

Karma Belief and Green Product Purchase Intention: Two Mediating Factors of Environmental Awareness and Global Warming Belief

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Abstract: Green marketing has established as an important topic among scholars and practitioners due to its importance in supporting a better world people are living in. The karma doctrine posits that all decisions and behaviors result in consequences. This belief is widely embraced globally as shown by previous research. Despite the importance of karma belief in daily life, research on the role of karma in consumers' decision, in particular green marketing context is relatively rare. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether belief in karma can increase the intention to purchase green products. In order to achieve the study's goal, data from 188 adult respondents were collected in this study. The respondents were reached by the convenience sampling method. Using a quantitative method, this study investigates the existence and type of relationship between constructs; thus, the analytical tool used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This study found that the relationship between karma belief and green product purchase intention is mediated by two constructs, namely, environmental awareness and global warming belief. Theoretical and practical contributions are discussed.

Keywords: Karma Belief, Green Product Purchase Intention, Environmental Awareness, Global Warming Belief

1. Introduction

Along with the increasing popularity of the issue of global warming, green marketing is gaining greater attention in the developed [1] as well in developing countries [2]. Various parties wish that by the increasing of environmentally friendly products consumption, the negative impacts of industry, technology and global warming will be suppressed that a sustainable environment can be established. The task of green marketers is not only to sell a product but rather to advocate for consumers to have a high awareness of protecting the environment by consuming environmentally friendly products [3].

Previous studies have highlighted religion as one of the factors that support the purchase of green products. Religious teachings have uniformity in terms of preserving the environment and maintaining the balance of nature that people who practice their religious teachings consistently

have a positive attitude towards environmental issues. This attitude is reflected in the purchasing behavior of green products [1, 4]. One important aspect in religious teachings is the concept of karma [5]. The doctrine of karma describes that every person has a will, where that person decides to choose one of the wills that produces a behavior. These decisions and behaviors have consequences called karma [6]. This study argues that the doctrine of karma (hereinafter: karma) influences the desire to purchase green products. Research linking karma and purchasing green products is still very limited [5], although these two concepts are very common in the global community. Previous research conducted by Chairy and Syahrivar [5] was conducted in a population that adheres to one particular religion (Buddha) and paid less attention to more universal issues such as global warming. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this void.

This study aims to explore the relationship between karma and the purchase of green products. In addition, this study

will also investigate the role of two constructs, namely environmental awareness and belief in global warming as mediators in such relationship. The results of this study will make important contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this study will provide insight into the mechanism of the relationship between karma and the purchase of green products. Practically, the results of this research will provide input to the government and other interested parties to market green products more effectively.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Karma in Social Marketing

Although western and modern cultures do not accommodate the law of karma, it is generally accepted that whoever does good will receive good results [7]. In line with the view of the law of karma, the belief that the world is a fair place grows in western civilization which gives the view that everyone gets what they deserve. For example, a lazy person one day will be poor [8]. The law of karma that developed in Hinduism and Buddhism has developed in terms and its principles and can also be found in various major religions in the world such as Christianity and Islam. Given that the world's population is inhabited by a majority of religious people, it can be said that belief in the law of karma is important in the individual decision-making process.

Green marketing is actually another form of traditional marketing with an environmental theme. In other words, green marketing seeks to sell green products to environmentally conscious consumers who seek to recycle the products they consume [9]. In this case, green marketing is considered as a marketing activity carried out by producers with the ultimate goal of not only selling products but also preserving the environment. As a continuation and green marketing, green consumerism begins with consumer awareness of their rights to obtain decent, safe, and environmentally friendly products. Therefore, the company applies environmental issues around it as one of its marketing strategies [10].

Social marketers always try to encourage people to comply with socially desirable behaviors by using social marketing campaigns [11, 12]. These desired behaviors include quitting smoking, throwing garbage in its place, participating in the Family Planning program and driving safely [13, 14]. Several previous studies have investigated how karma affects a person's interest in making donations to people in need. For example, belief in the law of karma makes someone interested in making donations to institutions that emphasize sincere actions without expecting anything in return [15]. Meanwhile, in the context of green marketing, research that discusses the influence of karma on buying interest in green products is still rare [5].

The results of research by Chairy and Syahrivar [5] show that karma has a positive effect on purchasing interest in green products in Indonesia. This is because karma can increase the spiritual level and long-term orientation of the person

concerned. If these two things are successfully improved, in general, the desire to live in a more beautiful environment will be higher and ultimately buying interest in green products will increase. Although this study proposes another mechanism, the arguments used are not much different. Thus, our first hypothesis in this study is as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Belief in karma can increase purchasing intent of green products.

