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A STUDY ON DETERMINANT FACTORS OF YOUNG VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S GREEN CONSUMPTION



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This thesis examines the green consumption of young Vietnamese people. The aim of the study is to find out what factors are influencing these young people in forming their green consumption intention and what factors facilitate or hinder them in turning their intention to actual purchase.

The research was carried out by thoroughly reviewing previous studies, applying theoretical frameworks and conducting a survey on a sample group. The target group of this research is young Vietnamese people who aged from 20 to 35 and are now living in Vietnam.

The research explores that environmental awareness, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are the driving factors to the target group's green intention. Moreover, determinant factors affecting these young consumers in transforming their green purchasing intention to real actions are revealed. Those factors can be listed as availability, product quality, trust in green-claims/eco-labels and perceived consumer effectiveness. Besides, other product-related factors are also suggested in the research for future works.

KEYWORDS:

Green consumption, Vietnam, environmental awareness, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intention – behaviour gap, perceived consumer effectiveness, product availability, product quality, trust in green claims, eco-labels.

CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS	5
1 INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Background	6
1.2 Motivation	7
1.3 Purpose of the thesis	8
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Green consumption	9
2.2 Green consumption Intention	10
2.2.1 The Theory of Planned Behavior	10
2.2.2 Environmental awareness	12
2.3 Green consumption behavior	13
2.3.1 The intention – behaviour gap	13
2.3.2 Theoretical factors affecting the intention – behaviour gap	14
a) <i>Perceived Consumer Effectiveness</i>	15
b) <i>Trust</i>	16
c) <i>Product availability</i>	17
d) <i>Product Quality</i>	17
3 METHODOLOGY	19
3.1 Research method	19
3.2 Survey design	19
3.3 Data Collection	20
3.4 Reliability and Validity	20
3.5 Limitation	21
4 DATA ANALYSIS	22
4.1 General	22
4.2 Factors are influencing young Vietnamese consumers in forming their green purchase intention	26
4.3 Factors facilitate/hinder young Vietnamese consumers in transforming their green intention to actual purchase	32
5 CONCLUSION	39

APPENDICES

Survey (in English)

Green labels/green claims in Vietnam

FIGURES

Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behaviour	12
Figure 2: Gender (n=62)	22
Figure 3: Age (n=62)	23
Figure 4: Employment status (n=62)	23
Figure 5: Monthly income (n=62)	24
Figure 6: Have you ever bought a green product? (n=62)	25
Figure 7: Do you intend to buy green products? (n=62)	25
Figure 8: Environmental awareness (n=52)	27
Figure 9: Attitude (n=52)	28
Figure 10: Subjective norms (n=52)	29
Figure 11: Perceived Behavioral Control (n=52)	30
Figure 12: Environmental awareness, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (n=10)	31
Figure 13: Factors concern respondents when/if they consider green products (n=62)	32
Figure 14: Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (n=52)	33
Figure 15: Availability (n=52)	35
Figure 16: Trust in green claims/eco labels (n=52)	36
Figure 17: Green products' quality (n=52)	37

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

TRA	the theory of reasoned action
TPB	the theory of planned behavior

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

During the past decades, over-consumption of goods and services across the world has led to the overexploitation of natural resources and environmental detriment. Stable economic growth, prosperity and the increasing use of technology has resulted in mounting demand in consumption. However, one of the simple facts is a strength of an economy cannot be maintained without a healthy environment (Commission, 2009). Being aware of the threat, many countries across the world have started their way to mitigate the environmental impact of their economic activities. “Sustainable development” concept emerged in the wake of this matter which gives emphasis on promoting sustainability and reducing negative impact on the environment and human society (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

In sustainable development, green consumption plays practical and strategic role (Kim, et al., 2012). In fact, companies have seen rising demand for green products in the past few years. Therefore, green marketplaces are growing in numbers in many countries, offering more environment-friendly substitutes for consumers (Eze & Ndubis, 2013). Specialized green manufacturers and sellers are competing over this new customer segment (Eze & Ndubis, 2013), while businesses are also adjusting their strategies to align with this trend (Lee, 2008). Furthermore, (Lee, 2008) indicates that the unparalleled economic development in many Asian countries results in resource overexploitation and pollution, posing questions about environmental sustainability in this continent. Asian citizens who are financially powered by the vibrant economies are also increasingly conscious of the problem and show interest in spending more on green solutions (ibid).

Vietnam, a developing nation in Southeast Asia, is also tackling environmental challenges and appears to be a prosperous green market. To most young Vietnamese, green consumption is no longer a strange concept thanks to the existence and restless work of non-profit organizations such as WildAct, WWF Vietnam and CHANGE.... Vietnamese young generation had the chance to learn about the environmental problems through fun and viral campaigns such as the “Plastic species”, the “No, thanks” as well as the #LESSPLASTIC challenge, etc. As a result, Nielsen Vietnam’s

survey results revealed that Vietnamese consumers are showing growing interest in “green” and “clean” issues and up to 80% of them are willing to pay more for products committing in these issues (Luu, 2017). Even so, the sales in consuming green products in Vietnam do not seem to increase. In fact, green consumption in Vietnam is still facing limitations assumedly because of traditional customs and habits (Duyen & Ngoan, 2019).

Nevertheless, this is a common problem worldwide. Despite the increasing number of consumers willing to opt for green options, the actual purchase is not evidently found to grow (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Not to mention traditional practices and habits, this indicates that ecological consciousness possibly is not the major determinant factor in the green consumers’ purchasing behaviour. Therefore, by taking into account the importance of green consumption in sustainable development and the opportunities that it is opening up for Vietnamese businesses, it is worthwhile to delve deeper into key factors that are shaping young Vietnamese’s green purchasing intention and behaviour.

1.2 Motivation

The author is highly intrigued by this topic as herself is interested in sustainable living style. Additionally, after undertaking two internships in the sustainable fashion field, the author understood better the threat that human society is facing and the importance of sustainable development.

Vietnam is the author’s home country; therefore, the author wants to explore how the green consumption concept can be promoted better to Vietnamese consumers, especially the young buyers. By investigating factors influencing young Vietnamese’s green consumption behaviour, this research will help businesses, marketers, and manufacturers navigate their strategies to stimulate more demands on the market. At the same time, this contributes to Vietnam’s sustainable development by giving organizations, law and policy makers different insights and discussions on the topic.

1.3 Purpose of the thesis

The objective of this thesis is to identify factors that are influencing young Vietnamese consumers in their green consumption process. In order to do so, the thesis will find the answers to these questions:

- What factors are influencing young Vietnamese consumers in forming their green purchase intention?
- What factors facilitate/hinder young Vietnamese consumers in transforming their green intention to actual purchase?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Green consumption

In some previous researches, green consumption has appeared to be a problematic concept (Peattie, 2010) (Kim, et al., 2012). Firstly, it is apparently an oxymoron because “green” suggests the preservation of natural resources, while consumption usually engages in destruction (Peattie, 2010). For example, according to (Peattie, 2010) and other studies, purchasing fair trade products is an act of green consumption because Fair Trade is not only socially motivated purchase, but its standards also cover environmental resources and biodiversity conservation. However, there are points of view that Fair Trade products may not be qualified (Kim, et al., 2012) as an act of green consumption because distribution process inevitably generates CO₂ emissions (McDonald, et al., 2009). Secondly, green consumption overlaps other concepts such as ethical, sustainable, or responsible consumption, making it even harder to set a limit and consistency in its definition (ibid).

An explicit concept of green consumption first appeared primarily in the United States in the 1970s as “societal marketing” expanded to include environmental issues (Peattie, 2010). Green consumption started to appear more in marketing scholarships, however, the main focus was on energy use and pollution issues related to a few polluting industries such as automobiles, oil, chemicals (ibid). According to (Peattie, 2010), during the 1980s, green consumption and green consumer behaviour became a commercial opportunity for businesses and an interesting field of research. During this time, the green consumption only focused on limiting the consumption of specific commodities such as aerosols, promoting recycling, and public transport.

