Consumers’ Attitude towards the Cruelty-Free Label on Cosmetic and Skincare Products and Its Influence on Purchase Intention

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ABSTRACT:
Many brands, especially in Indonesia, are starting to apply cruelty-free labels on their products currently. However, the absence of legal certainty, lack of consumers’ awareness, and the number of companies who still use animal testing methods make this research important. Therefore, this study aims to determine consumers’ attitudes toward cruelty-free labels on cosmetics products and their effects on purchase intention. In determining the sample, this study uses a non-probability sampling method. In addition, this study uses environmental knowledge and moral obligation variables as determinants of attitude and purchase intention in cruelty-free cosmetics products as the dependent variables. Questionnaires were distributed to 211 participants, starting from the age of 17 years old in Indonesia, specifically in DKI Jakarta and West Java areas. The results show a positive and significant influence on the determinant variable of attitude which in turn affects purchase intention. Based on the analysis that has been done, the respondents have a positive attitude toward cruelty-free cosmetics products.

Keywords:
Cruelty-free label, Moral Obligation, Environmental Knowledge

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1. INTRODUCTION

The cruelty-free label is a movement that international organizations continue to carry out to stop the practice of testing on animals. As a result, many brands, especially in Indonesia, are becoming aware of the importance of putting cruelty-free labels on their products. However, the lack of attention from a legal point of view causes companies not to feel obligated to use the label (Faradila, 2021). Another fact is that cosmetics brands still use the animal testing method (Wang et al., 2020). Moreover, it is supported by the low awareness of the Indonesian people about the cruelty-free label (Sinaga, 2018). Therefore, companies that still use animal testing have contributed to waste and carbon emissions to the earth (Acil, 2021).

The cruelty-free label indicates that the product is not tested on animals. Unfortunately, the cruelty-free term is different in each country as no law regulates the definition (Cadete, 2021). In addition, based on a survey conducted by CNN Indonesia to university students and college students in big cities regarding their knowledge and concern for the non-animal testing label, they do not understand and do not care about the label (Sinaga, 2018). This shows that the public are lack attention and awareness toward cruelty-free labels on products they purchase.

On the other hand, there are still brands that use the animal testing method because it can maintain the company's reputation and product safety for humans (Wang et al., 2020). The animal testing method ensures the safety of the product and does not cause allergic reactions in consumers (Sreedhar et al., 2020). Although many people think that the animal testing method is harmless, the practice of animal testing also has negative impacts, both on the environment and the animals.

The animal testing method is related to the increasing number of animal deaths resulting from these trials. The United States uses 20 million animals for research and is the country with the most animal testing in the world (Statista, 2021). Therefore, people for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) also voice their support for purchasing cruelty-free products to save animals from cruel testing, such as poisoning, purposely blinding, and being killed every year (Springirth, 2016). Furthermore, the waste generated from these trials in the form of animal carcasses, cages, and syringes has caused environmental problems because it includes the disposal of B3 waste (Ami, 2021).

Based on the previously described data regarding the negative impact of testing on animals in environmental pollution and cruel acts against animals, it is important to understand more about consumers’ attitudes toward cruelty-free labels and their effects on consumers’ purchase intention. Therefore, this study aims to determine the influence of the environmental knowledge and moral obligation variables on consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products and the effect of attitude towards consumers’ purchase intention of cruelty-free cosmetics products.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Cruelty-free

Cruelty-free labels on cosmetic and skin care products signify that the product is not using animal testing. A product is said to be cruelty-free if it contains raw materials obtained without harming animals and not tested on animals. Furthermore, these products can be registered with authorized organizations which oversee cosmetic products, particularly
cruelty-free labeling, such as PETA, Choose Cruelty-Free, Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics, and Cruelty-Free International (Paramitha, 2017).

Cosmetic products usually contain chemicals that cause the practice of animal testing is still carried out to ensure the product is safe for humans, which in turn causes air pollution due to burning animal carcasses and laboratory equipment. Therefore, the cosmetic industry must make innovations that increase sustainability by considering consumer safety and applicable regulations. If they ensure the cosmetic products are manufactured without involving any animals and using other experimental alternatives, the company has positively impacted the environment (Bom et al., 2019; Capdevila et al., 2019; Groff et al., 2014).

### 2.2 Environmental Knowledge

Environmental issues such as climate change, animal welfare, pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss are now widely discussed, thus it creates an ecological movement. It also influences consumers’ behavior and their awareness of the environment (Rawof, 2021). Previous studies show that environmental knowledge significantly affects consumers’ attitudes in purchasing behavior toward green cosmetics products (Malik & Singhal, 2017; Shimul et al., 2021). Therefore, this hypothesis is made:

\[ H_1: \text{Environmental knowledge significantly influences attitude towards purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products.} \]

