

## GREENWASH ONLINE MARKETING: DOES INDONESIAN GEN-Z STILL HAVE THE INTENTION TO REPURCHASE GREEN PRODUCTS?

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**Abstract:** This research was conducted to know whether Gen-Z in Indonesia still has the intention to buy bottled drinking water after knowing the term greenwash marketing by looking at the mediating effect of environmental concern and perceived quality. The study was conducted using a survey method of 160 Gen-Z respondents in Indonesia and analyzed using SmartPLS. From the research results, there is no significant relationship between greenwash perception and environmental concern with Gen-Z's intention to repurchase bottled drinking water products. However, the relationship between greenwash perception and environmental awareness and quality perception of Gen-Z's intention to repurchase bottled drinking water products was significant. Managers are also expected to focus more on maintaining the quality of bottled drinking water by paying more attention to the environment because clean water can only be obtained if natural preservation and ecosystem balance are correctly maintained, thus avoiding the impression of greenwash marketing in online media.

**Keywords:** Greenwash marketing, environmental concern, perceived quality, repurchase intention, Gen-Z

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui apakah Gen-Z di Indonesia masih memiliki niat untuk membeli produk air minum dalam kemasan setelah mengetahui istilah pemasaran greenwash dengan melihat pengaruh mediasi environmental concern dan perceived quality. Penelitian dilakukan dengan metode survei kepada 160 responden Gen-Z di Indonesia dan dianalisis menggunakan SmartPLS. Dari hasil penelitian yang dilakukan, tidak ada hubungan yang signifikan antara greenwash perception serta environmental concern dengan niat Gen-Z untuk membeli kembali produk air minum dalam kemasan. Namun, hubungan antara greenwash perception dengan kepedulian lingkungan serta persepsi kualitas terhadap niat Gen-Z untuk membeli kembali produk air minum dalam kemasan ditemukan berpengaruh signifikan. Manager pun diharapkan agar lebih fokus dalam menjaga kualitas air minum dalam kemasan ini dengan lebih memperhatikan lingkungan karena air bersih hanya bisa didapatkan jika kelestarian alam dan keseimbangan ekosistem tetap terjaga dengan baik sehingga menghindari dari kesan pemasaran greenwash di media online.

**Kata kunci:** Pemasaran greenwash, kepedulian lingkungan, kualitas yang dirasakan, niat membeli kembali, Gen-Z

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## INTRODUCTION

Plastic trash has become a huge problem in Indonesia. Indonesia became the world's third-largest garbage contributor in 2020, creating 67.8 million tons of plastic waste, or 185,753 tons of rubbish every day (Setiawan, 2021). Plastic usage is quite important to Indonesian consumers in their everyday lives. Almost every consumer-purchased product has plastic materials, even drinking water when plastic packaging is used. The requirement for clean drinking water that is quick and concise makes customers extremely reliant on bottled drinking water. Some bottled water firms are also being criticised for contributing significantly to plastic waste and harming the environment. As a result, several of these bottled water firms also undertook education on their role in trash management. Several programs to limit the usage of plastic garbage, recycle bottles, and protect the environment are ongoing. Because internet users in Indonesia have reached 204,7 million, making it the world's third-largest, the bottled water firm has chosen online media (Kemp, 2022). Online marketing is also widely practiced since practically all marketing goods and services are now done digitally (Enberg, 2019), and online media has a huge impact on raising awareness of emerging ecological problems (Severo et al. 2019). Furthermore, internet media may serve as community links, facilitating engagement between businesses and the community (Machado and Davim, 2016).

Some consumers, however, believe these commercials to be greenwash. Greenwash marketing refers to firms intentionally misleading or cheating customers with false claims about their environmental actions and impacts to rebuild professional image or further shape a good reputation (Delmas and Burbano, 2011; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Marquis et al. 2016), a specific exposure of positive information about a company's sustainability practices while refusing to disclose negative ecological information (Bowen and Aragon-Correa, 2014; Lyon and Maxwell, 2011; Marquis et al. 2016; Seele and Gatti, 2017). Companies purposely greenwash their clients by presenting misleading information about environmental initiatives made to boost or enhance their company's favorable public image (Delmas and Burbano, 2011; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Marquis et al. 2016). Greenwashing is achieved by promoting knowledge and good messaging while

suppressing the publication of unfavorable news (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011). Then, with consistent good news, customers would effortlessly think that the firm offers more beneficial advantages to the environment (Dahl, 2010). Many scholars have undertaken greenwash research in recent years. The company's negative marketing methods include tying greenwash to green trust, green concern, green WOM, and purchase intention to determine the repercussions of the negative effects (Bowen and Aragon-Correa, 2014; Chen et al. 2019; Zhang et al. 2018). However, previous research has focused more on green product products, which are less specific on the use of products that are the basic needs of consumers.

