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# The Impact of Green Skepticism on the Effectiveness of Green Promotion in Driving Green Purchase Behavior in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Growing consumer concern about environmental impact has prompted companies to adopt green marketing strategies. However, the rise of green skepticism, often triggered by greenwashing, raises questions about the actual effectiveness of such strategies. This study examines the impact of eco-labels and green advertising on green purchase behavior, with perceived green knowledge as a mediator and green skepticism as a moderator. Drawing from the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, a quantitative survey was conducted with 301 environmentally conscious consumers in Greater Jakarta. Structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. Results show that both eco-labels and green advertising significantly enhance perceived green knowledge, which positively influences green purchase behavior. Interestingly, green skepticism negatively moderates the effect of green advertising on perceived knowledge but does not weaken the influence of eco-labels—possibly due to their third-party verification. The findings emphasize the importance of credible and transparent green communication. Theoretically, this study extends S–O–R by validating direct stimulus-response pathways. Practically, it guides marketers and policymakers to prioritize substantiated claims over persuasive imagery in green promotions.

**Keywords:** Green Advertising; Eco-Label; Green Skepticism; Perceived Green Knowledge; Sustainable Consumption.

## INTRODUCTION

The rising of global product consumption has emerged as a major driver of environmental degradation and increasing waste generation (Carrión-Bósquez et al., 2024). Accelerated exploitation of natural resources, coupled with inadequate waste management, has increased ecosystem decline over the past decade (Aránega et al., 2022). These developments have further contributed to global warming, now recognized as one of the most pressing environmental challenges worldwide (Jaiswal & Kant, 2018). Indonesia, as one of the most biodiverse nations, is experiencing profound impacts from these changes (Chairy & Alam, 2019) and faces the complex task of balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability.

Environmental concerns are intensifying, driven largely by the surge in waste generation that threatens both human well-being and ecosystem sustainability (Oesman et al., 2024). Addressing this issue requires joint efforts between governments and consumers, particularly through shifting purchasing behaviour toward eco-friendly products (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). This awareness has fostered the rise of a new consumer segment that is highly sensitive to the environmental consequences of their purchase decisions (Riskos et

al., 2021; Taufique et al., 2017), making it essential for businesses to understand such trends (Haba et al., 2023). Consequently, more companies are producing environmentally friendly products in response to the growing urgency of global environmental issues (Mufidah et al., 2018).

In Indonesia, interest in green products is rising, with 60% of consumers considering environmental aspects in purchases, yet only 20% verify such claims (Herdman & Rahmanto, 2021). Empirical evidence further indicates that 86% express concern for ecological issues and 73% are willing to pay more for sustainable products (Yusiana et al., 2022). While growing consumer awareness has encouraged the production of eco-friendly goods, green marketing is often perceived as greenwashing when companies are believed to exaggerate their environmental benefits (Dahl, 2010). Greenwashing defined as misleading environmental claims aimed at enhancing corporate image and sales has become a global concern (Delmas & Burbano, 2011) and a significant challenge in Indonesia. Although greenwashing can bring immediate financial benefits, these are often surpassed by financial losses as consumer skepticism increases (Horobet et al., 2024). Empirical evidence globally affirms that prior incidents of greenwashing significantly erode trust in corporate sustainability claims (Farooq & Wicaksono, 2021). This consumer skepticism can undermine the adoption of genuinely sustainable products, creating confusion over authentic environmental responsibility (Cherry & Sneirson, 2011).

However, a gap persists between pro-environmental attitudes and actual purchase behaviour, highlighting the need for deeper examination of environmental certification's influence on consumer decision-making within Indonesia's cultural context (Mal & Nehra, 2023). Despite rising consumer environmental awareness, the gap between intention and actual purchase of eco-friendly products persists in developing countries such as Indonesia (Faisal et al., 2023). Greenwashing exacerbates this gap by fostering skepticism toward corporate sustainability claims, thereby widening the attitude–behavior discrepancy (Panda et al., 2020).