### 2.3 Moral Obligation

Ethical consumption is generally defined as consumers’ behavior in making purchases and using products that are not only based on value, but also moral factors. Moral factors relate to what is good and bad by considering other things, such as production conditions and how they feel after using the product (Andreevna, 2021). For this reason, cruelty-free products are deemed to be able to increase product sales because they can trigger consumers’ morale (Sheehan & Lee, 2014). Furthermore, previous research shows a significant and positive relationship between moral obligation and attitude (Barbarossa et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2015). Therefore, hypothesis 2 is developed:

\[ H_2: \text{Moral obligation significantly influences attitude towards purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products.} \]

### 2.4 Attitude towards purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products.

Understanding consumers’ attitudes and behavior has a very important role in providing better handling of the market and consumers (Miguel et al., 2020). Attitude formation results from the attributes associated with behavior and how a person evaluates how positive or negative these attributes are (Çoker & Linden, 2020). Previous studies said there was a positive influence between Attitude and Purchase Intention on green cosmetics products (Askadilla & Krisjanti, 2017; Hsu et al., 2017; Pop et al., 2020). Thus, consumers’ attitude is assumed to influence consumers’ purchase intention for cruelty-free products. Therefore, this hypothesis is made:

\[ H_3: \text{Attitude significantly influences Purchase Intention.} \]

### 3. METHODS

The sampling technique in this study used judgment sampling to distribute online questionnaires. This technique is included in the category of non-probability sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to 211 participants starting from the age of 17 years old in
Indonesia, specifically in DKI Jakarta and West Java areas. In addition, the questionnaire in this study was made based on indicators of each variable adopted from previous studies (Alaouir et al., 2019; Cadete, 2021; Pülm, 2021). Online questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms from January 2022 until March 2022. The data were analyzed using SPSS and SMART PLS software.

Furthermore, the model below shows the relationship between environmental knowledge and moral obligation on attitude, and the effect of attitude on purchase Intention.

![Conceptual Model](image)

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Respondent Characteristics

The demographic information from this study is displayed in Table 1. Five demographic information includes gender, age, education level, occupation, and income.

| Characteristic         | Customer The Body Shop | %      |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Gender                 |                         |        |
| Male                   | 12                      | 5,7%   |
| Female                 | 199                     | 94,3%  |
| Age                    |                         |        |
| 17-25 years old        | 177                     | 83,9%  |
| 25-30 years old        | 28                      | 13,3%  |
| 30-35 years old        | 5                       | 2,4%   |
| >35 years old          | 1                       | 0,5%   |
| Level of Education     |                         |        |
| Senior High School     | 95                      | 45,0%  |
| Diploma                | 29                      | 13,7%  |
| Bachelor               | 82                      | 38,9%  |
| Master                 | 5                       | 2,4%   |
Table 1. Respondents’ Profile (continue)

| Characteristic   | Customer The Body Shop |       |
|------------------|------------------------|-------|
|                  | Frequency | %     |
| Occupation       |           |       |
| Student          | 131       | 62,1% |
| Entrepreneur     | 20        | 9,5%  |
| Government Employees | 51   | 24,2% |
| Housewife        | 4         | 1,9%  |
| Other            | 5         | 2,4%  |
| Income           |           |       |
| < IDR. 1.000.000 | 76        | 36,0% |
| IDR. 1.000.000 - IDR. 3.500.000 | 67 | 31,8% |
| IDR. 3.500.000 - IDR. 6.000.000 | 49 | 23,2% |
| > IDR. 6.000.000 | 19        | 9,0%  |

4.1. Validity and Reliability

The questionnaires that have been distributed are then processed and analyzed using validity and reliability. The result of validity and reliability is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Result

| Construct                     | Loading | Cronbach Alpha |
|-------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| Attitude                      |         | 0,874          |
| ATT1                          | 0,840   |                |
| ATT2                          | 0,887   |                |
| ATT3                          | 0,788   |                |
| ATT4                          | 0,893   |                |
| Environmental Knowledge       |         | 0,736          |
| EK2                           | 0,571   |                |
| EK3                           | 0,843   |                |
| EK4                           | 0,652   |                |
| EK5                           | 0,666   |                |
| EK6                           | 0,716   |                |
| Moral Obligation              |         | 0,764          |
| MO1                           | 0,897   |                |
| MO2                           | 0,656   |                |
| MO3                           | 0,902   |                |
| Purchase Intention            |         | 0,912          |
| PI1                           | 0,842   |                |
| PI2                           | 0,886   |                |
| PI3                           | 0,887   |                |
| PI4                           | 0,834   |                |
| PI5                           | 0,847   |                |
There are test results on Loading and Cronbach’s Alpha, which were conducted to determine the quality of constructs and items in the study (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Loading with a low but significant value below 0.5 indicates that the item should be considered for deletion unless there is another firm support (Hair et al., 2016). All items in this study have met the requirements and have good results. Furthermore, Cronbach’s Alpha value on all constructs is >0.60.

Furthermore, the heterotrait monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) test must have a value below 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015). Following the table below, the results of HTMT in this study have met the established criteria. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs have valid results. The results of HTMT can be seen in Table 3.