However, years later, the green consumption in the attempt to release the pressure on the environment does not stop at refraining or recycling (Kim, et al., 2012) but includes the active purchase of green products. In 1994, the green consumption was formally introduced by the United National Environment Programme (UNEP) as “the use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations”.

Reviewing back through previous centuries, the notions of green consumption were created by organizations, governments, and numerous scholars in their research papers. Therefore, even the green consumption appears in different semantic forms (Kim, et al., 2012) such as socially responsible consumption, ecological consumption, environmentally friendly consumption, pro-environmental consumption (Antil, 1984), (Fraj & Martinez, 2006), (Gupta & Ogden, 2009), (Laroche, et al., 2001), (Welsch & Kühling, 2009), each terminology was eventually connected with the same concept/theme (Antil, 1984), (Kim, et al., 2012).

2.2 Green consumption Intention

2.2.1 The Theory of Planned Behavior

In most studies, green consumption is frequently measured as intention and behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Scholars found that one of the foundations that forms the whole buying process is purchase intention (Chekima, et al., 2016).

(Ajzen, 1991) suggests that intentions capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour of consumers and indicate how hard consumers are willing to try, how much effort they are planning to exert in order to perform a behaviour. In green consumption, intention indicates the probability and willingness of consumers in their buying consideration to adopt green products over traditional non-green options.

Correspondingly, (Joshi & Rahman, 2015) points out that in an attempt to explain green consumption behaviour, many previous studies focused on attitude and behavioural intentions. Two dominant theoretical frameworks which are applied in most studies to assist in explaining green purchase intention are the theory of reasoned action (TRA) developed by (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and the upgraded version of it – the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by (Ajzen, 1991). Under the TRA, two main driven keys to an individual behaviour are individual attitude and social norms (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Meanwhile, its extension – the TPB explains one's behavioural intention in green consumption by his/her attitude, perceptions about social pressure (social norms) and a new added factor which is the perception about the difficulty of the behaviour (perceived behavioural control). In both of his theoretical frameworks, (Ajzen, 1991)

affirms intention plays a central role for an individual in performing a given behaviour and the stronger the intention is, the more likely its performance should be.

In order to examine the formation of green consumption intention, it is necessary to discuss shortly about the three antecedents of intention including attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Attitude

Attitude toward the behaviour, the first antecedent of intention, refers to “the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in questions” (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, it refers to a person’s judgement on a questioned behaviour if it is good or bad, and whether the person wants to adopt it (Justin, et al., 2016). It is the psychological emotion and consumers’ evaluation that if it is positive, consumers’ behavioural intention will be more positive and vice versa (ibid).

Subjective norms

The second intention driven key, subjective norms, is a social factor. It is defined by (Ajzen, 1991) as “the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour”. The social pressure is also highlighted to come from those who are close/important to the person/behaviour actor such as close friends, family, relatives, colleagues, etc. (Justin, et al., 2016). Accordingly, (Justin, et al., 2016) suggested that consumers tend to adopt green consuming behaviour if they know that their close, important people endorse this behaviour.

Perceived Behavioral Control

The third determinant of intention is the degree of perceived behavioural control, which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a desired behavior (Justin, et al., 2016). “Perceived behavioural control plays an important part in the theory of planned behaviour as it together with behavioural intention can be used directly to predict behavioural achievement” (Ajzen, 1991). For a better illustration, Ajzen (1991) took an example of two people who have the same intention to learn to ski. While one person who is more confident about his ability can quickly master this activity, the other who doubts his ability is more likely to give up. Accordingly, perceived behavioural control in green consumption indicates the consumers’ perception that either they can easily consume a certain green product or its consumption is difficult or impossible (Liobikienė, et al., 2016).

Recently, (Kang, et al., 2013) shows that during the past, plenty of studies following the TPB found that the theory is a valid theoretical approach for predicting consumer behaviours in the green market such as fair trade grocery shopping by (Shaw, et al., 2000) or energy saving by (Gadenne, et al., 2011). (Halepete, et al., 2009) also supported that a positive attitude impacts positively the intention to purchase personalized fair-trade apparel, which can accurately predict consumers' actual behavior. (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008) also conclude in their study on organic food consumption among young adults in Belgium that 50% of the variance in intention in sustainable dairy consumption was explained by attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control. The study also suggests that attitudes were the main predictor of behavioral intention and can be seen as a good foundation to stimulate green consumption.

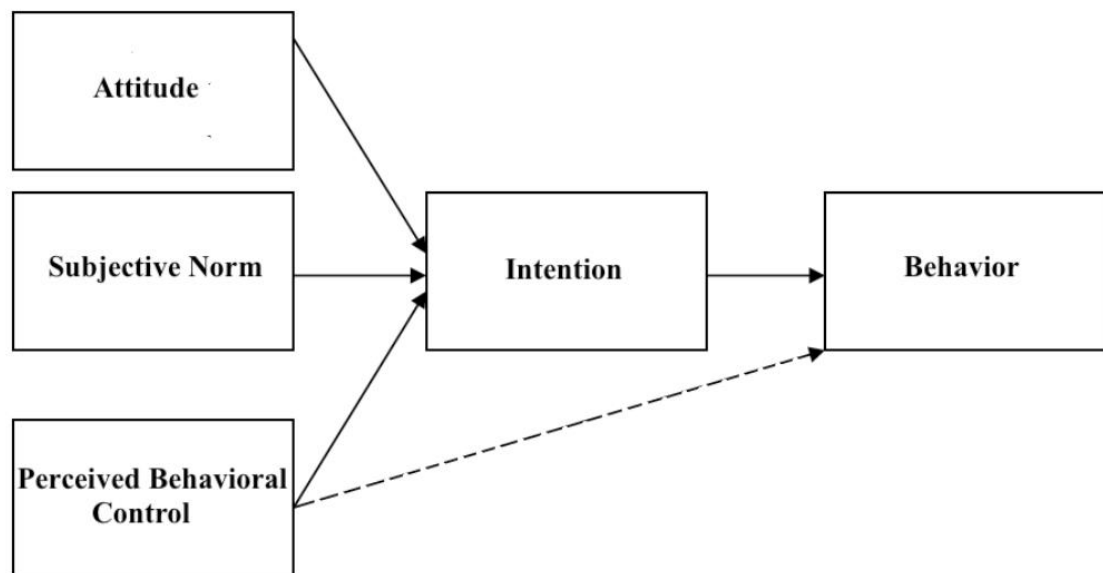


Figure 1: The Theory of Planned Behaviour

2.2.2 Environmental awareness

Environmental awareness is widely used to explain sustainable behaviour. It is frequently regarded as a vital predictor of green consumption and a direct factor motivating green consumption intention (Yue, et al., 2020). It indicates how much a person is aware of environmental issues and how willing that person is to contribute to the solution (Justin, et al., 2016). Consumers have shown their willingness to support solving environmental problems in previous studies as they are found to be increasingly

willing to pay more for green products (Justin, et al., 2016) (Chekima, et al., 2016) (Laroche, et al., 2001).

Consumers who are aware of environmental problems have a tendency to show more interest in green value when making purchases (Kang, et al., 2013). This can be explained as people with higher level of awareness about the environmental problems are more willing to respond to those problems and take actions in protecting the environment (Yue, et al., 2020). Additionally, Kang, et al., (2013) holds the position that consumers with more environmental awareness are likely to perceive that acts of an individual can contribute to solving environmental issues than those who less aware of the environmental matters.

