

Research Paper

Exploring Green Purchase Intention of Fashion Products: A Transition Country Perspective

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Abstract

Academic marketing scholars have paid considerable attention to the green purchasing intention of fashion products. From the perspective of transition countries, research on environmental awareness and consumers' attitude toward green purchasing is extremely limited, particularly for fashion products. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence the green purchase intention of fashion products from the perspective of Vietnam, a transition country. This study used an integrated research model by combining the Value Identity Personal Norm Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior. This model was used to determine how Vietnamese consumers plan to buy green products in the fashion industry. Notably, personal norms and the attitudes of consumers are two mediators in the research model. To collect data, a self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted in the three largest cities in Vietnam. Three hundred and forty-eight valid responses were analyzed using the SmartPLS 3.0 software for partial least squares structural equation modeling. Findings indicate that environmental self-identity and personal norms have a significant influence on attitude toward green fashion purchase intention. In turn, the strongest predictor of green purchase intention is the attitude, followed by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. As a result, solutions are proposed for marketers and government bodies to change their approach to promoting green purchasing behavior in the Vietnamese apparel industry.

Keywords: Green purchase intention, Fashion products, Theory of planned behavior (TPB), Value identity personal norm (VIP) Model.

Introduction

For decades, green consumption has been a pervasive research topic in the developed world and has recently gained prominence in transition countries. The increasing demand for research on green consumption is attributed to global climate change, causing society's actors and consumers to alter their behaviors to protect the environment.

Asia is the most crowded continent globally, with a total population of nearly 5 billion people in 2021 and the median age is 32 years (UN DESA, 2021). In addition, the number of middle-income people in most urban cities of Asia is tremendously increasing. Thus, Asia is the most potential growth market for the fashion industry. According to The State of Fashion 2020 report, China and Asia are manufacturing and consuming the majority of apparel products in the world (Beltrami et al., 2020). The rising demand in the Asian fashion industry also leads to consumers' greater concerns over sustainability. Key fashion players have recognized that it is time to address sustainable development in their production and distribution channels when fast fashion is overwhelming and environmental pollution becomes more serious when clothes are disposed of. More specifically, the boom of e-commerce in recent years also raises the anxiety of unsustainable consumption in the industry when it becomes too easy for consumers to click-and-buy fashion products, motivating them to become impulse buyers. From the above arguments, it is implied that fashion players are facing a dilemma of green production and consumption regarding the problem of how to increase revenue and sales and reduce quick product disposal that threatens the environment.

Nonetheless, green consumption in Vietnam, particularly in the fashion industry, is a relatively new research topic with few published studies. A 2019 Nielson survey found that Vietnamese consumers are the most concerned about environmental issues in Southeast Asia (Nielson, 2019). However, there is a paradox: many Vietnamese consumers are unfamiliar with green products and have difficulty distinguishing them from conventional products (Nguyen et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2018). As a result, Vietnamese consumers' environmental consciousness and intention have not yet been translated into actual daily behaviors (Deloitte, 2020). However, their desire to live a healthy lifestyle and protect the environment for future generations is relatively strong (De Koning et al., 2015).

It is worth noting that previous studies on green consumption in Vietnam have paid insufficient attention to the fashion industry, even though this industry is the world's largest polluter and second-largest consumer of water, with a significant environmental impact at all stages of production and consumption (Sahni et al., 2016). Over 80 million tons of textiles are sold each year globally, with three-fifths being incinerated or buried within that year (Long & Nasiry, 2019). Furthermore, the textile industry, which consumes billions of liters of water annually, is responsible for one-fifth of all harmful chemicals released into the environment (Chavero, 2017). Simultaneously, the fast fashion industry and consumers' large wallets contribute to an increase in garment waste. Meanwhile, fashion industry customers remain unaware of the benefits of reusing, recycling, and purchasing environmentally friendly products and packaging. As a result, a significant amount of old and out-of-date clothing ends up in landfills, creating a significant global environmental problem in Vietnam (Nayak et al., 2019). By 2025 if 80% of the population of emerging countries consumes textiles and clothing at the current rate in Europe, the textile and garment industry will be the most polluting, implying that its ecological footprint will grow (Remy et al., 2016). As a result, green consumption is becoming a popular trend in this industry.

Vietnam is one of the top seven global exporters of garments and also has a sizable domestic market, with a population of over 96 million people and 35% of them living in urban areas (Akbari & Hopkins, 2019). It is observed that the fashion industry in Vietnam, one of Southeast Asia's leading fashion manufacturing countries, is under considerable pressure to adhere to sustainability standards (Nayak et al., 2019). We begin with the premise that an individual's willingness to contribute to environmental protection and his or her interaction with society influence green purchase intention. We employed the Value Identity Personal Norm (VIP) Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to develop our research model and delve into the fashion industry of a transition economy such as Vietnam. We chose Vietnam as the context for a transition economy because it is home to one of the world's largest textile manufacturers. As a result, this study aims to shed light on the factors that influence green consumption behaviors and to suggest some implications for fashion producers seeking to be more sustainable.

Theoretical Background

Green Consumption and Green Purchase in the Fashion Industry

Green consumption, also known as sustainable consumption, is one of the pillars of sustainable development. Green consumer behavior is associated with reuse or energy conservation and consumers' reactions to the product information on labels and manufacturers' marketing messages.

Green consumption is a global trend that is becoming increasingly popular as environmental pollution becomes a global problem due to excessive industrialization and human consumption activities. Previous studies show that consumption activities generate between 30% and 40% of the global waste pollutes the environment. Furthermore, because demand pushes supply, businesses will scale up their production to meet the consumers' rising demand. As a result, environmental pollution will become increasingly severe due to the effects of production and consumption activities. Eventually, the key factor in reducing environmental impacts and promoting sustainable development is consumers' purchasing and consumption habits.

