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The Fair-Trade Products in Malaysia: An Exploratory Analysis of Purchase Intention

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Abstract:
The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of awareness, value, quality and convenience purchase intention of Fair Trade products among Malaysian. Since the poverty still retain the high rate, Fair Trade as a non-government organization intended to promote and improving the life of small growers and farmers and the low-cost labors through fair trade transaction.
This study is conducted due to Fair Trade products is only prevailed in developed countries but yet in developing countries includes Malaysia. Previous study indicates that consumer's purchase intention would be affected by awareness, value, quality and convenience. Thus this research is to explore more on the relationship between the variables.
The finding of this study shows that the data are significantly having a relationship between awareness, value, quality, convenience with the consumer purchase intention. The hypotheses were accepted, thus consumers' purchase intention in Fair Trade products would be influenced by the independent variables, and most of respondents are willing to purchase in the near future. Therefore, with the results obtained, Malaysia as a developing country, it could help to reduce the poverty rate for under developing and developing countries' farmers and growers.

Keywords: Fair trade product, awareness, value, quality, convenience, purchase intention

1.1. Development of Fair Trade Movement
Fair Trade is a social movement that is advocated by Fair Trade Organization which gives small producers an opportunity to improve their life and business, in other words, Fair Trade movement aims to help small producers and growers to gain better trading conditions in developed countries (Euro, USA) in term of fair price and promoting sustainability. It is also promoting better working and wellness condition among farmers and growers in developing countries that located in Africa and Asia continent.

1.2. The development of Fair Trade Organization
To align with the Fair Trade movement in 1970s, Alternative Trade Organization was informally met to the world and after a few years, it was considered to create more formal structure which is International Federation of Alternative Organization. In year 1989, World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) was set up to associate and represent the supply chain from producer to retailer and it's a global network supported by five continents, more than 70 countries over 370 member organizations. In year 1994, another informal group known as North American Alternative Trade Organization (NAATO) as a non-government organization has been involved into movement. Both WFTO and NAATO created the Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) that offers certification and supports, inspects the excluded farmers (Kocken, 2009). A Fair Trade label means any recognized Fair Trade product by FLO that is used to denote compliance with the internationally-agreed Fair Trade Standards.
Furthermore, Shahzad and Sillanpaa (2013) claimed that Fair Trade industry has been divided into four main organization groups as shown in Figure 1. They stated that the first main party manages those producers who come from southern countries or developing countries, secondary division is in charge the buying or place order to developing countries, third affiliation is the major bodies in Fair

Trade (FT) industry, the umbrella organization which were set up like FLO, this branch majority focus on evaluate the farm or manufacturing so that make sure every small farm could grab opportunity, and lastly, the fourth bodies are supermarket engage in FT which is that once the product has already done, they should have the channel to sale FT products, thus this party is helping them to sell in market. As FT are standardization, Carlson (2008) claimed that the process between FT, producers, and manufacturers is practiced in a series of steps by FLO-CERT, the completion of certification needs spent 4 to 12 months depends on the respective factors as shown in Figure 2.
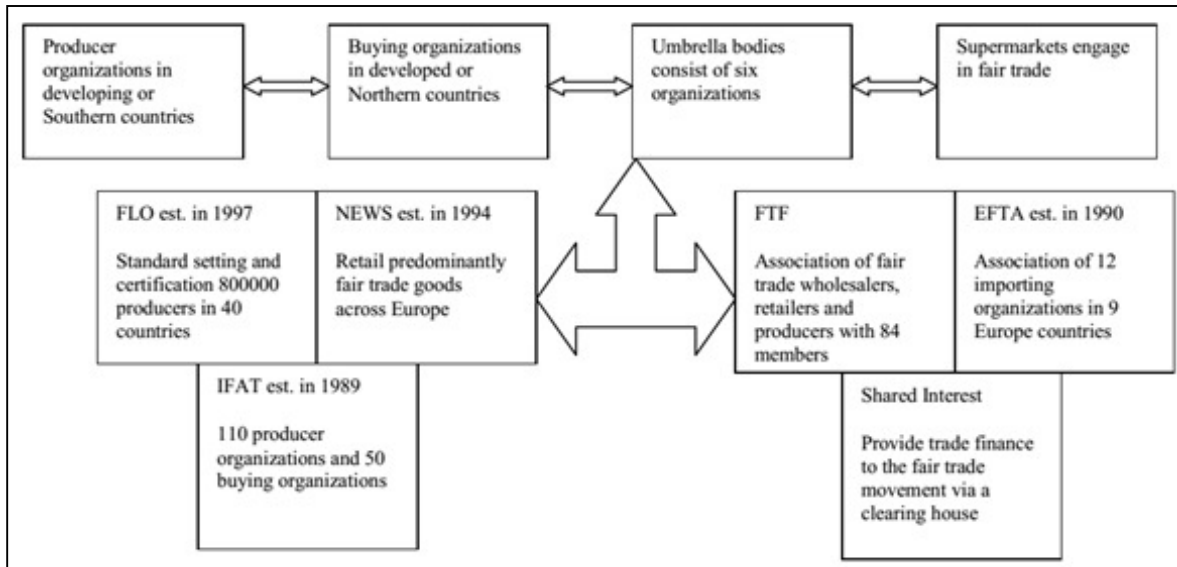

