

Consumer Decisions in Consuming Eco-Friendly Food Products During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Based on Green Marketing Mix Concept

Tanti Handriana, Rahmat Setiawan, Ratri Amelia Aisyah, Ika Barokah Suryaningsih

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: September 23, 2021</p> <p>Accepted: April 24, 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords : Eco-friendly Food, Green Product, Green Price, Green place, Green Promotion, Logistic Regression</p> <p>DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6481309</p>	<p><i>This study aims to analyze consumer decisions to consume green food during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the concept of a green marketing mix. This study uses a quantitative approach, data collected through online surveys. The number of samples was 363 people, which were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed using logistic regression using SPSS software. The results of the study show that consumer decisions in consuming environmentally friendly food products are influenced by green products, green places, and green promotions. Meanwhile, the green price has no effect on consumer decisions to buy eco-friendly food.</i></p>

Introduction

Eating and drinking are basic human needs. Various choices of food variety can be considered for consumption by the community. People's consumption patterns are also different, influenced both by factors that exist within the consumer and factors that exist outside the consumer. Consumer awareness to maintain health and preserve the environment is an interesting theme to study. To achieve sustainability, food consumption is suspected to be one of the solutions, because it is not only related to individual health, but also related to other aspects, such as public health, social cohesion, environment, and economy (Qi, et al., 2020).

Not all healthy foods are environmentally friendly. Some fruits, for example, require a fair amount of water and pesticides to grow optimally. For this reason, healthy food that is environmentally friendly is synonymous with organic food (<https://www.jpnn.com/news/7-makanan-sehat-ini-ramah-lingkungan>). Organic food is a type of food that is produced by natural methods or processed without the use of chemicals, additives, and genetic engineering. Not only beneficial for health, organically processed food is also claimed to be more environmentally friendly because it can preserve water and soil from chemical pollution. As an alternative, organic fruit and vegetable cultivation usually uses natural predators, such as ducks and chickens, to eradicate pests. This natural method is known to be safer and no less effective to produce healthy and environmentally friendly organic food (<https://www.alodokter.com/makanan-organik-sudah-pasti-lebih-sehat>).

Currently, people around the world feel the phenomenon of environmental damage. One of the impacts of environmental damage is eco-toxicity. The United Nations Environment Program (2019) defines eco-toxicity as the emission of toxic substances that come into contact with air, water, and soil, which in turn can result in direct or indirect exposure. Direct exposure is in the form of breathing air with pollutants, while indirect exposure can be through the absorption of pollutant plants from the soil and consumption of plants as food. For this reason, people as consumers of food products need to make the right decisions. In this regard, the marketing aspect plays an important role.

The marketing concept focuses on multi-stakeholder activities and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Kotler and Keller, 2016). Based on this concept, as a solution to the various threats mentioned above, two approaches are proposed, first, from the marketer/producer side through Green Marketing, and secondly, from the consumer side through Green Buying Behavior. The core concept in marketing is the marketing mix, which includes the product, price, place, and promotion. Likewise, the green marketing mix includes green products, green prices, green places, and green promotions.

Meanwhile, starting in early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the order of the world community. In order to prevent the spread of the corona virus outbreak, people are encouraged and even forced to stay at home. School, work, and even worship are recommended to be done at home. In May 2020, people in the world began

to be introduced to pandemic conditions with new normal. New normal is interpreted as a change in behavior to continue to carry out normal activities but with the addition of implementing health protocols to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 (<https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/05/20/063100865/mengenal-apa-itu-new-normal-di-tengah-pandemi-corona-?page=all>).

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the New Normal, people are increasingly aware of the importance of healthy living. One of the ways to fulfill these goals is through daily food consumption patterns. Eco-friendly food products can be people's choice during the COVID-19 pandemic and the current new normal. Eco-friendly food products are products that are processed, served, and distributed in a way that does not damage the environment. McKinsey data shows that more and more consumers are choosing to buy environmentally friendly local products (<https://www.sirclo.com/bagaimana-perubahan-pola-konsumsi-masyarakat-indonesia-selama-pandemi-covid-19/>).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of the green marketing mix on consumer purchasing decisions on environmentally friendly food products during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal. Considering the threat of environmental damage caused by human (consumer) behavior today which is increasingly worrying, it is hoped that this research can contribute to solving this problem. The results of the findings of this research are expected to be able to make a major contribution to the development of theories of consumer behavior, especially the buying behavior of green food in developing countries.

