

THE RELATIONSHIP OF VALUES, BELIEF AND NORM TOWARDS ETHICAL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AMONG MALAYSIAN

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ABSTRACT

Environmental issues became serious topic of discussion among politicians and decision makers either locally or internationally. Several studies show that one of the factors that contribute to this phenomenon is consumer consumption behaviour. Some consumers ignore about the effect of their daily consumption to the environment. They think it is not a part of their responsibility to protect the environment. The problems continuously till now and within the years so many efforts had been done in conserving the ecological system. Thus, ecological awareness has arisen worldwide, and the people are exposed on their moral responsibility towards the environment. Consumers have so many kinds of behaviours and attitudes towards consumption. Some consumers would be willing to purchase as long as the product met their needs although it were fake products. Others claimed they would purchase only original products as counterfeit leads to unethical behaviour. Instead of clothes consumption, dispose behaviour should also pay attention as it increases at rapid rate and it will harm the environment if doing it in improper ways. Due to this issue, this paper aims to examine the relationship among consumer values, pro-environmental belief and norms towards ethical consumption. Thus, values-belief-norm (VBN) theory is applied in this study. Data was collected through online survey using convenience sampling among 219 respondents. Then, the collected data analysed by using Smart-PLS. The value of internal consistency, convergent validity, coefficient of determination, effect size and predictive relevance were discussed. Then, hypothesis testing was conducted and the result shows that values and belief have relationship with ECB, meanwhile norm has no relationship with ECB. This study very important as it can give good information to academicians, consumers, businesses and policy makers. In addition, it also extends the theory of VBN in terms of clothes consumption from the Malaysian perspective.

Keywords: Ethical consumption, values, belief, norm, Smart-PLS

INTRODUCTION

Environmental friendly or green consumption have significant relationship with ethical consumption. In using certain products, people will consider about ethical value which can develop environmental conscious and protection. They think how ethical interpretations and actions should be adopt and also might differ in various consumer markets around the world. Basically, consumers can be motivated to make socially conscious consumption decisions on the basis of what effect their behavior might have on the environment or other people.

However, there have a people that prefer to buy fake product especially clothes. A possible factor that leads to this unethical behaviour is because it cheaper and the quality are same as the original one. Some of the designs are quite similar with original and sometimes it is hard to differentiate between counterfeit or original clothes. Thus, it encourages people to buy more and they are proud to consume it without any guilty. When the demand on counterfeit clothes increases, it encourages the manufacturer to produce more; continuously a lot of fake products exist in the market.

Resulting from this phenomenon, there have a lot of clothes disposal by the consumers. As the taste of them always change and they can buy the counterfeit clothes in cheap price, over consumption occurred unconsciously. Besides that, clothing today is not meant to last and often shows wear or defects in a short period of time resulting in fashion waste (Hassi & Niinimaki, 2011). Therefore, more consumers seem to be discarding textiles than before given that the collection of textile waste has increased from 7% to 30% based on weight in just five years (Birtwistle & Morgan, 2009). In addition, the annual statistics show that the import corresponds to 16.5 kg of clothes per person. At the same time the amount of textile waste has increased as the total of 10.5 kg per person comes from the household (Statistics Norway, 2010; SFT 2008).

In Malaysia, similar situation occurred as a lot of new design appear and it will create fast-fashion among the consumers. People excited to buy the latest style and some of them make over buying towards clothes. Consequently, to maximize their wardrobe space, they have to discard their old clothes by giving to their friends, relatives or throw away. This kind of behaviour will harm the environment as it takes a long time to dispose.

In addition, the report shows that textile is one of the contributors towards environmental destructions. It can be illustrated by Table 1.

Table 1: The composition and waste-related data in Iskandar Malaysia

Types	Composition (%)	Carbon Content (%)
Food	41.4	41.47
Yard	2.5	37.37
Paper	20.9	42.61

Plastic	22.2	60.93
Glass/ceramic	3.6	0
Metal	2.0	0
Textile	7.7	60.42
Total/average	100	34.68

Source: Tan et al. (2014)

Table 1 shows the effect of textile on the environment. It contributes to the second highest of carbon content after plastic. This type of waste can harm the ecological system especially human.

