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THE MALAYSIAN YOUTH ACCEPTANCE LEVEL ON PLASTIC BAG CAMPAIGN THROUGH THE SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the influence of social media advertising conducted on young people. The incidence of landfill spillover with plastic bags has increased drastically especially during the pandemic Covid 19 due to the huge usage rate of plastic consumption among consumers. This situation could be prevented if the young consumer has a high awareness of the effect of plastic on the environment. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between environmental awareness and social responsibility of youth response and their acceptance of the 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign through social media. The online survey was designed and distributed targeting youth in Malaysia. The result of the analysis showed that environment awareness indicated a significant relationship to influence the youth on their acceptance towards 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign, while social responsibility is not significant.

Finally, all independent variables contributed 54.4 % to the dependent variable, while the rest were explained by other variables not examined in this research. In this relation, marketers, the industry, and policymakers decision can use these findings to cater to this group segment in the future.

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1. Introduction

Products that consumers use in their everyday lives come from numerous materials. One of which is plastic. Many product items used plastic material content, therefore, plastic products exist in every home. For example, a plastic bag has the characteristic that is light in weight, inexpensive, and easy to carry, which made it attractive and being used in everyday activities on a massive scale (Bezerra, Walker, Clayton, & Adam, 2021). Although it is used to manufacture many products, plastic material is not environmentally friendly. Plastic is the most dangerous material to the environment because it cannot be easily disposed of (Henderson & Green, 2020; Rhein & Schmid, 2020). Plastic takes a hundred years to dissolve until it is buried underneath the surface (Blasing & Amelung, 2018). Furthermore, burning plastic bags can lead to toxic gases released into the air which is not good for our health which led to many health problems. The continuous increasing amount of plastic waste has post one of the biggest environmental issues facing the world. It is projected that the total plastic waste amount may surpass the number of fish by 2050, which may occur if control steps are not taken immediately to reduce the amount (Parker, 2018). The uncontrollable amount of plastic bags used by the consumer in their daily activity has led to tonnes of waste increase (Ncube, Ude, Ogunmuyiwa, Zulkifli & Beas, 2021). Plastic litters then continue to pollute the land and the sea without we realized.

2. Literature Review

The steady increase in the amount of plastic waste spillover in the landfill in all over the world has caused the society especially in develop and developing countries to pay attention toward sustainability(Nielsen, Hasselbalch, Holmberg & Strippel, 2020). This then continues to further raised social consciousness into reducing the use of plastic bags among consumers (Walther,

Yen,&hu, 2021). The plastic bag consumption habits are not only in the cultural development in developing countries like Malaysia but extend to all countries around the world (Quoquab & Mohammad, 2020). These plastic consumption habits have led to an increase in the number of wastes led to bigger pollution problems. Therefore, further promotion of the awareness of the effect of plastic bags on human beings for future sustainability is needed (Wijaya, Austini, Hanathasia, Putri & Sutawidjaya, 2020). This does not cover only the society but also the young people too are now becoming more concerned about their habit. Young people are considered as an active social agent where they can play a significant role to give impact on society (Koshy, 2019; Vassanadumrongdee, Hoontrakool & Marks, 2020).

This current trend toward sustainability has further encouraged many organizations in taking opportunities to pitch the awareness of plastic bag usage among consumers. The concurrent shift of green activity levels, a higher increase in awareness on global warming, heavy use of plastic by the frontliners, and the consumer's habitual behavior and preferences in food package consumption also appears to be accelerating in many regions of the world including Malaysia(Silva, Prata, Walker, Duarte, Ouyang, Barcelo & Rocha-Santos, 2020). According to an article published on August 17, 2020, a drastic increase in the use of masks and gloves, plus a decline in recycling programs is threatening the health of the sea. Specifically, the amount will be on average like eight million metric tons of plastic waste every year. This finding has clearly shown that people use at least one plastic bag almost every day. And if without a certain level of awareness on the impact of plastic on the environment is not been highlighted to the society, this will leads to a big problem in the future like pollution in the land and sea. Not only that it will also have an impact on other living thing like animals, and will lead to more polluted air and led to floods of wastage everywhere(Guimaraes, Charlie-Silva & Malafaia,2021; Nelms, Duncan, Patel, Badola, Bhola, Chakma & Koldewey,2021). However, without close control on the plastic bag usage, with strict regulations implementation and close monitoring of many parties like government and society especially among the young consumers, this will definitely lead to a much bigger pollution problem in the future (Soares, Miguel, Venancio, Lopes & Oliveira, 2021).