2.2. Mediating Role of Environmental Awareness

Prior to influencing purchasing interest of green products, belief in karma first has an impact on other factors. First, belief in karma can increase awareness of environmental problems (hereinafter referred to as environmental awareness). According to Albino, et al. [16], green products are products that are designed to have a positive impact on the environment during their circulation in the community. In particular, green products limit themselves to non-renewable raw materials, and materials containing chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Therefore, a green product is a product that is considered safe for humans and the environment, saves resources, can be recycled, and does not commit cruelty to animals [17]. The use of environmentally friendly labels is often used by green products to convince consumers about environmental issues, both locally and globally [18, 19]. It is expected that by using environmentally friendly labels, green products can serve as notifications for the community to increase awareness or concern for the environment.

Environmental awareness is a predictor of positive behavior towards environmentally friendly products and is considered a level of emotional commitment from consumers to various environmental issues [20]. According to Rini, et al. [21], environmental concern is a form of attention to facts and behavior from oneself which in the end can have positive consequences for the environment. Since karma and environmental care basically emphasize the reciprocal relationship between one party and another (between humans and nature), this study assumes that there is a positive relationship between the two. A person who believes in the law of karma will assume that if he takes good care of nature then in time nature will be kind to him, and vice versa. One of the actions that can be taken to preserve the environment and maintain the balance of nature is to consume green products. Thus, people who have a high awareness for the environment have a tendency to consume green products. Based on the theoretical review above, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Environmental awareness mediates the relationship between karma belief and purchasing intent of green products.

2.3. Mediating Role of Global Warming Belief

Global warming is the process of increasing the average temperature of the earth's land, including the atmosphere and oceans. There are at least two things that can be done to reduce the impact of global warming, namely by conserving energy

and using clean energy technology or reducing the use of energy derived from fossils [22]. Although it has been supported by various empirical data, there are still many parties who do not believe or care about the issue of global warming [23]. We assume that belief in global warming is influenced by belief in karma. As it is known that global warming is the result of human actions that do not pay attention to the balance of the environment such as excessive use of plastic and carbon, deforestation and air pollution [22]. The cause of global warming can be associated with the principle of the law of karma where the negative results due to past actions are also negative. One way to overcome or prevent the worsening of global warming is to use environmentally friendly products. Based on the description above, we hypothesize as below.

Hypothesis 3: Belief in global warming mediates the relationship between belief in karma and purchasing intent of green products.

3. Methods

3.1. Samples and Data Collection

Respondents in this study were Indonesian adults. One-hundred and eighty-eight respondents participated in this study, reached by the convenience sampling method. The criteria as a respondent are adults, willing without coercion to fill out the questionnaire, and do not know the hypothesis of this study. This requirement must be met so that the answers from respondents are not biased. The respondents were not rewarded for filling out the questionnaire and they were allowed to stop filling out if they felt uncomfortable with the questions in the questionnaire.

Respondents received an invitation to participate online in which there was an url link that directed them to the survey page. They were free to accept or decline the invitation. Respondents were informed that the purpose of this scientific research was to find out their views on environmental sustainability. The respondents were welcome to answer questions related to the existing research variables. At the end of the online survey, they were asked to fill in demographic data such as age, gender and education level. Respondents' names and cell phone numbers were not asked to ensure confidentiality so as to motivate respondents to give honest answers.

3.2. Measurement

The questions in the questionnaire were adapted from previous studies that have passed validation and reliability tests. For the belief in karma variable, the measurement scale was adapted from a previous study conducted by Kopalle, et al. [24]. The environmental concern construct was adapted from previous research conducted by Bohlen, et al. [25]. The construct of belief in global warming was adapted from research conducted by Feinberg and Willer [26]. While the construct of buying interest in green products is taken from the research of Kim and Chung [27]. All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 =

Strongly Agree).

3.3. Data Analysis

This research is a quantitative study that aims to find out the existence and type of relationship between one variable and another, thus, the analytical tool used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SmartPLS software was used to simplify SEM calculations. The analysis stages themselves was divided into early and advanced stages of analysis. Preliminary analysis was carried out to ensure that all measurement scales are valid and reliable, as well as perform data cleaning. While further analysis was to test the hypotheses that have been built.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

The instruments were examined in terms of their validity and reliability. We measured internal consistency for the reliability of the measurement model by inspecting at the Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability [28]. Table 1 depicts that the Cronbach Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) values surpassed the lower threshold of 0.70 (Field, 2013). It is concluded that the study constructs are considered sufficiently reliable.

