

The Influence of Green Product Knowledge, Consumer Attitude, Consumer Trust on The Decision to Purchase Environmentally Friendly Products

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ABSTRACT: Environmental concern increasingly influences consumer choices for personal care products, yet a gap persists between green awareness and real purchasing behavior, especially among Generation Z. This explanatory quantitative study investigates the determinants of green purchase decisions for mercury-free, *Centella asiatica*-based natural skincare products among Generation Z students in Solo Raya. Using an integrated framework that combines the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Green Trust Model, the study tests whether both models function complementarily in explaining the roles of knowledge, attitudes, and trust in shaping consumer decisions. Data were obtained through an online five-point Likert survey ($n = 125$, purposive sampling) and analyzed using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 3.3.2). Findings indicate that Green Product Knowledge has a significant negative effect on purchase intention ($\beta = -0.376$), suggesting that greater knowledge may heighten skepticism toward product claims or perceived complexity. Conversely, consumer attitude and consumer trust show positive and significant influences on purchase decisions, with attitude identified as the strongest predictor. This study offers novelty by focusing on the socio-culturally diverse Solo Raya region and by empirically integrating TPB and Green Trust constructs, demonstrating their complementary predictive capability. Theoretically, the results refine assumptions that knowledge automatically increases green buying behavior; practically, they suggest that natural skincare brands should balance factual education with persuasive communication that simplifies product understanding and strengthens brand credibility.

Keywords: Green Product Knowledge, Consumer Attitudes, Consumer Trust, Purchasing Decisions, Environmentally Friendly Skincare Products.



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INTRODUCTION

Public awareness of environmental issues has risen significantly over recent decades. Increasing concerns about climate change, pollution, and excessive resource exploitation have contributed to the emergence of green consumption, a behavioral shift where consumers prioritize environmentally friendly products (Chen et al., 2024). The trend is particularly visible in the

cosmetics and skincare industry, which remains one of the fastest-growing markets in Indonesia, expanding at more than 8% annually ([Cosmetics and Personal Care Market in Indonesia – Growth Forecast 2024–2028, 2024](#)). However, despite this growth, the industry still faces challenges related to the use of harmful ingredients such as mercury, parabens, and hydroquinone, which pose risks to both human health and the environment ([Fadila et al., 2022](#)). As a result, demand for natural, clean-label, and eco-friendly skincare alternatives continues to increase.

One ingredient gaining attention is *Centella asiatica* (gotu kola), known for its triterpenoid compounds that provide anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and skin-repairing benefits. Additionally, the cultivation of *Centella asiatica* requires minimal chemical intervention, making it a suitable option for sustainability conscious consumers ([Questania et al., 2024](#)). This aligns with green consumer behavior where purchase decisions incorporate ethical and environmental considerations ([Rahayu et al., 2025](#)). Such behavior is highly relevant for mercury-free skincare products, which rely not only on product benefits but also on consumer perceptions of safety, transparency, and environmental responsibility.

Three psychological constructs are often linked to green purchasing decisions: green product knowledge, consumer attitude, and consumer trust. Green product knowledge refers to consumers' understanding of product composition, environmental impact, and safety ([Lestari & Roostika, 2022b](#)). Prior studies suggest that knowledgeable consumers are more willing to purchase safe and ethical products, especially natural cosmetics ([Fauziah et al., 2022](#); [Yusof et al., 2021](#)). Consumer attitude also plays a central role and is understood as an evaluative tendency toward a product or behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)). Positive attitudes toward green skincare have been shown to reinforce environmentally responsible choices ([Joshi & Rahman, 2021](#); [Sugiarti et al., 2023](#)). In addition, consumer trust defined as belief in the authenticity, safety, and ethical claims of a product is increasingly important in the era of digital marketing and widespread greenwashing ([Chen et al., 2024](#); [Suki, 2020](#)). Prior research confirms that trust strengthens the relationship between perception and purchase intention, particularly in the natural cosmetics sector ([Mahmoud et al., 2024](#)).

Generation Z represents a unique consumer segment because of their digital fluency, environmental concern, and value-driven purchasing tendencies ([T. A. Chin et al., 2020](#)). However, existing studies consistently reveal a discrepancy between environmental awareness and actual green purchasing behavior often influenced by skepticism, price sensitivity, and product availability ([Assaker et al., 2020](#); [Liu et al., 2024](#)). This contradiction indicates that high awareness does not automatically translate into sustainable purchasing behavior.

