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Exploring the Nexus towards Green Products: Environmental CSR and Consumer Value

Attitude Behavior

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Abstract: This research aims to clarify the relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and consumers' willingness to pay premium prices for eco-friendly products, exploiting the theory of Value-Attitude-Behavior. First, the study investigates how ECSR influences willingness to pay premium prices. Hence, it examines the effect of ECSR impacts on food safety concerns and the subsequent food safety concerns impact on attitudes towards eco-social benefits. Lastly, this framework explores the effect of attitude towards eco-social benefit impact on willingness to pay premium prices. Conducted through a survey among Indonesian consumers who bought organic products in 2023, 319 completed questionnaires were analysed. Employing confirmatory analysis and structural equation modelling, the results reveal that ECSR does not significantly affect willingness to pay a premium. ECSR positively influences food safety concerns, which in turn food safety concerns impact attitudes towards eco-social benefits. Finally, attitudes towards eco-social benefits significantly affect the willingness to pay premium prices.

Keywords: ECSR, food safety concerns, attitude towards eco-social benefits, willingness to pay premium prices.

1. Introduction

The significance of environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and green purchasing behaviour has been highlighted by recent studies, stressing their consequence in encouraging sustainable business practices and consumer choices. ECSR initiatives demonstrate a company's commitment to reducing its environmental impact and contributing to sustainability goals, which enhances corporate reputation and competitiveness (Lin & Chen, 2021). Consumers' green purchasing behaviour reflects a growing awareness of environmental issues, driving demand for eco-friendly products and incentivising businesses to adopt sustainable practices (Shen et al., 2020). Moreover, the global organic food market is experiencing significant growth, driven by increasing consumer preference for healthier and environmentally friendly products is projected to reach USD 995.96 billion by 2030 (Gorade, 2024). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, there's been a notable shift in consumer purchasing habits towards traditional, health-conscious, and eco-friendly options (Arcese et al., 2024), therefore elucidating the relationship between ECSR and customer green purchasing is crucial.

Scholars have researched various aspects of organic food, including customer perceptions of its production process and purchasing intentions based on trust, convenience, and environmental concerns (Sinesio

et al., 2023 ; Prakash et al., 2023). Studies have also examined skepticism among millennial university students towards organic food purchases and explored factors influencing willingness to pay, such as origin designation and configurational approaches (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2023; Stiletto & Trestini, 2022; Marozzo et al., 2023). Additionally, research has focused on green purchasing intentions and eco-friendly behaviours related to organic food purchases (Kamboj et al., 2023; Parashar et al., 2023; Rashid & Lone, 2023). While several studies have explored organic food purchasing behaviours, there's a gap in applying environmental CSR, food safety concerns, and attitudes towards eco-social benefits to predict customers' willingness to pay premium prices, highlighting the need for further investigation (Cao et al., 2024).

Focusing on CSR and consumer green behaviour, Nguyen-Viet et al., (2024) have explored the mediating role of green brand image and green trust. Lee & Kim, (2023) investigated the effect of ECSR on consumers' willingness to pay premium prices adapting product involvement as a moderating construct. Moreover, Durmaz & Akdoğan, (2024) clarified the understanding of the role of brand reputation in the relationship between ECSR and consumer price sensitivity, while Duong, (2024) verifies the effect of ECSR initiative and consumer green consumption adapting the theory of attitude-intention-behavior. Although previous studies have examined the relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and green consumer behavior, there remains a need for a deeper understanding of the mediating and moderating variables affecting consumers' willingness to pay premiums for eco-friendly products. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the impact of ECSR on willingness to pay premium prices, considering factors such as food safety concerns and attitudes toward eco-social benefits.

The value-attitude-behavior (VAB) theory by Homer & Kahle, (1988) is relevant for understanding organic food purchasing intentions, as seen in previous studies (Hong et al., 2023; Kamboj et al., 2023; Parashar et al., 2023). This theory helps explain how attitudes influence behaviour (Han et al., 2019). It suggests customer values drive environmental attitudes and subsequent green behaviour (Kautish & Sharma, 2019). This study applies the VAB theory to explore the effect of ECSR on willingness to pay premium prices. Moreover, it investigated the effect of ECSR on food safety concerns, and in turn food safety concerns impact on attitude towards eco-social benefit. Finally, this framework examines the influence of attitude towards eco-social benefits on willingness to pay premium prices.