Theoretical Background

Green Marketing

Green marketing is a company's effort to design, price, distribute, and promote products by paying attention to environmental protection (Polonsky, 2011 and Fisher, 2012). Meanwhile, Pride and Ferrell (2012) describe that green marketing is also referred to as sustainable marketing which refers to the organization's efforts to design, promote, price, and distribute products that will not harm the environment. Green marketing strategy is a mantra for marketers to produce recycled products, non-toxic products, and environmentally friendly products to meet customer needs, and to earn profits on a large scale (Patil, 2012).

The concept of green marketing has been around since at least the first Earth Day in 1970. However, despite reports that environmental concerns are one of the top public concerns, the growth of the market for green products has failed to fall short of marketers' expectations (Wong et al., 1996). Furthermore, when there is an increase in public interest in environmental matters, it causes an increase in demand for greener products, and this is responded by producers to respond to the public interest by labeling hundreds of new products that are environmentally friendly.

The benefits of green marketing that can be felt by companies as producers of products in the form of goods and services include: (1) ensuring sustainable long-term growth and profitability; (2) saving money in the long run, even if it costs a lot at first; (3) help companies market their products by keeping environmental aspects in mind; (4) assist in accessing new markets and enjoying competitive advantages. and (5) most employees also feel proud and responsible for working in environmentally responsible companies (Saini, 2013).

Green Marketing Mix

The components in the green marketing mix consist of 4 elements, namely green product, green price, green place, and green promotion. In the following, each of these components will be discussed.

Green Product

A product is defined as anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need, including physical goods, services, experiences, events, people, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Kotler and Keller, 2016). A product is declared to be performing well if all components of the product/service performance can create high value for consumers. President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo said that Indonesia has the power to develop environmentally friendly products. This product is estimated to be able to increase Indonesia's competitiveness in the global market. Environmentally friendly products can be a long-term strength where all countries in the region are starting to look to work on the environmentally friendly product segment (<https://www.liputan6.com/bisnis/read/4463035/jokowi-yakin-produk-ramah-lingkungan-indonesia-mampu-kuasai-pasar-global>).

Eco-friendly products can be defined as products manufactured using eco-friendly measures and non-toxic materials licensed by a recognized company (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015). Eco-friendly products use renewable resources for products (Sivesan, et al. 2013). Most of its consumers are aware of environmentally friendly products. Consumer awareness of environmentally friendly products is very important in directing purchasing decisions (Hossain & Khan, 2018). Previous studies have found that green products affect consumer decisions in buying a product (Siddique & Hossain 2018; Hossain & Khan 2018).

Green Price

Price is an important component in product marketing. Price is the amount of money and/or other (non-monetary) aspects that contain certain utilities used to obtain a product/service (Kotler and Keller, 2016). For marketers, appropriate steps are needed to determine prices, including (1) choosing the purpose of determining nutrients; (2) determining product demand; (3) estimating costs; (4) analyzing competitors' costs, prices, and offerings; (5) choosing a pricing method; and (6) choose the final price. The green price is interpreted as a price that clearly indicates the company's efforts related to its support for environmental sustainability (Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011). According to Yazdanifard and Mercy (2011) that the price of environmentally friendly products must be logical for consumers and will inspire them to buy environmentally friendly products.

Green Place

Place or product distribution is intended to serve, sell, or deliver physical products or services to consumers. In this case, of course, the role of distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and agents is needed. In addition, it also requires the existence of transportation facilities, balancing warehouses, banking, and insurance for the smooth distribution of products into the hands of consumers. Kotler and Keller (2016) define price as a management decision about when, where, and how to provide good products/services to customers. The green place is intended to facilitate the distribution and supply of products into the hands of consumers while still paying attention to environmental sustainability (Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011). Shill (2012) revealed that a green place is also related to handling logistics properly so as to reduce air pollution and other environmental pollution.

Green Promotion

Promotion or also called integrated marketing communication is an important aspect of the overall marketing mission and a determinant of marketing success. Marketing communication can also be understood by describing its two main elements, namely communication and marketing. Communication is a process of thought and understanding conveyed between individuals or between organizations and individuals (Shimp, 2012). Integrated marketing communication includes one or more promotional activities and company marketing activities that allow companies to communicate uniform information to consumers to achieve clarity in marketing communications (Porcu, et al., 2012). In addition, marketers also need to create marketing communications to generate consumer awareness and interest (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), marketing communication is a means of providing information, persuading, and reminding consumers of the brand. There are eight marketing communication mixes as tools in creating effective marketing communications, namely, advertising, events, and experiences, sales promotion, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, direct selling, interactive marketing, and word of mouth marketing. The components in green promotion consist of various activities such as paid advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion, and other forms of promotion (Fan & Zeng, 2011). Green promotion is suspected to cause people to decide to buy environmentally friendly products (Siddique & Hossain, 2018; Hossain & Khan, 2018).