Despite increasing scholarly attention, limited research has examined how psychological constructs such as knowledge, attitude, and trust collectively shape green purchasing decisions among Gen Z in Indonesia. Moreover, the Solo Raya region represents a socio-culturally diverse urban–peri-urban setting with varying access to eco-friendly products, making it a meaningful context for examining behavioral inconsistency in green consumption.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how green product knowledge, consumer attitude, and consumer trust influence Gen Z purchasing decisions for mercury-free skincare products

containing *Centella asiatica* in Solo Raya. By addressing this empirical gap, the study contributes theoretically to the refinement of green consumer behavior frameworks and provides practical implications for cosmetic brands seeking to develop more credible and effective sustainability communication strategies.

Empirical Research Model

The proposed empirical model suggests that green product knowledge influences two key mediating variables consumer attitude and consumer trust which subsequently affect purchasing decisions for eco-friendly skincare products. In this framework, knowledge is positioned as a cognitive antecedent that shapes both emotional evaluation (attitude) and belief in product authenticity (trust). Purchasing decisions may therefore occur through both direct and indirect paths. To assess these latent relationships as well as potential mediation effects, Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using SmartPLS 3.0



Research Hypothesis

Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), consumer behavior is shaped by three major components: cognition (knowledge), affective evaluation (attitude), and behavioral beliefs (trust). Prior empirical studies indicate that consumers with higher awareness of sustainability are more likely to evaluate product benefits, safety, and environmental impact before making purchasing decisions ([Rahayu et al., 2025](#); [U. Saif & Bashir, 2024](#)). Thus, the first hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H₁: Green product knowledge has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

Positive consumer attitudes toward environmentally friendly products have also been shown to increase intention and likelihood of purchase. Attitudes are generally formed through perceived product benefits, quality, and alignment with personal sustainability values ([Paramita et al., 2022](#); [Yadav & Pathak, 2020](#)). Among younger generations, moral considerations and lifestyle identity further strengthen these attitudes and translate into green purchasing behavior ([Triyono et al., 2023](#)). Therefore, the second hypothesis is proposed:

H₂: Consumer attitude has a positive effect on purchasing decisions.

Consumer trust represents confidence in a product’s authenticity, safety, and transparency. Trust is especially relevant in the context of green products, where consumers remain cautious due to increasing cases of greenwashing. Previous findings show that strong trust increases purchase likelihood and encourages consumers to choose eco-friendly alternatives ([Chen et al., 2024](#); [Rahayu](#)

[et al., 2025](#)). As ([Sulistyaningrum & Asmawan, 2024](#)) demonstrated, trust in the information received can increase consumer confidence and simultaneously reduce perceived risk. Consistent communication and reliable certification can increase consumer confidence. Based on this rationale, the third hypothesis is formulated:

H₃: Consumer trust has a positive effect on purchasing decision.

METHOD

This study employed an explanatory survey design using a quantitative approach to examine causal relationships between variables. The study measured how green product knowledge, consumer attitudes, and consumer trust influence Generation Z purchasing decisions regarding mercury free skincare products containing Centella Asiatica. Numerical data were collected through a structured online questionnaire.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for hypothesis testing and model assessment, supported by SmartPLS version 3.3.2. This method was selected because it is suitable for complex research models involving latent constructs and does not require normally distributed data ([Chen et al., 2024](#); [Lestari & Roostika, 2022a](#); [Sugiarti et al., 2023](#)).

The population of this study consisted of college students in the Solo Raya region who regularly use natural skincare products. This region was selected due to its large Gen Z population and its growing interest in natural and eco-friendly products. Data collection took place in September, during the active academic semester, to ensure accessibility and response availability.

A purposive sampling technique was applied based on the following criteria:

1. Active university students in Solo Raya.
2. Have purchased or used mercury-free skincare products containing Centella Asiatica.
3. Willingly completed the questionnaire.

A total of 125 valid responses were obtained and used for analysis. The sample size met the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM based on the “10-times rule”, which recommends at least ten respondents for every indicator in the most complex construct path.

Data were collected using Google Forms. The survey link was distributed through WhatsApp, Instagram, and student community networks. Respondents participated voluntarily and anonymously. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the research purpose and provided informed consent.

The instrument used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). All items were adapted from prior studies and refined to fit the context of mercury-free Centella Asiatica skincare products.

