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Factors Impacting Vietnamese Consumers' Green Purchase Intention

Le Quynh Anh

CMC University, Hanoi, Vietnam

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***Corresponding author:** Le Quynh Anh

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the factors influencing green purchase intention among Vietnamese consumers in the context of increasing environmental issues and the growing prevalence of green marketing strategies. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and prior studies, the proposed research model integrates factors including social norm, environmental consciousness, health consciousness, green pricing, green marketing communication, green trust, perception of greenwashing, and perceived risk. Data were collected from Vietnamese consumers using a quantitative approach through a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The analytical results indicate that most measurement scales achieve acceptable reliability and validity through Cronbach's Alpha and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Regression analysis reveals that environmental consciousness, health consciousness, green trust, and perceived risk significantly influence green consumption intention, while the remaining factors do not show statistically significant effects on green purchase intention within the sample. The findings contribute to clarifying the mechanism underlying green purchase intention in an emerging market context, while emphasizing the importance of trust and information transparency in promoting sustainable consumption behavior. Based on these results, the study proposes several managerial implications to help firms enhance the effectiveness of green communication and build consumer trust.

Keywords: *green purchase intention, greenwashing, TPB.*

1. Introduction

Green consumption has increasingly become an important trend in the context of escalating global environmental issues. Activities related to consumption and lifestyle currently account for approximately 60% of total global greenhouse gas emissions and more than 50% of material impacts on ecosystems (UNEP, 2020). If consumption behavior does not change, the demand for natural resource extraction could nearly double by 2060, while municipal solid waste is projected to increase by over 70% (OECD, 2019). Consumer awareness of sustainability is also rising; about 66% of global consumers are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products (Nielsen, 2015), and 78% expect companies to demonstrate stronger environmental responsibility (NielsenIQ,

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2023). In the marketplace, products with sustainability claims have recorded sales growth rates two to three times higher than conventional products (NielsenIQ, 2022). However, green consumption still faces numerous barriers such as high costs, lack of trust, and the gap between consumers' intentions and actual behavior.

In Vietnam, the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and consumption growth are increasing environmental pressure, particularly through rising waste generation and resource exploitation (Nguyen et al., 2017; Environmental Management Agency, 2020). With a population of approximately 100 - 101 million, rapidly growing consumption demand has led to significant waste generation, especially plastic waste (World Bank, 2021). Consumer awareness of green consumption is improving; surveys indicate that 63.2% of consumers prioritize reducing food waste and 58.5% practice energy saving (Standard Insights, 2023). However, actual behavior remains limited, as only about 12 - 18% of consumers regularly choose green products (Vietnam News, 2024), reflecting a substantial gap between intention and sustainable consumption behavior.

Academically, research on green consumption originated from discussions on sustainable development following the 1972 Stockholm Conference, when the role of individuals in environmental protection began to gain attention (Johnson, 2012). Early studies focused on the relationship between environmental awareness and consumption behavior; for instance, Thomas C. Kinnear et al. found that environmentally concerned consumers tend to choose eco-friendly products (Kinnear et al., 1974), while Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) developed the New Environmental Paradigm scale to measure ecological awareness. Since the 1990s, research has shifted toward behavioral analysis, showing that only about 30 - 40% of consumers translate green attitudes into purchasing behavior (Berger & Corbin, 1992). Theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern, 2000) help explain green consumption intention through attitudes, norms, and moral values. However, recent studies indicate that only 20 - 30% of intentions are converted into actual behavior due to the influence of habits, trust, and market barriers (Carrington et al., 2014; White et al., 2021).

Green consumption intention is considered a direct antecedent of environmentally friendly consumption behavior and has become the focus of many studies on sustainable consumption. Previous research indicates that this intention is influenced by various groups of factors, including psychological - cognitive factors, personal values, social influence, market trust, and economic conditions. First, environmental awareness is regarded as a fundamental determinant of green consumption intention. Chan (2001) found that awareness of environmental severity positively affects green purchase intention, while Mostafa (2007) estimated that environmental awareness could explain approximately 20 - 25% of the variance in green consumption intention. Additionally, attitudes toward green consumption are strong predictors; specifically, positive attitudes can explain 30 - 40% of behavioral intention variance (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Beyond cognitive factors, many studies emphasize the role of personal values and moral norms. According to the Value-Belief-Norm theory, altruistic values and ecological responsibility can promote environmentally friendly behavioral intentions (Stern, 2000). Empirical studies also show that personal norms have an independent and significant influence on green consumption intention (Nordlund & Garvill, 2003; Klöckner, 2013). Moreover, social influence and subjective norms, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, play an important role. Social influence can increase green purchase intention by an average of 15 - 25%, especially among young consumers (Kim & Chung, 2011).