This study incorporates environmental CSR, food safety concerns, attitudes towards eco-social benefits, and willingness to pay premium prices, as customers generally trust organic food to be environmentally friendly, healthier, cleaner, and more nutritious compared to conventional options. Organic foods prioritize local ingredients and refrain from using synthetic additives to enhance environmental safety and public health (Dhaoui et al., 2020). Furthermore, the act of purchasing and consuming organic or locally sourced foods is viewed as a means to address environmental degradation and promote sustainability (Liobikiene et al., 2016; Aprile & Fiorillo, 2023).

This study contributes the understanding of green marketing by elucidating the relationship between environmental CSR and customers' willingness to pay more for organic food products. It also extends the theory of value-attitude behaviour (VAB) in the context of green marketing. Furthermore, it applies a VAB model to predict consumer behaviour, incorporating constructs such as environmental CSR, food safety concerns, attitude towards eco-social benefits, and willingness to pay premium prices, which have not been thoroughly investigated in prior studies.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Value-attitude-behavior model

This study exploits the value-attitude-behaviour (VAB) model by Homer & Kahle, (1988) to investigate green customer behaviours, specifically their inclination to pay a premium for organic products. According to this model, personal values serve as stable beliefs guiding decision-making, while attitudes directly influence behaviour and are subject to change. Research suggests that customers' values contribute to the formation of environmental attitudes, which subsequently influence their eco-friendly actions (Kautish & Sharma, 2019). Environmental attitude emerges as a significant factor determining eco-friendly behaviour, as highlighted in studies by Nam, (2020), Herbes et al., (2020), and Felix et al., (2022). Adapting the theory of value-attitude-behaviour to clarify the effect of ECSR and green consumer behaviour, this study posits ECSR, food safety concerns, and attitudes toward eco-social benefits, and willingness to pay a premium for organic food products.

2.2 Environment CSR and willingness to pay premium price

Environmental CSR refers to a company's commitment to conducting its operations sustainably, minimizing environmental impact, and promoting conservation efforts. It involves integrating environmental concerns into business strategies and decision-making processes (Maignan. et al., 2009). Willingness to pay premium price refers to consumers' readiness to spend more money on a product or service that they perceive as offering higher value, quality, or benefits compared to alternatives (Homburg. et al., 2016). The study findings from (Duong, 2024) indicate that green purchase intention not only correlates positively and directly with environmentally friendly purchasing behavior but also serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between green purchase attitude and behaviour. Furthermore, Dangelico et al., (2017) found that consumers' perception of environmental corporate social responsibility (CSR) significantly influences their preferences for eco-friendly products. Specifically, they observed that when consumers perceive a company as being environmentally responsible, they are more likely to prefer and be willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products. This suggests that a positive perception of environmental CSR can positively impact consumers' willingness to pay higher prices for products that are considered environmentally friendly, therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1. Environment CSR positively and significantly impacts willingness to pay premium price

2.2 Environment CSR and Food Safety Concerns

Food safety concern refers to individuals' levels of anxiety and fear regarding the presence of insecticide residues in food (Nguyen et al., 2023). It reflects consumers' worries about foods potentially containing residues like chemical fertilizers, sprays, and artificial additives due to conventional farming practices (Yee et al., 2005). The study by Yee et al., (2005) examined the determinants of consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior for organic food. While specific results may vary, their findings likely include factors influencing consumers' perceptions and behaviors regarding organic food, such as environmental CSR initiatives and concerns about food safety. They may have observed that consumers who perceive companies as

environmentally responsible are more likely to prefer organic food products. Additionally, they may have found that concerns about food safety, including the presence of chemical residues from conventional farming methods, influence consumers' decisions to purchase organic foods. The intention to purchase green products does not only demonstrates a direct positive association with environmentally conscious buying behaviors but also acts as a significant mediator linking green purchase attitudes to behavior (Duong, 2024). Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis based on these insights.

