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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN ALLEVIATING THE LONELINESS FELT BY EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT:

The year 2020 will go down as one of the hardest, most challenging periods known to man, for it is this year that millions of people succumbed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This event leads many people to stay at home to prevent and the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, everyone should stay at home that many businesses in terms of employee mandatory to work-from-home (WFH) to control the distribution of Covid-19. It leads to an increase in feeling loneliness because quarantine is isolated in a pandemic situation, where loneliness is the first problem in working from home. The study aims to find out the role that social support systems in an organization play in helping alleviate employee loneliness. Social support systems consist of Perceived Organizational Support (POS), Supervisor Support (SS), and Co-Worker Support (CS). This research used a quantitative research method with an open-ended questionnaire. A total of 137 employees that are currently working fromhome (WFH) participated in this research. By using multiple regression analysis and content analysis, the results show that co-workers' support (CS) has greater influences in alleviating the loneliness felt by the employee working from home, and the least was the perceived organization support (POS). On the whole, the social support system would be effective if organizations promote better interpersonal relationships, affiliation, and interaction with others as assigned by the organization, supervisor, and co-workers. This study provides an empirical contribution to the importance of human interactions in alleviating feelings of the loneliness felt by Indonesian employees working from home during a pandemic. Organizations must heed the call to be more engaged with their employees during this challenging situation that affects their employees' mental and psychological state.

Keywords: *Employee loneliness, work-from-home (WFH), social support system, pandemic COVID-19, Indonesia*

Introduction

The environmental issue was the main issue for the academician and professionals for over the past 30 years (Haytko & Matulich, 2008). Many retail businesses already implementing zero

plastics waste for their consumer, even though they are still charging the consumer for using their plastic. Data from World Bank's Indonesia Marine Debris Hotspots Rapid Assessment said that 20 percent of Indonesia's total plastic waste is thought to end up in rivers and coastal waters. Every 20 minutes, the equivalent of a 10-ton plastic truck is dumped into the waters around Indonesia (Alaidrus, 2018). Plastic waste becomes the main issue in the world, especially in Indonesia. The plastic waste becomes the new ocean's living thing besides the fish and other living things. Tilikidou, Adamson, & Sarmaniotis (2002) believes that the tremendous damage to the natural environment has led to an unstable environmental situation or a crucial stage of nowadays environment.

Recent literature has shown that consumers are paying more attention and interest in environmental issues and, in some cases, even changing their attitude toward green products (Sчена, Netti, & Russo, 2015). Kotler in 2011, reconsidering a new demand for ecologically imperative marketing nowadays. The sustainability of the ecosystem will rely on the level of activities that have been converted into environmental funding from green customers (Dunlap & Scarce, 1991). Many researchers have observed that consumers who are environmentally conscious or socially conscious seem to be more open to new ideas, have a greater appetite for learning, and are more susceptible to harm (Kinneer, Taylor & Ahmed, 1974); having a higher degree of self-actualization (Brooker, 1976); and possessing a greater tendency to have a beneficial influence on the health of others, to have greater internal- external influence (to have more power of their own experience) and to be usually of higher social status (Butler & Francis, 1997).

One of the recommended behavior that possibly supports the sustainability of the environment is green purchasing (Grace K. Dagher & Omar S. Itani, 2012). Several works of literature define green purchasing as green purchase intention. Ramayah, Wai Chow Lee, & Mohamad in 2010, states that green purchase intention refers to the willingness of the consumers to buy or purchase green products. Those intentions will lead to the process of green purchase behaviors. This particular field of study about green consumer behavior will get more attention from scholars. Kumar and Polonsky (2017) state that green consumer behavior has become one of the top priority areas that being studied in a long period. Even with that popularity, there is a small indication that the purchase of green products has significant growth. This situation was supported by the fact that the proportion of green products remains at just only 1 – 3 percent compared to the entire market (Bray, Jhons, & Kilburn, 2011). Relates to this phenomenon, many studies have shown the result that is a gap between consumer environmental attitude and the actual purchasing of green products (Tanner & Wölfing Kast, 2003; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Adrita (2020) states that this discrepancy is referred to as green purchasing inconsistency and it means that consumer environmental attitudes do not always easy to put into the real action.

