė et al., 2016). Yadav and Pathak (2017) have emphasised that green marketing should be done by marketers to communicate their green products to the consumers on how it benefits to the environment.

According to Household Expenditure Survey Report (2019), the average of household monthly consumption expenditure of Malaysian households has increased from 3.9 percent in 2016 to 4.2 percent in 2019. Of these, the food and non-alcoholic beverages remained as one of the major components of expenditure. This has implied that there an increase in the household consumptions towards household grocery products. Meanwhile, the households' awareness on the importance of environmental protection has also grown over the years. Thus, it cannot be denied that Malaysian households play a vital role in green consumption.

Consumption of green products by consumers which also known as their concern for healthy lifestyles would create a high demand for environmental-friendly or natural products. (Tafsir et al., 2016). This has showed that green products market has the perspective to grow due to the embrace of consumption sustainability among consumers (Zhao et al., 2014). In order to reach and target these customers and market more effectively, the marketers need to understand the consumers' buying behaviour towards green products or services (Ritter et al., 2015) in which they will be able to have better knowledge and strategy to lead the consumption of consumer towards green products effectively (Kong et al., 2014). Hence, it is essential to investigate the buying behaviour of household towards green grocery products.

Khare (2015) has pointed that studies on consumer buying behaviour towards green products in Asia is still at the infant stage. Several previous studies have adopted the theory of consumption values in their studies (Biswas & Roy, 2015b; Gonçalves et al., 2015; Solaiman et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2020). These previous studies mainly focus on buying behaviour of consumers towards green products (Gonçalves et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2018), organic food (Qasim et al., 2019) and electronic products (Solaiman et al., 2017). There is lack of studies on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products. As suggested by Sheng et al. (2019) that future studies to explore on specific green products instead of environmentally friendly products. Thus, this study aims to examine the impact of consumption values on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products.

**Literature Review**

Theory of consumption value is a theory developed to explain and predict how it influences the consumer behaviour (Sheth et al., 1991). Consumption value theory is an embedded model

that incorporates elements from different models of consumer value integrating multiple consumption characteristics. There are five values consisting of functional value, social value, epistemic value, conditional value and emotional value. This theory consists of five consumption values which are influencing the consumer choice behavior (Rahnama & Rajabpour, 2016).

### ***Functional Value***

Functional value is defined as “the perceived utility acquired from an alternative’s capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance” (Sheth et al., 1991, p. 160). Khan and Mohsin (2017) found that functional value is a main driver for the green product in his research conducted in Pakistan. Functional value is considered as more on intrinsic value of a product rather than extrinsic value (Qasim et al., 2019). Lim (2013) also pointed that functional value will have effect on consumer’s purchase decision as they will evaluate the benefit received from a product based on the price had paid.

According to Ritter et al. (2015), quality and price are the consideration for the consumer consumption towards green products. Suki and Suki (2015) have also argued that price and quality have influenced consumer’s purchase decision. Therefore, the quality and price are important factor that influence consumer buying behavior. Solaiman et al. (2017) have showed that functional value has significantly influenced on purchase behavior of environmental-friendly products. Similar findings also revealed by other studies (Biswas & Roy, 2015a; Maharum et al., 2017).

### ***Emotional Value***

Emotional value is the perceived utility resulting from a product or service that provokes feeling or affective states (Sheth et al., 1991). Consumer with high emotional value will concern to the environment issue with purchasing green product compare to consumer who are low emotional value (Khan & Mohsin, 2017). This means the level of emotional value will moderate the consumer buying intention towards the green products.

Maharum et al. (2017) in their study stated that emotional value able to enhance green purchase behaviour of young consumer which act as a driver of moral and responsibility towards environment. Consumer who are environmental conscious would prefer green products as they experience positive emotions when purchasing green product. The studies by Lin and Huang (2012) and Qasim et al. (2019) found that emotional value have positive impact on purchase behavior of green product.

### ***Social Value***

Gonçalves et al. (2015) opined that social status and self-image of an individual will affect the consumption of individual towards the green products purchase behaviour. Social value is viewed as perceived net benefit obtained from green consumption based on the impression of social force or the increase in prestigious status through commitment to environmental protection. Meanwhile, Lin and Huang (2012) highlighted that social value relates to the measure of consumer utility affected by peer opinions.

Suki and Suki (2015) have found social value to strongest effect on consumer green consumption which indicated that social value is an important factor of consumer purchase decision. Liobikienė et al. (2016) stated that buying green products is a form of agreement of

providing good example and positive manner to others. A number of studies have showed that social value has significant influence on green purchase behaviour of consumers (Biswas & Roy, 2015a; Solaiman et al., 2017).