4.3. Path Coefficients

In evaluating the Path Coefficients, an analysis was carried out, taking into account the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships in each construct (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Each hypothesis is tested using the calculation of p-values associated with path coefficients. If the p-values are below a predetermined threshold, it can be said that the hypothesis is accepted (Kock, 2018). In addition, a negative path coefficient means that the hypothesis is rejected or not significant (Hair et al., 2016). Then, each hypothesis is tested using p-values related to the path coefficient, which can be seen in Table 4.

According to Table 3, all variables have a positive and significant direct influence. The direct effect of attitude on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.408; p < 0.05$) produced positive and significant results. Furthermore, there was a direct influence of environmental knowledge on attitude ($\beta = 0.213; p < 0.05$), moral obligation on attitude ($\beta = 0.578; p < 0.05$).

The indirect effect of environmental knowledge and moral obligations variables on purchase intention is shown in Table 5.
Based on the results obtained, the indirect effect of moral obligation on purchase intention has the highest coefficient (β = 0.236). Another consequence of the indirect effect is shown in environmental knowledge on purchase intention with a coefficient value (β = 0.087). Meanwhile, the smallest total influence value is found in the relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention (β = 0.300).

5. DISCUSSION

This research involves the variables of environmental knowledge, moral obligation, and attitude to the purchase intention of The Body Shop consumers on cruelty-free cosmetics products. In addition, this study provides cruelty-free cosmetics industries about consumer behavior in recognizing cruelty-free labels to increase awareness of the importance of these labels.

Based on the first research question, the analysis results of the effect of environmental knowledge on consumers’ attitudes toward cruelty-free cosmetics products show positive and significant results. Previous research from Shimul et al. (2021) confirmed a positive impact on the relationship between consumers’ environmental knowledge and their attitudes. This result is supported by previous research, which ensures that the public is aware of the impact of animal testing practices on the environment and their attitude toward animal testing in general (Alaouir et al., 2019). In addition, based on research conducted by Malik & Singhal (2017), public attitude on matters related to environmental issues is the main factor in why they buy environmentally friendly products. This research contradicts the analysis results in this study, where the main factor is that consumers of The Body Shop buy cruelty-free cosmetics products based on their moral feelings towards animals because they have experienced cruelty. Therefore, companies are advised to create and build information about the importance of these products related to environmental issues to generate consumers’ knowledge (Alaouir et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, the moral obligation has a positive and significant influence on the attitudes of The Body Shop consumers and non-consumers of The Body Shop in purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products. As explained in the previous paragraph, the moral obligation has the most significant influence on buying cruelty-free cosmetic products. (Barbarossa et al., 2015) found a positive effect on the relationship between moral obligation and consumer attitudes. The findings obtained by Zhang et al. (2015) stated that moral obligation positively affects attitudes. In addition, the moral obligation of consumers plays the most significant role in determining their attitude towards certain products. In this case, companies are advised to
emphasize the moral motivation of individuals in promoting products that have environmentally friendly characteristics.

The study results show that attitude has a positive and significant influence on the consumers’ purchase intention of The Body Shop in purchasing cruelty-free cosmetics products. The results of this study support previous research, which showed a significant and positive relationship between attitudes and consumers’ purchase intentions (Askadilla & Krisjanti, 2017). This variable was found to be the variable that has the most significant influence on Purchase Intention. In line with research from Hsu et al. (2017), which also confirms that consumers’ attitudes have a significant and positive effect on their purchase intentions. To increase positive attitudes towards consumers’ purchase intentions, marketers can use communication channels, such as the internet, television, broadcasting, magazines, or leaflets, as a medium to send messages about the products offered. Based on Pop et al. (2020), attitudes have a positive effect on consumers’ purchase intentions for green cosmetic products. It means that consumers’ positive attitudes toward green cosmetic products will generate their purchase intention in buying these products. Companies are advised to develop their messages on social media platforms regarding the environmental benefits they get to increase consumers’ positive attitudes toward buying green cosmetic products.

In conclusion, there are three research questions from this study. To answer the first research question, the study indicates that environmental knowledge positively influences consumer attitudes toward cruelty-free cosmetics products. Based on the second research question, it can be said that moral obligation positively significantly affects consumers’ attitude regarding cruelty-free cosmetics products. Third, attitude positively and significantly influences consumers’ purchase intentions. It means that if consumers’ environmental knowledge and moral obligation increase, their attitudes towards cruelty-free cosmetics products will also increase, affecting their purchase intention.

This study has several limitations that need to be improved and is expected to continue to be developed in further research in the future. First, this research is only limited by the variables of environmental knowledge and moral obligation variables as determinants of attitude and purchase intention in cruelty-free cosmetics as the dependent variables. Therefore, further research is suggested to expand other variables to measure consumers’ purchase intention in cruelty-free cosmetics products, such as price considerations, customer trust in labels, and others. Second, most of the respondents have an income of fewer than one million rupiahs. However, this is inversely proportional to The Body Shop as a cosmetic brand with premium prices. Therefore, further research is expected to focus on consumers who are the brand’s target market.

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