Despite the growing body of literature on green consumer behavior, several critical research gaps remain unaddressed, particularly within the Indonesian context. First, while international studies have examined green skepticism's impact on purchase behavior, limited research has investigated how this skepticism differentially moderates the effectiveness of distinct green marketing tools—specifically eco-labels versus green advertising—within developing market settings. Second, the mediating role of perceived green knowledge in the relationship between green promotional stimuli and purchase behavior remains underexplored in Southeast Asian contexts, where educational levels and environmental literacy vary significantly from Western markets. Third, existing studies have predominantly examined these variables in isolation rather than within an integrated theoretical framework that combines the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model.

Therefore, this study represents a pioneering investigation in several key aspects: (1) it is the first comprehensive examination in Indonesia to simultaneously test the moderating effect of green skepticism on both eco-labels and green advertising, while incorporating perceived green knowledge as a mediating mechanism; (2) it integrates PKM and S-O-R frameworks to provide a more nuanced understanding of how consumers process and respond to different types of green marketing stimuli in the presence of skepticism; (3) it addresses the critical need to understand how trust deficits caused by greenwashing can be mitigated through

different promotional strategies, particularly third-party verified eco-labels versus company-initiated advertising; and (4) it provides empirical evidence from an emerging market perspective, where the interplay between economic constraints, environmental awareness, and marketing skepticism creates unique consumption dynamics.

The urgency of this research is underscored by Indonesia's dual challenge of achieving economic development while addressing environmental degradation. As the world's fourth most populous nation and a biodiversity hotspot, Indonesia's trajectory toward sustainable consumption patterns has global implications. Understanding how to effectively communicate environmental benefits while overcoming skepticism is crucial not only for corporate marketing success but also for advancing national environmental policy objectives and achieving Indonesia's commitments under international climate agreements.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, correlational approach with a cross-sectional design. A total of 312 respondents, all of whom identified as green product buyers with knowledge of eco-labels and green advertising, as well as awareness of environmental issues, voluntarily participated. Data collection was conducted in April 2025 through an online survey targeting residents of the JABODETABEK area.

The questionnaire was reviewed and validated by a panel of experts under the supervision of a faculty advisor. A pilot test involving 40 respondents was carried out to ensure the clarity and relevance of the items. The final instrument consisted of 19 items adapted from previous academic studies on green consumption: four items measuring perceived green knowledge (Sultana et al., 2022), three items on eco-labeling (Nguyen-Viet, 2022; Riskos et al., 2021), three items on green advertising (Sun et al., 2021), four items on green skepticism (MOHR et al., 1998), and five items on green purchase behavior (Lee, 2011; Nazir & Wani, 2024). All items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale.

The measurement model was assessed to ensure indicator reliability, internal consistency, and validity, following established PLS-SEM guidelines (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2011; Henseler et al., 2015). Indicators with outer loadings below 0.70 were carefully evaluated, and those between 0.40 and 0.70 were considered for removal if doing so improved composite reliability or the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, applying the thresholds of ≥0.70 for adequate confirmation and ≥0.80 for high reliability. Convergent validity was confirmed when factor loadings exceeded 0.70 and AVE values were greater than 0.50. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT), with a cut-off value of 0.90 for conceptually similar constructs and 0.85 for distinct constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with SmartPLS to evaluate both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The outer model assessment included indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted/AVE), and discriminant validity using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Threshold values followed established guidelines, such as outer loadings ≥ 0.70, AVE > 0.50, Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.70, and HTMT < 0.90 {Formatting Citation}. The inner model evaluation involved testing for

collinearity using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF < 5), determining the model's explanatory power with the coefficient of determination ($R^2$), and examining the effect size ($f^2$) where values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects (Cohen, 1988). Predictive relevance ($Q^2$) and path coefficient estimates were also analyzed through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, using a 95% confidence interval. Hypothesis testing applied a two-tailed significance level, where t-values > 1.96 indicated significance at the 5% level, supporting or rejecting the hypothesized relationships accordingly.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic characteristic of respondents

This study was conducted in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. A total of 312 respondents with purchase history with eco-labelled products participated in this research.