2.3 Green consumption behavior

2.3.1 The intention – behaviour gap

Despite the common usage of the TRA and TPB in studying green consumer behaviour by researches, these frameworks still show a weakness. While applying the theories, many studies observed an inconsistency in consumers' favourable attitudes and the actual buying behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Evidence for the discrepancy is demonstrated by (Hughner, et al., 2007), showing that even though a large number of consumers show a favorable attitude toward purchasing organic food products (46-67%), actual purchase behavior only accounts for a small amount (4%) of different product range (Young, et al., 2010).

This observed disparity between consumers' positive attitude and actual green purchase behaviour is referred to as "green attitude-behaviour gap", "green intention-behaviour gap" or "green purchasing inconsistency" by researches (Young, et al., 2010) (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). The notable and recurring theme within literatures about the gap reflects the fact that environmental knowledge and strongly held pro-environmental values, attitudes, and intentions frequently fail to translate into green purchasing (Peattie, 2010). Because of the gap, analyzing the underlying factors causing it is vital. By accurately discovering the factors, different approaches can be employed to change

and encourage consumer behavior towards sustainable consumption (Young, et al., 2010) (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Among the explanations for this gap, the frequently stated is the tendency of studies to overreport the strength of environmental attitude and intentions (Peattie, 2010). Some other explanations involve consumers who are constrained by habits, lifestyles or financial challenges. Meanwhile, some claim that brand loyalties, uncertainties or perceived trade-offs are leading to disincentive to green consumption (ibid). It is suggested that while attitudes tend to be good predictors of behaviour intentions, the association between attitudes and actual behaviours presents to be weaker (Gupta & Ogden, 2009), (Hanss, et al., 2016). Moreover, (Hanss, et al., 2016) further remarks that although intentions can be used to predict purchasing behaviour, situational or individual factors can possibly affect initial planned behaviour.

While TRA and TPB suggest that intention and behaviour have a strong relationship, these theories do not take the consumer affective factors into account (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Therefore, green consumption behaviour cannot be fully explained by only using these theories, but there is a need to look into other factors that can facilitate or weaken the link between green intention and behaviour.

2.3.2 Theoretical factors affecting the intention – behaviour gap

In order to give an overview of motives and barriers affecting green consumption behaviour, (Joshi & Rahman, 2015) reviewed 53 articles on the topic from 2000 – 2014. These articles were selected only if they contain relevant content on investigating various motives, barriers, and other factors affecting consumers' green purchasing intentions. The number of articles was limited to only empirical articles to avoid bias. Besides, by choosing and reviewing studies providing the case of consumers in different contexts and cultures, (Joshi & Rahman, 2015)'s findings and conclusions can be generalized globally. The study's findings indicated factors affecting the green consumption intention – behaviour gap including habits, perceived consumer effectiveness, values and personal norms, consumers' trust in green claims, price, product availability, product quality, store related attributes, and brand image. However, some factors' influential strengths are suggested to be weak or left with limited studies, while a few factors are widely studied and shown to have strong impacts on the gap.

Moreover, (Kim, et al., 2012) suggested that while the key role of environmental factors has been widely explored in the process of green consumption, the role of other factors used to explain consumer choice behaviour was rarely discussed. In other words, when it comes to green consumption, consumers are asked to bear the environmental responsibility and endure the inconvenience while their rights as consumers are not taken into account. As consumers, they have the right of choice, the demand for convenience and more alternative green options with an affordable price range. In order to have a look into the case of Vietnamese consumer choice behaviour, it is beneficial to review a survey on Vietnamese consumers by (Meng, 2020). According to the survey report, in all product categories, Vietnamese consumers ranked product quality as one of the top attributes that drives their buying decision. The survey also showed that Vietnamese consumers are now more confident in their expenditure due to the rapid population growth and emerging middle class. As a result, the price attribute becomes secondary to non-price attributes such as quality and trust in their buying decisions. Furthermore, Vietnamese purchasing behaviours have shown that convenience is the most priority in their shopping as proximity to residential areas, ease to access, product availability, variety of products are preferred.

Consequently, to narrow down the list of determinant factors, only the most notable factors concluded in (Joshi & Rahman, 2015)'s study are taken into account. Additionally, factors that have appeared to be key driving factors in Vietnamese purchasing behaviour such as quality, trust, and convenience are prioritized in examining their green purchasing behaviour. Therefore, the adopted factors in this thesis are perceived consumer effectiveness, trust in green claims, product availability, and product quality.

a) Perceived Consumer Effectiveness

Perceived consumer effectiveness is one of the most studied variables in an attempt to resolve the green consumption inconsistency (Joshi & Rahman, 2015), which can be explained as the extent to which consumers believe that any action they perform can contribute meaningfully to a particular issue (Peattie, 2010). It is a “set of belief concerns consumer perspectives in ascribing responsibilities for both causing and solving environmental problems, and their ability to contribute to their solution through consumption behaviors” (Peattie, 2010).

Perceived consumer effectiveness was discovered to be an indirect influence on consumer purchase intention because of its substantial impact on consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control which further defines consumer purchase intention (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Before consumers change their behaviour, they must believe their actions would make a difference (Wesley, et al., 2012). Many consumers likely feel that they, as an individual, cannot make a difference in meeting the sustainable goals via green consumption. In other words, they disbelieve that one's single purchase of a green product will make a positive change to the environment (Gleima, et al., 2013). However, if consumers believe that they can make positive results by purchasing green products, they tend to behave in accordance with their intention (Wesley, et al., 2012).

b) Trust

Trust in green consumption is defined as a belief or expectation about the environmental performance of green products (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Along with perceived consumer effectiveness, trust is another psychological factor that is found by studies to act as a determinant factor in converting green intention to green purchases. Green claims or eco-labels are created to help consumers distinguish products having environmental attributes from conventional products (Carsten, et al., 2014). However, green claims may sometimes be insufficient to encourage consumers to buy green products as they only use an eco-label/green claim in their buying decision if they have trust in it (ibid). Numerous studies discussed consumers' skepticism towards green product claims (Carsten, et al., 2014), (Nuttavuthisit & Thøgersen, 2015). For a clear illustration, Carsten, et al. (2014) suggested a case found by Peattie (1995), Eden (1994), and Mohr et al. (1998) that consumers in the US and UK believed that green claims are just an excuse made up by companies to raise their products' prices. Clearly, there are indications that the level of green claim trust has an impact on the level of green consumption. In fact, green products' attributes are credence attributes that consumers cannot verify even after buying and consuming the products. On the other hand, green products are usually charged at high prices, making consumers fear being cheated by the green claims, especially when they have little or no knowledge of these green products' environmental standards (Nuttavuthisit & Thøgersen, 2015).

c) Product availability

A research shows that 52% of consumers were interested in buying sustainable foods, yet eventually did not make those purchases due to perceived barriers of lack of availability and convenience. (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

There is a prevailing belief that green consumption associates with sacrifices in terms of convenience, costs, or performance without providing significantly genuine environmental benefits (Peattie, 2010). Meanwhile, as consumers, people often opt for convenience rather than value choices when shopping and avoid what requires higher perceived efforts (Padel & Foster, 2005) (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Especially, green products appear not to have a competitive advantage when price, quality and even convenience are compromised (Kim, et al., 2012). Hence, although consumers are highly motivated to buy sustainable products, the intention to actually make purchase is possibly impeded by the low availability of green products in the market (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). (Young, et al., 2010) also advocate the view that the limited availability of a product causes unfavorable effect on consumer green purchase intention and behavior. Conversely, sufficient availability and easy accessibility of green products motivate green consumption.