Table 1. Variable Indicators from Previous Research

Variables	Adaptation Source	Number of Indicators
Green Product Knowledge	(Lestari & Roostika, 2022a; Sugiarti et al., 2023)	5
Consumer Attitudes	(Ajzen, 1991; T. A. Chin et al., 2020)	5
Consumer Trust	(Chen et al., 2024; Rahayu et al., 2025)	4
Buying decision	(Kotler & Keller, 2016; Questania et al., 2024)	5

Table 2. Operational Definitions of Variables

Variables	Operational Definition	Indicator
Green Product Knowledge (X ₁)	Respondents' understanding of the benefits, ingredients, and environmental impacts of natural skincare products.	Knowledge of natural ingredients, product safety, environmental effects, and environmental awareness.
Consumer Attitudes (X ₂)	Customer evaluation of green product usage.	Product trust, feelings of satisfaction, purchase intention, and environmental concern.
Consumer Trust (X ₃)	Belief that the claims made by environmentally friendly products are true and reliable.	Product reliability, manufacturer honesty, authenticity of ingredients, and transparency of information.
Buying decision (Y)	Choice and purchase of green products in real life.	Brand preference, repurchase intention, product satisfaction, and purchase loyalty.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted in two stages:

1. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distribution.
2. Inferential analysis was performed using PLS-SEM to evaluate the structural relationships and test the research hypotheses.

Statistical outputs included validity and reliability assessment, coefficient of determination (R²), and hypothesis testing using t-statistics and significance values. The findings were interpreted based on established thresholds for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and model fit. Ethical procedures were followed throughout the process. All respondents provided informed consent, and their data were stored confidentially for academic purposes only.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 125 respondents, all of whom were active university students from the Greater Solo (Solo Raya) region. Respondents came from several universities, including Sebelas Maret University (UNS), Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta (UMS), Islamic Batik University (UNIBA), and other universities located in Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, and Boyolali.

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, based on the criteria that they were active students who regularly used natural skincare products, particularly mercury-free skincare products containing *Centella Asiatica*. Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondent profiles.

Table 3. Respondent Data Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	80	64
	Man	45	36
Semester of Study	Semester 2	18	14,4
	Semester 4	47	37,6
	Semester 6	38	30,4
	Semester 8	22	17,6
College of Origin	Universitas Sebelas Maret (UNS)	35	28
	Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta (UMS)	31	25
	Universitas Islam Batik Surakarta (UNIBA)	25	20
	Other (Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, Boyolali)	34	27
Number of Respondents		125	100

Table 3 shows that most respondents were in middle semesters (4th and 6th) and were predominantly female (64%). The majority (58%) reported daily use of natural skincare products, indicating high relevance and awareness of natural cosmetic consumption among Gen Z students in the region.

Validity and Reliability Test Results

All indicators met internal consistency requirements, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding **0.70**. Convergent validity was also achieved, as all Standardized Loading Factors (SLF) exceeded **0.70**, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded **0.50**. In addition, all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were < 5 , indicating no multicollinearity issues. Therefore, the measurement model was declared valid and reliable for further structural analysis.

Table 4. Results of Validity, Reliability and Multicollinearity Tests

Variables	Indicator	SLF	VIF	AVE	CA	CR
Green Product Knowledge	GPK1	0,789	1,740	0,577	0,817	0,872
	GPK2	0,726	1,534			
	GPK3	0,791	1,648			
	GPK4	0,746	1,626			
	GPK 5	0,745	1,568			
Consumer Attitudes	SK1	0,829	2,221	0,656	0,869	0,905
	SK2	0,844	2,355			
	SK3	0,773	1,669			
	SK4	0,762	1,847			
	SK5	0,840	2,353			
Consumer Trust	KK1	0,809	1,919	0,697	0,855	0,902
	KK2	0,871	2,415			
	KK3	0,840	2,031			
	KK4	0,817	1,845			
Buying decision	KP1	0,789	1,654	0,609	0,843	0,886
	KP2	0,754	2,480			
	KP3	0,780	2,672			
	KP4	0,755	1,579			
	KP5	0,824	1,912			

Discriminant Validity Test Results

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE for each construct was higher than its correlation with other constructs, confirming that the constructs measured distinct concepts (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 5. Results of Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Green Product Knowledge	Consumer Attitudes	Consumer Trust	Buying decision
Green Product Knowledge	0,760			
Consumer Attitudes	0,921	0,810	0,828	0,792
Consumer Trust	0,869		0,828	
Buying decision	0,716		0,744	0,781