Green consumption is linked to the idea of "green products." A green product is one whose design or product characteristics (or product manufacturing process) use recycled resources while reducing toxic waste. Green products, labeled with eco-labels, are also known as "eco products" or "environmentally friendly products." Thus, green consumption behavior is defined as purchasing and consuming green products. However, "green consumption" is broader because it includes purchasing green products and behaviors that reduce waste during the consumption process and improve production efficiency. Green purchase is preceded by green purchase intention. Green purchase intention is the willingness of a consumer to consider and prefer green or sustainable products rather than conventional ones when making a purchase decision.

In the fashion industry, the concept of sustainable fashion encompasses a variety of terms such as organic, green, fair trade, sustainable, and eco, all of which are used interchangeably (Cervellon & Carey, 2011). In addition, sustainable fashion is described as clothing, shoes, and accessories that are designed, manufactured, and used in the most environmentally friendly way to maximize environmental and socioeconomic advantages while avoiding negative environmental impacts (Chan & Wong, 2012). In practice, sustainability in the fashion industry

refers to ongoing efforts to enhance all aspects of a product's life cycle, including design, raw material production, manufacturing, transportation, storage, marketing, and sale. Furthermore, the product and its components use, reuse, repair, remake, and recycling stages are also included.

Theories and Models explaining Green Purchase in the Fashion Industry

Several theories have been applied in explaining consumers' behaviors toward sustainability in the fashion industry. For example, Weiner (2017) combined the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) with Self-congruity Theory and Self-completion Theory to explain the purchase intention of ethically produced fashion products with data from 147 US shoppers. Thongpila (2019) applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in examining the purchase intention of green fashion made from recycled plastic in Thailand. Similar studies in the fashion industry have been conducted in China (Zhu, 2021; Chen et al., 2021) and Malaysia (Augustine et al., 2019). Recently, Kim and Seock (2019) extended Norm Activation Model (NAM) with social norms constructed from the TPB to investigate how values relate to personal norms and pro-environmental behavior of apparel products and test the mediating role of personal norms. In addition, the Value Identity Personal norm (VIP) model was also used in several studies of pro-environmental studies, such as Van der Werff and Steg (2015), Gatersleben et al. (2014). Notably, contradictory results have been found in previous studies on the factors influencing green consumption and green purchase. Thus, there exists a quest to combine some theoretical frameworks to have a more comprehensive investigation of factors determining pro-environmental behaviors, particularly the green purchase of fashion products.

Value Identity Personal Norm (VIP) Model

The Value Identity Personal norm (VIP) model was developed by Van der Werff and Steg (2016) to explain better pro-environmental behaviors by focusing on general determinants rather than specific factors. The VIP model is based on leading models and theories, including Norm Activation Model (NAM) and Value Belief Norm theory (VBN).

Four factors in the VIP model are biospheric values, environmental self-identity, personal norms, interest, and participation in pro-environmental actions. Self-identity is defined as the perception of an individual of him/herself and the labels used to describe him/herself (Gatersleben et al., 2014). Environmental self-identity (ESI) denotes the extent to which you see yourself as a type of person that acts environmentally friendly (Van der Werff and Steg., 2016). Personal norms (PN) are defined as a self-expectation of specific action in a particular situation, experienced as a feeling of moral obligation (Schwartz, 1977). This definition is widely accepted in social psychological research such as Ajzen (1991) and Kaiser (2006).

According to the VIP model, pro-environmental behaviors are affected by feelings related to a moral obligation to act in a behavior (personal norms). In addition, the VIP model further proposes that PN is, in turn, affected by ESI related to environmental issues. Then ESI is affected by biospheric values.

Identities and personal norms become more important for behaviors in which the individual feels relatively free to act (Gatersleben et al., 2014). In other words, the VIP model serves very well in predicting pro-environmental behaviors.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The TPB has been adopted in numerous studies to explain pro-environmental behaviors such as the adoption of energy-efficient home appliances (Bhutto et al., 2021), and energy-saving behavior in the workplace (Gao et al., 2017), environmentally-friendly transportation modes (Haustein & Hunecke, 2007).

According to TPB, an individual's behavior is determined by their intentions to perform such behavior. Intentions, in turn, are related to a set of variables, including attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In the TPB, attitude, which indicates how consumers think, feels, and act about specific phenomena, is regarded as the first essential factor of intentions and subsequent behaviors (Ajzen, 1991).

Existing literature shows that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the most widely used to explain pro-environmental behaviors of fashion consumers in both Western and Eastern countries. Fashion products are those shopping goods that consumers purchase for their appearance and partially show an individual's style and personality. For fashion products, people tend to make their purchase decision upon their attitude (positive or negative) towards the behavior and the influence of referents. Thus, TPB is the principal theory that might thoroughly explain the purchase intention of fashion products.

Integrating VIP and TPB

Various studies on pro-environmental behaviors (e.g., green purchase of fashion products) have used different theories and models. In this study, we attempt to integrate VIP and TPB for three main reasons.

Firstly, the VIP model is based on leading models and theories in environmental psychology to investigate pro-environmental behaviors. At the same time, TPB is popular for explaining the rationale for self-interest parts of pro-environmental behaviors. The green purchase of fashion products is a particular pro-environmental behavior associated with personal feelings and emotions and is best described as a combination of pro-social motives and self-interest (Bamberg & Moser, 2007). Therefore, it is insufficient to base merely on the VIP model or TPB to explain the green purchase behavior of fashion products. Integrating the VIP model and TPB would be more advantageous.