H2. Environment CSR positively and significantly impacts food safety concerns

2.3 Food safety concerns and attitudes towards eco-social benefits.

Organic food production methods, which avoid unwanted chemicals, address these concerns (Rana & Paul, 2017). Furthermore, food safety concerns significantly drive the increasing demand for organic food products (Hsu, S.Y. et al., 2016; Wee et al., 2014). Studies conducted in various countries, including China, Turkey, and Vietnam, have consistently shown that food safety concerns positively influence consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour towards organic food products (Nguyen et al., 2023). In addition, Cheung & To, (2019) found that environmental consciousness significantly enhances attitudes towards environmental issues and eco-social benefits. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3. Food safety concerns positively and significantly impact attitudes towards eco-social benefits.

2.4 Attitudes towards eco-social benefits and willingness to pay premium prices

Willingness to pay premium prices reflects consumers' readiness to pay extra for products or services with environmental benefits (Han et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010). Regarding organic food, environmentally conscious consumers tend to show purchase intentions for organic food products (Wang et al., 2020) due to their positive ecological impact (Kaufmann et al., 2012). Furthermore, individuals with a strong environmental consciousness are inclined to protect the environment and engage in behaviors that promote eco-social benefits (Ritter et al., 2015; Tsai et al., 2014). Scholars have demonstrated that consumers' intentions for environmental behavior, including purchasing green products and willingness to pay premium prices, are indicative of their responsibility for environmental safety (Chiu et al., 2014; Handriana & Ambara, 2016). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4. Attitudes towards eco-social benefits positively and significantly impact willingness to pay premium prices.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Theoretical framework

This framework investigates eco-friendly consumer behavior using the VAB model, focusing on the influence of environmental CSR on willingness to pay premium prices and its interaction with food safety concerns. Additionally, it explores the relationship between food safety concerns and attitudes towards eco-social benefits, which subsequently affect willingness to pay premium prices. The theoretical framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

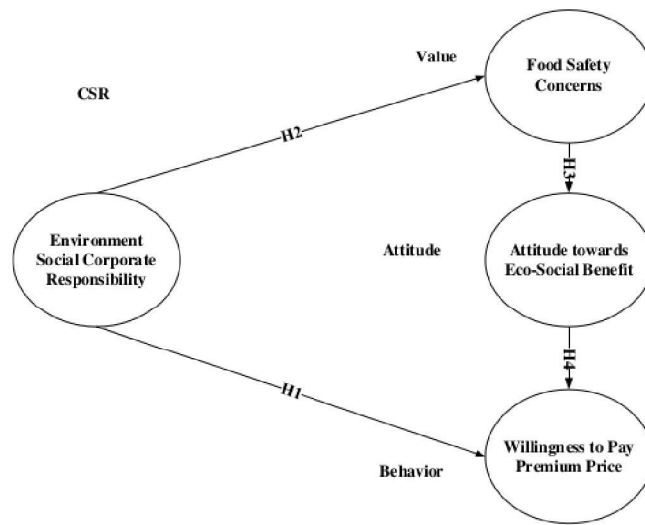


Figure 1. A theoretical framework of environment CSR and VAB model

3.2 Sample and data collection procedures

This survey employs structured questionnaires to identify green customer willingness to pay premium prices based on the VAB theory. The framework includes five constructs that were measured by multiple items. All the responses were measured using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Researchers actively distributed Google Forms via online media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, or email to respondents with experience purchasing organic food products like fruit, rice, and vegetables from August to September 2023 for data collection purposes. The survey selected the respondents from Indonesian consumers using convenient sampling. Seven university students helped and assisted with data collection by distributing 500 questionnaires. In total, 350 were returned with a response rate of 70%; however, only 319 of the returned questionnaires were subjected to the analysis process.

3.3 Questionnaire design

This framework adopted a measurement scale from previous studies with high reliability and validity for all constructs. The construct of ECSR was modified from Masurel and Rens (2015), and food safety concerns were derived from Lian & Yoong, (2019). Furthermore, the attitude towards eco-social benefits was taken from the study by Ritter et al., (2015) and the items for willingness to pay premium price were adapted from the measurement scale of Lee et al., (2010). The Cronbach alpha for all the items of each construct exceeded .70. The values of the Cronbach alpha reached between .725 and .807, indicating reliability and validity. Table 1 displays the items scale and the Cronbach alpha of each construct.