Hypothesis Testing Results

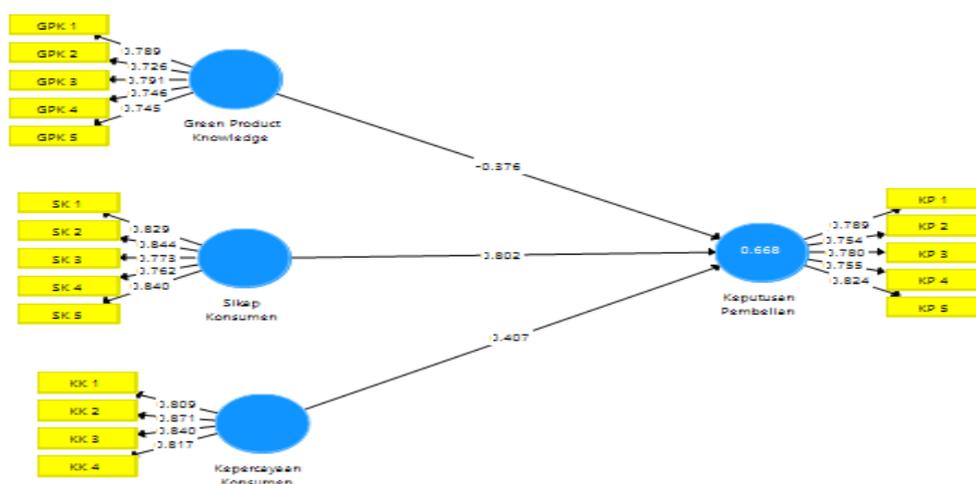
To determine how significant the relationship between variables is, testing is carried out using the bootstrapping technique.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	T-statistic	P Value	Information
Green Product Knowledge → Buying decision	-0,376	2000	0,046	Significant (-)
Consumer Attitudes → Buying decision	0,802	4,230	0,000	Significant
Consumer Trust → Buying decision	0,407	3,488	0,000	Significant

The findings indicate that consumer attitudes and trust have a significant and positive effect on purchasing decisions. In contrast, green product knowledge negatively affects purchasing decisions. This suggests that higher knowledge may make consumers more critical, cautious, and skeptical toward green product claims.

Final Results Image of Research Test



Source: SmartPLS 3.3.2 output

The structural model results demonstrate that all constructs are significantly measured by their respective indicators, as reflected by loading factor values exceeding 0.70. The path coefficient results indicate that green product knowledge has a significant negative effect on purchasing decisions ($\beta = -0.376$), whereas consumer attitudes ($\beta = 0.802$) and consumer trust ($\beta = 0.407$) exert significant positive effects. The model explains 66.8% of the variance in purchasing decisions ($R^2 = 0.668$), suggesting a strong level of explanatory power, with the remaining 33.2% attributed to factors outside the model, such as price, social influence, and promotional exposure. These findings confirm that consumer attitudes and trust are the strongest determinants of purchasing decisions for mercury-free Centella Asiatica skincare products, while higher levels of green product knowledge appear to increase consumer caution and critical evaluation toward environmentally friendly product claims.

Evaluation of Goodness of Fit and Model Fit

The evaluation of model fit showed that the structural model met the recommended criteria. The model produced an R^2 value of 0.668 for the purchase decision construct, indicating that green product knowledge, consumer attitudes, and consumer trust collectively explained 66.8% of the variance, which falls within the high explanatory category based on ([W. W. Chin, 1998](#)). The model also demonstrated strong predictive relevance, with a Q^2 value of 0.45, confirming that the model has substantial predictive capability. In addition, the model's goodness of fit was acceptable, as indicated by an SRMR value of 0.096, which meets the model fit threshold ([Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003](#)). Overall, these results confirm that the model possesses strong explanatory power and predictive validity, making it suitable for examining consumer behavior related to environmentally friendly skincare products.

The Influence of Green Product Knowledge on Purchasing Decisions

The findings indicate that green product knowledge has a significant but negative effect on purchasing decisions ($\beta = -0.376$; $p = 0.046$). This result aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), which positions knowledge as a cognitive antecedent of behavior; however, knowledge alone is insufficient to drive purchase intentions without supportive attitudes and trust. Respondents with higher product literacy appeared more cautious and skeptical toward eco-friendly claims, reflecting a critical evaluation process before committing to a purchase.

This finding supports prior studies ([M. Saif & Bashir, 2024](#)), which showed that environmentally aware consumers tend to question sustainability claims unless supported by credible evidence from manufacturers. Similarly, ([Rahayu et al., 2025](#)) found that knowledge contributes to shaping perceptions, yet its influence on behavior depends on trust. Among Solo Raya students, higher awareness led to more detailed assessment of product ingredients, production sources, and brand credibility. ([Triyono et al., 2023](#)) further explains that environmentally conscious consumers often apply rational decision-making tied to sustainability values.