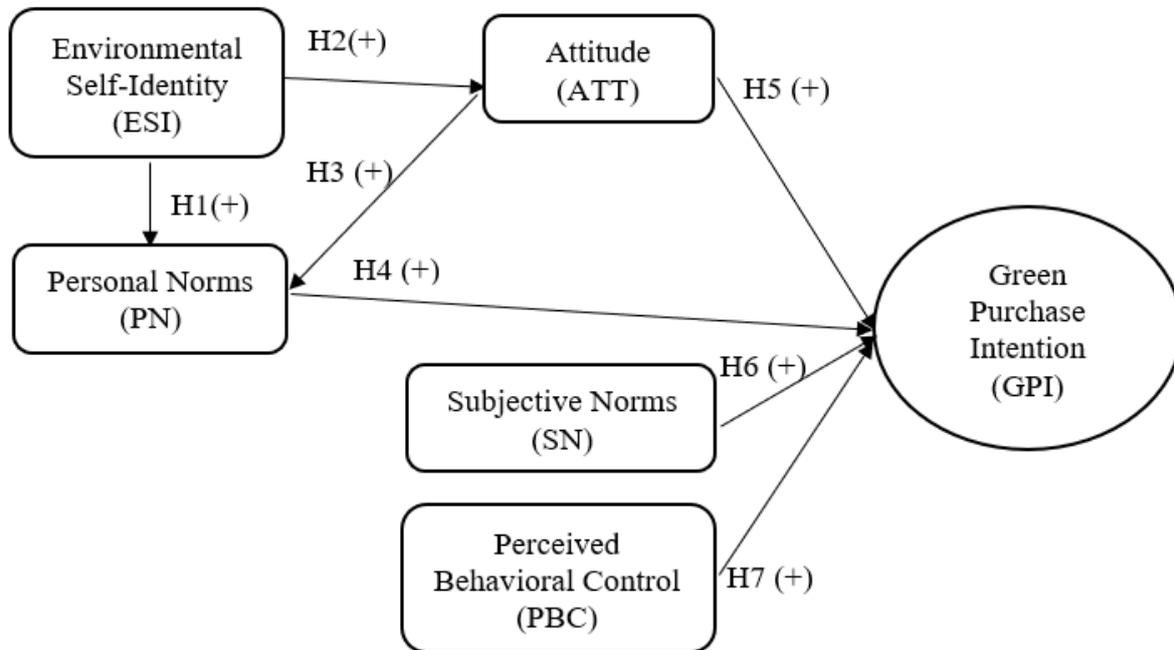
Secondly, studies on green or sustainable behaviors in the fashion industry have mainly used NAM or VBN theory. On the other hand, the VIP model is recently developed and rarely used, while it is more parsimonious than NAM or VBN theory. In particular, NAM neglects the influence of ESI on PN, while VBN theory mainly includes behavior-specific factors such as problem awareness, outcome efficacy, and personal norm (Van der Werff and Steg, 2016). Yet, Van der Werff and Steg (2016) claimed that it would be more beneficial to identify general antecedents of environmental actions, likely to affect many pro-environmental behaviors. In this regard, the VIP model is an appropriate choice for the pro-environmental behaviors study context.

Thirdly, recent studies that used the VIP model in combination with TPB have confirmed its superior power to predict pro-environmental behavior intention and behaviors compared to the original TPB and VBN or NAM models. For example, Chen (2016) demonstrated that extending TPB with the VIP model increases the explanatory ability of the TPB model by 9%.

Hypothesis Development

This study extended the TPB with two variables from the VIP model, which are environmental self-identity and personal norms, to examine the green purchase intention of fashion products in Vietnam. Figure 1 below shows the details of our research model.

Figure 1: Proposed Research Model



As shown in Figure 1, we developed several hypotheses as follows.

Effect of Environmental Self-identity on Personal Norms and Green Purchase Intention

Environmental self-identity (ESI) denotes how you see yourself as a type of person that acts environmentally friendly (Van der Werff & Steg., 2015). Thus, ESI is considered the salient part of an actor's self which relates to a particular behavior. It reflects the extent to which an actor sees him or herself as fulfilling the criteria for any societal role. Besides, Personal norms (PN) are defined as a self-expectation of specific action in a particular situation, experienced as a feeling of moral obligation (Schwartz, 1977). PN is created in response to a specific action situation, and they reflect the person's expectations.

Many studies have investigated how ESI influences individuals' green attitudes and behaviors (Mohammed, 2021; Patel et al., 2020). A survey of 289 students buying electronic products (Nguyen et al., 2018) showed that ESI was the most important factor that affected the GPI of young people in Vietnam. Previous studies have examined the direct impact of ESI on pro-environmental behaviors. However, we recognized that attitude toward a behavior is determined by salient behavioral beliefs, which link the behavior to a certain outcome (Ajzen, 1991). That is, the attitude toward a behavior is determined by the person's evaluation of the outcomes associated with the behavior and by the strength of these associations. Thus, let us assume that an individual, who evaluates himself as an environmental advocate, would formulate a positive attitude toward green purchase behavior.

On the basis of the reviewed literature, we raised the following hypotheses in this study:

- H1** Environmental self-identity (ESI) positively influences personal norms (PN).
- H2** Environmental self-identity (ESI) positively influences attitude toward the green purchase of fashion products (ATT).

Furthermore, attitude (ATT) has been mentioned in numerous studies on recycling behavior (Bezzina & Dimech, 2011), energy and water conservation, choice of greener travel options, and green hotels for stays, and also in choosing or building an eco-friendly house (Sia & Jose, 2019). In addition, Lindenberg and Steg (2007) pointed out that the evaluation of right and wrong influences behavioral choices. The effective evaluation may cause the person to feel obligated to the attitudinal object. Therefore, in this study, we raised the following hypothesis:

- H3** Attitude toward the green purchase of fashion products (ATT) positively influences personal norms (PN).