Therefore, in Malaysia, the green movement for environmental sustainability started by creating public awareness because it is the most important factor in influencing people to take an interest in and solve environmental issues. A variety of programmes and incentives have been implemented by the government and other parties to expose the population to issues related to the environment. Unfortunately, some people are still unconcerned about the environment and do not participate in any sustainable activities. Indeed, they are more likely buy and even pay more for a product that has status and are inclined to buy more organic merchandise for that reason rather than to protect the environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

As the environmental issues become more serious nowadays, people are becoming aware on their consumption as they know unethical behaviour leads to environmental damage. However, although ethical behaviour always exposed to the Malaysian, there are still lack of research done and need to address.

Kim et al. (2014) stated little research has been performed within the context of apparel consumption. Besides, Rahman (2014) noticed that there is an apparent shortage of studies incorporating general values and general attitudes as predictor of specific behaviour for different green products especially apparel consumption in Malaysian perspective. Moreover, lack of study on how the people dispose their clothes as Laitala (2014) focusing on reasons and recycling process of clothes.

Thus, further empirical investigation is needed to explore the relevant of existing theory, concept and scales that are associated with ethical consumption behaviour.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between consumer values and pro-environmental belief?
2. What is the relationship between pro-environmental belief and norms?
3. What is the relationship between norms and ethical consumption behavior?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4. To analyse the relationship between consumer values and pro-environmental belief
5. To examine the relationship between pro-environmental belief and norms
6. To investigate the relationship between norms and ethical consumption behaviour

LITERATURE REVIEW

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION: AN OVERVIEW

The origin of ethical action by consumers lie in the 1970’s when the first fair-trade initiatives started and ethical banking gained momentum. The idea was at that time was simple: you cannot achieve everything through what you buy, but you can achieve something. Now, in the early years of the 21st century, the issue of ethical consumption is still rising and it becomes more complex as so many products appear in the market but the level of awareness among the consumers still low.

Onel (2014) defined ethical consumption as environmentally sensitive purchase (acquisition), environmentally sensitive usage and environmentally post-use (disposal) behaviors. In similar vein, James (2010) states that one of the ways that people are encouraging to protect the natural environment is by assessing the objects that they buy in terms of the degree to which they meet environmentalist criteria, where people are argued to buy the objects that meets these criteria and reject the others. This goes under the name of “ethical consumption”, which is concerned with social as well as environmental issues.

Meanwhile, Long and Murray (2013) posits that ethical consumption has three dimensions: religiosity and ethics, social and environment. Thus, for this study it will focus on social (counterfeit) and environment (disposal) only.

COUNTERFEIT

Jeffrey (2013) defined counterfeit as any unauthorised manufacturing of goods whose special characteristics are protected as intellectual property rights (trademarks, patents and copyrights) constitutes product counterfeiting. There are a few studies regarding to counterfeit products. Tang et al. (2014) in their study identified the categories of motivation that encourage people purchasing different counterfeit products. The results show that the most frequently mentioned motivation was the utility (35 percent) received from the good over the genuine article. The second was the perceived risk involved in the purchase (22 percent), and the next were social norms, confusion, and ethical concerns which each represented about 10 percent of the

motivations toward the purchase of counterfeit items. The least mentioned motivations to purchase, at less than 4 percent each, were culture, habit, and desire to explore. These factors were evident across a variety of 15 product categories, headed by electronics, such as DVDs and computer software.

Further, Mari'a et al. (2010) explore the relationship between the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods and identity construction and the result showed that consumers of counterfeit luxury goods construct an identity in which they perceive themselves as "savvy" individuals. Therefore, identity has relationship with the counterfeit products.

In addition, Giacomo et al. (2009) investigating how people consume counterfeit luxury products and the result found the consumers of fakes accumulate facts that increase their knowledge of the originals with the aim of picking a 'good counterfeit' that will render the personal and private use of the product highly gratifying all the same. Meaning that, people try to find as much as information of the originals products and they compare it with the fake product to minimised the differences.