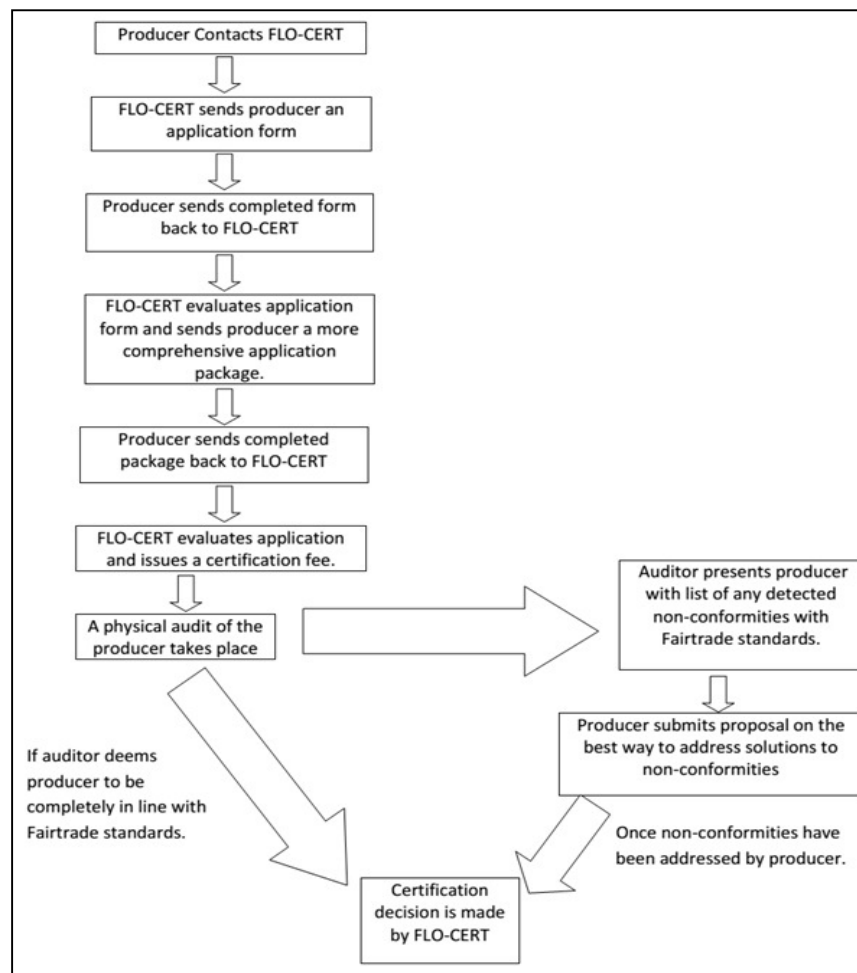*Figure 1: The industry structure [Adapt from Shahzad, & Sillanpaa, 2013]*

Figure 2: The process of Fair Trade [Adapt from FLO-CERT]

1.3. Purpose of Study

Apparently, the global problems and issues once are recognized by some international agencies like WFO, it's more easily to promote and be advocated, consequently influence the sustainable consumption. Therefore, this study is conducted on Fair Trade movement, where the initiative purpose is in terms of the determination of purchase intention towards the awareness level, value, quality and convenience of Fair Trade products and impacted by them, while exploiting the implicated significant relationship between four independent variables that contain the main component affect consumers' purchase intention, finally impact the Fair Trade further movement.