Social media post a big influence on many young people's lives (Pokhrel, Ing, Kawamoto, Laestadius, Buente & Herzog, 2021). In today's lifestyle, social media is used to share photos and experiences about their activities(Liao, Wang, Tsai & Zhao, 2021). Social media advertising is a platform on which many companies spend time, money, and resources to market their products (Sondhi, 2021). Despite the appropriateness of social media advertising as to communicate the

ideas and product to the public, it is under-explored in the past literature as to whether these social media advertising platforms are able to influence the young in changing their attitude and perception toward plastic bag usage.(Arora, Kumar & Agarwal, 2020 ; Kumar, Konar & Balasubramanian, 2020; Sujata, Khor, Ramayah & Teoh, 2019).

Therefore, this study seeks to analyze two factors that can affect the young customer attitude in influencing their acceptance level toward the 'No plastic bag campaign' via social media advertising, which includes environmental awareness and social responsibility. This study is of considerable importance. The topic of social media advertising is less explored especially in predicting the factors influencing the youth level of acceptance, especially in Malaysia, even though many studies have been conducted focusing on the factors to determine the impact of plastic on the consumers and society (Vassanadumrongdee, Hoontrakool, & Marks, 2020). There has been a number of studies on ways to improve the habit of consumers (T'ing, Moorthy, Mei, Yin Ying, Khong & Lin, 2020). However, limited is known about the effect of social media on young consumers related to the " No plastic bag campaign. Thus, the objective of this study is to determine the social media effect in influencing the young consumers toward the "No plastic bag" campaign.

2.1 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The research framework indicates that there were two independent variables: which are environmental awareness and social responsibility. The Ajzen theory of planned behavior is being referred to in this underlying this study (Arifani & Haryanto, 2018). This theory is relevant in inferring the social attitude of young peoples of Malaysia as an outcome of the intention to change their behavior. A strong and positive attitude is needed to engage the young people to participate in the behavior into action which is not to consume single-use plastic bag in their everyday life. Environment awareness and social responsibility are two crucial factors in influencing their attitude and perception towards plastic bag usage.

2.2 Environmental awareness

One is said to be environmental awareness when he or she is considering or having a basic understanding and knowledge about the earth, physical and ecological systems, and environmental issues that affect society, politics, economy, culture, and technology (Mei, Wai & Ahamad, 2016). High environmental awareness among young people will increase their

sensitivity to environmental concerns (Sukma, Ramadhan & Indriyani, 2020). This is one of the moves in regard to a person's recognition for his or her environmental responsibility. Environmental behaviour can be measured by environmental attitudes; thus, many studies have been done to evaluate environmental perception and practices among the young generation in Malaysia (Gronhoj & Thogersen, 2017). The discussions result in the following hypothesis:

H1: Environmental awareness has a positive influence on social media acceptance level of the youth towards 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign.

2.3 Social Responsibility

Responsibility is something that one is supposed to do as a member of a community. The vision of social responsibility, according to Nakayama & Teixeira (2012), is associated with principles including law enforcement, standards, accreditations, and the picture of what is identified as an ideal topic by society. The principle that everyone should all take as an obligation for how to connect toward the environment is known as environmental responsibility (Wang, He, Meng, Locatelli, Yu & Yan, 2017). Young people should participate in any environmental conservation and improvement activity or event. The young people should embrace environmentally sustainable behaviors not only at homes, schools, but also with other youth groups around the world through social media. The discussions result in the following hypothesis:

H2: Social responsibility has a positive influence on social media acceptance level of the youth towards 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign.