**Table 1. Summarizes the Demographic Characteristics.**

| Characteristics | Category | Frequency |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 57.3% |
| | Male | 42.7% |
| **Age** | 18-25 | 33.0% |
| | 26-33 | 53.0% |
| | 34-41 | 8.0% |
| | 42-49 | 4.3% |
| | >49 | 1.7% |
| **Domicile** | Jakarta | 42.3% |
| | Bogor | 5.7% |
| | Depok | 10.3% |
| | Tangerang | 35.0% |
| | Bekasi | 6.7% |
| **Educations** | Bachelor | 53.3% |
| | Master | 7.0% |
| | Doctoral/Ph.D | 4.0% |
| | High School | 35.7% |

### Estimation of the measurement model

**Table 2. The Hypothesized Model, Composed of Five Variables (ECL, GA, PGK, GS, GPB)**

| Variables | Item measurements | Factor Loadings | AVE | Composite Reliability | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Eco–Label** (Nguyen-Viet, 2022; Riskos et al., 2021) | I consider eco-labels displayed on products to be a good way of providing information to consumers. | 0.910 | 0.801 | 0.923 | 0.876 |
| | The presence of certified eco-labels and organic labels increases my trust in a product. | 0.893 | | | |
| | I believe that products with eco-labels are truly committed to protecting the environment. | 0.881 | | | |
| **Green Advertising** (Sun et al., 2021) | I think brands that use advertising messages about the environment are good. | 0.904 | 0.821 | 0.932 | 0.891 |
| | I pay attention to products that develop advertisements related to the environment. | 0.922 | | | |

| Variables | Item measurements | Factor Loadings | AVE | Composite Reliability | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I believe that environmentally friendly advertisements have a positive value. | 0.892 | | | |
| **Perceived Green Knowledge** (Sultana et al., 2022) | I feel that I know more about environmental preservation compared to the average person. | 0.817 | 0.698 | 0.902 | 0.856 |
| | I understand the environmental terms and symbols found on product packaging | 0.843 | | | |
| | I know that I purchase products and packaging that are safe for the environment. | 0.832 | | | |
| | I know how to choose products and packaging that can reduce the amount of waste ending up in landfills. | 0.849 | | | |
| **Green Skepticism** (MOHR et al., 1998) | Most environmental information found on green product labels or advertisements is untrue. | 0.862 | 0.751 | 0.923 | 0.889 |
| | Because environmental claims are often exaggerated, it would be better if such claims were removed from products. | 0.879 | | | |
| | Most environmental information found on green product labels or advertisements is misleading to consumers. | 0.890 | | | |
| | I do not trust most environmental claims conveyed through product labels or advertisements. | 0.834 | | | |
| **Green Purchase Behavior** (Lee, 2011; Nazir & Wani, 2024) | I check and make sure that the products I purchase do not contain ingredients harmful to the environment. | 0.821 | 0.711 | 0.925 | 0.898 |
| | I regularly purchase environmentally friendly products. | 0.844 | | | |
| | I spend a considerable amount of money on environmentally friendly products. | 0.884 | | | |
| | I prefer products with recyclable or environmentally friendly packaging. | 0.823 | | | |
| | I plan to purchase more environmentally friendly products in the next six months. | 0.843 | | | |

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait–monotrait ratio)**

| | ECL | GA | GPB | PGK | GSXGA | GSXECL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ECL** | | | | | | |
| **GA** | 0.583 | | | | | |
| **GPB** | 0.547 | 0.696 | | | | |
| **GS** | 0.597 | 0.740 | 0.725 | | | |
| **PGK** | 0.697 | 0.764 | 0.697 | 0.714 | | |
| **GSXGA** | 0.470 | 0.612 | 0.522 | 0.662 | 0.604 | |
| **GSXECL** | 0.561 | 0.473 | 0.329 | 0.532 | 0.555 | 0.752 |

**Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Fornell Larcker Criterion)**

| | ECL | GA | GPB | GS | PGK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ECL** | 0.895 | | | | |
| **GA** | 0.516 | 0.906 | | | |
| **GPB** | 0.488 | 0.628 | 0.843 | | |
| **GS** | 0.527 | 0.657 | 0.652 | 0.867 | |
| **PGK** | 0.604 | 0.669 | 0.612 | 0.622 | 0.835 |