Table 2: Summary of research on counterfeit

Researcher(s) & Year	Independent variables	Counterfeit		Finding
		Dependent variables		
Tang et al. (2014)	Motivation	Counterfeit product		Positive relationship
Mari'a et al. (2010)	Identity	Counterfeit products	luxury	Positively relationship
Giacomo et al. (2009)	Knowledge and use	Counterfeit products	luxury	Positively relationship

DISPOSAL

Disposal refers to getting rid of something, and in the context of this study means the end of life stage of the clothing with the present owner, regardless of whether the clothing is discarded of as waste or sent for/taken to recycling or reused (Laitala, 2014).

A few researches have done on clothes disposal. Laitala (2014) studied on the issues of disposal channels, behavioural motivations, disposal reasons and the demographics of consumers. The researcher found that many consumers prefer to give their clothing away for reuse rather than dispose of it, but convenience is paramount. Common reasons for apparel disposal are wear and tear, poor fit, change of fashion, boredom and lack of storage space.

Moreover, Lang et al. (2013) identified those consumers who are sensitive to fashion trends also dispose of their unwanted clothing more frequently than those who are less sensitive to fashion trends, especially for young and female consumers. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have identified fashion trends as well as boredom and closet cleaning as drivers of disposal (Bianci & Birtwistle, 2010; Birtwistle & Morgan, 2009; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Domina & Koch, 1999, 2002; Hawley, 2000).

Meanwhile, Meyer (2013) studied on the process on recycling of clothes where he found that it has not yet gained full momentum among the majority consumers. Previous studies have shown that consumers usually consider other disposal methods rather than recycling (Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013: 110; Domina & Koch, 2002: 233). However, these types of disposal methods are crucial to counter further environmental decline due to excessive waste and overflowing landfills that accompany much of the current economic advances in emerging economies (New Generation Textile Recycling – An Outlook 2010).

Table 3: Summary of research on disposal

Researcher(s) & Year	Independent variables	Disposal		Finding
		Dependent variables		
Laitala (2014)	Disposal channel, behavioural motivations, disposal reasons and demographics of consumers	Clothing disposal behaviour	disposal	Positive relationship
Lang et al. (2013)	Personal attribute and behaviour of disposal	Clothing disposal		Positively relationship
Meyer (2013)	Recycling	Clothing disposal		Positively relationship

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VALUES AND PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEF (PEB)

It would seem reasonable that there is a relation between general values and pro environmental behavior. Values may channel actions (Bardi & Schwartz 2003: 1208; Agyeman & Kollmuss, 2002: 251; Rokeach, 1970: 157), and for that reason values may possibly be the foundation for pro-environmental behavior (Jackson, 2005:52; Stern, 2000: 411).

Meanwhile, Gatersleben et al. (2002); Garvill & Nordlund, (2002) states there is a consensus that pro-environmental belief is determined mainly by values. While study done by (Boldero, 1995) found that values, attitudes and beliefs have been more successful in predicting pro-environmental behaviors.

There have a few studies investigate the relationship between values and pro-environmental belief. Hye et al. (2015) investigate the relationship of three types of values: utilitarian, hedonic and conspicuous on consumer behaviour. The result shows that utilitarian and hedonic values have relationship with pro-environmental belief, not conspicuous value.

In similar vein, Jung et al. (2014) found that utilitarian and hedonic value motivate pro-environmental belief, and eco-friendly faux leather product attributes significantly mediate belief and positive attitude toward the EFL product.

In addition, Judith and Linda (2012) found that hedonic, egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric values influence behaviour indirectly, via behaviour-specific beliefs, preferences, attitudes and norms. Thus, values have relationship with pro-environmental belief.

Table 4: Summary of literature on consumption values

Consumption Values			
Researcher(s) & Year	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Finding
Hye et al. (2015)	Utilitarian, hedonic and conspicuous value	Pro-environmental belief	Utilitarian and hedonic values have positive relationship with PEB but conspicuous value has no relationship with PEB
Jung et al. (2014)	Utilitarian and hedonic value	Pro-environmental belief	Utilitarian and hedonic values have positive relationship with PEB.
Judith and Linda (2012)	Hedonic, egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric values	Pro-environmental belief	All values have positive relationship with PEB.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BELIEF (PEB) AND NORMS

When consumers are concerned about the environment, they verbally endorse most schemes or products that seek to converse or improve it (McDonald & Oates, 2006). However, consumers are disinclined to put pro-environmental belief into practice unless they hold the belief that their efforts can make a difference to the environment (Pieters et al., 1998).