Given this background, the study objectives are to shed light on this phenomenon through several things, which are: 1) investigate the significant influence of environmental attitude toward ecologically conscious consumer behavior; 2) investigate the significant influence of social influence toward ecologically conscious consumer behavior. This study is expected to add a more empirical perspective about this ecologically conscious consumer behavior in Indonesia. Thus, when the research objective is achieved, it can be generalized to

countries with similar contexts.

Literature Review

Environmental Attitude

Environmental attitudes were used to assess how critical an individual thinks about protecting the environment and environmental health promotion (Chuang & Huang, 2018). Environmental attitude is a dynamic mental state, involving environmental behavioral beliefs and values. On the other hand, it taps the rational decision of the user concerning the importance of environmental conservation and a safe living environment (Lee, 2009). Law et al. (2017) reported that environmental attitudes are the environmental values of the person and the understanding of their responsibilities and their role in the world. The positive attitudes toward green behavior were evolved, thus the goal of green behavior among consumers inevitably grew stronger (Law et al., 2017).

Every individual action can be predicted by their attitudes and it becomes the fundamental belief of consumer behavior scholars. The turbulence changing of consumers' attitudes is more likely to stimulate behavior. Spruyt, Hermans, De Houwer, Vandekerckhove, and Eelen in 2007 states that the attitude of the consumer will lead to behavior, and it could become the prediction of behavior. More than one studies of environmental attitudes agree that it becomes powerful antecedents affecting environmental behaviors (e.g., Ballantyne & Packer, 2005; Kotchen & Reiling, 2000; Wells, Ponting, & Peattie, 2010). Considering these perspectives, the following hypothesis is proposed: **H1: Environmental attitude has a significant influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior.**

Social Influence

Social factors show how other people affect a person's choices (Wang, 2014). External influences can be identified at social conditioning, conformity, and many others (Grace K. Dagher & Omar S. Itani, 2012). The theory of social influence provides a framework for recognizing sustainable consumption and promoting it (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011). Environmental visibility and subjective norms are influencing individual behavior, so they are become part of social influence because of its critical influence (Wang, 2014). Arpita Khare in 2014 said that consumer-friendly attitudes are influenced by several factors, such as eco-labels, size, confidence, psychological factors, and personal and social values. A person may perceive social pressure under a subjective standard to participate in the pro-environment activities, such as ecologically goods purchases, to live up to external reference expectations. Shih-Tse Wang (2014) found that social influence exerted a significant influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior. The result of the findings after the researcher researched the title Consumer characteristics and social influence factors on green purchasing intentions. The previous study has also shown that individual and social factors affect consumer attitudes towards environmental issues (Rylander and Allen, 2001). Past studies have shown that social factors, such as cultural norms, influence recycling intentions positively (Park and Ha, 2012). We, therefore, test the following hypothesis:

H2: Social influence has an influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior

Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior

Ecologically conscious consumer behavior refers to psychiatric factors that determine the propensity of individuals to pro- environmental behaviors (Schultz, Zelezny, & Dalrymple, 2000). To get a better understanding of environmental behavior, it is necessary to conduct market research that examines thoroughly Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behaviour (ECCB) (Tilikidou, Adamson, & Sarmaniotis, 2002). Arpita Khare (2014) already conducting a study with the title Consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence as a determining factor of ecologically conscious behavior. From the study, the researcher found that social influence contributes to ecologically conscious consumer behavior. The findings support earlier researches that posit the importance of social norms in green purchase behavior (Park and Sohn, 2018). We are going to analyze how well the independent variables simultaneously have a significant influence on the dependent variable, therefore, develop the following hypothesis:

H3: Environmental attitude and social influence simultaneously have a significant influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior.