**Table 5. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)**

| Variable | VIF |
|---|---|
| Eco–Label → Green Purchase Behavior | 1.860 |
| Eco–Label → Perceived Green Knowledge | 1.362 |
| Green Advertising → Green Purchase Behavior | 2.311 |
| Green Advertising → Perceived Green Knowledge | 1.362 |
| Perceived Green Knowledge → Green Purchase Behavior | 2.367 |
| Green Skepticism X Green Advertising → Green Purchase Behavior | 3.068 |
| Green Skepticism X Eco–Label → Green Purchase Behavior | 2.625 |

**Table 6. The Effect Size ($f^2$)**

| Variables | $f^2$ | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Eco–Label ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.022 | Small |
| Eco–Label ⟶ Perceived Green Knowledge | 0.197 | Medium |
| Green Advertisement ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.041 | Medium |
| Green Advertisement ⟶ Perceived Green Knowledge | 0.379 | Large |
| Green Skepticism ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.100 | Medium |
| Perceived Green Knowledge ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.047 | Small |
| Green Skepticism X Green Advertising ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.030 | Small |
| Green Skepticism X Eco–Label ⟶ Green Purchase Behavior | 0.066 | Small |

**Table 7. Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing**

| Hypothesis | Original Sample | T stat (\|O/STDEV\|) | P values | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Eco–Label has a positive effect on Perceived Green Knowledge | 0.352 | 4.678 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H2: Green Advertising has a positive effect on Perceived Green Knowledge | 0.488 | 6.591 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| H3: Perceived Green Knowledge has a positive effect on Green Purchase Behavior | 0.223 | 3.182 | 0.001 | Accepted |
| H6: Eco–Label has a positive effect on Green Purchase Behavior | 0.135 | 1.958 | 0.025 | Accepted |
| H7: Green Advertising has a positive effect on Green Purchase Behavior | 0.205 | 2.712 | 0.003 | Accepted |
| H8: Green Skepticism weakens the relationship between Eco–Label and Green Purchase Behavior | 0.135 | 1.924 | 0.027 | Rejected |
| H9: Green Skepticism weakens the relationship between Green Advertising and Green Purchase Behavior | -0.099 | 1.972 | 0.024 | Accepted |

**Table 8. Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing**

| Hypothesis | Original Sample | T stat (\|O/STDEV\|) | P values | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H4: Perceived Green Knowledge positively mediates the relationship between Eco–Label and Green Purchase Behavior | 0.079 | 2.618 | 0.004 | Accepted |
| H5: Perceived Green Knowledge positively mediates the relationship between Green Advertising and Green Purchase Behavior | 0.109 | 2.740 | 0.003 | Accepted |

## Discussion

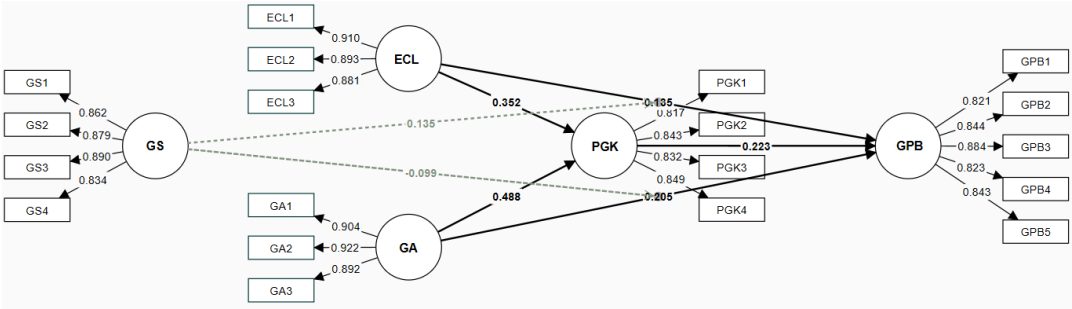


Fig 1. Structural Equation Model of the Effects of Eco-Labels, Green Advertising, Perceived Green Knowledge, and Green Skepticism on Green Purchase Behavior