Additionally, (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) discovered that one of the reasons causing the attitude - behaviour inconsistency is that people often forgot about their green purchasing intention or it just simply slipped their minds as green products aren't frequently available at where they shop in.

d) Product Quality

Quality of a product is the outcome of a good performance or is the extent to which it can meet the customer's needs and expectations (Reza, et al., 2012). Depending on product categories, the quality of a green product can be demonstrated by its features, design, taste, healthiness, durability, and the ability to alternate traditional products, etc. For example, when it comes to purchasing green food products, quality attributes such as taste and healthiness are important for consumers to make their decisions (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Studies found out that green product quality significantly influenced consumers' green purchase intention and behaviour. An investigation has shown that the environmental values of a product can be overridden by other decisive factors such as quality, which, for example, can be observed in a case of conflict between making sustainable choices and fashionable choices (Park & Lin, 2018). Hence, failures to meet high product attributes and quality of green products may result in a conflict between consumers' personal needs and their sense of environmental responsibility, which decreases the chance of consumers to transform their green purchase intention into real actions (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). On the other hand, if consumers perceive a green product to have high quality, it positively supports their intention to buy that product.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research method

In this thesis, suggested theoretical factors are examined to study what influences young Vietnamese in their green consumption. Because of this purpose, deductive approach was selected for this research. Considering a few reasons, quantitative is a suitable method for this thesis. First of all, Saunders, et al. (2016) suggested that a quantitative research is usually associated with a deductive approach where data is used to test theory. Secondly, by following quantitative method and conducting a survey, this thesis not only can collect qualified data to support its purpose but also reach the mass participants in a short period.

Therefore, this thesis conducts a survey to collect data and uses statistical methods to analyse, as well as present the findings. The survey consists of 3 parts:

- **Background information:** In this part, participants' basic information is collected including their genders, age, employment status, income and their familiarity with green consumption.
- **Green consumption intention:** Participants' intention in buying green products is investigated by asking questions regarding environmental concerns, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.
- **Green consumption behaviour:** The last part investigates factors that would facilitate participants' green intention to transform into actual behaviour, as well as finding out what concern them when buying green products, what challenges they are facing in considering green products by asking questions about perceived consumer effectiveness, trust in green claims, product availability, and product quality.

3.2 Survey design

The questionnaire has been designed as an online survey that targets only young Vietnamese individuals whose age ranges from 20 – 35 years old. Its goal is to examine their green consumption process from intention formation to actual behavioral hinderance/facilitation. The survey was designed in the most structured way to ensure

that it is easy to read and fill up. Due to the target research population, the survey was written in Vietnamese language, however, it is also translated into English for presenting purpose.

There are 2 types of question in the questionnaire including multiple choice and close-ended. Multiple choice questions are used for asking background information, previous experience and opinion on the topic while the rest of the questions are in a form of close-ended questions. Close-ended questions ask respondents to evaluate proposed statements on a Likert scale. By letting respondents evaluate the statements, it is more time-saving for them and also supportive to this study's data analysis process.

3.3 Data Collection

As the survey is distributed online, it was created using Webropol. Webropol is selected to collect data as its layout is more user-friendly and the collected data can be readily transferred to numerous statistic softwares such as Excel, SPSS, etc. The survey was anonymous so participants can decide to participate in by their own will and confidently share their answers.

The survey was sent out via social media platforms to a group of the author's selected contacts up to 110 people. The participants were carefully selected to ensure that the sample group represents this research's target group. Hence, the survey was only delivered to individuals now living in Vietnam whose age is from 20 – 35 years old. It was distributed via Internet and social media platforms because of time and geography constraint. Besides, by using these channels, the research was able to reach the sample group faster.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, the survey was expected to be delivered to as many participants as possible. Moreover, the survey was designed carefully based on theoretical framework from the literature review part of the research and the questions are highly structured to be easy to understand. Additionally, prerequisite conditions such as age range and living locations are checked before

sending to participants to increase the validity in responses. The questionnaire is also sent to some friends, thesis supervisor to run trials, receive feedbacks and ensure its workability.

3.5 Limitation

The survey was structured carefully to test theories studied in the literature review section of the research. As a result of this, most of the questions were designed to be close-ended. There is only one open question that allows participants to indicate what other factors that are not included in the study can hinder/facilitate their green buying if they consider green products. Therefore, using close-ended question may result in bias answers or different perspectives on the topic undiscovered. In addition, even the survey was highly structured and reviewed, there are also chances of misunderstanding of the questions and dishonesty in answering.

Another limitation of this research is a lack of generalization. The survey got 66 responses which is a small sample group comparing to the Vietnam's current population. In addition, while this study targeted on young Vietnamese people, it is not possible for the author to distribute the survey to all Vietnamese consumers across Vietnam because of time and geography constraints. The survey was mainly distributed to consumers in Ho Chi Minh city, the biggest city in Vietnam. Therefore, the result of this study cannot be popularized to all Vietnam's population.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

Among the individuals that were selected to send the survey to, 66 participated in it. However, 4 responses were left out because they didn't meet the target group's requirements. Therefore, the final data includes 62 responses from a group of young Vietnamese people aging from 20 to 35 years old and now living in Vietnam.

The collected data was analyzed with Webropol tool. Findings are discussed based on the structure of the survey.

4.1 General

This section was designed to learn more about the respondents' background information. Demographic factors are not the focus of this study, however, some basic information such as gender, age, income, etc. are included.

- Gender

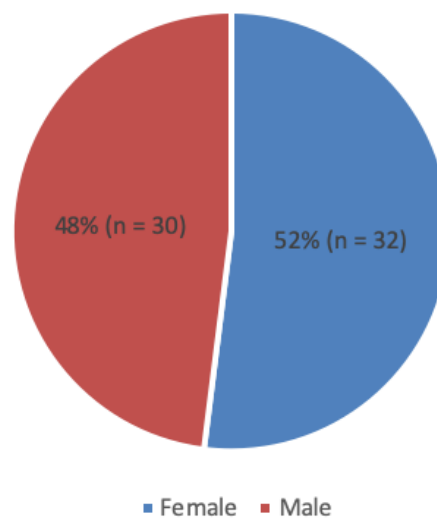


Figure 2: Gender (n=62)

It can be seen from the graph (Figure 2) above that there is a slight gender difference where females account for 52% (32 out of 62 participants) of the responses, while males contribute 48% (30 out of 62 participants) to the outcome. Overall, the survey was taken part in by both genders evenly.

- Age

Generally, survey participants' age mostly ranges from 20 to 30 years old. The largest group is the age group from 20 – 25 years old which constituted more than half of the sample group (33 out of 62 participants). The second largest group belongs to the age group from 26 – 35 years old with 36% (22 out of 62 participants). Meanwhile, there is an insignificant percentage (11%) of the participants (7 out of 62 participants) are in the age 31 – 35. Furthermore, there is no respondent whose age is below 20 or above 35 years old.

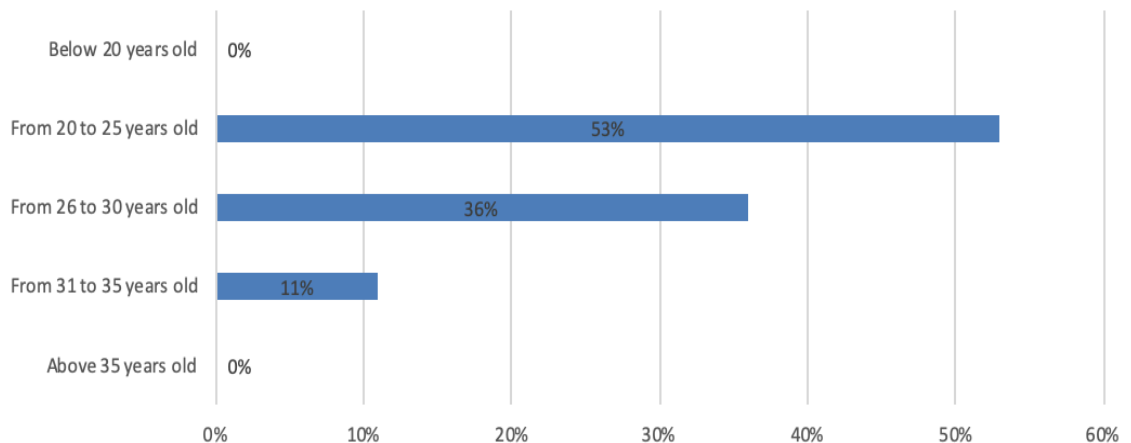


Figure 3: Age (n=62)