Thus, to develop this study below assumptions of the conceptual framework had been made:

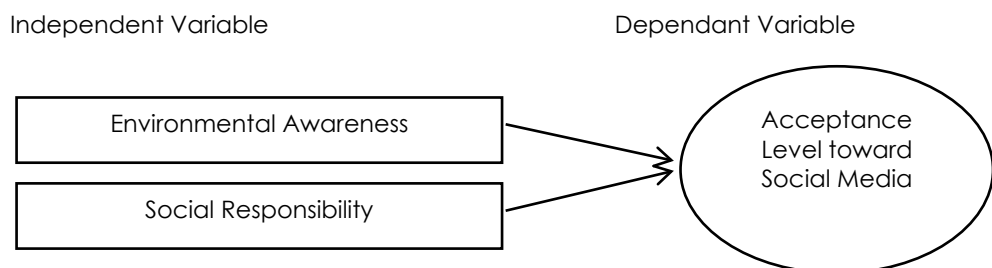


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Research Method

This study has conducted an online survey and has collected data from 150 respondents. Recognizing the rule of thumb set out in for the studies conducted by VanVoorhis & Morgan, (2007) which specified that the minimum sample size set according to the number of variables used. The population of the study include all young people who have at least ones using social media. The sample technique used for this study is purposive sampling. The participants were expected to arise from young people in the university. This is due to their higher homogeneity characteristics, since there are no major variations in age and education. In addition, this group is considered to be both active in society and on the internet related to social media, and alert on the issues like pollution.

Briefly, the questionnaire was designed for both the dependent and independent variables. The demographic information of consumers such as gender, age, and education level were also gathered during the study. For both variables section, questions were using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 which mean from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Using a self-administered survey, this research wants to evaluate the youth response towards "no plastic bag day" campaign advertised in the social media platform. The questionnaire consists of four sub sections which are (1) demographic information, (2) acceptance level on plastic (3) environment awareness and (4) social responsibility.

4. Results and Discussion

The summary on the demographic profiles of the respondents shown in Table 1 below. Data were obtained from 150 respondents consisted of 27.3 percent male and 72.7 percent of female. Majority of them are between 23 to 27 years old. There are five segments for educational level where the highest level is the Bachelor's Degree with 72.7%, second highest level is Diploma with 22%, next is others with 2.2 %. The second least choice is Master's Degree with only 1.9%. The least choice is Doctorate (PhD) with only 1.3%.

Table 1: Demographic statistics (N=150)

	demographic	percentage
--	-------------	------------

age	18-22	36
	23-27	59.3
	28-32 years old	1.4
	More than 33 years old	3.3
Gender	male	27.3
	female	72.7
Education background	diploma	22
	bachelor	72.6
	master	1.9
	doctrate	1.3
	others	2.2
Own smartphone / laptop/tablet	Yes	150
	no	0
Platform social media use	facebook	4
	instagram	5.3
	Facebook and instagram	20
	Instagram and twitter	4.7
	All the above	66
Frequency use	daily	92
	Several times a week	7.3
	weekly	0.7

From table 1, survey evidence that all the respondent has their own gadgets either smartphone, laptop, or tablet. Table 1 also had shown the platform used by the participant. It was found that majority of respondent, 66% use all kind of application followed by the second highest Facebook and Instagram with 20%, and only 5.3% on Instagram. The least choices are using Twitter with 4.7 % and Facebook with 4% respectively. Lastly is the result of the frequency, on often people use their social media where three option are provided.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Acceptance level for social media	5	.809

Environmental awareness	5	.850
Social responsibility	5	.828
Overall (Total)	15	.829

Reliability Assessment

To test the internal consistency of the variables, reliability test using Cronbach alpha was utilized in the study. Based on Table 2, all variables were found to be acceptable, thus, based on their reliability values which ranged from 0.809 and 0.850. Among the independent variables, Social Responsibility show the highest mean of 22.35. The standard deviation for all variables ranges from 2.541 to 2.970.