Purchase Decision

In marketing management, purchasing decisions will be related to the questions of when, where, how, and why consumers make purchases. The stages in the purchase decision include problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behavior (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The five processes will differ from one consumer to another, as well as the characteristics of the product to be purchased will also lead to different stages through which consumers decide to purchase a product. In this study, the focus is on the third stage, which is when consumers make a decision whether to buy or not to buy environmentally friendly food products.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: Green products affect consumer purchase decisions in buying eco-friendly food products

H₂: Green price affect consumer purchase decisions in buying eco-friendly food products

H₃: Green place affect consumer purchase decisions in buying eco-friendly food products

H₄: Green promotion affect consumer purchase decisions in buying eco-friendly food products

Research Model

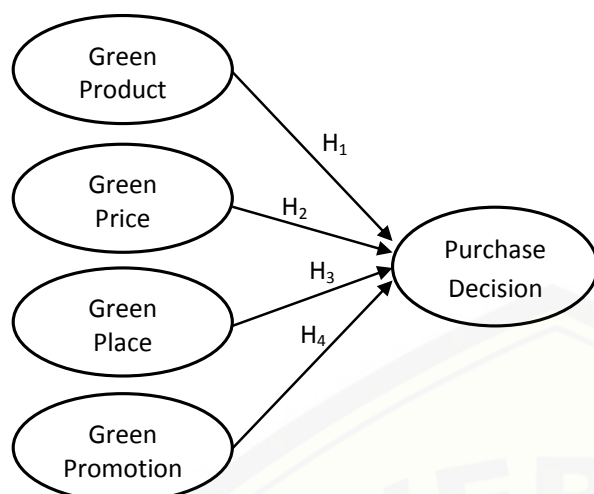


Figure: Research Model

Method

This study, the research variables consist of independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables consist of: Green products, Green prices, Green places, and Green promotions. Meanwhile, the dependent variable in this study is the purchase decision. The green product variable is defined as the respondent's perception of the performance of environmentally friendly food products. Green price is defined operationally as the respondent's perception of the price applied to environmentally friendly food products. The green place variable is the respondent's perception of the availability and distribution of environmentally friendly food products. Meanwhile, green promotion is defined operationally as respondents' perceptions of forms of marketing communication carried out by marketers of environmentally friendly food products. The purchase decision variable is interpreted as the respondent's decision to buy or not to buy environmentally friendly food products.

The indicators for all independent variables in this study were measured using a 5-level Likert scale, with the following criteria: 1 to strongly disagree; 2 to disagree; 3 for neutral; 4 to agree; and 5 for strongly agree. While the dependent variable uses categorization, namely: 0 for the decision not to buy environmentally friendly food products; and 1 for the decision to buy environmentally friendly food products.

The population in this study are people who have bought and who have never bought environmentally friendly food products. The selected samples are people who have bought environmentally friendly food products and those who have never bought environmentally friendly products who are at least 18 years old. Meanwhile, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling.

The appropriate analytical technique to answer the problems in this study uses the Logistic Regression technique (Hair et al., 2014), using SPSS software. The reason for choosing this technique is because it is in accordance with the measurement scale in the independent variable which is interval type (parametric), while the dependent variable data is nominal type (non-parametric).

Results and Discussion

This study uses a quantitative research approach, namely descriptive research (to test the influence between research variables). Data collection has been completed through a survey using a google form and obtained data that is suitable for processing a total of 363.

Table 1. The Result of Logistic Regression

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	*Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Green_Product	1.742	.389	20.045	1	.000	.175
	Green_Price	.433	.507	.729	1	.393	.649
	Green_Place	1.710	.432	15.658	1	.000	.181
	Green_Promotion	1.100	.377	8.496	1	.004	.333

Constant	16.933	2.860	35.067	1	.000	.744
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* $\alpha = 0.05$

From the results of the data processing, it was found that the green marketing mix, consisting of green products, green places, and green promotions, influences purchasing decisions for environmentally friendly food products. Meanwhile, the green price does not affect the decision to purchase environmentally friendly food products. As shown in Table 1, with a significance level of 0.05, it can be seen that successively the magnitude of the effect of green product, green price, green place, and green promotion on green food product purchasing decisions is 0.000; 0.393; 0.000; and 0.004. Thus, of the 4 hypotheses proposed in this study, three of them are supported, including H1, H3, and H4, while H2 is not supported.