A study by ([Suhartini, 2022](#)) also confirms that environmental and economic literacy encourages more responsible and selective consumption, preventing consumers from being easily influenced by marketing claims without factual product transparency. Therefore, the negative direction observed in this study strengthens the knowledge behavior gap literature, suggesting that higher knowledge may trigger skepticism when it is not accompanied by strong trust or positive emotional attitudes toward the product.

The Influence of Consumer Attitudes on Purchasing Decisions

Consumer attitude demonstrated a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions ($\beta = 0.802$; $p = 0.000$). This result reinforces the congruence principle of the Theory of Planned Behavior ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), where favorable attitudes predict behavioral intention. Positive views

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toward natural skincare products including perceived safety, environmental value, and alignment with lifestyle identity significantly shaped students' willingness to purchase.

This finding supports (Yadav & Pathak, 2020), who identified pro-environmental attitudes as a dominant predictive factor in green purchasing behavior in emerging markets. Positive attitudes among respondents were associated with values related to sustainability, self-care, health consciousness, and ethical consumption. The result is also consistent with (Paramita et al., 2022; Utami & Kussudyarsana, 2024), who found that perceptions of natural and halal-based products significantly influence purchase preferences. Furthermore, (Triyono et al., 2023) emphasized that environmental learning experiences foster positive attitudes and encourage responsible decision-making among students.

Thus, among Solo Raya consumers, positive attitudes toward natural skincare extend beyond functional benefits and reflect deeper symbolic and ethical meaning. This suggests that emotional and value-driven judgments may outweigh rational evaluations when purchasing green skincare products.

The Influence of Consumer Trust on Purchasing Decisions

Consumer trust also showed a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions ($\beta = 0.407$; $p = 0.000$). Trust functions as an essential bridge between attitude and behavior, forming a key component in the Theory of Planned Behavior. Similarly found that product credibility positively influences purchasing behavior and brand loyalty.

This result is supported by (Chen et al., 2024), who assert that confidence in product authenticity, transparency, and eco-label accuracy is critical in strengthening consumer loyalty to green brands. Within this study context, students relied on indicators such as mercury-free labels, ingredient authenticity, peer recommendations, and online reviews to form trust perceptions. (Rahayu et al., 2025) also noted that trust mediates the relationship between green brand perception and purchasing action.

Additionally, findings align with (Rachmawati.S & Wahyudi.T.N, 2024), who suggested that trust enhances consumers' sense of security and belief in product integrity. (Triyono et al., 2023) emphasized that in the digital consumption environment, trust is fundamental because young consumers prefer products with verified transparency and consistent communication. When brands deliver clear, credible, and consistent messages about product safety, trust is fostered. Trust is crucial for converting environmentally conscious intentions into purchasing behavior, especially among younger, digitally active customers (Sari et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of green product knowledge, consumer attitudes, and consumer trust on Gen Z purchasing decisions regarding mercury-free Centella Asiatica skincare products. The results show that green product knowledge has a negative effect on purchase

decisions, while both consumer attitudes and consumer trust have a positive and significant effect. These findings indicate that having higher knowledge about green products does not always encourage purchase behavior. Instead, knowledgeable Gen Z consumers tend to question environmental claims more critically, leading to hesitation rather than action.

This counterintuitive relationship aligns with the knowledge–behavior gap literature, which explains that awareness alone is insufficient to shape environmentally responsible purchasing behavior unless supported by emotional engagement and perceived credibility. In contrast, positive attitudes and strong trust toward natural skincare products play a decisive role in transforming intentions into actual purchasing behavior. For Gen Z consumers, belief in product authenticity, safety, and ethical values appears more influential than mere product knowledge.

Practically, these findings highlight the need for skincare companies to adopt transparent, evidence-based, and educational marketing strategies to reduce skepticism and strengthen consumer trust. Approaches such as ingredient transparency, third-party certifications, and credible reviews may help ensure that Gen Z perceives sustainability claims as genuine rather than promotional rhetoric.

This study has limitations, including the use of cross-sectional data and a sampling focus limited to the Solo Raya region. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal methods, expand the geographic scope, and consider additional psychological variables such as perceived green value, environmental concern, or green brand attachment. These extensions may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics underlying green product purchasing behavior among Gen Z.

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