According to research undertaken by Sasetyaningtyas (2019), not all plastic bottles claiming to be made from recycled plastic bottles are the same as 100% recycled plastic bottles. This is because 50% of plastic garbage has yet to be treated due to the difficulty in reaching the waste collection location. The instructional advertising that is shown then primarily concentrates on the recycling program and not on refilling, even though the plastic bottles that are meant to be used may be reused several times. Furthermore, the bottled mineral water corporation had a stranglehold on the spring water, making it impossible for local inhabitants to get clean water.

Several prior studies have been undertaken on the impacts of greenwash marketing. However, there is currently little study on the influence of online greenwash marketing on consumer repurchase intentions when purchasing a product that claims to have taken meaningful action to preserve the environment (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Newton et al. 2015), particularly for items that become a fundamental necessity as a source of life. Chen et al. (2014) discovered that the more customers are aware of a firm that engages in greenwashing, the less likely they are to purchase the product. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2018) discovered that customers with a greenwash impression had a negative influence on their propensity to buy the product. As a result, this study was done to learn how consumers' perceptions of greenwash and environmental concerns impact their repurchase intentions for green goods, particularly basic needs items. Because, as is well known, everyone has the right to safe drinking water. However, safe drinking

water is difficult to get by in Indonesia, particularly in large cities. As a result, individuals must purchase bottled drinking water to meet the demand for clean water (Pokja AMPL, 2012). To conduct this research, the researcher used the attitude-behavior-context (ABC) theory to delve deeper into the impact of consumer greenwashing perceptions on green product repurchase intentions (Guagnano et al. 1995). ABC theory is based on an end-of-the-way approach, in which individuals act according to the benefits they expect from certain behaviors (Feldmann and Hamm, 2015). This research was also undertaken to explore how perceived quality influences customer repurchase intention to drink bottled water since, according to Ariffin et al. (2016), perceived quality strongly predicts consumer repurchase intention of green goods. This study is intended primarily for Indonesian consumers of the Z generation. According to First Insight (2019), Gen-Z is a generation that loves to buy items that embody the notion of sustainability above Gen-Y and Gen-X. Furthermore, Gen Z is the generation with the biggest population in Indonesia (BPS, 2021), so understanding their perspectives can aid marketers in developing a marketing plan based on their preferences for green goods.

## METHODS

The survey approach was used to collect primary data for this study. The data were collected in April 2022. Closed-ended questionnaires are used to make it simpler for researchers to undertake statistical analysis, compare data, and prevent irrelevant answers. Before completing the questions, respondents were asked screening questions to assess whether they had seen an advertisement for one of the bottled drinking water companies that demonstrated their care for the environment on social media platforms such as Youtube, Tiktok, Instagram, and the others. There is a lot of garbage trash in the world. Following that, responders will be asked to complete a questionnaire to fill. The response options will be 5 Likert scales, with one indicating strongly disagree and five indicating strongly agree. This study's population consists of Indonesian consumers. Non-probability sampling using a purposive strategy was employed in this

investigation. The purposive sampling technique was chosen to limit specific types of people who can provide information because it is adjusted to the criteria given by the researcher. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The unit sample consists of users aged 15 to 25 who have purchased bottled drinking water to reflect the Gen-Z demographic. From 186 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, only 160 respondents filled out valid answers. This research used 160 respondents as samples, because this study used PLS (Partial Least Square), an alternative method of SEM (Structural Equation Model), with a minimum sample size of 100 (Hair et al. 2017). PLS-SEM is useful for evaluating novel ideas since it is covariance-based and can readily incorporate reflective and formative measuring approaches (Hair et al. 2017).

Five measurement items were adapted from Horiuchi et al. (2009) and Laufer (2003) to measure consumers' greenwash perception. Environmental concern was measured using four items adapted from Lee (2008) and Paladino & Ng (2013). Perceived quality was measured using five items adapted from (Chen & Chang (2013), and repurchase intention were measured using three items adapted from Rahman et al. (2015). The table of questionnaire items can be seen in Table 1.