- Employment status

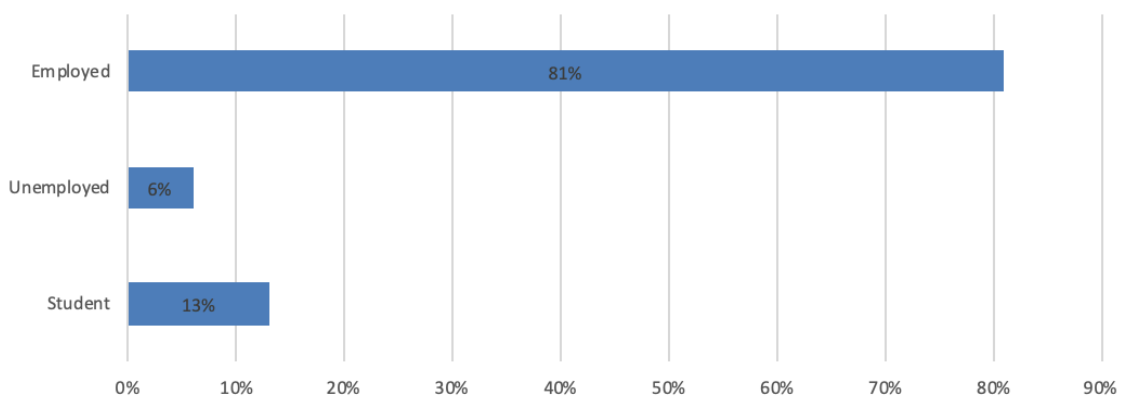


Figure 4: Employment status (n=62)

Figure 4 illustrated that a large share of respondents is employed (81%), followed by 13% (8 out of 62) of respondents who are students. Besides, only 6% (4 out of 62) of the sample group is found to be unemployed.

- Income

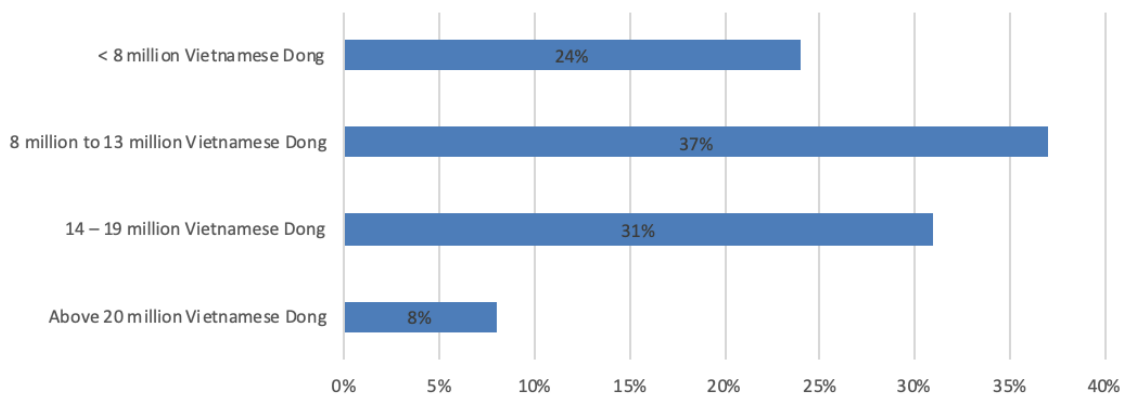


Figure 5: Monthly income (n=62)

As showed in Figure 5, the dominating income range is 8 million – 13 million VND (around 292 – 475EUR) accounting for 37%. 19 participants (31%) answered that their monthly income is from 14 million – 19 million VND (around 511 – 694EUR) while 15 (account for 24%) participants said their monthly income is under 8 million VND (around 292EUR). A small percentage of the participants said their income is more than 20 million VND (around 730EUR) per month which accounts for 8%.

- Have you ever bought a green product

The findings have showed a significant difference in respondent's experience with green product. 29% (18 out of 62) of them said they have made a green product purchase before while two-thirds of them (71%) revealed that they haven't purchased this kind of product.

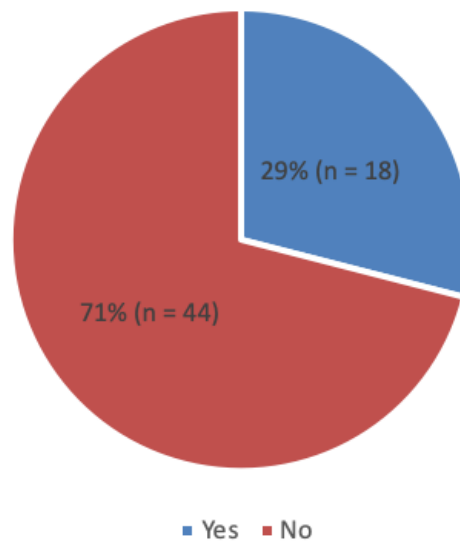


Figure 6: Have you ever bought a green product? (n=62)

Based on the answer of the respondents, either they were required to answer another follow-up question or continue to the next question. For those who answered they haven't bought a green product before, they were asked if they have any intention to.

- Do you intend to buy green products?

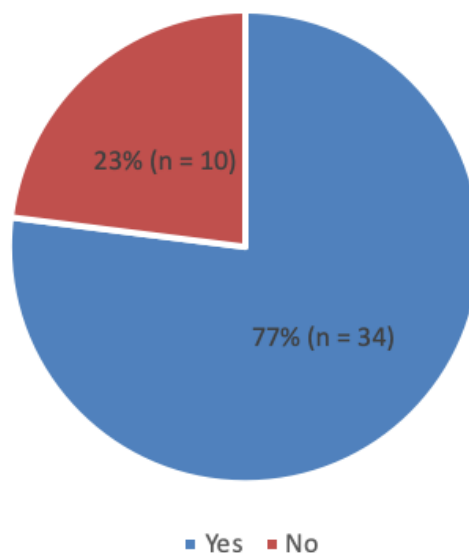


Figure 7: Do you intend to buy green products? (n=62)

Interestingly, a large percentage of the survey participants said they have the intention to buy green products, which explained for 77% (34 out of 62) of the result. Oppositely, 23% (10 out of 62) of them disclosed that they have no intention to do so.

4.2 Factors are influencing young Vietnamese consumers in forming their green purchase intention

Survey participants are now divided into two groups to be analysed. Respondents who have purchased green products and those who have the intention to do so were grouped together (Group 1) and continued the second and third parts of the survey. Meanwhile, those who have no intention in purchasing green products (Group 2) were asked to continue only the second part of the survey to find out reasons behind their unconcern for green consumption.

The analysis first starts with Group 1.

○ Environmental awareness

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding environmental awareness in order to examine how this factor helps them in forming their green consumption intention. Those statements include:

- I'm worried about the current environmental problems.
- I'm aware that over-consumption and conventional consumption are burdening the environment.
- I'm interested in finding solutions for the environmental issues.

As shown in Figure 8, respondents who have experience with green products or intend to purchase them show a positive environmental awareness. 48% of the respondents admitted (35% agree and 13% strongly agree) that they are "worried about the current environmental problems". In addition, more than half of the responses showed agreement with the statement "I'm aware that over-consumption and conventional consumption are burdening the environment" (54% agree and 15% strongly agree). Lastly, nearly half of the respondents held a neutral opinion on the statement "I'm interested in finding solution for the environmental issues", while 29% of them agreed and 12% strongly agreed with the statement. As a result, the respondents of this group have shown a good environmental consciousness. They are intrigued to find solutions to the environmental issues but not strongly. However, they are highly aware that over-

consumption and conventional consumption are the problems. Therefore, the high consciousness about the green problems can be seen as one of the factors forming the intention to purchase green products of the respondents.