Table 1. Item scale of each construct

Dimension	Measurement	Cronbach's alpha
Environment CSR	The company actively attempts to purchase products and services that minimize environmental impacts The company encourages customer to reduce their environmental impact through programs and initiatives The company reports on the company's environmental performance	.817
Foods Safety Concern	Nowadays most foods contain residues from chemical sprays and fertilizers Organic food products are natural food. Organic food contains less health risk	.725
Attitude towards Eco-Social Benefits	By buying organic foods, I am contributing to society for the present and future. When buying organic foods instead of non-organic foods, I am acting morally. By buying organic foods, I am contributing to new businesses that focus on those foods.	.763
Willingness to Pay Premium Price	It is acceptable to pay a premium to buy organic foods. I am willing to pay more to consume organic foods I am willing to spend extra to support organic foods to be environmentally sustainable.	.807

4. Results and analysis

4.1 Socio-demographics of respondents

This survey describes the socio-demographic profiles of customers who purchased organic food products, including gender, age, marital status, education background, and household income. The number of female respondents who participated in this study was higher than that of males, with 63% females and 37% males. Moreover, the majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years old (41.0%) and between 20 and 30 years old (40%). The married respondents outnumbered single respondents, as 63.0 % were married, and 37.0% were single. Concerning the education level, the greatest number of participants achieved an undergraduate level (63%) and the second-highest number of participants had a master's degree (27%). The majority of respondents' monthly income was between IDR 5,000,000 and IDR 7,500,000 (39%), followed by under IDR 5,000,000 (35%). Considering the frequency of purchasing organic food products, the respondents who answered always and sometimes achieved the same percentage (34%), followed by often (32%). Table 2 displays the details of the respondents' socio-demographic profiles.

Table 2. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Variable		N	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	119	37%	37%
	Female	200	63%	100%
Age	20~30 years old	127	40%	40%
	31~40 years old	130	41%	81%
	41~50 years old	53	17%	98%
	51~60 years old	9	2%	100%
Marital Status	Single	118	37%	37%
	Married	201	63%	100%
Education Level	Senior High School	20	6%	6%
	Undergraduate	202	63%	69%
	Master	87	27%	96%
	Doctor	10	4%	100%
Monthly Income	< IDR 5.000.000	113	35%	35%
	IDR 5.000.000 - < IDR 7.500.000	126	39%	74%
	>IDR 7.500.000 - < IDR 10.000.000	48	15%	89%
	IDR 10.000.000 - < IDR 12.000.000	21	7%	96%
	>IDR 12.000.000	11	4%	100%
	Always	107	34%	34%
Frequency of Purchasing Organic Foods	Often	101	32%	66%
	Sometimes	111	34%	100%

4.2 Measurement model

Based on Anderson & Gerbing (1988), the process of data analysis exploits a two-step approach including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). The results of CFA analysis showed satisfactory measurement model fit, with values of $\chi^2 = 150.061$, $\chi^2 / (df = 59) = 2.543$, ($p < .001$), good fit index (GFI) = .945; comparative fit index (CFI) = .923, incremental fit index (IFI) = .924, Tucker Lewis index (TLI) = .898; normed fit index (NFI) = .880, and a root mean square error of approximately (RMSEA) = .061. The CFA results show good model fit, with the values of GFI, CFI, and IFI reaching above .90, between zero and one with values close to 1.00. The value of RMSEA was below .08 and the Standard RMR (SRMR) = .0560 (<.8), conforming to the level satisfactory model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998).

The CFA model also presented convergent and discriminant validity, showing that all items of the variables performed well (Koufteros, X. et al., 2009). The results displayed in Table 3 describe each construct, including item reliability, standard factor loading, error variance, SMR, CR and AVE indices. The value of construct reliability (CR) displays good reliability, reaching between .752 and .890 greater than the value of minimum requirement (>.70). Similarly, the value of average variance extracted (AVE) demonstrates a high convergent reliability achieving the value ranging from .502 to .603 (>.50). Finally, the results of CFA analysis

demonstrate a satisfactory level of discriminant validity with the square root of the AVE in the diagonal being greater than the correlation of each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) as displayed in Table 4.