Onwezen et al., (2013) also pointed out that acting according to PN is associated with positive emotions such as pride, while acting against PN brings negative emotions such as guilt. It has been found that PN was a more impactful predictor than other variables such as economic situation and environmental concern (Doran & Larsen, 2016). This argument has been proved in several studies about eco-friendly behaviors (Doran & Larsen, 2016; Esfandiar et al., 2019). Similarly, we formulated hypothesis 4 as follows:

- H4** Personal norms (PN) positively influence green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

Effect of Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control on Green Purchase Intention

Attitude

Attitude (ATT) reflects the positive or negative feelings of an individual toward a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). ATT has been mentioned in various studies as a determinant of green purchase intention and behaviors (Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Pham et al., 2019). For example, Chakrabarti (2010) insisted that attitude toward organic food positively relates to purchasing intention. Some studies showed that consumers who have a positive attitude toward green products are inclined to perform green purchases (Pham et al., 2019). Therefore, we assumed that ATT would have a positive impact on green purchase intention in the fashion industry. Thus, we formulated the following hypothesis.

- H5** Attitude (ATT) positively influences the green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms (SN) can be considered as social pressure that is received by someone to do or not do the behavior (Yadav & Pathak, 2016). SN has been proved in many studies to positively affect green purchase intention, such as organic food (Tandon et al., 2020), energy-efficient home appliances (Bhutto et al., 2021), or green products in general (Maichum et al.,

2016). In this present study, we raised the following hypothesis to test the influence of SN on GPI:

H6 Subjective norms (SN) positively influence the green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is the extent to which individuals perceive themselves as being able to perform a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Ma et al. (2012) claimed that PBC has a profound and positive influence on the connection between intention and purchase action. However, a finding from Arvola et al. (2008) showed that PBC plays no role in sustainable consumer intention. It is argued that green purchasing is still a new concept for many Vietnamese consumers so that they tend to rely on the advice of other people around them to make purchase decisions (Nguyen et al., 2021). Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis.

H7 Perceived behavioral control (PBC) positively influences green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

Attitude and Personal Norms as Mediators affecting Green Purchase Intention

Several previous studies have discussed the relationship between environmental self-identity (ESI), personal norms (PN), and attitude (ATT) in explaining pro-environmental actions. For example, Van der Weff and Steg (2016) found that PN significantly mediates the influence of ESI on pro-environmental behaviors. Meanwhile, Çabuk et al. (2014) and Pham et al. (2019) confirmed that ATT strongly mediates the impact of environmental concern on the intention to buy organic food. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2019) insisted that ATT also mediates the relationship between consumers' perception of traditional values and pro-environmental behaviors (i.e., buying organic food).

Thus, it is noted that previous studies on pro-environmental behaviors address the direct relationship between ESI or similar environmental self-concept factors on purchase intention. Unlike previous studies, we assumed that ESI would indirectly affect green purchase intention (GPI) via two mediating variables: attitude and personal norms. Thus, three hypotheses from H8 to H10 were formulated.

H8 Attitude (ATT) mediates the relationship between environmental self-identity (ESI) and the green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

H9 Attitude (ATT) mediates the relationship between environmental self-identity (ESI) and personal norms (PN).

H10 Personal norms (PN) mediates the relationship between environmental self-identity (ESI) and green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI).

In moral situations, personal norms were insisted to be a stronger predictor of behavioral intention than attitude or subjective norms (Sia & Jose, 2019). Moral obligation is the motivation to act according to moral conviction (Schwartz, 1977). Logically, a person who has a positive attitude toward green consumption will perceive a moral obligation to purchase responsibly before taking action. In other words, activated personal norms in sync with the

favorable or non-favorable attitude may also predict the intention to behave in a prescribed manner. For the above discussion, we initiated the following hypothesis:

H11 Attitude (ATT) positively influences the green purchase intention of fashion products (GPI) through personal norms (PN).

Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

An online self-administered survey was conducted to collect data. Potential respondents are Vietnamese young people from 18 to 24 years old who are mature enough to make a purchase decision by themselves and less dependent on their parents. This age group is about 20 million people and accounts for nearly 20% of the Vietnamese population (World Bank, 2021). We choose young people as the sample for our study for three reasons. Firstly, the population of Vietnam is quite young, so fashion brands mainly focus on young customers. Therefore, there would be more implications for fashion brands from studies on the factors that determine the intention and behaviors of this group of audience. Secondly, the majority of consumers of fashion products are young and dynamic. These people are more open and willing to accept a new trend in the fashion industry, such as sustainable or green consumption and purchase. Thirdly, young people are more inclined to participate in the online survey, which is chosen as our main channel to access the potential respondents.

The convenience and snowball sampling methods in an online environment were employed. According to the Social Media Report, in 2020, Vietnam had 73.56 million social network users, accounting for 75,6% of the total population, and the majority of Internet users are young people (Iris, 2021). Thus, our chosen sampling methods are the most feasible for us to approach our respondents. The data collection procedure was conducted through three steps. First, we circulated the Google Form questionnaire through social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and Zalo to approach people in our friend circles. Then these early advocates were encouraged to circulate the questionnaire to their friends. After two months, we received 348 valid responses.

Measurements

In this study, the green purchase intention (GPI) of fashion products is the dependent variable. The measurement scale of GPI (4 items) was adapted from the studies of Chan and Lau (2002). The scales of attitude (3 items), subjective norms (4 items), and perceived behavioral control (3 items) were modified from the studies of Liobikienė and Bernatoniėnė (2017), Nguyen et al. (2018). Two constructs adapted from the VIP model are environmental self-identity (3 items) and personal norms (4 items), adopted and adapted from Kaiser (2006) and Patel et al. (2020).

