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THE EFFECT OF GREENWASHING PERCEPTION, GREEN WORD OF MOUTH, AND GREEN MARKETING ON H&M PURCHASE INTENTIONS IN JAKARTA

Abstract. Greenwashing has long been an issue in Western and developed countries. Yet, this matter regrettably remains quite underexplored among academics in developing and emerging markets, especially in Indonesia. The presented quantitative research focuses on the impact of greenwashing perception, green word of mouth (“green WOM”) and green marketing on intentions to purchase items at H&M in Jakarta. Hypotheses were answered with the SEM-PLS model using SmartPLS3 software. Based on a questionnaire administered to 200 respondents, results show that the perception of greenwashing has a direct negative impact on consumers’ purchase intentions and an indirect negative impact through green WOM, which can be influenced by the factor of lack of concern and awareness in Jakarta. These findings stand in contrast to several studies in Europe that were used as a reference while conducting this research. At the same time, green WOM strengthens the positive impact between green marketing and purchase intentions. Practical implications for companies include taking substantial steps towards sustainability and the need to adopt a fact-based approach without embellishment.

Keywords: *greenwashing perception, green word of mouth, green marketing, purchase intention*

Introduction

Consumers perceive greenwashing as being present when a company’s communications regarding the environment are unaccompanied by action, with these perceptions ultimately being able to deter them from purchasing

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products made by the company (Nyilasy et al., 2014). Greenwashing has long been an issue in Western and developed countries. Yet, this matter regrettably remains quite underexplored among academics in developing and emerging markets, especially Indonesia. The “Go Green” movement in Indonesia has been widespread in recent years. Many consumers in Indonesia are unaware of the practices concerning products and related advertisements that companies engage in. This is due to the lack of both education and public concern for the environment in Indonesia. According to Fitrianingrum (2020), Indonesia is considered to be less educated about greenwashing practices.

Among the myriad of global fashion brands, H&M is known as a fast fashion manufacturer that produces environmentally friendly products, namely H&M Conscious. As a multinational company from Sweden, H&M has over 5,000 stores spread across 34 countries around the world. H&M Conscious is a clothing line that utilises recycled and organic goods such as recycled polyester and Econyl, a material made 100% from small plastic and fishing nets (H&M, 2019).

Nevertheless, in the conduct of its business practices H&M is perceived to have engaged in greenwashing activities. A 2021 report by the Changing Markets Foundation in England says that H&M Conscious uses synthetic raw materials that can damage the environment (Welbers, 2022). Research by Lorincz (2021) in 2019 described how the Norwegian Consumer Authority had accused H&M of having misled its customers. In addition, according to Commodore (2022), H&M New York is claimed to lack transparency in the recycling process it carries out and other details to allow the company to call its products sustainable fashion, which may be assumed to be greenwashing activities.

Consumer perceptions of greenwashing at H&M in the European countries mentioned above led to the selection of H&M in Jakarta as the object of the study in response to the absence of research on greenwashing perceptions in the fashion sector in Indonesia. Jakarta as the capital city was chosen as the location for the research because Jakarta is a megapolitan city in which the public strongly desires to follow fashion trends to appear fashionable, and, with 16 of them, Jakarta itself has the most H&M outlets in Indonesia. This is further supported by research conducted by Valendia (2022) which states that the term greenwashing is not very well known among Indonesians. The presented research was thus performed to determine how aware Indonesian people, especially in Jakarta, are of greenwashing perceptions and associated variables.

When companies greenwash, the impact is to make consumers become sceptical (Rahman et al., 2015) and confused while deciding which environmentally friendly products to buy (Chang and Chen, 2013). This confusion

means consumers with a greenwashing perception of a product or service become reluctant to refer to that product or service. When consumers believe that a product has engaged in greenwashing, consumers may become convinced to give positive word of mouth (“green WOM”). Referring to Chaniotakis and Lymperopoulos (2009), green WOM is verbal communication between customers and other people or stakeholders such as channels, product or service producers, experts, friends and relatives. Green WOM directly affects the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products since consumers consistently consult the information available to reduce errors while making purchasing decisions (Chen et al., 2014).