Convergent validity was examined by inspecting the loading item and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index. All items yielded in outer loading values that are greater than 0.7, and the AVE value of each variable is greater than 0.50 [29]. Outer loading and AVE values are presented in the Table 1. Discriminant validity were tested by examining the square root of the AVE for each construct that must be higher than the correlation between the particular construct and other constructs [28]. In this study, these requirements have been satisfied.

Table 1. Measurement Model.

Variable	VIF	Loading	α	CR	AVE
Karma belief (X)			.88	.91	.63
X1	2.09	.81			
X2	2.52	.80			
X3	2.38	.82			
X4	2.31	.82			
X5	1.87	.76			
X6	1.75	.77			
Environmental awareness (M1)			.78	.85	.60
M11	1.65	.77			
M12	2.01	.84			
M13	1.54	.73			
M14	1.33	.76			
Global warming belief (M2)			.87	.91	.73
M21	2.81	.88			
M22	1.75	.78			
M23	2.26	.86			
M24	2.87	.88			
Purchase intent (Y)			.79	.87	.70
Y1	1.54	.85			
Y2	2.10	.86			
Y3	1.73	.79			

4.2. Mediation Models

This study investigates the direct and indirect effects of the karma belief and green products purchase intent through environmental awareness and global warming belief. To achieve the goals, the mediation models are analyzed.

The direct effect of karma belief on green products purchasing intent was not significant ($b = -.10$, $p > 0.05$). This

rejects our first hypothesis. However, we found that the mediating role of environmental awareness in the link between karma belief and purchasing intention was significant ($b = 0.07$, $p = 0.03$). This supports our first hypothesis. The results also confirm that the relationship between karma belief and purchasing intention is mediated by global warming belief ($b = 0.08$, $p = 0.01$). This supports the second hypothesis.

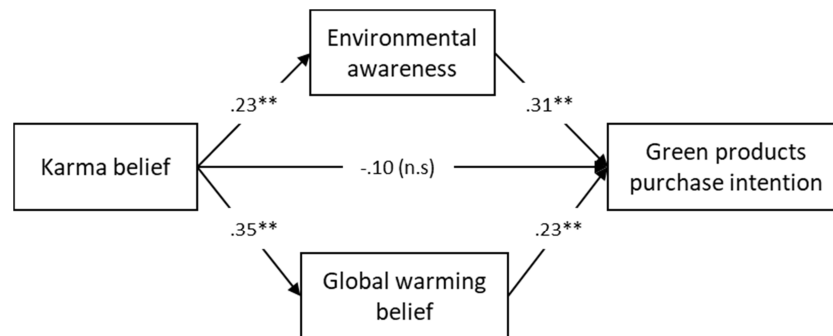


Figure 1. Hypothesis testing results.

5. Discussion

Although the direct effect of karma belief on green products purchasing intent was not significant, we found the indirect relationships between the two constructs via environmental awareness and global warming belief. Karma belief increases one's environmental awareness and global warming belief which in turn elevates one's willingness to purchase green products. The findings are novel in the literature of green products marketing.

Given the importance of karma belief in supporting green marketing practice, recommendation is presented based on the results of this study to green marketing managers as well as other practitioners such as environmentalists, non-government organization activists and governments. Apart from focusing on the karma belief factor, it is recommended that practitioners may stimulate environmental awareness and global warming belief of individuals. It is expected that, according to this study's findings, the willingness to purchase green products among consumers would be increased.

Despite its theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several limitations that can be addressed by future studies. First, the data were collected in a one-shot fashion or a cross sectional study. The results may only depict the situation only when the data were collected, not in a time series that may have a richer interpretation (Levin, 2006). Future studies can conduct a more dataset contains of a longitudinal study. Second, data were collected in a religious culture (i.e., Indonesia) where karma is considerably high. This may cause an invariability in the population that may weaken the validity of the findings. In order to address this issue, further research obtain a more representative sample by collection data from various cultures such as high religious to low religious countries.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that karma belief plays crucial role in increasing green products purchase intention. The relationship is mediated by two factors, namely environmental awareness and global warming belief. Despite the limitations, this study has made theoretical contribution to literature and practical ones to green marketing practitioners.

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