1.4. Types of Research

This is a descriptive quantitative study, where the purpose is to describe in detail the relationship between the purchase intention of consumers and pre-purchase stage perception (awareness, value, quality and convenience). By conducting a quantitative approach, it could use the numerical data to analysis and draw the conclusion for the hypothesis.

1.5. Problem Statements

As economic environment practices growth, organizational behavior is forced to practice within the social responsibility by consumers who are more concerned about society. In contrast, some organizations often adopted in lower labor for cost-reduction or switch the manufacturing to other developing country in order to grab the competitive advantage and challenges (Kogut, 1985; Porter, 1986). Thus, Doane (2001) and Lindholm and Wahlstedt (2016) reported that Fair Trade movement initially motivates consumers to purchase the labeled Fair Trade products which actually balance their organization responsibility upon the ethical and fair means of consumption.

Nelson and Smith (2011) had studied the Fair Trade cotton in India, which aimed to assess the impact of fair trade on cotton producers and their organizations in India. This study founded an unfair trade issue which related to labor cost and farmers' transaction situation. In addition, Gomersall and Wang (2012) study of Fair Trade products in Chinese market founded low level of awareness of Chinese consumers and their willingness to purchase the premium price on Fair Trade Tea.

Furthermore, Pearcy and Schock (2014) and Śmigielska, Dąbrowska and Radziukiewicz (2015) stated that through this approach, firms might gain the financial advantage with low cost subsequently the sales price could be lower than other competitors, in some way, it might offer potential for opportunism, who would have utilized it to clean up, command cheap workforce to work in a stress environment, or unequal respect condition. By rising Fair Trade purchase intention can increase people's living standards, gain a decent living environment and access to the very basic necessities of life. Fair Trade consumption behavior has proved that it could improve the lives of substantial numbers of individuals and communities in developing nations who regularly face great challenges in earning a decent living and accessing the very basic necessities of life (Pearcy & Schrock, 2014). Consequently, no matter Chinese Tea or Indian's cotton, all these articles had proven that Asia consumers' having lower awareness level of Fair Trade products. Therefore, it's stronger reason to conduct this study on Fair Trade product among Malaysian consumers, because none of the previous study discussed about the awareness and understanding of Fair Trade concept or willingness to accept its principles in Malaysia. Hence, conducting this research is to examine and exploit how the Malaysian consumers' purchase intention if they're aware of the Fair Trade movement. As a result, it surely rises willingness to pay a high premium for Fair Trade products as well as to improve the poor producers' living standards.

1.6. Research Objectives

The following objectives are based on the problem statement of this research:
a) To identify is there any significant relationship between awareness and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
b) To discover is there any significant relationship between value and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
c) To detect is there any significant relationship between quality and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
d) To investigate is there any significant relationship between convenience and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.

1.7. Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated based on the research objectives:
a) Is there any significant relationship between awareness and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian?
b) Is there any significant relationship between value and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian?
c) Is there any significant relationship between quality and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian?
d) Is there any significant relationship between convenience and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian?