Purchase intention is an important aspect for a company by showing consumers’ intention to buy, in turn allowing the company to develop further and earn profits. Raza et al. (2014) describe how purchase intention is a process whereby consumers analyse their knowledge of products, compare products with similar products, and decide on the product to purchase.

Purchase intention is related to consumer plans to buy certain products and how many product units are needed in a given period. If consumers dream of a product and intend to buy one, they will endeavour to place an order for that purpose. To increase intentions to purchase a product, companies can positively implement green marketing activities. The company forms an environmentally friendly image as part of a good communication and marketing strategy. Consumers tend to be more interested in buying environmentally friendly products if both companies prioritise environmental sustainability and they believe that environmentally friendly products can benefit themselves, others and the environment (Setiawan and Yosephani, 2022). Growing public awareness of the important need to preserve the environment has made various companies communicate themselves as environmentally friendly companies. Consumers are often willing to pay more for products that are claimed to be environmentally friendly, even relatively high prices, due to their desire for products that have a smaller negative impact on the environment (Utami, 2014). This indicates that consumers are today paying greater attention to their purchases and prioritising their environmental impact.

In light of the foregoing explanations and issues, the presented study addresses the issue with the title *The Effect of Perceptions of Greenwashing, Green Word of Mouth, and Green Marketing on H&M Purchase Intentions in Jakarta*.

Perception of greenwashing

Perception is important in the positioning concept because humans interpret a product or brand as they perceive it. According to Webster's New Millennium Dictionary of English, greenwashing is the selective disclosure of information that aims to promote environmentally friendly programmes to divert attention away from corporate activities which are not environmentally friendly (Rahman et al., 2015). Greenwashing is the selective disclosure of positive information without fully disclosing negative information with a view to creating an overly positive corporate image. Companies that cannot prove their green claims often mislead consumers when purchasing (Ramus and Montiel, 2005). Accordingly, one may infer that greenwashing can engender negative perceptions among consumers such as doubt and confusion with regard to a company's green claims.

Green word of mouth

Chen et al. (2014) proposed Green Word of Mouth (green WOM) to describe the extent to which customers tell their friends, relatives and colleagues about the positive environmental messages and environmentally friendly. Green WOM is split into two segments: positive and negative. Positive green WOM will develop when consumers tell others about their pleasant experiences. Products with positive green WOM enable customers to become more confident while making purchases. Negative green WOM will develop when consumers express discontent and tell others stories about their unfavourable experience. According to (Chen et al., 2014), if a company deceives its consumers through greenwashing practices, consumers will disseminate adverse information about the company, and might deter prospective buyers from purchasing the company's products.

Green marketing

Pride and Ferrel state that green marketing is the efforts a company makes to design, promote, calculate prices, and distribute products that are friendly to the environment (Jain and Kaur, 2004). Green marketing refers to marketing activities developed to stimulate and maintain environmentally friendly consumer behaviour. In marketing activities, one also encounters a Green Marketing Mix, a concept in which activities related to product, price, place and promotion take environmental sustainability or environmental health into account. Companies produce eco-friendly products in an endeavour to fulfil customer needs and as a form of concern for environmental sustainability. This simultaneously provides added value to the

company by increasing its competitiveness. Companies that make products with the environment in mind have a stronger reputation because the company is seen as being concerned about environmental sustainability (Haryadi, 2009).

Purchase intention

Purchase intention can further be defined as a customer's desire to buy the same product since they know its functions (Madahi and Sukati, 2012). According to Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2014), as cited by (Purbohastuti and Hidayah, 2020), interest in buying a product/service arises after an alternative evaluation process is in place. In this process, an individual will make a series of choices regarding the product to be purchased based on brand or interest. The intention to purchase derives from a learning process and a thought process that forms a perception. The interest that arises in making a purchase creates a motivation that is continuously recorded in the individual's mind and becomes a very strong activity which ultimately actualises what is in the mind. Thus, interest in buying will arise during the decision-making process.