It was found that individual might behave in a certain manner because of norms, even if the specific behaviour counters the individual's values (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003: 1217). Therefore, pro-environmental clothing disposal behaviour may also have the strongest relationship with personal norms.

In addition, when individual's beliefs that a certain object or behaviour is associated with his/her personal lifestyle, value and self-image (Celsi et al, 1992), they tend to be more involved in that issue (McQuarrie & Munson, 1992; Zai-chkowsky, 1985).

There have a few studies regarding to relationship between PEB and norm. Park and Ha (2011) investigate the differences in underlying psychological aspects regarding pro environmental behaviours between green product purchasers and green product non-purchasers. The result showed that green product purchasers exhibited significantly higher levels of cognitive attitude, affective attitude, social norm, personal norm, and recycling behaviour.

Further, Ozaki (2011) studied about consumers' concern on green electricity. Surprisingly, the result shows that belief has no relationship with personal norm. the consumers belief that electricity produced in an environmentally friendly way lacked personal relevance to their lives on the basis.

In contrast, Thogersen (2006) stated that the environmentally responsible behaviour of an individual may be a result of the strength of the individual's personal norms. He found that individual might behave in a certain manner because of norm, even if the specific behaviour counters the individual's values. Therefore, pro-environmental clothing disposal behaviour have the strongest relationship with personal norms.

Table 5: Summary of literature on pro-environmental belief

Pro-environmental belief			
Researcher(s) & Year	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Finding
Park and Ha (2011)	Psychological characteristics	Personal norm	Beliefs positively influence personal norms
Ozaki (2011)	Belief	Personal norm	Belief has no relationship with personal norms.

Thogersen (2006)	Environmental belief	Personal norm	Beliefs positively influence personal norms
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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NORMS AND ETHICAL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR (ECB)

Personal norms are assumed to be rooted in values (Schwartz 1977; Stern 2000). That is, people feel morally obliged to act in accordance with their prevalent values. The ultimate preachers of action representing the person’s obligation to adopt a pro-environmental behaviour (Mustapha, 2010). Therefore, norms are the closest determinant to behaviour.

A few studies have done on the relationship between norm and ECB. A study by Kevin and Willmes (2014) examine the relationship of perceived norms as moderator between environmental concern and select environmental attitudes. They found that perceiving pro-environmental behaviours as norms has positive relationship with personal conservation behaviour.

In addition, Pillai et al. (2011) investigate how norms impact on forming consumer behaviour. A few personal characteristics such as age, professional status, income levels, educational status etc has being surveyed and the result found that norm has a great influence on consumer behaviour.

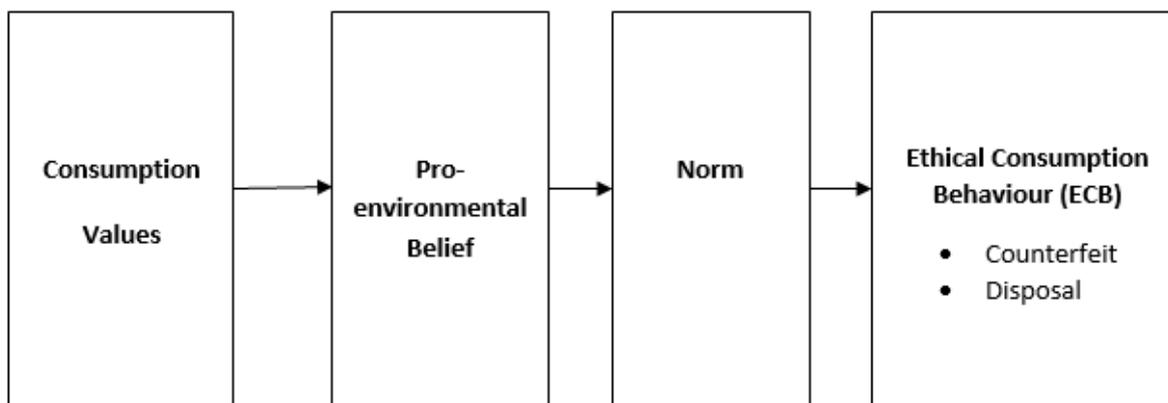
In similar vein, Melnyk et al. (2010) studied how the specification of the norm can substantially impact consumer decision making. Therefore, they study shows social norms had a relatively large effect on social responsible behaviours. In other word, it showed that social norms indeed are relatively influential for consumer behaviour.