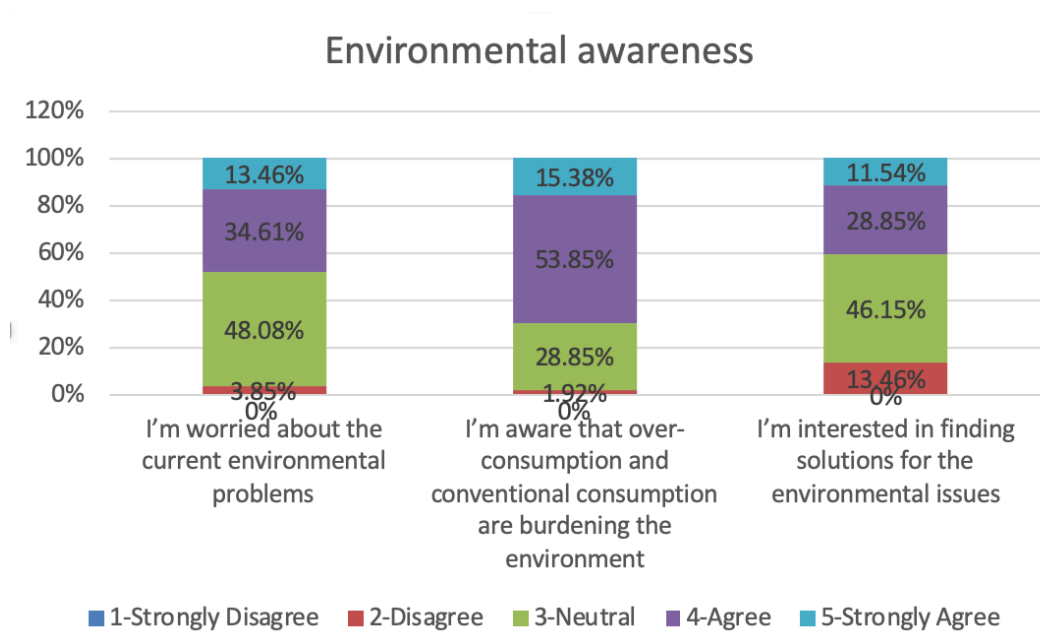


Figure 8: Environmental awareness (n=52)

- Attitude

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding green consumption in order to examine their attitudes towards this sustainable solution. Those statements include:

- Green consumption is a good idea to solve environmental issues.
- I have a positive/favorable attitude towards green consumption.

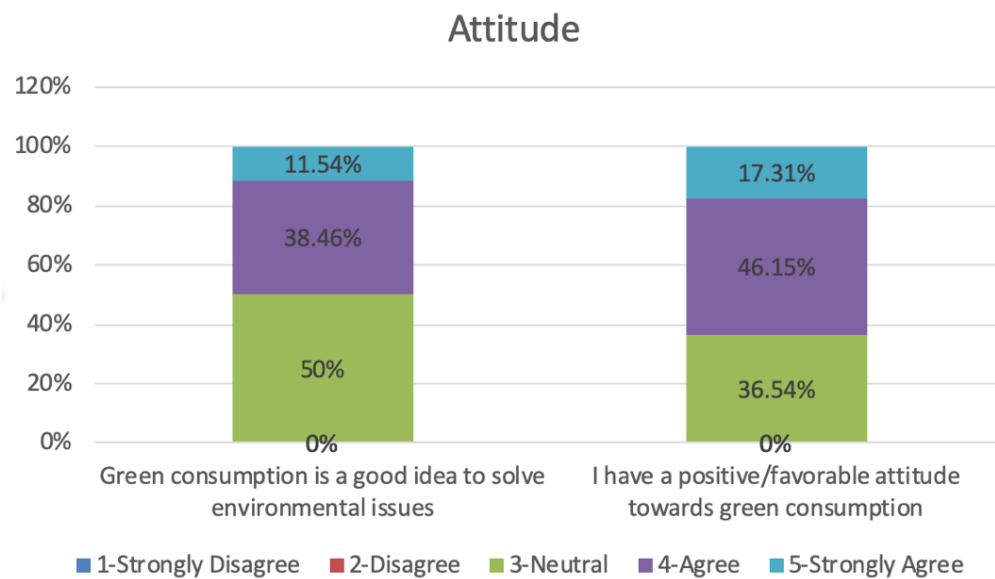


Figure 9: Attitude (n=52)

Figure 9 illustrates the survey participants' opinion on green consumption. In both statements, none of the respondents showed a negative point of view about green consumption. In the first statement "green consumption is a good idea to solve environmental issues", half of the respondents in this group didn't share any particular opinion. Meantime, the rest of the group expressed their opinions about the statement from agree (39%) to strongly agree (12%). Additionally, a favorable attitude of this target group towards green consumption was showed in the second statement's evaluation. Nearly 64% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while the rest showed a neutral attitude. Therefore, the result showed that the respondents have favorable attitudes towards the green consumption, explaining for both their green purchasing and the intention in adopting this behavior.

○ Subjective norms

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding social influence in order to see if it assists them in forming their green consumption. Those statements include:

- My family/relatives/friends is/are consuming green products.
- My family/relatives/friends is/are encouraging me to buy green products.
- I will consider buying green products if people who are important to me encourage me to.

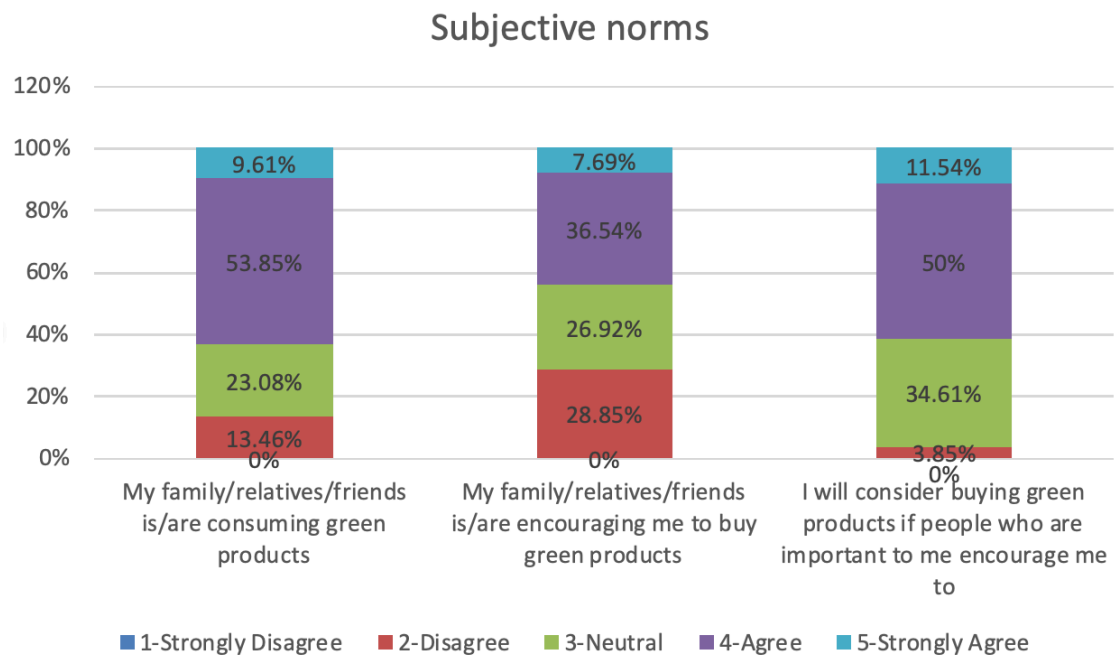


Figure 10: Subjective norms (n=52)

It can be seen on the Subjective norm chart (Figure 10) that there is a certain level of social influence on the respondents' green consumption behavior. A large share of participants agreed (54%) and strongly agreed (10%) with the statement "my family/relatives/friends is/are consuming green products" and approximately 62% of them (11.54% strongly agree and 50% agree) revealed in the third statement's evaluation that their important people can influence them to consider green products. By seeing friends/family members, colleagues, business partners, etc. using green products, respondents are likely to form an intention to do the same thing. Additionally, about 8% and 37% of the respondents admitted that they got the encouragement from their close people to buy green products. However, there is a notable share of the participants (29%) said they did not receive any green consumption endorsement or encouragement from their close, important people even it is helpful in forming their green purchasing intention. Overall, subjective norms factor has showed an impact in shaping green consumption intention of the survey participants.