1.8. Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between "awareness" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
H2: There is a significant relationship between "value" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
H3: There is a significant relationship between "quality" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
H4: There is a significant relationship between " convenience" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.
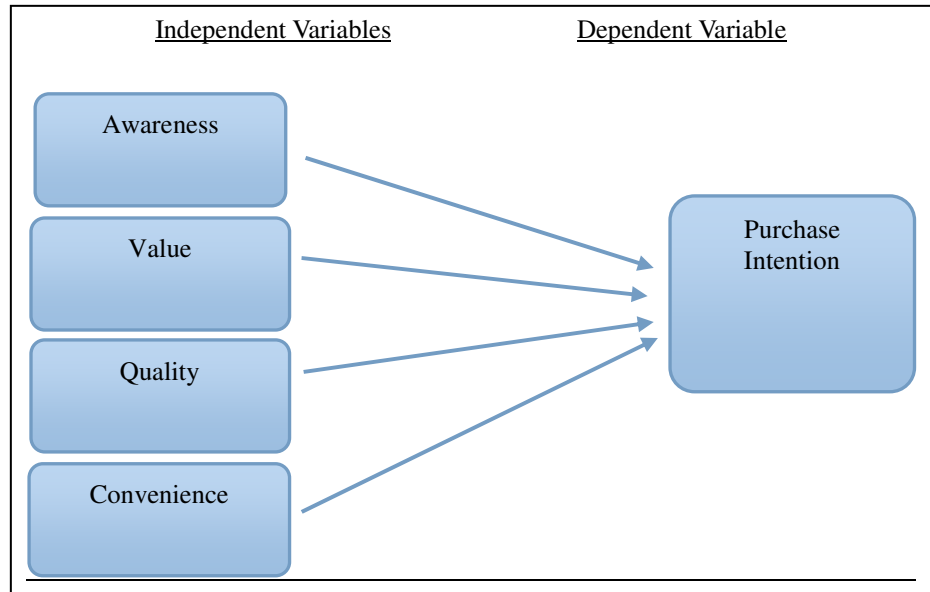
1.9. Theoretical Framework

Figure 3: Research Framework

1.10. Significant of Study
This study is conducted to investigate the consumers' purchasing intention on Fair Trade products among Malaysian on awareness, value, quality and convenience.

1.11. Contribution of Study
The results obtained from this study, it devotes to introduce the Fair Trade products in Malaysia. It cultivates better purchase intention by using consumers' right especially in developing countries by examining how the ethical consumption intention could be proceeded through the four variables.

1.12. Limitation of Study
Research sample may not be representable and generalizable enough to study the Fair Trade products among Malaysian. Secondly, lack of reliable data of Fair Trade manufacturers in Malaysia can limit the scope of study, thus it affected the precision and confidence of the study. Other than that, since the questionnaire is a self-reported, it may contain biasness due to exaggeration, inaccurate answers or selective memories.

2.1. Purchase Intention
Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) claimed that the purchase intention comes into deliberation when a customer is most likely attempting to purchase some product or service (Rizwan et al., 2014). Ottman (1992) stated that when the quality, performance, convenience and affordability of products has been met the consumers' primary need, they would accept the products, and further to influence their purchase decisions. Purchase intention refers to consumers' behavior on a repetitious purchase and frequently visit their preferred store (Wan Halim & Hamed, 2005; Whitlark, Geurts & Swenson, 1993).
Rizwan et al. (2013) showed that the main fundamental aspect of consumer behavior is their purchase intention whereby it is described as the situation in which a customer is agreeable to make a transaction with the retailer. They also added that the quality, brand satisfaction, price, brand trust and product knowledge have a positive significant relationship with purchase intention.

2.2. Awareness
Several studies (Leire & Thidell, 2005; Pearcy & Schrock, 2014; Skanavis & Sarri, 2002) showed that the majority of consumers are unaware the impact of their purchases have on the environment and society. Therefore, the starting point in addressing sustainability issues is making people aware of the connection between their consumption behaviors and sustainability (Skanavis & Sarri, 2002).
Watterson (2008) study on fair trade concept in market such as US, UK and New Zealand founded level of awareness and understanding about fair trade is generally high. Gomersall and Wang (2012) pointed that higher education level would have an influence on consumers' level of understanding and accepting towards fair trade concept and product. Moreover, increasing awareness and understanding among consumer on Fair Trade product could meet the needs of the current generation and benefited to the environment without harming the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs (Leary, et al. 2014).
Moreover, previous study examined that consumers' awareness is an important factor which would affect their prediction purchase intention on the fair trade products, evidence exits which support to measure the level of awareness are come from the public policy

and market access. Pearcy and Schrock (2014) showed that the public policy, stakeholder involvement and fair trade information dissemination play an important role to increase consumer fair trade awareness level.