The results obtained through SEM-PLS support 8 hypotheses presented in the hypothesis model and reject one. Therefore, H1 empirically supported indicating that ECL positively influences PGK consumers in buying eco-friendly products. These findings align with Islam et al. (2022), who demonstrated that knowledge of eco-labels enhances positive attitudes and consumer trust toward environmentally friendly products. The informative function of eco-labels in improving consumers' ecological knowledge perception (Panopoulos et al., 2023). Thus, eco-labels function not only as visual identifiers but also as educational stimuli that enrich consumer understanding and strengthen GPB. This reinforces the strategic importance of marketing approaches that leverage eco-labels to simultaneously build trust and enhance environmental literacy among consumers.

H2 is empirically supported, implying that GA positively influences PGK of green products consumers. These findings found that environmentally oriented advertising fosters consumer awareness and knowledge of ecological issues. Authentic green advertising integrating credible environmental data and relevant visual narratives can effectively enhance consumers' understanding of the benefits of green products (Nguyen-Viet, 2022). Recent evidence by Li (2025) further confirms that green advertising significantly increases consumers' environmental knowledge, which in turn mediates and strengthens their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. This highlights the importance of embedding educational elements within green advertising strategies to improve consumer engagement and trust toward sustainable products.

H3 is empirically supported, indicating PGK directly influences GPB. This finding aligns with Amoako et al. (2020), who demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between perceived green knowledge and green purchase behavior. Greater environmental knowledge enhances perceived green value, thereby encouraging the purchase of eco-friendly

products {Formatting Citation}. Aman et al. (2020) further identified perceived green knowledge as a key predictor of sustainable purchase behavior. Acting as a cognitive catalyst, it strengthens the link between environmental information and actual purchasing behavior, enabling consumers to make more selective choices and willingly pay a premium for sustainable products. Hence, sustainability communication strategies should prioritize consumer education, as improved environmental knowledge directly contributes to stronger green purchase behavior.

H4 is empirically supported, indicating that eco-labels have a positive and significant effect on green purchase behavior, with perceived green knowledge serving as a significant mediating variable. This suggests that eco-labels not only build consumer trust in a product but also enrich their understanding of sustainability issues, which in turn drives purchasing decisions. Consistent with previous studies, consumer knowledge about eco-labels strengthens the link between persuasive green information and green brand credibility, ultimately enhancing eco-friendly purchasing behavior (Kumar et al., 2021). Similarly, Jeong and Kim (2021) found that environmental knowledge amplifies the impact of sustainability communication on purchase decisions. In this context, eco-labels act as a stimulus that enhances perceived green knowledge, which then fosters green purchase behavior as a response. These findings highlight the strategic importance of integrating educational elements into eco-labeling to promote more sustainable consumption patterns.

H5 is empirically supported, indicating that green advertising positively influences green purchase intention, with this effect strengthened by consumers' environmental knowledge. As shown by Li (2025), environmental knowledge enables consumers to better interpret the information conveyed in green advertisements, thereby increasing their intention to purchase eco-friendly products. This aligns with Chairy and Nur Alam (2019), who found that higher perceived green knowledge significantly enhances green purchase intention, as well-informed consumers better understand the environmental value of such products. Similarly, Kautish and Sharma (2020) emphasized the importance of raising awareness about the environmental consequences of consumption to foster sustainable purchase behaviors. These findings highlight that the effectiveness of green advertising lies not only in persuasive narratives or visual appeal but also in its capacity to educate consumers, enabling both emotional engagement and cognitive awareness of sustainability impacts.