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Relationship between perception of greenwashing and purchase intentions

The existence of perceptions of greenwashing can damage consumer confidence in companies, in turn lowering purchase intentions. If a company engages in greenwashing practices, consumers may no longer want to build a long-term relationship with the company and may eventually reduce their intention to purchase its products. If consumers feel that a company's communication about the environment is not accompanied by genuine actions, their perception may inhibit and reduce their intention to buy the company's products. The sceptical attitude that develops in consumers' minds can make them not wish to have a long-term relationship with the company. Research conducted by Lu et al. (2022) shows that the impact of perceptions of greenwashing significantly influences purchase intentions.

The first hypothesis considered in the study draws from the literature and aforementioned arguments:

Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of greenwashing influence purchase intentions.

Relationship between green marketing and purchase intentions

Green marketing initiatives undertaken by companies can foster consumer purchasing behaviour, thereby encouraging stronger interest in product purchases. By influencing consumer decisions, green marketing has an impact on interest in buying. As an outcome of successful green marketing activities, consumers will exhibit a proclivity to spread positive green WOM and cause an increase in product purchases and, in turn, satisfy the business goal of making profit. The findings of this study are corroborated by research by (Akhfiani et al., 2022) which shows that green marketing has a significant positive influence on purchase intentions. The following hypothesis draws from the literature and above-mentioned arguments:

Hypothesis 2. Green marketing influences purchase intentions.

Relationship between perception of greenwashing and green WOM

Consumers who perceive a company offering a product or service has been involved in greenwashing become reluctant to refer to the product or service through green WOM and reduce their associated purchase intentions. Green WOM directly influences the intention to purchase a product because consumers always refer to the information that is available to reduce errors while making purchasing decisions. If a company engages in greenwashing practices to mislead consumers, the latter may no longer want to build a long-term relationship with the company and ultimately may reduce their intention to buy green products. This is also supported by research carried out by Zhang et al. (2018) showing that the perception of greenwashing has an influence and on green WOM. The following hypothesis stems from the literature and abovementioned arguments:

Hypothesis 3. Perceptions of greenwashing influence green word of mouth.

Relationship between green marketing and green WOM

Green marketing is among the latest marketing strategies. The Green Marketing strategy is said to exert a significant influence on the business by allowing the creation of trust in the brand due to the trust generated by the product. Community behaviour that is sensitive to environmental sustainability is an important basis for carrying out green marketing. If a company is implementing green marketing practices effectively, the response and intensity of consumers in spreading positive news about this will be substantial, and vice versa. Further support for this may be found in research by (Chen et al., 2014), which states that green marketing has an influence on

green WOM. The following hypothesis draws from the literature and aforementioned arguments:

Hypothesis 4. Green marketing influences green word of mouth.

Relationship between green WOM and purchase intentions

Green WOM has a direct impact on product purchase intentions as explained by consumers' consistent reliance on the information available to reduce errors being made in their purchasing decisions. Consumer purchase intentions are directly influenced by green WOM because the information consumers acquire by way of peer recommendations can prove pivotal in intentions to purchase a product. Positive green WOM can be particularly credible and thus customers are more likely to develop green purchase intentions when they associate a person who conveys positive information about a product. Research by (Guerriero and Pacheco, 2021) also describes how green WOM has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. The next hypothesis arises from the literature and the above-mentioned arguments:

Hypothesis 5. Green word of mouth influences purchase intentions.