Data Analysis

We use SPSS version 22.0 and SmartPLS version 3.3.6 to analyze the data in this study. Collected data was put into the SPSS software to calculate sample characteristics. Smart PLS was used to test the measurement model and the structural model. In Smart PLS, we ran the PLS Algorithm function to check the reliability and validity of the measurements. Other tests,

including the Fornell-Larcker test and HTMT criterion test, were applied to check the measurement model. We also run bootstrapping function in Smart PLS to test the structural model.

Results

Measurement Model Test Results

Sample Demographic Profile

The sample characteristics were obtained using SPSS software. Table 1 below shows details of the sample demographics. In our sample, 32.8% of the respondents are male, and 67.2% are female. Regarding the frequency of fashion product purchases, it was reported that 30.5% of the respondents often buy one to three times a month, and 43.7% of them buy fashion products one to three times in six months. When asked about the budget for fashion products, 37.4% of the respondents reported that they would spend from 15% to 35% of their annual income on fashion. Meanwhile, the majority (55.2%) would spend less than 15% of their annual income to buy fashion products.

Table 1: Sample demographics (N = 348)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	114	32.8
Female	234	67.2
<i>Frequency of fashion product purchase</i>		
From 1 to 3 times per week	6	1.7
From 1 to 3 times per month	106	30.5
From 1 to 3 times in 6 months	152	43.7
From 1 to 3 times in a year	84	24.1
<i>Estimated budget for fashion products (in total annual expenditure)</i>		
Below 15%	192	55.2
From 15% to 35%	130	37.4
Above 35%	26	7.5

Reliability and Validity Test Results

Furthermore, our preliminary analysis included the tests of reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. The reliability of measurements was checked using several criteria, including Cronbach's alpha, outer item loadings, and composite reliability (CR). The validity of the measurements was evaluated based on variance inflation factor (VIF), average variance extracted (AVE), the Fornell-Larcker test, HTMT criterion test, and R-square. Table 2 showed that all item outer loadings were higher than 0.7, except for GPI1. So GPI1 was removed from the GPI scale. Six measurement scales in the conceptual framework have Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.783 to 0.860, and all CR values were above 0.8, reporting good internal consistency reliability. Moreover, the VIF values of all items were between 1 and 3, which were below the suggested value of 5. Thus, the multicollinearity issue in each measurement scale does not occur. Furthermore, AVE values were above 0.5, so convergent validity was achieved.

Table 2: Results of measurement model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	VIF	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Environmental Self-Identity (ESI)	ESI1	0.848	1.801	0.788	0.876	0.703
	ESI2	0.864	1.930			
	ESI3	0.802	1.459			
Personal Norms (PN)	PN1	0.802	1.811	0.802	0.871	0.627
	PN2	0.818	1.899			
	PN3	0.765	1.504			
	PN4	0.782	1.542			
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1	0.820	1.563	0.809	0.887	0.724
	ATT2	0.865	1.990			
	ATT3	0.866	1.910			
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1	0.866	2.134	0.860	0.905	0.705
	SN2	0.896	2.888			
	SN3	0.852	2.492			
	SN4	0.734	1.528			
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	PBC1	0.797	2.010	0.783	0.870	0.690
	PBC2	0.860	2.261			
	PBC3	0.833	1.370			
Green Purchasing Intention (GPI)	GPI2	0.851	2.015	0.827	0.897	0.744
	GPI3	0.908	2.540			
	GPI4	0.827	1.698			

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted
 Recommended value: Cronbach’s alpha ≥ 0.7; Outer loadings ≥ 0.7; VIF < 5; CR ≥ 0.7; AVE ≥ 0.5

To check the potential problem of common method bias, we ran Harman's single factor test in SPSS. All items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis using principal components with varimax rotation. The result showed that the extraction could not be done. Thus, it is concluded that common method bias did not appear to be a potential problem in this study.

The discriminant validity was checked using the Fornell-Larcker test and HTMT criterion results. For each construct, we assessed the discriminant validity by comparing the square root of each AVE in the diagonal with the correlation coefficients (off-diagonal) in the relevant rows and columns. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE for all 6 constructs (the values in bold) ranges from 0.792 to 0.851, and it is higher than any of the correlation coefficients in the vertical and horizontal related cells. Overall, discriminant validity between the 6 constructs in this study was supported. In addition, the HTMT values of all constructs were below the threshold value of 0.85, so the discriminant validity of measurement scales is acceptable in this study (Hensenler et al., 2015).

Another criterion taken in this study was R2. Table 4 shows that the R2 value of ATT was 0.346, which means that ESI explained 34.6% of the variance of ATT. Meanwhile, the R2 value of PN was 0.463, showing that ESI and ATT explained 46.3% of the variance of PN. Finally, all factors in the structural model explained 56.1% of the variance of GPI as the R2 value of GPI was 0.561. This result means that the coefficient determination was confirmed as all R2 values of endogenous variables were above 0.3 (Hair et al., 2022). The structural model achieved moderate fitness for further analysis (see Table 4).

Table 3: Measurement Model: Discriminant Validity

	Fornell-Larcker criterion						HTMT criterion					
	ATT	ESI	GPI	PBC	PN	SN	ATT	ESI	GPI	PBC	PN	SN
ATT	0.851											
ESI	0.590	0.838					0.736					
GPI	0.696	0.566	0.863				0.850	0.702				
PBC	0.508	0.483	0.538	0.831			0.625	0.618	0.642			
PN	0.671	0.496	0.582	0.495	0.792		0.832	0.623	0.714	0.618		
SN	0.516	0.578	0.559	0.526	0.487	0.839	0.603	0.699	0.643	0.662	0.575	

Table 4: R² Results

	R ²	R ² Adjusted
ATT	0.348	0.346
GPI	0.566	0.561
PN	0.466	0.463

Structural Model Test Results

In SmartPLS software, we chose the subsamples of 5000 and ran basic bootstrapping with the parallel processing option to evaluate the statistical significance of variables in the structural model. The confidence interval method is Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) bootstrap with a two-tailed test type at a 0.05 significance level. Results are presented in Figure 2 and Table 5 below.