### ***Epistemic Value***

Consumer normally will seek information or knowledge on an inexperienced or different product (Suki, 2015). The decision process of consumers will be influenced by the characteristics of knowledge. The availability of information of the green products will be able to develop a positive perception of consumer who desire for knowledge seeking (Qasim et al., 2019). Maharum et al. (2017) opined that young consumer will likely to experience and try on new and different product due to their curiosity. This phenomenon has also confirmed by the study conducted by Wang et al. (2018).

Suki and Suki (2015) revealed that the superior epistemic value could be the determinant of the purchase decision towards green products. Consumer who has higher epistemic value will be more environmental concern. There are few studies have showed a significant influence of such value on consumer green buying behaviour (Liobikienė et al., 2016; Suki & Suki, 2015).

### ***Conditional Value***

Conditional value is the perceived utility that resulting from a specific circumstance that a decision maker face (Sheth et al, 1991). Lin and Huang (2012) refers the situational as times and places which has impact on consumer's purchase decision. Qasim et al. (2019) stated that bad environmental situation in recent years has changed consumption habit of consumers to be more conscious. This has thus impacted their buying behaviour towards green products in positive manner.

Conditional value can affect consumer's purchasing behaviour towards green product when discount and promotion take places (Maharum et al., 2017). This strategy can always be used to attract attention of consumers to explore the green products or services (Solaiman, et al., 2017). Empirical studies have showed that conditional value have influence on green product buying (Biswas & Roy, 2015a; Wang et al., 2018).

Based on above discussion, the following five hypotheses were established.

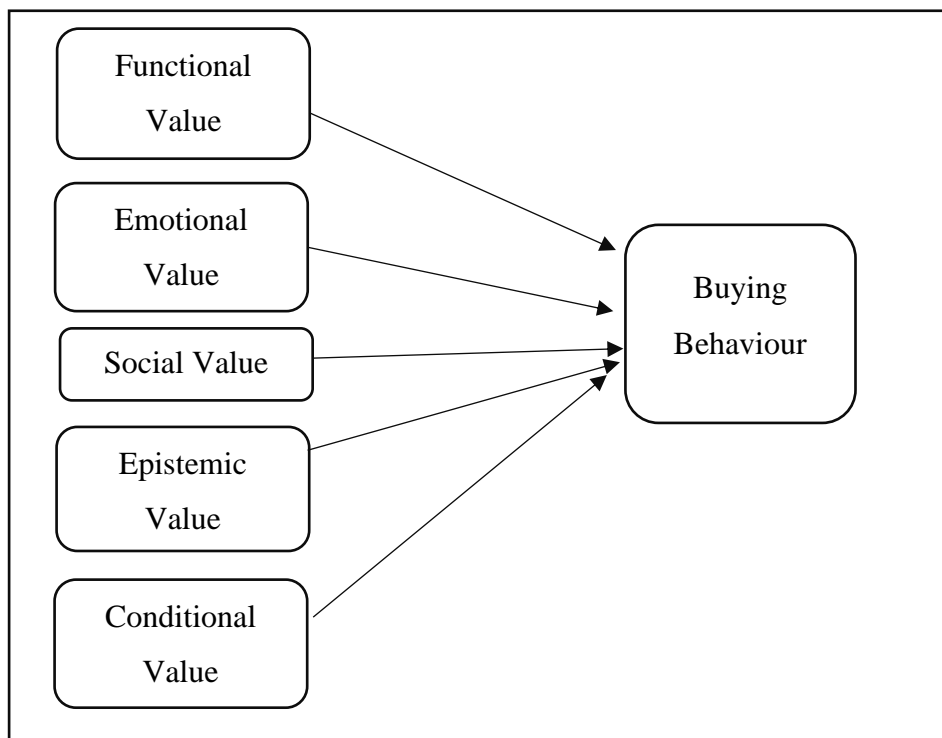
H1: Functional value has a positive influence on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products

H2: Emotional value has a positive influence on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products

H3: Social value has a positive influence on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products

H4: Epistemic value has a positive influence on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products

H5: Conditional value has a positive influence on households' buying behaviour towards green grocery products



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

## Methodology

This study was conducted in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. Based on the G\*Power analysis, the required minimum sample size is 92 in order to have sufficient statistical power. Therefore, a total of 200 households were recruited for data collection using convenience sampling approach. The households were then interviewed using a set of self-administered questionnaires from December 2019 to January 2020. The questionnaire consists of three sections ranging from respondents' profile to all the variables in the model. Functional value (5 items), emotional value (5 items), social value (6 items), epistemic value (5 items) and conditional value (5 items) which based on five-point Likert scales with 1 represents strongly disagree to 5 represents strongly agree. Household buying behaviour (5 items) was designed based on seven-point Likert scales with 1 represents strongly disagree to 7 represents strongly agree. The purpose of different scale used is to minimise the impact of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Tehseen et al., 2017). All the construct measurements were adapted from previous study (Biswas & Roy, 2015a; Lin & Huang, 2012; Mun, 2014). Pilot study was conducted with 30 households in order to assure the questionnaire is understandable and answerable before the actual data collection. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach to examine the five hypotheses established in this study. The data estimation was performed using Smart-PLS with measurement model being first stage and structural model analysis as second stage. Validity of the constructs were assessed in the measurement model and their relationships in the structural model.