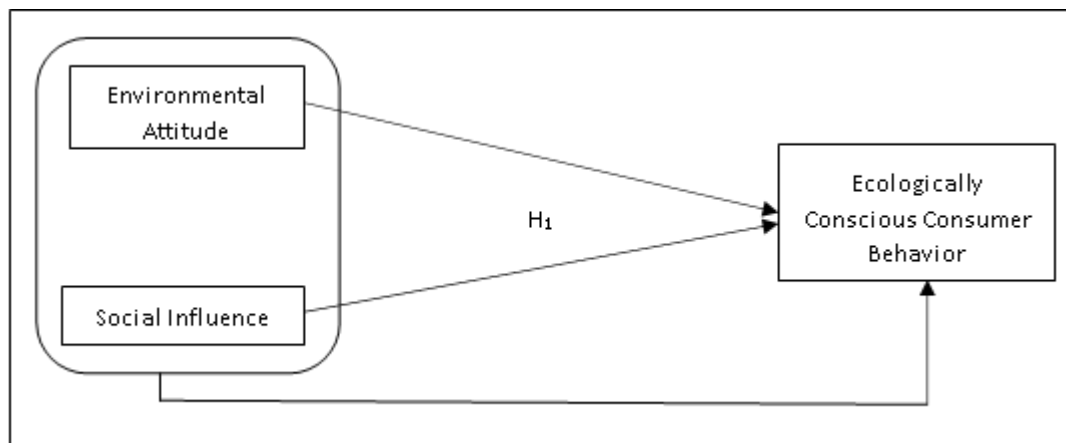


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study. This study started with measure the significant level of influence from independent variables which are Environmental Attitude and Social Influence toward dependent variable which is Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior (ECCB).

Research Method

A quantitative research method was used in this study, especially descriptive study. The descriptive study is a suitable research method in order to describe respondent or market characteristics (Maholtra, 2007). This descriptive study consisted of survey that try to collect information about group of individuals with direct relationship with the objects studied (Suparmoko, 1999). The primary data are collected by giving online questionnaires to respondents. This study implement 7-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 7: strongly

agree). In order to get the total score, every item were added and it was calculated from the total value of each respondents.

Sampling

This study used nonprobability sampling which is snowball sampling. This study selects the sample based on certain characteristics of individuals. This sample was selected from student who are study in one of private higher education institution in Indonesia. The target sample size was more than 200 respondents. Of the 250 questionnaires distributed, 207 valid responses were returned.

Data Collection

This study uses primer data collection by spreading the questionnaire to the respondent. A questionnaire is a list of statements used to obtain primary data from answers given. Those questionnaires were disseminated by more than one person through online, especially for those who are study in one of private higher education institutions in Indonesia. A total of 250 questionnaires were disseminated through online and the final sample consisted of 207 respondents.

Reliability and Validity

The consistency of the construct and variables in the questionnaire is really important. Reliability test is a tool that could help this study to determine it. Cornbach Alpha was used to test the reliability in this study. The construct and variable will categorize as reliable with one condition that if the construct has a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.60 (Ghozali, 2005).

Pallant (2007) states that validity could be define as the degree to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test validity in this quantitative study. It evaluates whether a single dimension of a construct can confirm the construct or variable. The underlying assumption of the usefulness of factor analysis is supported by matrix data with sufficient correlations. Bartlett's test of sphericity can determine the correlation between variables. The other team used the Kaiser-Meyer- Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO MSA), whose value must be more than 0.50 to continue factor analysis (Ghozali, 2005).