- Perceived behavioral control

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding their perceived level of difficulty in adopting green consumption in order to examine how this factor helps them in forming their intention. Those statements include:

- I don't find it challenging to buy green products if I want to.
- I have enough time and resources to look for green products' information and consider green products.

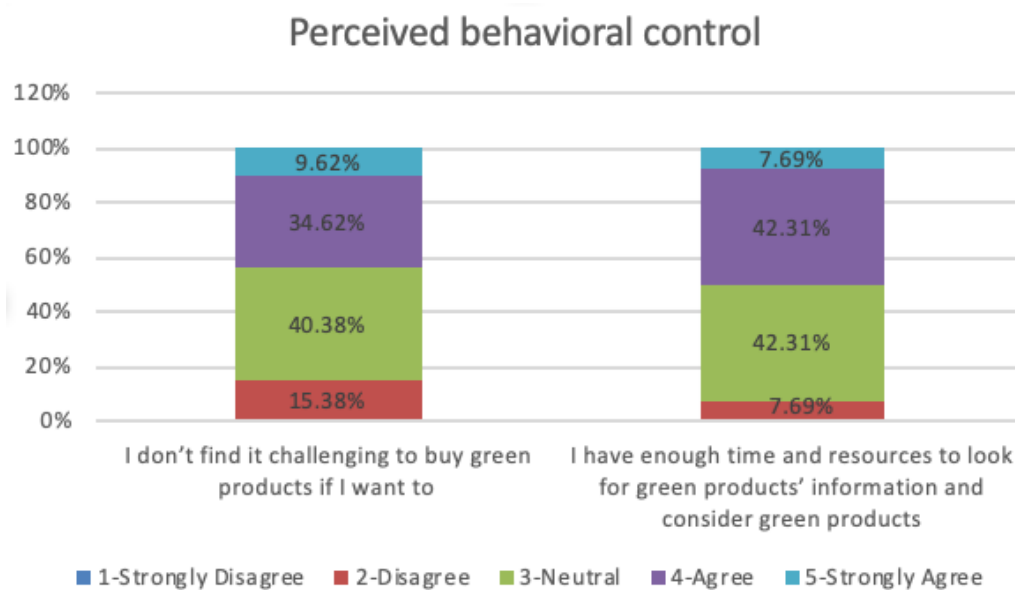


Figure 11: Perceived Behavioral Control (n=52)

In general, respondents gave a positive perception of the level of difficulty in pursuing green consumption. In the statement “I don't find it challenging to buy green products if I want to”, 44% of the sample group showed agreement and 40% expressed a neutral opinion while approximately 15% showed disagreement. The figures can be interpreted that while some were neutral about it, the others believed that it is not difficult to buy green products if they have the willingness to, which further defined their intention to take that action. Moreover, the statement “I have enough time and resources to look for green products' information and consider green products gained a considerable share of agreement from the respondents (50%), indicating that that respondents also believed they have the ability and resources to search for green products.

Group 2:

	1- Strongly Disagree	2- Disagree	3- Neutral	4- Agree	5- Strongly Agree
I'm worried about the current environmental problems	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
I'm aware that over-consumption and conventional consumption are burdening the environment	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%
I'm interested in finding solutions for the environmental issues	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Green consumption is a good idea to solve environmental issues	0%	30%	70%	0%	0%
I have a positive/favorable attitude towards green consumption	0%	60%	40%	0%	0%
My family/relatives/friends is/are consuming green products	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
My family/relatives/friends is/are encouraging me to buy green products	0%	90%	0%	10%	0%
I will consider buying green products if people who are important to me encourage me to	0%	30%	50%	20%	0%
I don't find it difficult to buy green products if I want to	10%	40%	10%	40%	0%
I have enough time and resources to look for green products' information and consider green products	50%	40%	0%	10%	0%

Figure 12: Environmental awareness, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (n=10)

Overall, the majority of responses of this group is negative, explaining why they have no intention in green consumption. It can be observed that, this minority is less aware of the green issues, therefore, shows no interest in solving them. When it comes to

attitude towards green consumption, some showed a neutral or even negative feeling. Besides, they are not affected by social influence as they have rarely seen their close, important people (family, relatives, friends, etc.) using green products or received any encouragement from these people. Additionally, half of them perceived that it is difficult to buy green products if they want to and most of them believed they don't have any time or resource to look for and consider green products. Therefore, the lack of environmental awareness, favourable attitude towards green consumption, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control factors is the reason why these people fail to form an intention for this behavior.

4.3 Factors facilitate/hinder young Vietnamese consumers in transforming their green intention to actual purchase

- Concerning factors

Both respondents in Group 1 and Group 2 are asked what factors concern them when/if they consider green products.

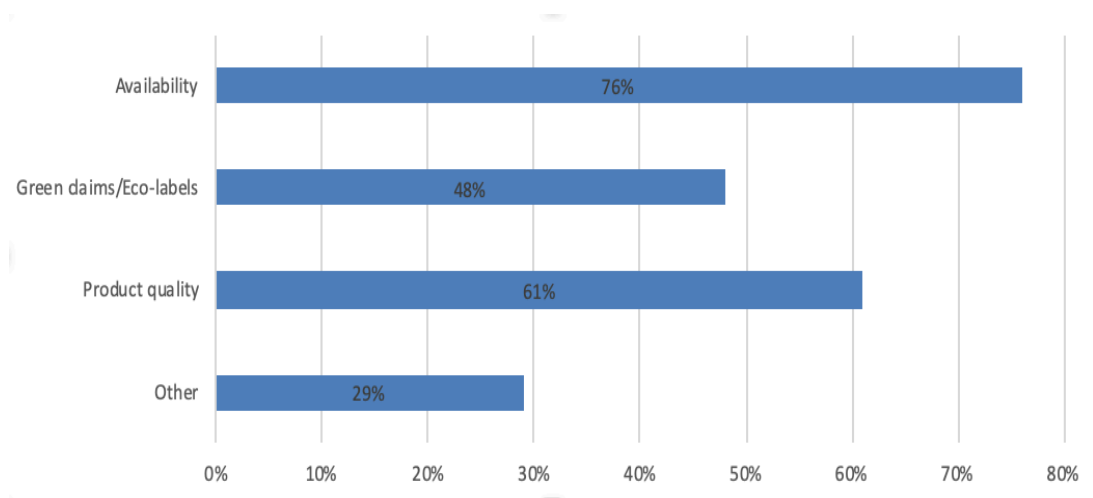


Figure 13: Factors concern respondents when/if they consider green products (n=62)

The Figure 13 has clearly illustrated that “Availability” is the most concern of the survey participants when/if they consider environmental-value products. “Product quality” appears to be the second concern, followed by “green claims/green labels”. Moreover, 29% of the respondents suggested that they also care for other factors, most of which are brand, price and information concerns.

The survey participants are also asked to explain shortly about their choices. Most of them skipped the question but some of the explanation are “green products are not widely available”, “I don’t see any green product on the market”, “limited availability, high price but low in quality”, “brand matters more because popular, favored brands have high-quality offerings”, “the prices are high but the products are not trustworthy enough”, etc. To sum up, the recurring reasons behind their choices on concerning factors are the unavailability of green products, the priority in product quality, the trust in green claims and brand and the compromise in price.