## Findings and Discussion

67 % of the respondents were female and 33% were male. Mostly, respondents were from age group 26-35 (36%), followed by those 25 and below (30.5%) and 26.5 % for 36-45. More than half (58%) of the respondents were Chinese, 23.5% Malay and 22.5% Indian.

### Measurement Model

Convergent validity is assessed using a minimum value of 0.7 of the factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.5 and composite reliability (CR) of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). The factor loadings are ranging from 0.628 to 0.806 as showed in Table 1. Those items with factor loading that less than 0.7 as suggested by Hair et al. (2017) but greater than 0.5 were retained in the model as their average variance extracted (AVE) value are 0.5 (Byrne, 2016). The composite reliability (CR) all the constructs are from 0.837 to 0.871. Hence, convergent validity of the model meets the acceptable criteria.

Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015) was used to assess the discriminant validity of the constructs. HTMT criterion is assessed by comparing the HTMT values obtained to the threshold value of HTMT<sub>.85</sub> (Franke & Sarsterd, 2019). All the HTMT values are less than HTMT<sub>.85</sub>. Therefore, the discriminant validity is deemed sufficient.

### Structural Model

Bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 5000 were used to perform the structural model (Hair et al., 2017). Structural model has showed that functional value ( $\beta = 0.218$ ) and conditional value ( $\beta = 0.311$ ) are significant but not emotional value ( $\beta = 0.129$ ), social value ( $\beta = 0.02$ ) and epistemic value ( $\beta = 0.096$ ). Thus, H1 and H5 are supported while H2, H3, H4 are not supported. The R<sup>2</sup> value obtained for consumer buying behavior towards green grocery products is 0.443. R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.443 showed that 44.3% of the variation in buying behaviour is explained by the model. The model also has a moderate R<sup>2</sup> according to Chin (1998).

Functional value and conditional value have medium effect sizes of 0.054 and 0.097 respectively (Cohen, 1988). The effect size of emotional value, social value and epistemic value are less than minimum value of 0.02 due to non-significance outcomes. Blindfolding procedure was sued to check on the predictive relevance of the model. Q<sup>2</sup> value obtained is 0.192 which greater than 0 (Hair et al., 2017) indicates that model has an adequate predictive relevance. All the VIF are less than 5 (Hair et al., 2017) provides evidence that there are no multicollinearity issues among all the constructs in the model.

**Table 1 Measurement Model**

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Consumer Buying Behavior	CBB1	0.789	0.841	0.516
	CBB2	0.753		
	CBB3	0.688		
	CBB4	0.715		
	CBB5	0.693		
Conditional Value	CV1	0.715	0.849	0.531
	CV2	0.744		
	CV3	0.628		
	CV4	0.754		
	CV5	0.741		
Emotional Value	EV1	0.663	0.837	0.508
	EV2	0.777		
	EV3	0.652		

Epistemic Value	EV4	0.706		
	EV5	0.757		
	EpV1	0.739	0.846	0.524
	EpV2	0.760		
	EpV3	0.628		
Functional Value	EpV4	0.706		
	EpV5	0.778		
	FV1	0.673	0.844	0.520
	FV2	0.710		
	FV3	0.688		
Social Value	FV4	0.806		
	FV5	0.722		
	SV1	0.708	0.871	0.529
	SV2	0.738		
	SV3	0.682		
	SV4	0.771		
	SV5	0.712		
	SV6	0.750		

**Table 2 Discriminant validity using HTMT**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Conditional Value						
2. Consumer Buying Behavior	0.725					
3. Emotional Value	0.782	0.691				
4. Epistemic Value	0.688	0.578	0.666			
5. Functional Value	0.488	0.625	0.756	0.472		
6. Social Value	0.641	0.607	0.755	0.735	0.606	

**Table 3 Result of Partial Least Square**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	Decision	R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>	VIF
H1	Functional Value -> Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.218	0.083	2.624	Supported	0.443	0.192	0.054	1.572
H2	Emotional Value -> Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.129	0.105	1.229	Not Supported			0.014	2.203
H3	Social Value -> Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.092	0.062	1.475	Not Supported			0.008	1.934

H4	Epistemic Value -> Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.096	0.068	1.404	Not Supported	0.009	1.744
H5	Conditional Value -> Consumer Buying Behaviour	0.311	0.082	3.799	Supported	0.097	1.784

### ***Discussion***

This study has indicated that functional value is positively influencing household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. This finding is consistent with previous study that functional value has effect on green purchase behaviour towards environmental-friendly products (Solaiman et al., 2017). Ritter et al. (2015) have also provided evidence that price and quality both are the consideration of consumers when purchase green products. This implies that households in Negeri Sembilan perceived green grocery products associated with good quality and good value of the money at level of price that they are willing to pay. So, it can be said that their green buying behaviour is influenced by a range of functional benefits from an affordable price to expected quality of grocery products. Thus, functional value is a predictor of household's purchase behaviour towards green grocery products.