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Relationship between perception of greenwashing and purchase intentions through green WOM

Perceptions of greenwashing held by consumers can influence their attitudes while making purchasing decisions. If a company indulges in greenwashing practices and ultimately attracts negative WOM, its reputation may suffer and consumers would be unlikely to want to build a long-term relationship with the company, also including preventing others from buying the company's products. In the end, intentions to purchase a given product are reduced due to the mediating effect of green WOM, which can significantly encourage consumer purchase intentions and reduce the negative impact of greenwashing perceptions. Research conducted by (Ghassani et al., 2022) corroborated this by showing that the perception of greenwashing has an influence on purchase intentions through green WOM. The following hypothesis draws from the literature and the arguments mentioned above:

Hypothesis 6. Green word of mouth mediates the influence of greenwashing perceptions on purchase intentions

Relationship between green marketing and purchase intention through green WOM

Green marketing is among the factors able to influence consumer decisions, including purchase intentions. Consumers committed to certain environmentally friendly products seek to achieve a number of purchasing objectives. Green WOM is seen as more reliable information and hence influences consumer purchase intentions. The existence of WOM as an element of green marketing strategies relies on consumers viewing WOM as reliable, which ultimately leads them to become inclined to purchase a product. Román-Augusto et al. (2022) also found that green marketing has an influence on purchase intentions through green WOM. The next hypothesis arises from the literature and the arguments presented above:

Hypothesis 7. Green word of mouth mediates the effect of green marketing on purchase intentions.

Methods

This research conducted is quantitative in nature. An explanatory research design was used and aimed to analyse the relationship between one variable and another, or how one variable affects other variables (Husein, 2005). The data utilised in this study largely come from primary sources, specifically respondents' answers to the questionnaire completed online through Google Forms.

When analysing and evaluating visitors to H&M fashion product outlets in the city of Jakarta, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a sample selection technique entailing certain considerations and criteria:

1. Age 18-40 years old, namely, the age of maturity when an individual is considered legally mature and can be held personally responsible
2. Minimum high school education or equivalent
3. Will make purchases and has used H&M fashion products twice in the last 6 months

Considering that the research was conducted on an unknown number of buyers at all H&M fashion brand outlets in Jakarta, the sample used in the study was 200 respondents, which was considered sufficient for the purposes of the research. An appropriate sample size is between 100-200 respondents in order to be able to conduct Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) (Hair, 2010).

The presented research evaluates the research model in two steps: the outer (measurement) model and the inner (structural) model. To test the

hypotheses, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples was used. The hypothesis testing procedure considered two effects: direct and indirect.

The measurement scale in the study is the rating scale, which is obtained in the form of numbers and then interpreted qualitatively. Since it can be used for a wide range of research subjects, the rating scale can assess 200 samples spread across the city of Jakarta. For instance, on a scale from 1-10, "I get recommendations for H&M products from other people because of their good environmental image".

Results and Discussion

Reliability and validity analysis was performed on the data contained in the 200 valid questionnaires collected. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient were used to analyse the reliability of the questionnaire. Table 1 shows Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the model by dimension, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of *the variables* Greenwashing Perception, Green WOM, Green Marketing, and Purchase Intention *respectively being* 0.934, 0.941, 0.915 and 0.957, indicating that the questionnaire's reliability is acceptable. Convergent validity was assessed using the factor loading method. Factor loadings exceeding 0.6 indicate reasonable convergent validity.

Multiple covariances were tested using a full variance inflation factor (VIF). If the VIF value is 5 or higher, one may infer that a problem of collinearity exists among the latent variables. The multicollinearity test results are presented in Table 1. The highest VIF for the potential variables is 4.298, showing that multicollinearity is not a concern in this study.

As displayed in Table 1, the factor loadings for all latent variables are above 0.6, indicating good convergent validity of the factors. Average variance extraction (AVE) was used to assess the discriminant validity of the measure. Specifically, the square root of AVE must exceed the correlation between the variable and other variables. As shown in Table 1, the square root of the AVE of all variables is higher than the correlation between all constructs in Table 1, and thus the discriminant validity of this measure is acceptable.

Further, the AVEs of Greenwashing Perception, Green WOM, Green Marketing, and Purchase Intention are 0.628, 0.860, 0.746 and 0.796, respectively. All AVEs exceed the minimum level of 0.5, indicating that the convergent validity of this measure is also acceptable. Moreover, all the questions in the scale were derived from other well-established classical literature, which has undergone rigorous testing to ensure content validity.