2.3. Value
De Pelsmacker, Driesen and Rayp (2005) claimed that value is based on the price of product which includes the price of product itself and the cost of workers. In fair trade, its include product premium cost and fair trade transaction cost. They also claimed that purchase intention is based on the price which would affect the consumers who might be willing to pay for fair trade goods. McCluskey and Loureior (2003) using product labeling which allows businesses to create distinct quality or a specific desirable attributes, consequently to offer premium price based on that distinction. By this, consumers are willing to buy fair trade products which has a significant quality (Loureior & Lotade, 2005).
Values also means that products are made ethically by retailers or using the social components of a company's business process and supporting corporate social responsibility (Freestone & McGoldrick, 2008). Values also represents a significant impact on their ethical consumption behavior and therefore depicts consumer purchase intention. Gomersall and Wang (2011) found that most of consumer are willing to pay a premium price and additional price for fair trade product.

2.4. Quality
Quality is one of the most important factors that affecting the buying or purchase decision of consumers (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000), this can further be defined by the theory of conventions whereas quality is one of the spheres in which the economic activity is regulated by the procedures which go beyond regulation (Renard, 2003). The theory of conventions also perceives quality as the fundamental concept in which the analysis of economic life, as well as being the key axis of current competitive strategies in this post-ford period. Renard (2003) had discusses two types of quality which are product-based-quality (PBQ) and manufacturing-based-quality (MBQ). PBQ is an amount of specific attributes or ingredients of a product, whereas MBQ involves conformance to manufacturing specifications or service standards. Therefore, De Pelsmacker, Driesen and Rayp (2005) stated that the quality of Fair Trade products would sensitively affect consumers' purchase intention.

2.5. Convenience
Kotler, Armstrong, and Cunningham (2005) pointed that convenience is not only about place, it's the way that are convenient as much as possible for consumers to get the products or service. Therefore, retailers should select the trading-area and take every effort to give convenience to customer for purchasing (Wang, Wang & Yao, 2005).
While Bechetti and Rosati (2007) and Eze and Bello (2015) asserted that purchase intention for most of fair trade products by consumers have been found to be affected by distance, which requires a need to travel to a retail outlet. Convenience to buy is to optimize the operational hours.
Nazir et al. (2012) reported that huge information provided by online retailers could allow consumers to access from anywhere in the world. It has totally changed the way how and where people spent their leisure time to shop, work, and other ways in our lives. Thus, by this time-saving shopping channel, customers are no longer tied to the opening hours or specific locations, it may become active virtually at any time and any place to purchase products and service.
Furthermore, Caldwell (2013) claims that the Internet Usage Statistic in year 2013 displayed that there are 38.8% of the world population are using internet, while it related new medium for the communication as well as exchanging information which has become present in our daily lives. Since online shopping has become prevail, the most convenient way for consumer exactly affecting consumers' purchase intention (Nazir et al., 2012). Thus, regardless of the place for selling the Fair Trade products is off line or online in Malaysia, not yet launched means that as a factor definitely influence the purchase intention, consequently impede the expanding of Fair Trade movement.

3.1. Research Design
There is a fundamental approach used in research that known as a quantitative research. A quantitative approach can be described as a research concerned with the measurement of attitudes, behaviors and perceptions of respondents, it involves data collection and conversion as a numerical form via the statistical calculations, so that it could make and draw conclusions for this research. Regarding to Malholtra (2015), research design is an outline structure for running a research project. Research design helps the researcher to organize the research activities, including the data collection, in ways that are most likely to achieve the research objectives. Thus, quantitative research approach was use because it is measurable, descriptive and is able to provide conclusive results (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

3.2. Purpose and Area of Study
This survey was concentrated at the central spot in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where people come from different state and countries includes local and international respondent. Various location could allow the researcher to obtain a diversified sample in cost-saving way and to better monitor the data collection process, students also as the new generation of consumers are expressing their preference.

3.3. Population & Sampling Procedure

This is a descriptive study by using the questionnaire survey method. A survey conducted by providing questionnaires to the segmented groups which every respondent of the population will be given equal chance to complete the questionnaire in order to make the study more dependent.

3.4. Instrument Reliability and Validity

In section A, nominal scale is used to gather demographic data such as the age, gender, program and country. Section B were to assess the "purchasing intention on FT product" construct and four related independent variables construct, each variable underlies five items in order to examine the reliability and validity, participants are required to cycle each item by using five-point Likert scale which from 1 to 5, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, normally, 1 presents strongly disagree, while 5 is strongly agree. The result of this questionnaire would test the consistency reliability by the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (George & Mallery, 2003), the result is reliable when the alpha value greater than 0.60, more than 0.6 and 0.70 would be considered questionable reliability, less than 0.50 would not be accepted, however it is considered excellent reliable when the value is more than 0.90.