Greenwash is done intentionally by companies to cheat their customers by providing false information regarding actions taken to the environment to improve or enhance the good public image of their company (Delmas and Burbano, 2011; Lyon and Montgomery, 2015; Marquis et al. 2016). Greenwash is done by increasing information and positive messages and avoiding published negative news (Lyon and Maxwell, 2011). Then, with positive news presented continuously, consumers will easily believe that the company brings more positive benefits to the environment (Dahl, 2010). In recent years, many researchers have conducted research related to greenwash. The negative tactics taken by the company in marketing its products are by linking greenwash to green trust, green concern, green WOM, and purchase intention to find out the consequences of the negative impacts (Bowen and Aragon-Correa, 2014; Zhang et al. 2018; Chen et al. 2019).

Table 1. Constructs, operational definitions, and items

Constructs	Operational Definition	Item	Measurement
<b>Greenwash Perception</b>			
(Horiuchi et al. 2009; Laufer, 2003)	The process of a consumer recognizing a marketing company's activity appears more concerned with the environment.	GP1	In my opinion, this advertisement for bottled drinking water is able to deceive me by mentioning the words environmental conservation in the advertisement.
		GP2	In my opinion, this bottled water is able to deceive me by presenting visuals or graphics of environmental conservation in its advertisements.
		GP3	In my opinion, this bottled drinking water has an unprovable claim of environmental preservation.
		GP4	In my opinion, this bottled water is exaggerating its environmental conservation claims.
		GP5	In my opinion, this bottled drinking water masks important information so that it looks like you really care about the environment.
<b>Environmental Concern</b>			
(Lee, 2008; Paladino and Ng, 2013)	The level of consumer awareness of the environment to take action to save the environment.	EC1	I am worried that drinking bottled water can harm the environment.
		EC2	Preserving the environment is very important to me.
		EC3	I really like things related to how to protect the environment.
		EC4	I sometimes think about how to improve environmental conditions for the better.
<b>Perceived Quality</b>			
(Chen & Chang, 2013)	Overall consumer assessment of the quality of a green product	PQ1	The quality of bottled drinking water is proportional to the company's concern for the environment.
		PQ2	The quality of bottled drinking water can be relied upon in the company's efforts to preserve the environment.
		PQ3	This bottled drinking water has a durable quality so that it can help reduce environmental waste.
		PQ4	The quality of bottled drinking water is reflected in the company's image towards the environment.
		PQ5	The quality of this bottled drinking water reflects how professional the company is in protecting the environment.
<b>Repurchase Intention</b>			
(Rahman et al. 2015)	The consumer's desire to repurchase certain products is generated from an environmental perspective to buy products and services from companies with a reputation for being environmentally friendly.	RPI1	I am willing to buy this bottled water again even though I know the promotion is only a greenwash.
		RPI2	I intend to remain a consumer of this bottled drinking water even though I know the promotion is only a greenwash.
		RPI3	I will make an effort to be able to consume this bottled drinking water even though I know the promotion is only a greenwash.

Consumers in Indonesia in their daily lives are very dependent on plastic consumption. Almost every element of the product purchased by consumers always contains plastic elements, including the drinking water consumed where the packaging uses plastic. The need for clean drinking water that is fast and concise makes consumers highly dependent on bottled drinking water. However, in general, consumers have a negative attitude towards greenwash marketing, which impacts their intention to buy the product or service (Stokes, 2009). Purchase intention refers to the consumer's intention to buy a product or service, wherein the context of green products; consumers will buy by determining their attitudes and views on the company's environmentally friendly reputation (Netemeyer et al. 2005; Newton et al. 2015). This will be seen in consumer attitudes if the company is known to carry out greenwash activities to consumers and reduce their intention to buy products or services from the company (Nyilasy et al. 2014). For example, consumers who feel deceived by the marketing of bottled drinking water who always campaign to be wise in using plastic, but become the most significant waste contributor company. Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study are:

**H1.** Greenwash perception has a significant negative effect on the repurchase intention of Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia.

Environmental concern is a form of consumer awareness of the environment to overcome environmental problems (Akehurst et al. 2012). The higher the environmental concern that consumers have, the higher the sense of responsibility they have to preserve the environment, and it will be seen in the attitude they show daily, such as recycling and buying environmentally friendly products (Biswas and Roy, 2015; Newton et al. 2015). Thus, consumers who find a company practicing greenwash will reduce consumer intentions to buy a product (Johnstone and Tan, 2015). Therefore, the researcher proposes a hypothesis:

**H2.** Greenwash has a significant negative effect on the environmental concerns of Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia.

**H3.** Environmental concern has a significant positive effect on the repurchase intention of Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia.