Data Analysis

The objective of data analysis is to identify the relevant information and use it to answer and solve the problems (Ghozali, 2005). This quantitative study use regression analysis for testing the hypothesis. There are two significance tests from regression analysis were conducted in this study: (1) regression analysis with simultaneous significance test (test of F statistic) and (2) partial significance test (test of t statistic). H1 and H2 were tested using the individual parameter significance test (test of t statistic), which assessed the significance of the influences of one independent variable in individually explaining the variance in the dependent variable. The criteria that used in this study was: If the sig. value was more than

0.05, there was no significant influence, so H₀ was accepted. If the sig. value was 0.05 or less, there was a significant influence, so the alternative hypotheses (H₁ and H₂) were rejected (Ghozali, 2005). H₃ was tested with the simultaneous significance test (test of F statistic) to show the significance of the simultaneous influences of all the independent variables on the dependent variable. The criteria used were: if the F value was more than 4, H₀ was rejected at a 0.05 sig. level. The hypothesis alternative (H₃), therefore, was accepted and explained that all the independent variables simultaneously had significant influences on the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2005).

Results and Discussion

This study consisted of a survey and the data were analyzed with reliability, validity dan hypothesis testing. Validity dan reliability tests were applied to measure the quality of data in this study (Cooper & Emory, 1995).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is a tool to determine the consistency of data by measuring the construct and variables. The construct and variable will categorize as reliable with one condition that if the construct has a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.60 (Ghozali, 2005).

Table 1 gives the reliability information for variables in the final test survey in this study.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha

No	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability
1	Environmental Attitudes	0.880	Reliable
2	Social Influences	0.906	Reliable
3	Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior	0.928	Reliable

Source: Statistical Software

The Statistical Software output presented in Table 1 shows that all the variables had Cronbach's alpha values of more than 0.60, indicating that the results were reliable based on the criteria (Ghozali, 2005). Confirmatory factor analysis was applied in this study to performed test validity. It evaluates the dimension of a variable. To determine the correlation between variables, this study uses the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. This study also uses the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO MSA), the value of KMO MSA must be more than 0.50 in order to categorize as a valid and possible to continue factor analysis (Ghozali, 2005). Table 2 displays the validity information for the variables in the final test survey.

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

No	Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Explained Variance (%)	Validity Information
1	Environmental Attitudes	0.83	560.637	68.435	Valid

		9			
2	SocialInfluence	0.87	968.522	60.947	Valid
		7			
3	Ecologically Conscious ConsumerBehavior	0.90	1396.559	65.567	Valid
		4			

Source: Statistical Software

The Statistical Software output in Table 2 showed that the KMO for all variables was more than 0.50, so the factor analysis was valid and could be continued. In Bartlett's test, all the variables are significant and thus valid.

Hypothesis Testing

The objective of data analysis is to identify the relevant information and use it to solve problems (Ghozali, 2005). This study uses regression analysis for hypothesis testing. In particular, two significance tests from regression analysis were conducted: partial significance test (test of t statistic) and regression analysis with simultaneous significance test (test of F statistic).

Partial Significance Test (Test of t statistic)

H1 and H2 were tested using a partial parameter significance test (test of t statistic), which assessed the significance of the influences of one independent variable in individually explaining the variance in the dependent variable. The criteria used were: If the sig. the value was more than 0.05, there was no significant influence, so H0 was accepted. If the sig. the value was 0.05 or less, there was a significant influence, so the alternative hypotheses (H1 and H2) were rejected (Ghozali, 2005).

Table 3 presents the results of regression analysis with individual parameter significance test (test of t statistic) for testing of H1 and H2 in this quantitative study and the results from the individual parameter significance test (test of t statistic).

Variable		Beta	Sig.	Information
Independent	Dependent			
EnvironmentalAttitudes	EcologicallyConscious	0.048	0.321	H ₁ is Rejected
SocialInfluence	EcologicallyConscious	0.795	0.000	H ₂ is Accepted

In the statistical software output in Table 4, the significant value of Environmental Attitude H₁ = 0.321 is bigger than $\alpha = 0.05$, so H₀ is accepted. This refers to there is no partial significant influence between environmental attitude toward ecologically conscious consumer behavior in this study. Thus, it answers the first research questions of this study. Meanwhile, the significant value of Social Influence H₂ = 0.000 is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$, so H₀ is rejected. This refers to there is a partial significant influence between social influence toward ecologically conscious consumer behavior in this study. Thus, it answers the second research question of this study.