Furthermore, market-related factors such as green trust, perceived risk, and the phenomenon of greenwashing have been shown to significantly affect consumer behavior. Chen and Chang (2012) argued that green trust has a direct impact on purchase intention, while perceived risk may negatively influence this intention (Gleim et al., 2013). In particular, greenwashing can substantially reduce consumer trust as well as green consumption intention (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Finally, economic barriers such as price and product accessibility also play a significant role; high prices are considered a major factor causing hesitation in forming green purchase intentions (Young et al., 2010), whereas improved perceived behavioral control can increase green consumption intention by 10% to nearly 30%, depending on the market context (Li et al., 2023).

Although international studies have identified numerous factors influencing green consumption intention, several important research gaps remain. Most empirical evidence focuses on developed economies, while studies in developing countries such as Vietnam are still limited. At the same time, many studies adopt a linear approach and have not fully examined the interactive roles among factors such as green trust, perceived risk, and greenwashing perception. Accordingly, this study is conducted to analyze the factors influencing green consumption intention among Vietnamese consumers, while also examining the mediating role of perceived risk and the impact of greenwashing perception.

2. Hypotheses

Based on theories of consumer behavior, green marketing, and sustainable consumption, this study proposes a research model to explain the mechanism underlying the formation of green consumption intention in the context of market information asymmetry, particularly regarding environmental information that is not fully transparent. According to Ajzen (1991), intention is considered the direct antecedent of actual behavior, reflecting the level of readiness and commitment of an individual toward a specific action, and is the strongest predictor of behavior across various consumption contexts. In the context of sustainable consumption, green consumption intention is defined as the tendency and willingness of consumers to select and prioritize environmentally friendly products in the future (Chen & Chang, 2012).

Synthesizing prior studies, the proposed model examines the roles of cognitive, social, and psychological factors, including social norm (SN), environmental consciousness (EC), health consciousness (HC), green pricing (GP), green marketing communication (GM), green trust (GT), perception of greenwashing (GW), and perceived risk (PR), in explaining green purchase intention (PI).

First, social influence (SN) is considered a key factor shaping behavioral intention. According to Ajzen (1991), subjective norms reflect the extent to which individuals perceive pressure from significant others. When consumers receive support from family, friends, or the community for green consumption, they are more likely to increase their intention to perform such behavior

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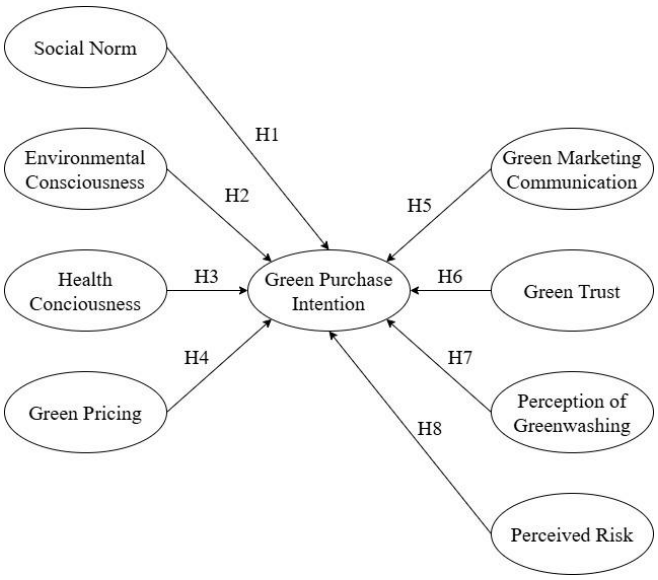
(Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Empirical studies also confirm the positive effect of this factor in sustainable consumption contexts (Han et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2016). Therefore:

H1: Social norm (SN) positively affects green purchase intention (PI).

In addition, environmental awareness (EC) plays a fundamental role in shaping green consumption intention. When individuals are knowledgeable and aware of environmental issues, they tend to value eco-friendly products more highly and are willing to adjust their consumption behavior toward sustainability (Mostafa, 2007; Chen & Chai, 2010). Previous studies also indicate a positive relationship between environmental awareness and green consumption intention across various contexts (Paul et al., 2016; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Therefore:

H2: Environmental consciousness (EC) positively affects green purchase intention (PI).

