



## Review

# Why determinants of green purchase cannot be treated equally? The case of green cosmetics: Literature review



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## ABSTRACT

Promotion of green purchasing is one of the ways to minimize the environmental impact of products and achieve sustainability. The research on green marketing and green purchase behavior has recently become a subject of study. This review of 80 papers published from 2011 to 2017 on green purchase behavior revealed that most of the studies were conducted during the last three years. Moreover, the review showed that authors obtained different results of the analysis of the green products in general (including all green products) purchase behavior. Thus, we suggested that the future researchers consider categories to which particular green products could be attributed, since different factors influence the purchase of separate products differently. In addition, we proposed a model for the analysis of green personal care products purchase behavior, giving particular attention to the health consciousness as the main determinant with brand and quality variables, in regard to the color and styling cosmetics products. This study provides insight for future research, policy makers and marketing managers seeking the promotion of green products purchase behavior.

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## 1. Introduction

The depletion of natural resources, climate change, air pollution and waste generation are the main environmental problems which the policy should cope with. Over the last decade, great efforts have been put into policies aimed at production processes. However, only in recent years the importance of the consumption perspective has been highlighted, as high levels of consumption threaten the quality of the environment and the processes of sustainable development (Tukker et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2010; Liobikienė and Dagiliūtė, 2016). The main aim of sustainable consumption is not to worsen the environmental quality by growth of goods and services, not to reduce the consumption but to reduce its environmental impact. One of the main tools to achieve the sustainable consumption is to increase purchase of environmentally friendly products (in this paper we entitle them green products (GPs)). The consumption of GPs could be a way to minimize the environmental impact (Mont and Plepys, 2008; Elliott, 2013; Ritter et al., 2015).

The research work regarding green marketing and GPs purchase behavior started in late 1960s, however, the main studies appeared at the end of 80s—a time period that also saw a rise in eco-labeling (D'Souza et al., 2006; Horne, 2009; Coleman et al., 2011; Smith and Brower, 2012; Braimah, 2015). The green marketing has received increased attention due to the environmental deterioration related to the rising level of consumption (Kumar, 2010). Thus, in a broad sense the green marketing activities facilitate exchanges, which satisfy consumer needs and wants by minimizing the impact of these activities on the physical environment via: a) reduction of waste in packaging; b) growth in resource use efficiency, and c) decrease of chemical and toxic emissions and other pollutants in production and use (Majumdar and Swain, 2015). Therefore, in general the GPs are referred to as having a lesser impact on the environment and damaging human health less than traditional products, hence the term sustainable or environmentally friendly products (Janssen and Jager, 2002; Albino et al., 2009; Chairy, 2012; Tsai, 2012; Tseng and Hung, 2013; Biswas and Roy, 2015; Zhao and Zhong, 2015).

Braimah (2015) has recently stated that market for green brands is growing exponentially at global level. These trends are related to increasing social and political pressures as many companies have adopted green marketing strategies, and thus environmental issues became a competitive advantage (D'Souza et al., 2006; Coleman et al., 2011; Subhani et al., 2012). Moreover, the studies (see Oana, 2014; Kong et al., 2014) have shown that the demand of green (organic) products has increased significantly in recent years as well, and, from the perspective of environment, it is evaluated very positively.

The determinants of GPs intention and purchase behavior have been explored in the vast number of research works. Joshi and Rahman (2015) presented a review of empirical articles on consumer green purchase behavior published in reputed academic journals from 2000 to 2014. Their review focused on studies that sought to identify factors affecting green purchase behavior (except demographic variables). The main limitation of their review is focusing on general research of GPs purchase and not separating

products into groups. Considering that purchase of products of different categories is determined by distinct factors (Liobikienė et al., 2016), the necessity of the product specification is highlighted in this paper. Moreover, Joshi and Rahman (2015) presented only the factors and their impact on GPs purchase; meanwhile, this review proposed a classification system for internal, social and external factors determining the green purchase behavior. It was convenient and practical for analysis of the determinants of broad categories of products purchase.

In this study, as the case, the exclusive attention was paid to the purchase behavior of green cosmetics products, as currently there is an imbalance between the growing use of organic cosmetics and the limited attention from researchers to this product category. The product group of green cosmetics is very broad (it encompasses products such as styling gels or mousses, fragrances (cologne, essence, light essence, perfume, light perfume, etc.), color or make-up (lipstick, blush, compact powder, eyebrow pencil, etc.) cosmetics, and personal care products (creams, lotions, oils, shampoos, soaps, cleansers, and even toothpaste) (Wu and Chen, 2012; Ecocert, 2012; Patel et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important as well to consider the categories of green cosmetics while analyzing the main determinants of these products. Thus, this paper reviewed the studies on green cosmetics purchase behavior and proposed a model for the analysis of determinants of make-up, styling and personal care products purchasing behavior.

The literature review was conducted aiming to collect and analyze all relevant papers. The research methodology is described in section 2, descriptive analysis (distribution of papers in a period of time, product categories and main factors of green product purchase) is presented in section 3. In section 4, the material evaluation is discussed. The discussion and model of green cosmetics purchase behavior is proposed in section 5, while section 6 produces the main conclusions.

## 2. Research methodology

### 2.1. Selection process

This paper used the review methodology suggested by Mayring (2002) and Seuring and Müller (2008). The primary search for related publications from 2011 to 2017 was conducted as a structure keywords search. The main keywords were: “green products”, “consumption of environmentally friendly products”, “organic products”, “sustainable consumption”, “green purchase behavior” and “pro-environmental consumer”. Major databases (Scopus) were used to search for related papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals in English. For selection of relevant studies, the following selection criteria were applied: (1) the study should have been published during 2011–2017; (2) the study should be empirical in nature; (3) the study should discuss or explain the various factors affecting consumer green purchase intention or behavior. Moreover, this review considered not only the papers which analyze the determinants of general green purchase behavior (intention) but also the ones analyzing the purchase determinants of separate

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