Simultaneous Significance Test (Test of F statistic)

In this study, the author is using Simultaneous Significant Test (test of F statistic) for testing H3. The objective of F statistic test will give us information about how significant the effect of all independent variables toward dependent variable simultaneously. The Simultaneous Significant Test has criteria to make sure the hypothesis is significant or not. The criteria used are: if F value is bigger than 4, so the H0 is rejected at 0.05 Significant levels. Then, the hypothesis alternative (H3) is accepted and explains that all of the independent variables are simultaneously give significant influence toward dependent variable (Ghozali, 2015). Table 4 presents the results of regression analysis with simultaneous significance test (test of F statistic) for H1 in this descriptive study.

Table 4 Simultaneous Significance Test (Test of F Statistic)

Independent variable	Hypothesis Dependent		F	Sig.	Information
Environmental Attitudes& Social	Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior	H3	213.658	0.000	H3 is Accepted

Influences

The table is the result of Simultaneous Significant Test of all independent variables toward dependent variable using statistic software show that F value is 421.564 which bigger than 4, so the H0 is rejected at 0.05 significant levels. Thus, the hypothesis alternative (H3) is accepted and explains that environmental attitude and social influence simultaneously give significant influence toward ecologically conscious consumer behavior.

Conclusion and Implications

This research's objective on identifying the variables that have a significant influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior, which are environmental attitude and social influence. This research also has extended the research done by Arpita Khare (2014) by changing the environmental attitude from dependent into the independent variable. The previous research done by Arpita Khare (2014) had been done with mall visitors in India as the sample, but this study only takes students in President University as the sample. From the hypothesis result, the environmental attitude will not lead us to ecologically conscious consumer behavior. The difference between real attitudes (not expressed attitudes) and behaviors can be a possible reason for the negative relationship found. Previous research found that the correlation between actual behavior and measured attitude is weak (Wicker, 1971). Richard LaPiere in 1934 stated that inconsistency between people's attitudes as verbally expressed and their actual behavior.

For the social influence variable, the result is significant. Social influence and norms in society can stimulate ecological conscious consumer behavior. Finding Lee (2009) suggested to use of social influence as the top predictor for ecological conscious consumer behavior. It is

suggested that strong peer control, a sort of social influence, is a factor behind the group's effect on environmental behavior Lee (2009). Friends and family is the key to make social influence becoming significantly influence ecologically conscious consumer behavior. The result of the third hypothesis is positive, even though the first hypothesis is rejected. The environmental attitude still has a good influence on ECCB (Adrita & Mohiuddin, 2020). Richard LaPiere (LaPiere, 1934) stated that inconsistency between people's attitudes as verbally expressed and their actual behavior, but in this study, the environmental attitude could have a good influence on ECCB if simultaneously with social influence.

This result can be used for the business that some factors influencing ecologically conscious consumer behavior. Understanding the role of social influence on ecologically conscious consumer behavior could make businesses that going to implementing green business in their business process knowing the best strategy to start. This is a challenge for companies. The development of advertisements and campaigns should be improved to able to approaching groups toward environmental and green products. Since the result is social influence becomes a good predictor for ecologically conscious consumer behavior, the business should consider creating a good image both for society and peer influence. The new four marketing mix that considers by Kotler (2011) should be used by the company if they want to shift their conventional business into a green business. A good marketing plan that building a good image of the environment in society could get strong and good impressions from them and it is good for the business.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research has social influence, environmental attitude, and ecologically conscious consumer behavior as the variables. This research presents very limited variables. It can be further expanded by adding more variables or parameters that may be useful for future research. Another factor that could be influencing ecological conscious consumer behavior like perceived personal responsibility, green lifestyle, green repurchase intention, etc. should examine in future research. This research also has a limitation in the sample and has no specific product. Future research should attempt a larger and more specific sample for the research. After knowing the significant influence of variables in this research, future research may use a specific product or service for the research.

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