H6 is empirically supported, indicating that eco-labels have a positive and significant impact on green purchase behavior. Consistent with Riskos et al. (2021), consumers who understand the meaning of eco-labels tend to perceive labeled products as superior, are willing to pay a premium, and rely on labels as a reference in purchase decisions particularly those highly involved in environmental issues. This aligns with previous studies who view eco-labels as symbols of product integrity and sustainability (Alamsyah et.al., 2020; Fuerst & Shimizu, 2016) and emphasizes their role in building consumer trust and facilitating informed choices (Putri, 2023). By enabling consumers to distinguish environmentally friendly products from non-sustainable ones, eco-labels influence preferences, strengthen purchase intentions, and encourage more selective and environmentally conscious buying behavior. These findings highlight the importance of transparent, credible, and educational communication about eco-labels in promoting sustainable consumption.

H7 is empirically supported, indicating that green advertising significantly influences green purchase behavior through the enhancement of perceived consumer value. Sun et al. (2020) found that advertisements promoting products aligned with environmental protection effectively encourage consumers to choose green alternatives. Separately, Sun et al. (2021) showed that raising public awareness of the consequences of traditional product consumption strengthens the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Zhang et al. (2024) further highlight that messages incorporating perceived economic and social value enhance the effectiveness of green advertising, while green advertising shapes various perceived values, functional, social, emotional, conditional, and epistemic which, in turn, drive green purchasing decisions (Wang & Musa, 2024). These findings highlight that transparent and relevant environmental messaging not only persuades but also educates and transforms consumer preferences toward more sustainable choices.

H8 is rejected. Therefore, the moderating role of green skepticism towards eco-label and green purchase behavior is not supported. This finding contradicts several investigations showing that the rise of eco-labels, while intended to guide consumers, often fails to guarantee genuine sustainability, which in turn fosters skepticism when these labels lack credibility (Özkan & Özbey, 2023). Such skepticism may erode consumer trust, highlighting the importance of consumer awareness in curbing greenwashing and restoring confidence in sustainability initiatives. In a similar vein, prior studies have demonstrated that green skepticism can impede environmentally friendly purchasing behavior, as doubts about environmental claims reduce consumers' willingness to buy products marketed as eco-friendly, including those bearing eco-label. These findings emphasize the need to improve the quality and transparency of eco-labels, alongside public education to enhance consumers' critical assessment skills. The barrier is not skepticism itself, but the lack of clarity and integrity in environmental communication. Clear, honest, and credible messaging can still win the trust of even skeptical consumers, presenting a strategic opportunity for businesses to rebuild confidence through trustworthy eco-labels.

H9 is empirically supported, indicating that consumer skepticism moderates the effectiveness of green advertising in driving green purchase behavior. This aligned with previous studies, which is found that general advertising skepticism shapes attitudes toward green advertising, with highly skeptical consumers tending to hold negative perceptions (Yu, 2018). Such skepticism often stems from the view that advertising is inherently biased or manipulative, particularly when unsupported by verifiable evidence (Schmuck et al., 2018). Unsubstantiated environmental claims can trigger distrust and doubt (Kautish & Sharma, 2020), reducing the persuasiveness of sustainability messages and, in some cases, fostering resistance (Higueras-Castillo et al., 2024). These findings highlight that the credibility of green advertising is as critical as its environmental content. In an era of heightened concern over greenwashing, transparent, evidence-based communication ideally validated by credible third parties are essential to maintain consumer trust and safeguard brand sustainability.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that eco-labels, green advertising, perceived green knowledge (PGK), and green skepticism (GS) significantly influence green purchase behavior (GPB) among 301 Indonesian respondents, with eco-labels and transparent advertising directly

enhancing PGK and responsible buying, while PGK amplifies the persuasive effect of stimuli and GS moderates by strengthening credible eco-labels yet weakening manipulative advertising. The findings extend the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework and the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) by highlighting the mediating role of PGK and the nuanced influence of GS in an emerging market context. Practically, the research advises businesses to emphasize verified sustainability messages, educational efforts, transparency, and targeted audience engagement to boost environmental literacy and trust. Future research should expand to broader demographics and geographic areas, incorporate longitudinal or qualitative methods to understand motivational drivers, include variables like green trust and cynicism, conduct cross-country studies across Southeast Asia, and explore rural consumer behaviors to develop more comprehensive insights for effective and sustainable green marketing strategies.

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