Table 3: Multiple Regression - Annova

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	722.836	2	361.418	89.814	.000 ^b
	Residual	591.538	147	4.024		
	Total	1314.373	149			
a. Dependent Variable: Acceptance Level through Social Media						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Responsibility, Environmental Awareness						

Reliability Analysis

Multiple regression in Table 3 below shows that ANOVA F-test, the P-value of every independent variables is 89.814 and its significant value is equal to 0.000, means that its significant value is less than alpha value of 0.05. It is clearly can be seen that all the independent variables used in this research were significant and its hypothesis can be tested.

Table 4: Multiple Regression- Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.742 ^a	.550	.544	2.006
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Responsibility, Environmental Awareness				
b. Dependent Variable: Acceptance Level through Social Media				

Multiple regressions in Table 4 had shown the R squared result value was equal to 0.54 this had shown that 54% of the variance in selected dependent variable which is the youth responses towards “no plastic bag day” by social media: acceptance level can be explained by the changes in the selected independent variables which is Environmental Awareness and Social Responsibility. The rest of the percentages are explained by the other factors which are not included in the model.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

Based on the multiple regression coefficients Table 5 shows the summary of the hypothesis results. H1, have a significant relationship based on the p-value less than 0.05. Based on the result, it was found that environmental awareness has a significant contribution to the response and acceptance level of youth towards the 'no plastic bag day' campaign. Young people are active users of social media, with the tendency to be attracted to adverts that make them continue to develop their awareness of the environmental surroundings around them (Moreno, Lafuente, Carreon & Moreno, 2017).

Table 5: Coefficients of The Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.	Result
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.121	1.463		1.450	1.49	
ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS	.173	.088	.173	1.974	.050	Rejected
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	.701	.102	.600	6.862	.000	Supported
a. Dependent Variable: Acceptance Level through Social Media						

Individuals can feel more attracted if the message is persuasive enough to engage them in their everyday activities (Hew, 2018). The awareness about the effect of the plastic bag is able to be understood by the young people through the power of the message conveyed in the social media advertising (Sujata, Khor, Ramayah & Teoh, 2019; Meijers, Remmelswaal & Wonneberger, 2019). However, social responsibility does not score as a significant factor in influencing the youth's acceptance of the plastic bag campaign. The young growing sense of responsibility is the climax toward the responsibility to be adulthood (Salt, Melville & Jahoda, 2019). It is recommended that more youth programs should be organized among the young in the community service to get them some experience which led them to develop toward being responsible adults (Jaufar, 2021). Knowledge on the impact of single plastic bag usage should be continued focusing on the youth segment. Parent and the society has an important role to play in increasing the young people awareness for single-use plastic bag usage to become the more responsible person (Gronhoj & Thorgersen, 2017). An icon among the youth needs to be created to model to them in influencing them on their social responsibility behavior (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

5. Conclusion

The goal of this study was to measure the acceptance level of the youth on social media

advertising campaigns on 'No Plastic bag campaign'. This study examined the association of environmental awareness and social responsibility of youth acceptance level about the campaign on social media. As the objective of this study is to understand the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variables has been achieved. The findings of this study had found that environmental awareness was a significant factor that associates with the response of youth towards the 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign on social media while factor like social responsibility is not significant. The youth are aware that plastic bags are harmful to the environment. Seeing the photos, text, and also watching the videos on 'No Plastic Bag Day' campaign on social media enables them to feel how plastic has an impact on the environment in the future. The campaign on social media also helps youth to realize that the usage of plastic bags needs to be reduced. Thus, It is suggested that the government should stringently implement the campaign to save the environment (Muposhi, Mpinganjira & Wait, 2021). Increased usage of plastic bags will lead to pollution and animal choking. The number of data collected is the limitation of this study as it is not enough to represent the youth in Malaysia in general and it is suggested that a larger sample need to be taken for future research. Social media remain the right platform to educate and exposed youth about a lot of things. This is because they are active users of social media suiting their daily lifestyle.

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