Fig 2.1: Research Model



Source: Proposed by Author

Beyond ecological factors, health consciousness (HC) is considered an important personal driver of green consumption. Consumers often associate green products with higher safety, fewer harmful chemicals, and long-term health benefits (Magnusson et al., 2003; Chen, 2009). When this perception is strengthened, individuals tend to develop more positive attitudes and increase their intention to choose green products (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). Therefore:

H3: Health consciousness (HC) positively affects green purchase intention (PI).

However, consumption decisions are constrained by economic factors, among which price perception (GP) is a significant barrier. According to Zeithaml (1988), consumers evaluate trade-offs between costs and benefits. When green products are perceived as more expensive, while their environmental benefits are long-term and difficult to assess, purchase intention may decline (Gleim et al., 2013; Biswas & Roy, 2015). Therefore:

H4: Green pricing (GP) negatively affects green purchase intention (PI).

In the context of information asymmetry, green marketing communication (GM) plays an important role in shaping perceptions and reducing uncertainty. According to Peattie and Crane (2005), transparent and consistent information enhances consumer trust. Recent studies also show that effective communication can improve awareness and promote green consumption intention (White et al., 2019). Therefore:

H5: Green marketing communication (GM) positively affects green purchase intention (PI).

Another central factor in the model is green trust (GT). Drawing from relationship marketing theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust reduces risk under conditions of incomplete information. In green consumption, Chen (2010) defines green trust as the evaluation of a firm's environmental credibility and commitment. When trust is strengthened, consumers are more likely to increase their purchase intention (Chen & Chang, 2012). Therefore:

H6: Green trust (GT) positively affects green purchase intention (PI).

Conversely, perception of greenwashing (GW) is considered a factor that undermines trust and hinders green consumption intention. When consumers suspect the credibility of environmental claims, they tend to become more cautious and reduce their willingness to purchase green products (Delmas & Burbano, 2011; Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). Therefore:

H7: Perception of greenwashing (GW) negatively affects green purchase intention (PI).

Finally, perceived risk (PR) is viewed as an important psychological variable explaining the gap between attitude and behavior. According to Bauer (1960), all purchase decisions involve uncertainty. In green consumption, risks may relate to product performance, environmental authenticity, or financial cost (Gleim et al., 2013). When perceived risk increases, consumers are more likely to delay or avoid purchase decisions. Therefore:

H8: Perceived risk (PR) negatively affects green purchase intention (PI).

3. Methodology

The study was conducted following a systematic procedure to ensure logical consistency and scientific reliability. First, based on literature, hypotheses were developed to describe the relationships among variables in the research model. Next, a quantitative approach was employed through a survey using a structured questionnaire to collect data from consumers in Vietnam. After data collection, statistical analysis techniques were applied to test the measurement scales and hypotheses. Finally, the results were synthesized, discussed, and managerial implications were proposed. This process ensures a strong linkage between theory, research design, and empirical validation.

The measurement scales used in this study were adapted from prior research to ensure reliability and validity. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree," allowing for the quantification of respondents' levels of agreement. The variables in the model and their corresponding measurement sources are presented in Table 3.1.

After designing the online questionnaire using Google Forms, primary data were collected from consumers in Vietnam using a

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convenience sampling method to ensure feasibility. The target respondents were individuals who were aware of or had experience with green products. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: (1) demographic information and (2) measurement items for the research model. The survey was conducted both online and offline, ensuring anonymity and voluntary participation. Invalid responses were removed prior to analysis to ensure data quality.

Table 3.1: Measurement

Construct	Label	Adapted from
Social Norm	SN	Ajzen, 1991; Yadav & Pathak, 2016
Environmental Consciousness	EC	Dunlap & Van Liere, 1978
Health Consciousness	HC	Magnusson et al., 2003
Green Pricing	GP	Gleim et al., 2013
Green Marketing Communication	GM	White et al., 2019
Green Trust	GT	Chen, 2010
Perception of Greenwashing	GW	Delmas & Burbano, 2011
Perceived Risk	PR	Bauer, 1960; Jacoby & Kaplan, 1972
Green Purchase Intention	PI	Ajzen, 1991; Yadav & Pathak, 2016