Emotional value is found to have no significant impact on the household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products in this study. This is not in line with previous studies which emotional values were found to have significant impact on green buying behaviour of consumers (Qasim et al., 2019; Sangroya & Nayak, 2016). This indicates that households in the study area perceive buying green grocery products is not part of their obligation towards environmental protection. The households do not perceive buying green grocery products related to states such as feeling good of buying, contributing towards something better or being a better or more responsible individual in society. Their purchase decision could be attributed to other reasons. Hence, emotional value is not an important factor that affect their process of purchasing towards green grocery products. Suki and Suki (2015) also revealed in their study that emotional value does not influence green buying behavior in context of Malaysia.

Social value is shown to have no relationship with household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. This result is contradicting to the findings by Biswas and Roy (2015a) where social value has strong effect on green consumption behaviour of consumers. However, Wang et al. (2018) in their study showed that social value does not has any influence on young consumers towards green products in China. This shows that households in Negeri Sembilan buying green grocery products based on their own judgement. They do not consider perceptions like acceptance or good impression by others on their purchase of green grocery products. Therefore, social value is not a determinant of household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products in this study.

The result of this study has illustrated that epistemic value has non-significant impact on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. It was different to the study by Gonçalves et al. (2015) that consumers' purchase behaviour is affected by their product knowledge of the green products. Biswas and Roy (2015a) opined that consumer usually will search for information and knowledge regarding the green products before they make a purchase. Households in this study, however, seems not acquire much information related to the products which will allow them to compare when they purchase the green grocery products.



This mainly because these households purchase the green grocery products most likely based on their own experience and concerns on health conscious towards their family. Hence, epistemic value shows no significant relationship on this buying behaviour.

Lastly, conditional value was indicated to have positive influence on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. This finding is thus supported by Biswas and Roy (2015a). Conditional value was shown to be the strongest factor of household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products in this study. Conditional value in this study gauges the concern towards the easily acquirable, promotional activities or subsidies of the green grocery products. This reveals households in Negeri Sembilan will purchase green grocery products given the products are easily acquirable, and in presence of promotion or subsidies. The significant relationship has thus confirmed that conditional value plays a prominent role in influencing buying behaviour of household on green grocery products. Solaiman et al. (2017) have also highlighted that conditional value such as cash rebate or subsidy by government would be able to gain the attention from the consumer which will in turn to induce them to consume the products and services.

### **Conclusion**

This study has confirmed that functional value and conditional value both have positive impact on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. However, emotional value, social value and epistemic value were found to have no significant relationship with household's buying behaviour. Compared to functional value, conditional value was revealed to be the most important predictor of household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products mainly due to discount and promotion incentives. Elements such as quality, price and promotion of the green grocery products were implied to be important in affecting household's purchase behaviour. This study has thus provided an understanding of the relations of consumption values on Malaysian household's green grocery buying behaviour. Such understanding will establish better nexus on demand and supply of green grocery products in market. The useful information would be able to facilitate marketer to develop better marketing strategies and activities in attracting more consumers to secure a bigger market share of green grocery products. This study has also provided an insight into the household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products in Malaysia context.

### **Limitation and Recommendation For Future Study**

Several limitations were addressed and the corresponding avenues for future study were also suggested. First, the coverage of this study is limited to the households from Negeri Sembilan. The findings of this study cannot be generalized towards the entire Malaysia. Thus, it is suggested that the future study should extend its study areas to other states in Malaysia such as Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Penang as the population in these areas are more gazette. This will allow comparative studies between different regions to be made and thus providing more insightful evidences on household's buying behavior analysis.

Second, this study using quantitative approach for data collection. The information collected may not be sufficient to have in- depth understanding of household's buying behaviour. Therefore, it is recommended future studies to employ mixed research method that consists of both quantitative and qualitative approach. This may allow a better understanding on household's green buying behaviour towards grocery products.

Lastly, this study examined only five variables namely functional value, emotional value, social value, epistemic value, and conditional value of the theory of consumption values on household's buying behaviour towards green grocery products. There are other potential variables to be explored such as environmental attitude (Biswas & Roy, 2015b), corporate image value (Solaiman et al., 2017), cultural values (Sheng et al., 2019) and etc. Hence, future study may consider including these variables in studying household's buying behavior.

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