Then, consumers are strongly influenced by the perceived quality that can differentiate the product from its competitors (Aaker, 1996). Several previous studies found that perceived quality significantly affects marketing performance (Parasuraman et al. 1988). In the context of green products, perceived quality is perceived as a consumer's assessment of a brand whether it has genuine concern and action for the environment (Chen & Chang, 2013). The greenwash tactic can confuse consumers to assess the overall attributes of a product (Ramus & Montiel, 2005). This can also reduce consumer intentions to buy products (Chen & Chang, 2013). Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is:

**H4.** Greenwash perception has a significant negative effect on the perceived quality of Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia.

**H5.** Perceived quality has a significant positive effect on the repurchase intention of Gen-Z consumers in Indonesia.

## RESULTS

From 186 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, only 160 respondents filled out valid answers. 34.5% of respondents are male, and 65.6% are female. Gen-Z's education is currently being pursued; most are undergraduates at 82.5%, followed by masters at 10%, diplomas at 6.25%, and high schools at 1.25%. The respondents' occupations are students by 89.4%, employees by 8.13%, and others by 2.47%.

With SmartPLS 3.0 software, we examined the link between components using the variance-based Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM). The suggested model is made up of reflective objects, and all structures are considered reflecting items. The measurement and assessment of the structural equation model will be covered in detail below.

The reflecting construct was tested for reliability and validity. When analyzing internal consistency, Hair et al. (2017), recommend that Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability be more than 0.7. Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6 is still acceptable, according to (Chin, 1998), Table 2 shows that, except for the greenwash perception construct, all construct values are more than 0.7. As a result, any structures may be considered acceptable.

The outer loading value should be greater than 0.7. If it is less than 0,7, then deletion of indicators with outer loading between 0.4 and 0.7 is permitted if deletion increases the composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values to the threshold value (Hair, et al. 2017). The severe loading values are shown in Table 3. GP3 and GP5 entries were removed since their values were less than 0. Then, to establish convergent validity (Hair et al. 2017) the AVE value must be larger than 0.5, such that all AVE values in Table 2 are acceptable.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT), cross-loading, and Fornier-Larcker criteria were then employed to evaluate discriminant validity. The HTMT result shows that all constructions are smaller than the threshold of 0.9 (Henseler et al. 2015). The external loading of an indicator on a structure must surpass all cross-loading with other constructions, and the findings fulfill this condition. In the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE of each construct must be bigger than the correlation coefficient of the other constructs, according to Hair et al. (2017). Thus, the discriminant validity test is accurate.

### Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

For assessing the structural model, a multicollinearity test was performed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The VIF number must be less than 5, and the analysis findings revealed that it varies between 2.795 and 1.000. (Table 4). As a result, multicollinearity is not a concern. The variation is then evaluated by R<sup>2</sup>, level of significance, and path coefficient. R<sup>2</sup> returns a value of 0.284. This suggests that the independent variable of 28.4% may explain the desire to repurchase bottled drinking water and is deemed sufficient (Hair et al. 2017). Hypothesis testing employs a significance threshold of alpha 5%, indicating a 95% confidence level. H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>, and H<sub>5</sub> are the approved hypotheses based on the path coefficient and significance test. Meanwhile, H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, and H<sub>6</sub> were rejected due to a p-value larger than 0.05 and a t-statistic less than 1.96. Table 5 displays the structural model's findings as well as the outcomes of hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EC	0.771	0.774	0.855	0.600
GP	0.644	0.786	0.783	0.573
PQ	0.853	0.859	0.895	0.630
RPI	0.817	0.825	0.890	0.730

Table 3. Outer Loadings

	EC	GP	GP*PQ	PQ	RPI
EC1	0.623				
EC2	0.740				
EC3	0.877				
EC4	0.833				
GP1	0.883				
GP2		0.899			
GP4		0.365			
PQ1				0.813	
PQ2				0.822	
PQ3				0.735	
PQ4				0.795	
PQ5				0.799	
RPI1					0.842
RPI2					0.893
RPI3					0.826

Table 4. Collinearity statistics (VIF)

	VIF
EC1	1.131
EC2	1.826
EC3	2.715
EC4	2.165
GP1	1.592
GP2	1.569
GP4	1.099
PQ1	2.022
PQ2	2.307
PQ3	1.726
PQ4	2.027
PQ5	1.940
RPI1	2.389
RPI2	2.795
RPI3	1.487

Table 5. The results of structural models and hypotheses testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Decision
GP → RPI	0.042	0.043	0.084	0.499	0.309	H1 Rejected
GP → EC	0.277	0.290	0.076	3.646	0.000	H2 Accepted
EC → RPI	0.020	0.019	0.090	0.228	0.410	H3 Rejected
GP → PQ	0.279	0.291	0.089	3.154	0.001	H4 Accepted
PQ → RPI	0.512	0.517	0.063	8.073	0.000	H5 Accepted

The H1 test findings demonstrate an insignificant positive association between greenwash perception and the intention to repurchase bottled drinking water, indicating that greenwash perception does not substantially impact the consumer's desire to continue purchasing bottled drinking water. This research contradicts Stokes' (2009), findings, which claim that, in general, customers have a negative opinion toward greenwash marketing, which influences their propensity to purchase a product or service. According to Netemeyer et al. (2005) and Newton et al. (2015) repurchase intention refers to a consumer's desire to purchase a green product or service again, and customers will buy by assessing their attitudes and perspectives on the reputation of environmentally friendly firms.