Figure 2: Structural Model

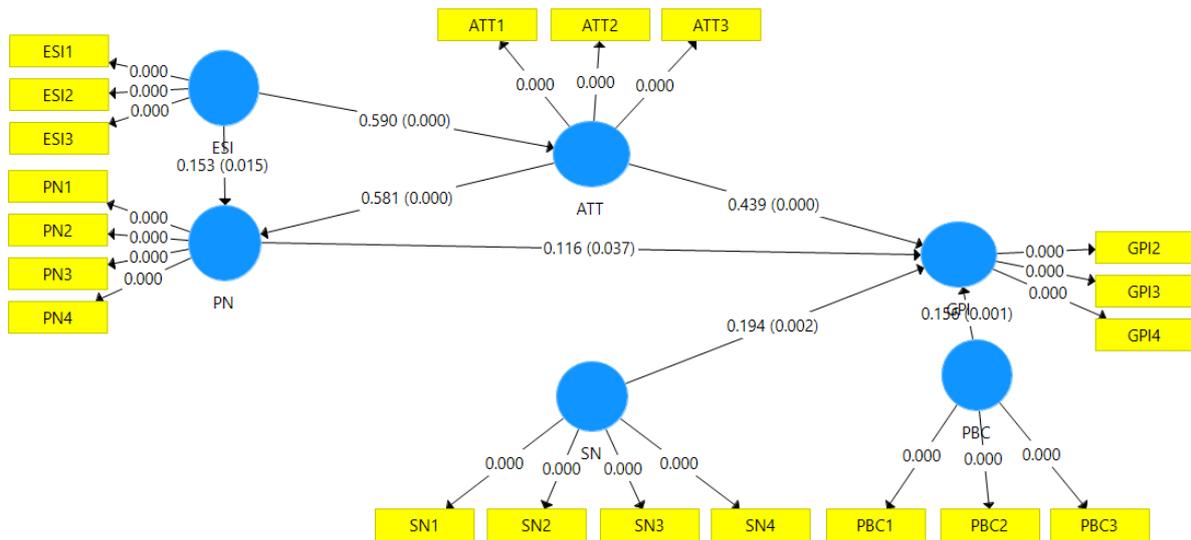


Table 5: Hypothesis – Path Coefficients

Path	β	f^2	T value	P-Value	Hypothesis	Result
<i>Direct Effect</i>						
ESI → PN	0.153	0.029	2.430	0.015	H1	Accepted
ESI → ATT	0.590	0.533	16.219	0.000	H2	Accepted
ATT → PN	0.581	0.412	9.960	0.000	H3	Accepted
PN → GPI	0.116	0.016	2.088	0.037	H4	Accepted
ATT → GPI	0.439	0.216	6.719	0.000	H5	Accepted
SN → GPI	0.194	0.054	3.063	0.002	H6	Accepted
PBC → GPI	0.156	0.035	3.272	0.001	H7	Accepted
<i>Indirect Effect</i>						
ESI → ATT → GPI	0.259		6.003	0.000	H8	Accepted
ESI → ATT → PN	0.342		9.547	0.000	H9	Accepted
ESI → PN → GPI	0.018		1.340	0.180	H10	Rejected
ATT → PN → GPI	0.067		2.111	0.035	H11	Accepted

Note: Significance level $p < 0.05$

Effect size: $0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$ (small); $0.015 \leq f^2 < 0.35$ (moderate/medium); $f^2 \geq 0.35$ (large)

As shown in Table 5, ten proposed hypotheses were accepted with p-values smaller than 0.05. Only one hypothesis (H10) was rejected ($p = 0.180 > 0.05$).

The standardized path coefficients revealed that ESI has a higher effect on ATT ($\beta_2 = 0.590$, $p = 0.015 < 0.05$) than on PN ($\beta_1 = 0.153$; $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). Regarding the role of ATT in our proposed research model, it is confirmed that ATT has a strong impact on PN ($\beta_3 = 0.581$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$). In turn, PN in this study was found to have small impact on GPI ($\beta_4 = 0.116$, $p = 0.037 < 0.05$). As a result, H1, H2, H3, H4 were accepted.

Furthermore, among three factors of TPB, ATT ($\beta_5 = 0.439$; $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) has the strongest impact on GPI, followed by SN ($\beta_6 = 0.194$; $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) and PBC ($\beta_7 = 0.156$; $p = 0.000 < 0.01$). In words, H5, H6, and H7 were accepted.

Regarding the effect size of each factor in our research model on ATT and GPI, we use the f^2 values to evaluate and conclude. According to Cohen (1988) and Hair et al. (2022), f^2 values reflect the effect size of independent variables on dependent variables in the model with small effect ($0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$), moderate effect ($0.015 \leq f^2 < 0.35$), and larger effect ($f^2 \geq 0.35$). Table 5 showed that ESI has a large effect on ATT ($f^2 = 0.533 > 0.35$), but a very small effect on PN ($f^2 = 0.029$). In addition, the f^2 value of all three TPB variables on GPI is within the range from 0.035 to 0.0216, confirming that these variables have a large effect on GPI.