Source: Compiled by Author

4. Result

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics results indicate that the sample exhibits a relatively diverse distribution but remains concentrated in several key groups. In terms of gender, females account for a higher proportion (64.4%) compared to males (35.6%), suggesting a greater level of concern among women regarding consumption-related issues. Regarding age, the group over 40 years old dominates (82.2%), reflecting a sample skewed toward mature consumers with purchasing experience. In terms of occupation, students represent the largest share (54.5%), followed by office employees (36.1%) and self-employed individuals (9.4%). Concerning income, the majority of respondents fall into the group earning below 10 million VND per month, indicating that the sample primarily represents middle- and low-income consumers. Overall, although a convenience sampling method was used, the data still provides a sufficient basis for further analysis of factors influencing green consumption intention.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Characteristic		Freq.	Pct.
Gender	Male	68	35.6
	Female	123	64.4
Age	Under 18	16	8.4
	18 to 40	18	9.4
	Above 40	157	82.2
Employment Status	Student	104	54.5
	Employed	69	36.1
	Self-employed	18	9.4
Income	Under 5m VND / month	69	36.1
	5-10m VND / month	68	35.6
	10-20m VND / month	41	21.5
	Above 20m VND / month	13	6.8

Source: Compiled by Author

Construct Reliability and Validity

Based on the data presented in Table 4.2 regarding the measurement model assessment, the indicators of reliability and convergent validity suggest that most latent constructs satisfy the required thresholds for structural equation modeling.

The reliability of the latent constructs is evaluated using three main indicators: Cronbach's Alpha, rho_a, and composite reliability (rho_c).

Table 4.2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Reliability and Validity		Outer Loadings	
SN	Cronbach's α	0.814	SN1	0.778
	rho_a	0.821	SN2	0.743
	rho_c	0.876	SN3	0.692
	AVE	0.640	SN4	0.676
EC	Cronbach's α	0.817	EC1	0.739
	rho_a	0.828	EC2	0.693
	rho_c	0.879	EC3	0.731
	AVE	0.644	EC4	0.743
HC	Cronbach's α	0.840	HC1	0.761
	rho_a	0.844	HC2	0.785
	rho_c	0.893	HC3	0.702
	AVE	0.676	HC4	0.764
GP	Cronbach's α	0.737	GP1	0.599
	rho_a	0.766	GP2	0.362
	rho_c	0.835	GP3	0.821
	AVE	0.561	GP4	0.755
GM	Cronbach's α	0.792	GM1	0.753

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	rho_a	0.794	GM2	0.781
	rho_c	0.878	GM3	0.711
	AVE	0.707		
GT	Cronbach's α	0.797	GT1	0.787
	rho_a	0.804	GT2	0.775
	rho_c	0.868	GT3	0.704
	AVE	0.624	GT4	0.561
GW	Cronbach's α	0.855	GW1	0.726
	rho_a	0.860	GW2	0.670
	rho_c	0.892	GW3	0.560
	AVE	0.582	GW4	0.729
			GW5	0.784
			GW6	0.757
PR	Cronbach's α	0.846	PR1	0.698
	rho_a	0.846	PR2	0.761
	rho_c	0.896	PR3	0.836
	AVE	0.684	PR4	0.750
PI	Cronbach's α	0.839	PI1	0.627
	rho_a	0.840	PI2	0.624
	rho_c	0.886	PI3	0.600
	AVE	0.608	PI4	0.638
			PI5	0.631

Source: Compiled by Author

Both Cronbach's Alpha and rho_a for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, ranging from 0.737 to 0.855, indicating strong internal consistency among the observed variables. Additionally, composite reliability values range from 0.835 to 0.896, significantly above the minimum acceptable level of 0.7, confirming the robustness and stability of the measurement scales.

Regarding convergent validity, the study employs the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and outer loadings. All constructs achieve AVE values greater than 0.5, with the lowest being 0.561 (price perception) and the highest 0.707 (green marketing), indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators.

In terms of outer loadings, most observed variables exceed the threshold of 0.7, demonstrating strong contributions to their respective constructs. Although a few items have loadings below 0.7, they remain above 0.4 and are retained due to satisfactory overall reliability and AVE values. However, the observed variable GP2 exhibits a very low loading (0.362) and is therefore removed prior to further analysis.

Model Regression

The results of the covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) indicate that the research model demonstrates a high level of fit, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.801. This value implies that the independent variables in the model explain 80.1% of the variance in behavioral intention (PI), reflecting strong predictive power of the selected factors.