Greenwash impression was shown to have a considerable favorable influence on environmental concerns in the H2 test. This suggests that Greenwash has a detrimental impact on the environmental concerns of Indonesian Gen-Z customers. This is consistent with the findings of Bulut et al. (2021), who discovered that the notion of greenwashing lowers the impact of environmental

concern on green behavior. The H3 test results revealed that the findings were rejected. According to the test findings, environmental concerns did not have a major impact on Gen-repurchase Z's intention for bottled drinking water. These findings differ from those of Biswas & Roy (2015) and Newton et al. (2015), who found that the greater consumers' concern for the environment, the greater their sense of responsibility to preserve the environment, as evidenced by daily behaviors such as recycling and purchasing intentions to buy environmentally friendly products.

The H4 test findings reflect the unfavorable association between greenwash perception and perceived quality among Gen-Z. This is because buyers are heavily affected by perceived quality, which may distinguish a product from its rivals (Aaker, 1996). Several prior research showed that perceived quality has a substantial impact on marketing effectiveness (Parasuraman et al. 1988). In green goods, perceived quality is defined as a consumer's perception of a brand's real care and action for the environment (Chen & Chang, 2013). Greenwashing will confuse customers due to

untrustworthy information, making it harder for them to appraise the company's offerings (Ramus and Montiel, 2005). As a consequence, greenwash will lower customers' perceptions of the quality of green items (Laufer, 2003). The findings of the H5 test demonstrate a strong positive influence on the association between perceived value and repurchase intention among Gen-Z. These results confirm the findings of Ariffin et al. (2016), Choi & Kim (2013), and Wu & Chen (2014), who discovered that when customers perceive a green product as having good product quality, they are more likely to repurchase the product.

### Managerial Implications

The increasing demand for green products by the younger generation is due to an effort to save the earth, making companies take steps to meet this trend. One way is to upload marketing content that contains an element of concern for the environment. Bottled water companies most often position their products as green products that care about the environment because this company is the most significant contributor of plastic waste on the earth. According to the findings, the greenwash perception and environmental concern on Gen-Z's intention to repurchase bottled drinking water after knowing there were indications of greenwash marketing did not have any effect. This insignificant effect might happen because the need for clean drinking water is essential, so advertising claims by making green contributions that the company has made are less relevant to Gen-Z. Although greenwash perception does not affect Gen-Z's intention to buy bottled drinking water, Gen-Z's concern for the perception of its quality can influence their intention to buy green products. Therefore, Managers are expected to focus more on maintaining the quality of bottled drinking water by paying more attention to the environment because clean water can only be obtained if natural preservation and ecosystem balance are correctly maintained. Managers need to regularly conduct environmental audit activities and environmental responsibilities to obtain clean water sources and then announce them transparently to all consumers in a transparent manner in online media. This is mandatory because consumers have the right to have a healthy environment to live and work in an environment that does not threaten the welfare of generations now and in the future. In addition, marketing content must also educate consumers about how to dispose of or recycle used plastic bottles that are easy to do at home.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This research was conducted to know whether Gen-Z in Indonesia still has the intention to buy bottled drinking water after knowing the term greenwash marketing by looking at the mediating effect of environmental concern and perceived quality. From the research results, it was found that Gen-Z in Indonesia still chooses to buy bottled drinking water, regardless of whether bottled water companies carry out greenwash actions or not. The absence of this effect may be because bottled drinking water is a source of life for humans.

### Recommendations

Therefore, future studies can replace the type of product that is the object of research. In addition, future studies can also use experimental methods to determine the influence of Gen-Z emotions on greenwash practices. Then, In addition, because the term greenwash marketing has not yet become a popular term, it is necessary to conduct further studies with a longer period to obtain more comprehensive results. Thus, future studies can add other variables, such as green trust, green attitude, the perception of the brand, and brand attachment to predict Gen-Z's repurchase intention of green products. Finally, it is necessary to introduce the types and characteristics and look at the level of education possessed by Gen-Z to predict Gen-Z's repurchase intention of green products.

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