Moreover, the present study also investigated the indirect relationship among variables in the research model. Among the four hypotheses, only one (H10) was rejected. The remaining hypotheses (H8, H9, H11) were accepted. Thus, we confirmed the role of ATT as a mediator in the linkage between ESI and GPI, ESI and PN. Interestingly, our study found that PN mediated the relationship between ATT and GPI. However, PN was not proved to mediate the linkage of ESI and GPI.

To assess the predictive power of our structural model, we applied the Q^2 and Goodness of Fit (GOF) index. The threshold value of Q^2 is zero for all constructs. Table 6 shows that with an omission distance of 7, this study obtained a Q^2 of 0.247 for ATT, 0.412 for GPI, and 0.289

for PN, all of which were greater than the threshold limit, confirming that the path model's predictive relevance was adequate for the endogenous constructs.

In this study, the GOF index is calculated by using the geometric mean value of the average communality (AVE values) of all 6 constructs and the average R² values for all endogenous constructs, which are ATT, GPI, and PN. It was calculated from Table 2 and Table 4 that the GOF index for this study model was measured as 0.466, which exceeded the cut-off value of 0.36 for a large effect size of R² (Cohen, 1988). It indicates that our proposed structural model has a good prediction power.

Table 6: Blindfolding Test Results (Q² Value)

	Cross-validated communality	Cross-validated redundancy
ATT	0.433	0.247
ESI	0.396	
GPI	0.470	0.412
PBC	0.369	
PN	0.378	0.289
SN	0.502	

Discussions

Our findings in this study support the integrated model of VIP and TPB to explain consumers' GPI of fashion products. Notably, the positive impact of ESI on PN and ATT toward the green purchase of fashion products has been strongly confirmed. Then three factors of TPB were also proved to have a positive impact on GPI, with ATT being the most influential factor, followed by SN and PBC. Our finding is in line with other studies about green purchase behaviors in both Western and Eastern countries (Arvola et al., 2008; Patel et al., 2020; Wu & Nguyen, 2015), and Vietnam in particular (Nguyen et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2019).

In our study, ESI is confirmed to have a relatively weak effect on PN, and then PN does not mediate the relationship between ESI and GPI. This finding reveals that although young Vietnamese consumers seem to have a higher awareness of environmental issues than their old generation and consider themselves as environmentally friendly people, their perception is still not strong enough to be turned into moral obligation and intention to act. This result can be attributed to the national culture that Vietnam, with a score of 20 on the individualism dimension, is a collectivistic society (Hofstede Insights, 2021). Thus, Vietnamese people are usually afraid of "losing face." When being asked about their ESI, they might pretend to have high ESI, but they would find it hard to turn their thoughts into real action. Furthermore, the insignificant relationship between ESI, PN, and GPI in this study can be explained by the "familiarity backfire effect" that Vietnamese consumers might encounter. The familiarity backfires effect happens when people are exposed to new information about a phenomenon, but it causes them to remember the misinformation better and to remember it as being true. Consequently, this effect causes people to strengthen their support for a certain piece of misinformation each time they hear an attempt to refute it. In the case of green fashion products, it is notable that information about sustainability issues in the Vietnamese fashion industry is unclear. Most Vietnamese people have low knowledge and find it hard to comprehend the concept of sustainability when buying fashion products. As a result, when Vietnamese consumers get more information about green purchasing in the fashion industry, they tend to

reject and reinforce their previous misinformation, causing hesitation in changing their purchase intention. The result is contrary to the finding by Van der Werff and Steg (2016) that confirmed the strong mediating role of PN in the VIP model when it is applied in a study on smart energy systems. Our study finding is different from the study by Van der Werff and Steg (2016) because the two types of products that consumers purchase are not the same, i.e., smart energy systems versus fashion products, and the context, i.e., Western versus Eastern nations. Nevertheless, our finding is partially supported by previous studies on pro-social behaviors such as Nguyen et al. (2018), Nguyen et al. (2016), Pham et al. (2019).

Interestingly, we found that ESI had a strong effect on ATT than ATT positively and strongly affected GPI. This is a new and different finding from previous studies that have examined the direct impact of ESI on the green purchase without considering the mediating role of ATT. Thus, ESI is confirmed to positively influence GPI through ATT. It is understandable that attitude is the most important factor that determines purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991). In turn, ESI is supposed to affect attitude toward GPI because consumers may consider fashion products as representative of their personality and identity. Thus, the more awareness of the environmental issue that consumers have, the more positive attitude toward green purchasing will be formulated. Consequently, a positive attitude leads to GPI. This finding is in line with other studies on green products such as energy-efficient appliances in Vietnam (Nguyen et al., 2018) and general green products in a comparative study of American and Indian consumers (Patel et al., 2020), and pro-environmental behaviors (Ateş, 2020).

Regarding the role of ATT, we also found a significant impact of ATT on PN, which indicates that the perception and positive attitude toward green purchasing activate their moral obligation to act as responsible citizens. Our finding is in line with the research results of Sia and Jose (2019). Furthermore, our finding proved that PN had a very slight influence on GPI and PN mediated the linkage between ATT and GPI. Although the path from ATT to GPI through PN is not so strong in this study, the finding suggests a new way to explain green purchase behaviors and needs more empirical investigation to verify the theoretical assumptions in different study contexts.

Furthermore, SN has a small effect on young fashion consumers. This finding reveals that young consumers are relatively independent in their purchase choices, particularly for fashion products that reflect their personalities and styles. Our findings supplement the existing literature showing contradictory results of the SN's impact on GPI. For example, in the case of green apparel in the Asian context, Thongpila (2019) found no effect of SN on purchase intention in a study of Thai consumers, while Wu and Nguyen (2015) insisted on the significant positive impact of family and friends on the ecological fashion Taiwanese consumers. The same result was also found in the study of Augustine et al. (2019) about the Malaysian students who buy sustainable fashion products. Regarding these different results, it is interesting to have more investigation in the new research context of transition economies like Vietnam.