3.5. Data collection methods

This study was carried out by gathering the primary data from the samples. In order to collect the data for understanding the situation about the purchase intention on Fair Trade products, as well as the four elements which would affect consumers to make a final purchase decision, a pilot testing was pretested the questionnaire beforehand within a small group of target, then a set of closed-end question.

3.6. Data analysis method

By using IBM SPSS software of the Version 19 to obtain the mean, frequencies and to analyze the reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha, involved to launch a test of the consistency of respondents' answer in measuring construct that alpha value more than 0.5 is acceptable. The analysis tools include of data entries, coding, checking and handling missing data, normality test, hypotheses testing and etc.

3.7. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is the process of transforming the raw collected data into the form that enable the data be more understood able and interpretative (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The descriptive analysis would indicate the maximize score, the minimum score, the standard deviation, the means, the frequency distribution and the range of the scores. In the result of descriptive analysis can find out whether the data spread normally and whether there are any illegal entries and missing entries. The suitable correction will be implemented for all the illegal entries. The missing entries will be filled up by the means of other entries.

3.8. Reliability Test

After the descriptive analysis, the reliability of the data will be tested. A reliability test is to test the consistency and stability of the data. Consistency of the data indicates the extents of the item measuring the same concept hanging together as a set (Bland & Altman, 1986). Every item for each variable will be tested on their reliability. This analysis is to test the consistency and stability of the collected data for each variable from the respondents. Cronbach's coefficient alpha will be used to estimate the reliability for this research, the result should be according to the indicator which is range described the extent of the items in a set are positive correlate to each other. Therefore, the reliability coefficient of this research has to maintain at least in the acceptable range so that it can make sure the data analysis result can be consistent with what the research is seeking.

3.9. Pearson Correlation Analysis

The relationship between the dependent variable (purchase intention) and independent variable (awareness, value, quality convenience) were be tested by using Pearson correlation analysis according to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), Pearson correlation analysis is to measure the strength and direction of a linear relationship, while the significant value relationships among all variables. The Pearson Correlation Analysis will test all the hypothesis of this research. In the Pearson Correlation Analysis, the result shows the stronger level of relationship, it might gain larger the correlation coefficient, the relationship of the variables. The direction of relationship can be either positive or negative.

4.1. Profile of the Respondents

The demographic information includes the following characteristics of participants: gender, age, race and income. The demographics information is represented in table 1 based on the frequency distributions and percentages. From the 250 respondents in this study, we finally collected 241 sets of questionnaire which is successfully and completely answered the survey.

	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	137	56.8	56.8	56.8
	Male	104	43.2	43.2	100.0
	Total	241	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Frequency of demography

4.2. Hypothesis Testing & Correlation Analysis

- H1: There is a significant relationship between "awareness" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.

The result from table 2 shows that the variable has a significant positive relationship with r=0.666 and significant value (p <0.05), this suggested that awareness significantly influence the purchase intention among respondents, the H1 is accepted and the result is consistent with the finding by May, Gilson and Harter (2004) as cited in Saks (2006) that awareness has positively related to purchase intention. By introducing the Fair Trade products to current market, it would achieve the positive outcome, since the relationship between these two variables are positive, and approximate 0.7 which means that once the awareness increases, the purchase intention will also be increased.

		Purchase Intention	Awareness
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.666[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	241	241
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.666[**]	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	241	241
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 2: Relationship between awareness and purchase intention

- H2: There is a significant relationship between "value" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.

Table 3 indicates that the results of the study where the variable has significant positive relationship with r=0.686 and significant value (p <0.05), therefore, it is proven that value significantly influence the purchase intention, the H2 is accepted and the result is consistent with the finding by May, Gilson and Harter (2004) as cited in Saks (2006) that value has positively related to purchase intention.

		Purchase Intention	Value
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.686[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	241	241
Value	Pearson Correlation	.686[**]	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	241	241
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 3: Relationship between value and purchase intention

- H3: There is a significant relationship between "quality" and purchase intention on the Fair Trade products among Malaysian.