Table 3. The result of the CFA model

Construct	Factor loading	Error Variance	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Environmental CSR				
CSR1	.713	.501	.888	.587
CSR2	.654	.577		
CSR3	.723	.437		
Foods Safety Concern				
FS1	.724	.501	.734	.534
FS2	.723	.500		
FS3	.727	.466		
Environmental Concern				
EC1	.728	.472	.811	.557
EC2	.767	.417		
EC3	.689	.509		
EC4	.767	.417		
Attitudes Towards Eco-Social Benefits				
AE1	.744	.434	.768	.555
AE2	.733	.465		
AE3	.747	.454		
Willingness to Pay Premium Price				
WP1	.799	.368	.833	.611
WP2	.744	.452		
WP3	.818	.338		

Note: $\chi^2 = 150.061$; $\chi^2 / (df = 59) = 2.543$ ($p < .001$); RMSEA = .061; NFI = .880; RFI = .842; IFI = .924; TLI = .898; CFI = .923; RMR = .034; GFI = .945; AGFI = .915; PGFI = .613; SRMR = .056, and PNFI = .666.

Table 4. Correlation matrix of discriminant validity

Construct	CSR	FS	AE	WP
CSR	.758			
FS	.632	.718		
AE	.668	.625	.726	
WP	.577	.655	.701	.766

Note: CSR = Environmental CSR; FS = Foods Safety Concern; AE = Attitude Towards Eco-Social Benefits; WP = Willingness to Pay Premium Price.

4.4 Structural equation modelling

The next step of data analysis is testing the hypotheses by employing structural equation modelling as suggested by Anderson & Gerbing, (1988). The results of the structural model analysis showed satisfactory model fit with the values of $\chi^2 = 87.581$, $\chi^2 / (df = 50) = 1.752$, ($p < .001$); RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) = .042; GFI = .964; NFI (Normed fit index) = .921; IFI (Incremental fit index) = .965; TLI (Tucker Lewis index) = .952; and CFI (Comparative Fit Index) = .964. The values such as GFI, CFI, and IFI were close to 1.00, attaining >.90, and satisfying model fit. Moreover, RMSEA achieved .042 a close fit value (between .04 and .08) and SRMR (Standardized RMR) = .0465, leading to an adequate model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1998).

The results of convergent and discriminant validity analysis of the structural model indicated that every item of all constructs demonstrated acceptable criteria. The results of construct and item reliability, standard factor loading, error variance, SMR, CR and AVE indices fulfilled the criteria (Koufteros et al., 2009). Construct reliability (CR) exceeded .70 and thus achieved high reliability, with results between .734 and .888. Furthermore, the value of average variance extracted (AVE) was greater than .50, which is as the minimum criteria (ranging from .534 to .611), showing acceptable convergent validity.

Finally, the hypotheses testing showed that ECSR does not positively and significantly affect willingness to pay premium prices (hypothesis 1), while ECSR positively and significantly impact food safety concerns (hypothesis 2). Similarly, food safety concerns have a significant and positive effect on attitude towards eco-social benefits (hypothesis 3). The final hypothesis shows that attitude towards eco-social benefits positively and significantly impacts willingness to pay premium prices (hypothesis 4). All the results of the hypotheses testing are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5 displayed any details of the hypotheses results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	Result
H1	ECSR → WP	-.026	.025	1.078	Not Supported
H2	ECSR → FS	.040**	.020	2.036	Supported
H3	FS → AE	.951***	.214	5.491	Supported
H4	AE → WP	.721***	.109	6.588	Supported

Note: ** $p \leq .05$ and *** $p \leq .001$

ECSR = Environmental CSR; FS = Foods Safety Concern; AE = Attitude Towards Eco-Social Benefits; WP = Willingness to Pay Premium Price.

4.5 Discussion and conclusion

This study failed to prove the effect of the positive and significant effects of ECSR on willingness to pay premium prices, however, ECSR successfully impacts food safety concerns. Hence, food safety concerns positively and significantly impact attitudes towards eco-social benefits. Finally, attitude towards eco-social benefits positively and significantly affect willingness to pay a premium price. This study successfully explained the effect of ECSR on consumer behaviour in the context of organic food by employing the value attitude behaviour model.