It is also noteworthy that PBC is a minor influential factor in the TPB and slightly affects GPI in the present study. This result is attributed to the reality that eco-fashion or green apparel products are still unfamiliar to many Vietnamese people. The unclear understanding of the consumers still exists, so they will find it hard to perceive the ease of GPI when it comes to green fashion products. Our finding is similar to the result of Thongpila (2019) with Thai consumers buying eco-apparel.

Theoretical Contributions and Conclusion

Theoretical Contributions

In terms of theory, this study has some contributions. Firstly, this study combines the VIP model and TPB to explain the purchase of green products, e.g., fashion products, while most previous studies merely focus on other theories or TPB or the VIP model in a discrete manner. Furthermore, our integrative research model provides an adapted approach to explaining GPI, focusing more on environmental self-identity and personal norms than previous studies. Thus, our study paves the way for future research to provide more empirical evidence of the relationship between variables in the TPB and VIP model. Notably, in transition countries like Vietnam, few studies have adopted VIP in explaining green purchase behavior. Our study pioneers the study of the VIP model in the Vietnamese context and is expected to be expanded to the cross-nation study of GPI.

Secondly, unlike other studies, the present research examined and strongly confirmed the indirect impact of environmental self-identity on green purchase intention through the mediating role of attitude. In the original VIP model, attitude is not included. However, our study raised the assumption that environmental self-identity might be an antecedent of attitude in explaining pro-environmental behaviors. Using data from a transition country, i.e., Vietnam, we provided empirical evidence to verify and support the theoretical assumptions.

Thirdly, our new contribution compared to other studies is to test the mediating role of personal norms in the extended TPB with two variables from the VIP model to explain green purchase intention that many previous studies have neglected or revealed contradictory results.

Conclusion

From the perspective of a transition country, this study investigates the factors that influence people's desire to purchase green fashion products. According to the research findings, young Vietnamese people's perceptions of themselves as responsible citizens are critical in shaping their positive attitude toward green fashion purchases. Notably, attitude and personal norms are found to moderately mediate the relationship between environmental self-identity and green purchase intention of Vietnamese consumers.

Furthermore, the present study shows that young consumers are mostly self-sufficient in their purchasing decisions, especially regarding fashion items that reflect their personalities and styles. However, many Vietnamese are still unfamiliar with eco-fashion or green clothing products. As a result, consumers' green purchasing illiteracy persists, making it difficult for them to grasp the simplicity of GPI of fashion products. This study also suggests that marketing communication techniques should prioritize educating young consumers about their moral obligations. This factor will have a significant impact on the purchasing habits of young Vietnamese consumers.

This study has three flaws. Snowball and convenience sampling can both introduce bias. This survey polled urbanites with Internet access and regular fashion purchases. Rural consumers aren't mentioned. Future research should increase the sample and employ different sampling approaches to further understand Vietnamese green purchase behavior. Second, this study didn't look at gender, income, or education level and green product purchases. More research is needed to discover how sociodemographic factors affect green purchasing. Third, the

research model looked at the intention to acquire green fashion products. The findings focus on purchasing intent factors. Future research should incorporate product availability and pricing that accounts for the buying gap. While this study focused on the Vietnamese fashion market, additional transition economies could be studied. Therefore, cross-national research is required.

Practical Implications for Asian Business

In terms of practice, this study confirms the exploratory work of other scholars that have addressed the sustainability issue of the fashion industry in the context of transition economies like Vietnam. As Vietnam is one of the most dynamic market and also a big manufacturer of fashion products, in the context of the Asian fashion market, this study also provides some practical implications for Asian businesses. This study has shed light on antecedents of green purchase intention of fashion products and revealed that attitude is the most important determinant of green purchase intention while attitude is mainly determined by environmental self-identity. In this regard, it is advised for green fashion producers that marketing communication methods should emphasize promoting environmental self-identity and moral obligation of young consumers. This element will be most noticeable in the purchasing process of young consumers, affecting their personal norms and purchase intention.

In the fashion segment of Asia region, the number of users is expected to amount to 1,852.5 million users by 2025. In addition, revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2022-2025) of 7.53%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$587.30 billion by 2025 (World Bank, 2021). Notably, many future customers are Gen Z of today, who are “identity nomads” and online constantly. Furthermore, they are more pragmatic and analytical in their decision making than older generations. As a result, the marketing communication message of green fashion products aiming at waking up the personal norms of young consumers should be designed in an innovative way. Furthermore, social media channels should be used to deliver the messages to the young customers.

For the policymakers, an impetus for change toward sustainability of the fashion industry in Asia should come from the young consumers, who account for the majority of the market. The rising middle-income class in Asia leads to higher demand for fashion products, and frequent customers of fashion stores and companies are young people. Consequently, it is more effective if we integrate some topics about sustainable consumption and green purchase in their training programs at the university level. Regular instructions in secondary and high schools will transform Vietnamese perception and attitude. Teenagers, who will be the major buyers of fashion products, should be educated about green purchasing through school extracurricular activities. In addition, the local government should promote projects that green the fashion industry's value chain, eliminate corporate taxes or simplify administrative procedures to attract investment in sustainable fashion ventures, and encourage customers to reuse and recycle clothes to reduce fashion waste.

Furthermore, it is recommended that governments of Asian countries might issue national policies to promote sustainability in the fashion industry, encouraging the producers to apply cleaner production methods to protect the environment. As Asian countries are strengthening their collaboration in the fashion value chain, particularly in the post-pandemic era, the policies of one nation may have some influence on other players in the regional value chain. Therefore, our findings might contribute to developing a coherent regional policy system and institutions

that promote the sustainable development of the fashion industry.

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