According to the table 4, the results portrayed that the variable has significant positive relationship with r=0.673 and significant value (p <0.05) which revealed that quality has significant effects on the respondents purchase intention, the H3 is accepted, the result is consistent with the finding by May, Gilson and Harter (2004) as cited in Saks (2006) that quality has positively related to purchase intention. As for Fair Trade products, it needed to be inspected by the Fair Trade Labeling Organization (FTLO) to ensure the top quality before it reaches to the consumer.

		Purchase Intention	Quality
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.673[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	241	241
Quality	Pearson Correlation	.673[**]	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	241	241
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4: Relationship between quality and purchase intention

- H4: There is a significant relationship between "convenience" and purchase intention on the fair trade products among Malaysian.

In table 5, the results of the study examine that the variable has significant positive relationship with r=0.688 and significant value (p <0.05) and this indicate that convenience significantly influence the purchase intention for the 241 respondents, this H4 is accepted and the result is consistent with the finding made by May, Gilson and Harter (2004) as cited in Saks (2006) that convenience has positively related to purchase intention. Therefore, the outlet or store where is more eased and convenient for consumers to purchase the Fair Trade products, it helps increasing the purchase intention, so Fair Trade Organization could prompt or set up like the outlet or website in Malaysia, in terms of advocating the Fair Trade movement in Malaysia as well.

		Purchase Intention	Convenience
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation	1	.688[**]
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	241	241
Convenience	Pearson Correlation	.688[**]	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	241	241
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Table 5: Relationship between convenience and purchase intention

4.3. Reliability Analysis
There is positive and significant relationship between purchase intention and awareness, value, quality and convenience among Malaysian in table 6, over all Cronbach Alpha of purchase intention questionnaire items were 0.905 that is more than satisfactory and recommended value 0.70 by George & Mallery (2003). This also shows that all the 23 items were consistent and authentic to evaluate the opinion of consumer towards purchase intention.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (α)		Alpha Coefficient Length	Strength of Association
Purchase Intention	0.905		Less than 0.6	Poor
Awareness	0.922		0.6 to <0.7	Moderate
Value	0.903		0.7 to < 0.8	Good
Quality	0.935		0.8 to < 0.9	Very Good
Convenience	0.921		More than 0.9	Excellent
Total	0.974		Rules of Thumb (George & Mallery, 2003)	

Table 6: Reliability Analysis

4.4. Summary of Analysis and Discussion
All in all, table 7 showed the summary of test being conducted for each hypotheses and result of hypotheses testing. All hypotheses are testing by using Pearson Correlation Coefficient to identify the relationship, while all the significant value is less than 0.05 to make the decision by accepting the hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Result	Decision
H1: There is a significant relationship between "awareness" and purchase intention on the fair-trade products among KL residents in Malaysia.	r=0.666	H1 was
	p=0.000	accepted
H2: There is a significant relationship between "value" and purchase intention on the fair-trade products among KL residents in Malaysia.	r=0.686	H2 was
	p=0.000	accepted
H3: There is a significant relationship between "quality" and purchase intention on the fair-trade products among KL residents in Malaysia.	r=0.673	H3 was
	p=0.000	accepted
H4: There is a significant relationship between "convenience" and purchase intention on the fair-trade products among KL residents in Malaysia.	r=0.688	H4 was accepted
	p=0.000	

Table 7: Summary of hypotheses testing

5. Conclusion
The implication of this study is to determine the factors that affect the purchase intention of fair trade products among the Malaysia citizens. With knowing the factors that will influence the Malaysia citizens' fair trade purchase intention, the government could have ideas about how to create awareness for the purchase intention of fair trade products among Malaysia citizens. Besides creating awareness, the results of this study also shows that Malaysian government and citizens should consider other factors, such as value and quality of fair trade products and the convenience way of purchasing fair trade products. All these factors are important for Malaysia to achieve its vision to transform from developing country to developed country.

Such findings are unique and have significant value as of the study helps to determine which variable is more significant and effective for purchase intention of fair trade product. Therefore, for future research, there is a need to look into other dimensions that also contribute to purchase intention on the fair trade products.

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