Table 6: Summary of literature on norm

Researcher(s) & Year	Norm		Finding
	Independent variables	Dependent variables	
Kevin and Willmes (2014)	Norms and individual values	Conservation behaviour	Norms positively influence conservation behaviour
Pillai et al. (2011)	Norm	Consumer behaviour	Norms positively influence consumer behaviour
Melnyk et al. (2010)	Norm	Social responsible behaviour	Norms positively influence consumer behaviour

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is based on the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory proposed by Stern et al. (1999). It is applicable in the study of the behaviour of consumers in relation to environmental concerns and issues.



HYPOTHESIS

- H1: Consumption values have a positive relationship with belief.
- H2: Pro-environmental belief has a positive relationship with norm.
- H3: Norm has a positive relationship with ethical consumption behaviour.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

POPULATION

Population refers to the entire group of people, events, and things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate. For this study, the population refers to all customers in Malaysia.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Sampling is the process of using a small number of items or a part of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population (Zikmund, 2003). For this study, non-probability convenience sampling was used due to simplicity and convenience. Hulland et al. (2017) mentioned that in marketing surveys, there is often no obvious target population to which the researcher wants to generalize the findings, thus convenience sampling is highly recommended. Theoretically, convenience sampling is a nonsystematic approach to recruiting respondents that allows potential participants to self-select into the sample. The sample is all consumers in Malaysia. Thus, the sample size is 219 and data was collected via online survey.

INSTRUMENTS

The questions were divided into five sections which are demographic profile, ethical consumption, values, belief and norm. All the questions in each section except demographic profile were measured by using a 5-point Likert Scale as a scaled response of this type takes no more values, the error introduced by assuming that differences between the discrete points are equal become smaller. In addition, it is a simple method to administer (Zikmund et. al., 2010).

Section	No of items	Sources
Ethical consumption behavior	8	Agnes Total (2015); De Matos et al. (2007); Huang et al. (2004)
Counterfeit Disposal	8	Laitala (2014); Hyun-Mee (2014); Shim (1995),
Values	9	Hye et al. (2014); Iniesta-Bonillo and Sanchez-Fernandez (2007); Sheth et al. (1991)
Belief	8	Hye et al. (2014); Carrigan and Szmigin (2006); Stern (2000); Karp (1996); Francis et al. (2012); Berger and Corbin, (1992)
Norm	8	Ibtissem (2010)

ONLINE DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used a web-based survey that was designed using a Google Form (www.googleform.com). According to Gummerus et al. (2015), the activity of ethical consumption is well suited for online survey because by nature it connects people, although much of their behaviour continues offline as well. In addition, it can reduce the time and focused on resources required, especially when handling a large database (Duffet et al., 2012).

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, SmartPLS-3 software was used to analyse the data. PLS can be applied to complex structural equation models with a large number of constructs. In addition, it is able to handle both reflective and formative constructs and at the same time it better suited for theory development than for theory testing. This study test the Internal Consistency (CR), Convergent Validity (AVE), Coefficient of Determination (R²), Predictive relevance (Q²), Effect Size (f²) and the last is hypothesis testing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY (CR)

Table 7: Internal consistency (reliability) of the constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Conspicuous	0.84	0.90
Disposal	0.60	0.79
Ethical consumption behaviour	0.86	0.87
Hedonic	0.73	0.85
Norm	0.84	0.88
Pro-environmental belief	0.62	0.79
Utilitarian	0.68	0.82

Table 7 shows the value of CR for the indicators ranges from 0.79 to 0.90. As all the values are higher than the minimum suggested value of CR, it can be concluded that the factor scales are internally consistent and that all the items have strong and acceptable reliability.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY (AVE)

Table 8: Construct validity: convergent validity

Construct	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Conspicuous	0.750
Disposal	0.552
Hedonic	0.646
Norm	0.519
Pro-environmental belief	0.567
Utilitarian	0.611

Table 8 shows that values of the AVE are within the suggested range of 0.50 to 0.80 and therefore the measurement model's convergent validity is satisfactory.

COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R²)

Table 9: R-square values

Construct	R Square
Conspicuous	0.100
Ethical consumption behaviour	0.970
Hedonic	0.124
Norm	0.387
Pro-environmental belief	0.142
Utilitarian	0.209

Referring to Table 9, the value of R² for ECB as the endogenous construct (dependent variable) is 0.970. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variance of ECB is substantially explained by the conspicuous, hedonic, norm, pro-environmental belief, and utilitarian constructs as these account for 97% of the variance, while and the rest (3%) was explained by other variables that are not included in this study.

PREDICTIVE RELEVANCE (Q²)

Table 10: Predictive relevance values

Construct	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Conspicuous	657.000	611.176	0.070
Disposal	657.000	528.693	0.195
Ethical consumption behaviour	7,446.000	6,013.643	0.192
Hedonic	657.000	607.860	0.075
Norm	1,533.000	1,230.193	0.198
Pro-environmental belief	657.000	615.488	0.063
Utilitarian	657.000	583.583	0.112

As a relative measure of predictive relevance, (Q²) values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate, respectively, that an exogenous construct has a small, medium, or large predictive relevance for a certain endogenous construct (Hair et al.,2014). Thus, Table 10 indicates that the Q² value for ECB as an endogenous construct has a medium predictive relevance as the value of 0.192.

EFFECT SIZE (F²)

Table 11: f-Square

Construct	Ethical consumption behaviour	Personal norm	Pro-environmental belief
Conspicuous	0.001		0.005
Hedonic	0.015		0.030
Personal norm	0.003		

Pro-environmental belief		0.631	
Utilitarian	0.054		0.082

Table 11 indicates that the effect size of all of the constructs which (conspicuous, hedonic, norm and utilitarian) have a small effect on the endogenous latent variable, ECB.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 12: Hypothesis Testing

No.	Path model	Beta	Std. deviation	T- statistics	P- value	Decision
H1	Consumption value -> Pro-environmental belief	0.267	0.154	1.734	0.042	Supported
H2	Pro-environmental belief -> Norm	0.623	0.041	15.377	0.000	Supported
H3	Norm -> Ethical consumption behaviour	0.009	0.020	0.470	0.638	Not Supported

The result from Table 12 shows the value of estimated coefficient for the relationship between consumption value and pro-environmental belief is 0.267 with the Std. Deviation equal to 0.154 and t-ratio is 1.734. The significant value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H1 is accepted. Moreover, the result shows the value of estimated coefficient for the relationship between pro-environmental belief and norm is 0.623 with the Std. Deviation equal to 0.041 and t-ratio is 15.377. The significant value is less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). Therefore, H2 is accepted. In similar vein, the result shows the value of estimated coefficient for the relationship between norm and ethical consumption behaviour is 0.009 with the Std. Deviation equal to 0.020 and t-ratio is 0.470. The significant value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). Thus, H3 is rejected.

CONCLUSION

Ethical consumption behaviour is a new issue nowadays in Malaysia. Many programs offered by a few parties to ensure environment are save and protected from any harmful activities. Thus, this study conducted regarding to these phenomena whereby it focuses more on ethical behaviour consumption among Malaysian in purchasing counterfeit clothes and the way they dispose it. Online survey had conducted in getting the data and the result shows that values have relationship with pro-environmental belief. It shows that value that a person hold can influence their belief in buying decision. It is in line with the study by Judith and Linda (2012). In similar vein, pro-environmental belief also has relationship with norm. It shows that belief can shape their norm especially in buying clothes. This study is consistent with the study by Park and Ha (2011). However, norm has no relationship with ethical consumption behaviour. A possible explanation for this is because sometimes norm cannot shape a people to be ethical in consumption as there have a lot of factors influence their decision in purchasing. The finding of this study is contradicted with the study by Kevin and Wilmes (2014). Thus, this result answered all research questions and research objectives of the study.

Theoretically, this study extends the literature of ECB where it focuses on another dimensions which are disposal (environment) and counterfeit (social) issues. So the new instrument and measurement are develop and it useful for future research. Practically, this study give new instruments and information to use in further studies by focusing on different angle for example ascertain different antecedents for ethical purchasing behaviour. Moreover, this information helps them in creating new theories and or test existing hypotheses (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1981).

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