In terms of structural relationships, 4 out of the 8 proposed factors are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p-value < 0.05). Among them, environmental concern (EC) plays the most critical role and exerts the strongest positive effect on PI, with a regression coefficient of 0.477 (p-value = 0.000). This is followed by health consciousness (HC) with a coefficient of 0.257 (p-value = 0.002), green trust (GT) with 0.185 (p-value = 0.010), and perceived risk (PR) with 0.164 (p-value = 0.029). These findings confirm that EC, HC, GT, and PR are the primary drivers of behavioral intention in the research context.

Conversely, the relationships from green marketing (GM), price perception (GP), greenwashing perception (GW), and social norms (SN) to PI are not statistically significant, as all corresponding p-values exceed 0.05. This indicates that, within the scope of the surveyed sample, these variables do not demonstrate a direct impact on green consumption intention (PI).

Table 4.3: CB-SEM Model Result

	Coefficients	**Std.Err.**	**p-value**
EC→PI	0.477	0.109	0.000
GM→PI	-0.074	0.072	0.307
GP→PI	0.049	0.113	0.667
GT→PI	0.185	0.071	0.010
GW→PI	-0.019	0.069	0.788
HC→PI	0.257	0.082	0.002
PR→PI	0.164	0.074	0.029
SN→PI	-0.046	0.06	0.443
		R^2	0.801

Source: Compiled by Author

5. Discussion

The results of the covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) provide important insights into the determinants of green consumption intention (PI). With a coefficient of determination of R^2 = 0.801, the model explains 80.1% of the variance in behavioral intention, demonstrating strong predictive power of the included factors. This finding confirms that the theoretical framework, grounded in prior studies such as Ajzen (1991), Yadav and Pathak (2016), and related research, is highly appropriate in the empirical context.

Among the statistically significant factors, environmental concern (EC) emerges as the most influential driver of green consumption intention. This result suggests that when individuals are aware of environmental issues (EC1) and understand the benefits of green products (EC2), they develop a strong sense of responsibility toward environmental protection through consumption (EC3). Prioritizing environmental impacts in purchasing decisions (EC4) becomes a key internal motivation, outweighing external pressures.

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This aligns with Dunlap and Van Liere (1978), who argue that awareness of ecological limits can fundamentally reshape human behavior. In addition, health consciousness (HC) appears as the second most important factor. Consumers are increasingly motivated not only by altruistic concerns (environmental protection) but also by self-interest (personal well-being). Their willingness to pay a premium for safer products (HC1, HC4) and to reduce long-term health risks (HC2) indicates that the "green" attribute is closely associated with direct utilitarian value. As health becomes a top priority, the intention to shift from conventional to green products intensifies, consistent with the findings of Paul et al. (2016).

Green trust (GT) also contributes positively to the formation of green consumption intention. Confidence in choosing green products (GT1) and trust that firms do not exaggerate environmental claims (GT4) provide a foundation for sustained consumer support. Interestingly, perceived risk (PR) shows a weak but positive effect on behavioral intention. Despite concerns about product quality (PR1) or performance (PR2), risk does not appear to act as a barrier in this sample. Instead, it may encourage consumers to seek more information, thereby reinforcing their purchase intention once credible evidence is found.

A notable finding is that social influence (SN), including community trends (SN1), social evaluation (SN2), and opinions from significant others (SN3, SN4), does not have a statistically significant effect. This suggests that green consumption intention in this sample is highly individualized and driven more by internal awareness (EC) and health benefits (HC) than by social approval. Similarly, green marketing (GM) does not directly influence intention, possibly because current campaigns (GM1) primarily provide information rather than exerting immediate behavioral impact. Moreover, price perception (GP) and greenwashing perception (GW) are not statistically significant. Although consumers recognize higher prices (GP1) and express skepticism toward corporate environmental claims (GW1, GW4), these factors are not strong enough to deter their intention. Once environmental and health benefits are firmly established, price and skepticism become secondary considerations.

Based on these findings, strategies to promote green consumption should emphasize enhancing personal responsibility and demonstrating tangible health benefits rather than relying solely on general communication messages or social pressure. Firms should improve transparency in production processes to strengthen green trust (GT) and reduce perceived risk (PR). Effectively addressing the "health + environment" value proposition will be a key driver in transforming awareness into actual purchasing behavior and achieving sustainable competitive advantage in the green market.

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