Table 1: PROPERTIES OF THE CONSTRUCTS AND ITEM LOADINGS

	GMK	GWM	GWS	PCI
R-squared		0.441		0.605
Adj R-squared		0.436		0.599
Composite reliability (rho_a)	0.944	0.944	0.930	0.958
Composite reliability (rho_c)	0.944	0.958	0.936	0.965
Cronbach's alpha coefficient	0.934	0.941	0.915	0.957
Average variance extracted (AVE)	0.628	0.850	0.746	0.796
Full collinearity. VIFs	3.366	3.987	3.429	4.298
Q-squared		0.327		0.420

Source: Analysis result, 2023.

Hypotheses Testing

Direct Effect Test

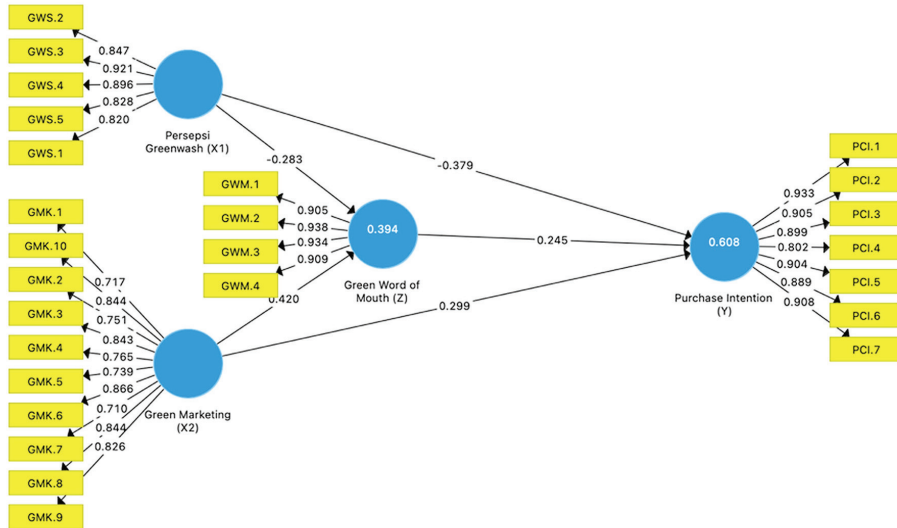
The results of the PLS-SEM analysis are summarised in Figure 1 and simplified in Table 2. It is shown that the perception of greenwashing has a non-significant negative effect on purchase intention ($\beta = -0.379$). The higher the perception of greenwashing, the lower the willingness to buy green products, providing support for Hypothesis 1. The coefficient of the path from Green Marketing to Purchase Intention is significantly positive ($\beta = 0.299$) and Hypothesis 2 is thus supported. Greenwashing Perception holds a significant negative effect on Green WOM ($\beta = -0.283$), which is in accordance with Hypothesis 3. Among all the latent variables in the full model, the strongest standardised regression weight was found between Green Marketing and Green WOM ($\beta = 0.420$). This demonstrates that Green Marketing has the strongest positive effect on Green WOM, giving support for Hypothesis 4. The positive effect of Green WOM on Purchase Intention as suggested by Hypothesis 5 is also supported ($\beta = 0.245$).

Table 2: DIRECT EFFECT TEST

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Greenwashing Perception -> Purchase Intention	-0.379	-0.292	0.233	1.628	0.055
Green Marketing -> Purchase Intention	0.299	0.359	0.127	2.350	0.010
Greenwashing Perception -> Green WOM	-0.283	-0.280	0.090	3.147	0.000
Green Marketing -> Green WOM	0.420	0.448	0.087	4.849	0.000
Green WOM -> Purchase Intention	0.245	0.278	0.143	1.718	0.044

Source: Analysis result (2023).

Figure 1: PATH ANALYSIS DIAGRAM



Source: Analysis result (2023).