The result of this study fails to explain that ECSR positively and significantly impacts willingness to pay premium prices however ECSR denotes a company's commitment to conducting its operations sustainably, minimalising environmental impact, and promoting conservation efforts (Maignan. et al., 2009) it does not become the determining factor for customer willingness to pay premium prices. This finding cannot support the indication from Duong, (2024) ECSR correlates positively and directly with green purchase attitudes and behaviour and the study from Dangelico Maria & Mencaroni (2017) that reported consumers' perception of environmental corporate social responsibility (CSR) significantly influences their preferences for eco-friendly products. The potential explanation of the insignificant effect may be that ECSR does not directly affect willingness to pay premium prices but via mediation such as brand image, brand trust, food safety concerns etc.

This study shows that ECSR positively and significantly enhance food safety concerns, it confirms that ECSR can reduce consumer anxiety and fear regarding the presence of insecticide residues in food (Nguyen et al., 2023) and that the foods potentially containing residues like chemical fertilizers, sprays, and artificial additives due to conventional farming practices (Yee et al., 2005). This finding proves that consumers who

perceive companies as environmentally responsible are more likely to prefer organic food products and concerns about food safety, including the presence of chemical residues from conventional farming methods.

The findings of food safety concerns successfully predict consumers' attitudes towards eco-social benefits, show that consumers who are concerned that the food they consume is safe from pesticide residue, chemical sprays, fertilizers, and artificial additives (Nguyen et al., 2023; Yee et al., 2005) means that they are concerned about eco-social benefits. The significant effect of food safety concerns on attitudes towards eco-social benefits in the context of Indonesia consumers strengthens previous research showing that food safety concerns significantly and positively affect consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour towards organic food products in China, Turkey, and Vietnam (Lie et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023).

The finding that attitudes towards eco-social benefits positively and significantly impact willingness to pay premium prices shows that consumers who have environmental consciousness tend to have purchasing intention toward organic food (Wang et al., 2020) and purchasing behaviour related to organic food products due to positive ecological effects (Kaufmann et al., 2012). Moreover, people who have a high level of environmental consciousness are likely to protect the ecology (Ritter et al., 2015) and perform consistent behaviour towards eco-social benefits (Tsai et al., 2014). The result of this study confirms that consumers will pay extra for products or services that have environmental benefits (Han et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2010). This finding supports many studies showing that consumers' environmental behaviour intentions point to their responsibility for environmental safety such as consuming green products, intention to return and to recommend, as well as willingness to pay premium prices (Chiu et al., 2014; Handriana & Ambara, 2016; . Lee et al., 2005).

4.6 Theoretical Implications

The results of this study enrich the theory of corporate social responsibility and green marketing, particularly regarding green consumer behaviour towards organic food products. In addition, it contributes to the theory of value attitude behaviour by studying aspects related to consumers' purchasing of green products, including ECSR, food safety concerns, attitudes towards the eco-social benefits and willingness to pay premium prices for organic food.

4.7 Managerial Implications

Considering these findings, managers or providers of organic food should promote consumer attitudes towards eco-social benefits and willingness to pay premium prices based on the important factors of ECSR. The promotion activities can collaborate with the government, universities, and green communities that are still concerned with campaigning about environmental safety, sustainability, and healthy lifestyles in society. Supporting by ECSR, many programs and services in the community such as training and counselling from the government and universities to promote organic food products will be effective. Finally, the use of social media to promote green consumption among the public that can spread widely beyond borders and effectively be conducted by green companies that produce organic food.

4.8 Limitations and directions for future research

This study only adapted the sample of green consumers in Indonesia. Thus, the conclusions of this study cannot be generalized. Future studies could expand the sample to Asia or European countries that have different characteristics and consumers with varying cultures. This framework only adapts constructs based on ECSR and the value-attitude-behaviour theory, therefore future studies can adapt CSR and other theories such as social identity theory, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation theory, personality traits, or stimulus organism response to focus on green consumption.

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