The first hypothesis in this study is supported. This indicates that consumer decisions in consuming environmentally friendly food products (organic products) related to green product variables include aspects of products that do not pollute the environment, high quality of environmentally friendly products, products have health benefits, food product materials do not harm health, and products can be relied on by consumers. This result is in line with research conducted by Siddique and Hossain (2018) and Hossain and Khan (2018). During a pandemic, people are very concerned about their health condition, one of the efforts to maintain this health is by consuming healthy and environmentally friendly food. Organic food products are the right choice with this condition.

The results of the analysis, that the second hypothesis is not supported. Green prices do not affect consumer decisions in consuming environmentally friendly food products. The indicators of the green price in this research include: the price of environmentally friendly food products is reasonable, consumers' willingness to pay for environmentally friendly food products, the price of food products is proportional to the quality, the prices of environmentally friendly food products and conventional products are not much different, and the performance of environmentally friendly food products. worth the price. This finding supports the study conducted by Hossain and Khan (2018). This condition is suspected because this research was conducted in a developing country (Indonesia), where most people's income is still relatively low, so the price of organic food products is perceived as "expensive" and not commensurate with the benefits of these food products.

The third hypothesis in this study is supported, that green place affects consumer decisions in consuming organic food products. The distribution of organic products is perceived by consumers that there are many choices of environmentally friendly food products, environmentally friendly food products are available in offline stores, environmentally friendly food products are available in online stores. Consumers are also not difficult to get environmentally friendly food products, and producers of organic food products seem to have a willingness to cooperate with agents that are friendly to the environment. This finding supports the studies conducted by Hashem & Al-Rifai (2011) and Shill (2012). With the development of information technology, especially the internet, the existence of e-commerce during this pandemic makes it easier for people to consume environmentally friendly food products. To get organic food products, they don't have to bother to go to the location of the sale of these products, but simply by using an online application.

Marketing communications made by marketers of environmentally friendly food products influence consumer decisions in consuming environmentally friendly food products. Respondents in this study perceive that marketing contributes to supporting environmentally friendly campaigns, advertisements for environmentally friendly food products in the mass media are attractive, advertisements for environmentally friendly food products in digital media are attractive, the word of mouth about environmentally friendly food products has many positive meanings, and there are sales promotions. on environmentally friendly food products benefit consumers. Thus, the results of this study are in line with previous studies (Siddique & Hossain, 2018; Hossain & Khan, 2018). Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that there are 8 components in integrated marketing communication, including advertising, sales promotion, events & experiences, public relations & publicity, online & social media marketing, mobile marketing, direct & database marketing, and personal selling. Well-designed marketing communications will be a driving factor for consumers in deciding to purchase environmentally friendly food products. During the pandemic, digital-based marketing communications play an important role in boosting consumer demand for environmentally friendly food products.

Conclusion

The marketing mix is a major component in marketing management. A marketing mix that includes aspects of product, price, place, and promotion is needed for business people to maintain and increase their offer to the market. Likewise, for environmentally friendly food products, three of the 4 components of the marketing mix (product, place, and promotion) influence consumers in deciding to purchase environmentally friendly food products. Meanwhile, this study also found that the variable price did not affect consumers in deciding to

purchase environmentally friendly food products in Indonesia. For further studies, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study on purchasing decisions of environmentally friendly food products in developed countries versus developing countries. Further researchers can also conduct exploratory studies to see changes in consumer patterns of environmentally friendly food products before the pandemic and during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering that during a pandemic, people tend to lead a healthy lifestyle.

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Author Information

Tanti Handriana

Faculty of Economics and Business, UniversitasAirlangga
Jl. Airlangga 4 Surabaya, Indonesia

Rahmat Setiawan

Faculty of Economics and Business, UniversitasAirlangga
Jl. Airlangga 4 Surabaya, Indonesia

Ratri Amelia Aisyah

Faculty of Economics and Business, UniversitasAirlangga
Jl. Airlangga 4 Surabaya, Indonesia

Ika Barokah Suryaningsih

Faculty of Economics and Business, UniversitasJember
Jl. Kalimantan 37 Jember, Indonesia