Indirect Effect Test

The indirect effect test depends upon the statistical significance of the direct path coefficients in the research model. Green WOM is included in the research model as a mediating variable. The table below presents the indirect effect in this study:

Table 3: INDIRECT EFFECT TEST

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Green Marketing → Green Word of Mouth → Purchase Intention	0.115	0.121	0.062	1.649	0.035
Greenwash Perception → Green Word of Mouth → Purchase Intention	-0.111	-0.082	0.056	1.237	0.020

Source: Analysis result (2023).

The data in Table 3 reveal that the results of the estimation of the path coefficient of the indirect influence of the Green Marketing (GMK) variables on Purchase Intention (PCI) was 0.115 with a significance value of P = 0.035. Meanwhile, the estimated value of the Greenwashing Perception coefficient (GWS) on Purchase Intention (PCI) was -0.111 and significant at P = 0.020. The results of the estimation of changes in the value of the direct

influence path coefficient in the model are further analysed below using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method.

Table 4: VAF TEST

	VAF	
1	VAF = Green Marketing (0.115/0.402)	0.286
2	VAF = Greenwashing Perception (-0.011/-0.499)	0.022

Source: Analysis result (2023).

According to Hair et al. (2013), a VAF value above 80% indicates the role of the mediating variable as full mediation. If the VAF is between 20%–80%, it can be categorised as partial mediation. However, if the VAF is less than 20%, one may infer that there is a minimal, if any, mediating effect. The results of the VAF calculations made to examine the effect of the Green WOM variable between Greenwashing Perception on Purchase Intention were 0.022 or 2.2%, which indicates that Hypothesis 6 may be accepted. Further, the VAF value on the Green Marketing variable on Purchase Intention is 0.286 (or 28.6%), which means Hypothesis 7 may be accepted.

The study findings demonstrate that the Green WOM variable acts as a mediator able to enhance the relationship between Green Marketing and Purchase Intention. However, the Green WOM variable does not play a role by way of partial mediation between the Greenwashing Perception and Purchase Intention variables since its VAF value was below 20%.

Conclusion

Noting the unique circumstances of the fast fashion industry, the presented research has examined the effect of perceptions of greenwashing, green word of mouth, and green marketing on H&M purchase intentions in Jakarta. After collecting 200 valid questionnaires, the study employed statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draws the following conclusions: consumers' perception of greenwashing in the fast fashion industry has a direct negative impact on their purchase intention and an indirect negative impact through green WOM, albeit green WOM does not play a partial mediating role. This is also in line with greenwashing perception that has a direct negative impact on green WOM. This perception can be influenced by the lack of concern and awareness in Jakarta, a finding that is in contrast with several earlier studies conducted in Europe that were used as a reference while conducting this research.

At the same time, the moderating variable of Green WOM strengthens the positive impact between Green Marketing and Purchase Intention. Green

WOM is also positively correlated with Purchase Intention regarding H&M in Jakarta. In summary, Green Marketing has a positive effect on Purchase Intention and Green WOM. The presented study holds certain practical implications. First, the more consumers perceive a company's behaviour as greenwashing, the more their desire to buy related products is weakened. This means it is necessary for companies to undertake substantial sustainability measures and embrace a verifiable approach without embellishment or concealment.

Business actors can prepare green marketing actions that are more substantive, real and transparent to consumers. Further, companies must demonstrate the capacity to capitalise on opportunities to support consumer behaviour that is aware of environmental sustainability so as to increase consumers' purchase intentions.

The results of the study show the Green WOM variable does not play a mediating role between the Greenwashing Perception variable and Purchase Intention. By upgrading the role of Green WOM as a mediator, business actors can work to lower consumer scepticism with a view to consumers providing positive feedback about a given product.

Like other studies, this research has some limitations. First, the sample used in this study was only in the retail industry. Future research could examine other sectors that apply environmentally friendly principles, such as the food and beverage industry, beauty, and so on. Second, the study only measured Greenwashing, Green Word of Mouth, and Green Marketing perception variables on Purchase Intention. Research in the future could add other related variables like Green Concern, Green Perceived Quality, Green Trust, and more. Third, the sampling for this study only encompassed Jakarta. Future research could concentrate on other areas and compare them with the results of this study.

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