- Perceived consumer effectiveness

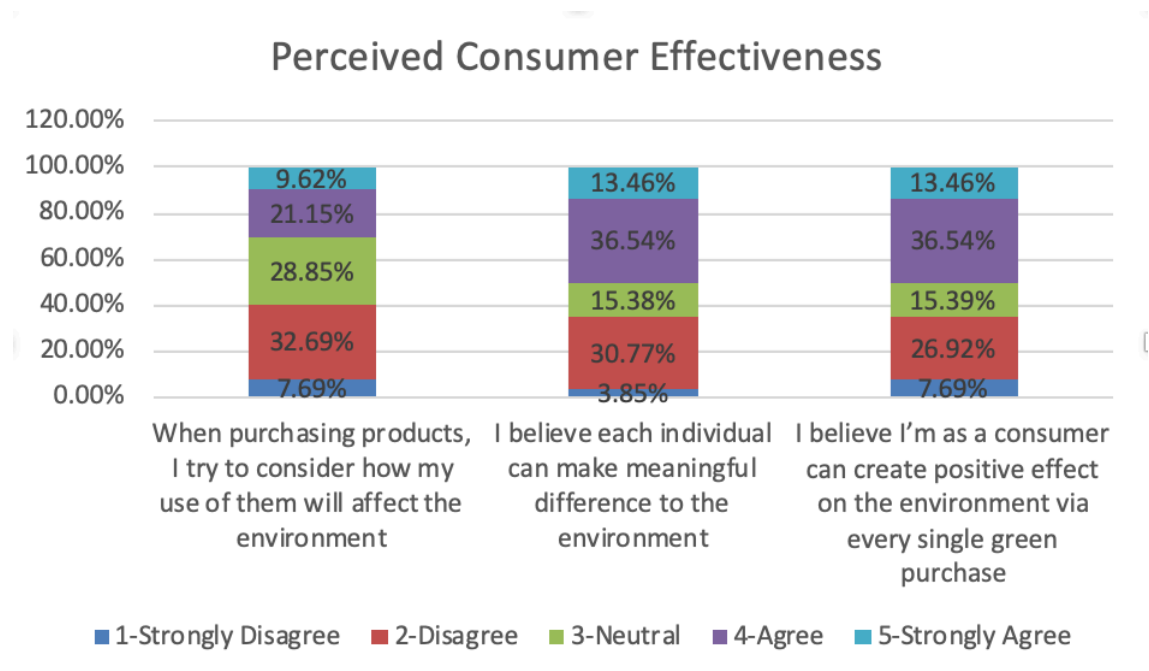


Figure 14: Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (n=52)

The respondents are asked to evaluate statements regarding their perception on individual contribution in solving green issues. Those statements are:

- When purchasing products, I try to consider how my use of them will affect the environment.
- I believe each individual can make meaningful difference to the environment.
- I believe that as a consumer, I can create positive effect on the environment via every single green purchase.

Overall, the responses are scattered from strongly agree to strongly disagree for all three statements. When asked to evaluate the statement “When purchasing products, I try to consider how my use of them will affect the environment”, only approximately 10% strongly agreed and 21% agreed with the statement. This reflects that Vietnamese consumers haven’t actively taken environmental consciousness into consideration in their daily consumption. Both statements “I believe each individual can make meaningful difference to the environment” and “I believe that as a consumer, I can create positive effect on the environment via every single green purchase” got similar responses. A same number of share of respondents (13.46%) strongly agreed and (36.54%) agreed with these two statements while approximately 16% didn’t share any opinion and the rest showed disagreement. Therefore, it is suggested that perceived consumer effectiveness is influencing Vietnamese young consumers in transforming their green consumption intention into real actions. If respondents believe in individual contribution, they are more likely to transform their green consumption intention into real actions. Oppositely, if they disbelieve in individual contribution to the positive environmental changes, their green consumption behavior is confined in the intention stage only.

Because of some of negative responses in the survey results, it can be seen that to some extent, the disbelief or doubt in individual contribution by purchasing green products is preventing some of the respondent’s in their green consumption process, explaining for the large number of respondents who haven’t made any purchase for green products.

- Availability

In the line of the question regarding concerning factors of respondents when considering green products, the respondents reported that availability was the main problem of their green consumption when they were asked to evaluate these statements:

- Green products are available in stores/market places that I usually shop in.
- I know where to buy green products.
- I find it difficult finding green products to replace conventional products.
- Availability and convenience concern me most when I consider green products.

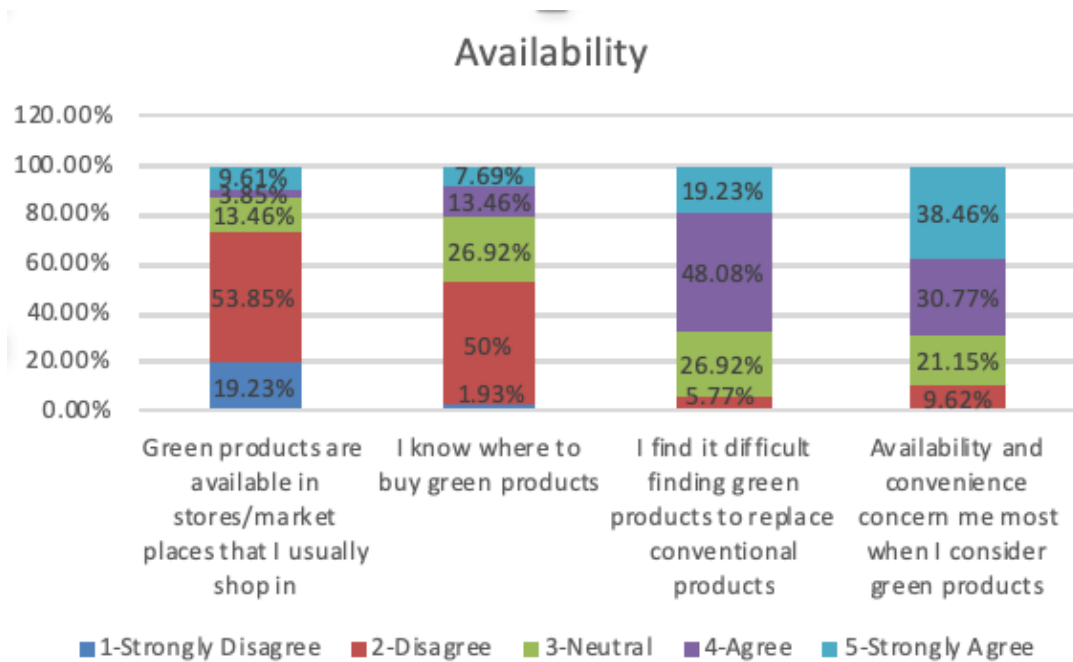


Figure 15: Availability (n=52)

The findings revealed that those who purchased green products or have had intention to buy them cannot find this type of products at their disposal. A large share of participants disagreed (approximately 54% disagree and 20% strongly disagree) with the statement “Green products are available in stores/market places that I usually shop in”, indicating that convenience and availability are highly compromised if the respondents want to make green purchases. Similarly, 50% of the respondents disagreed with the statement “I know where to buy green products” while only a small percentage (13%) of them agreed with the statement. Accordingly, even if respondents have the intention to buy green products, they face the difficulty to find them as they don’t know where is selling them. Besides, the statement “I find it difficult finding green products to replace conventional products” was agreed by many participants (48% agree and 19% strongly agree), showing that the limited availability and inconvenience are causing trouble for respondents. Therefore, the fact “availability and convenience concern me most when I consider green products” is well supported by respondents. Consequently, availability was found to play a crucial role in transforming green consumption intention of the respondents.

- Trust in green claims/eco labels

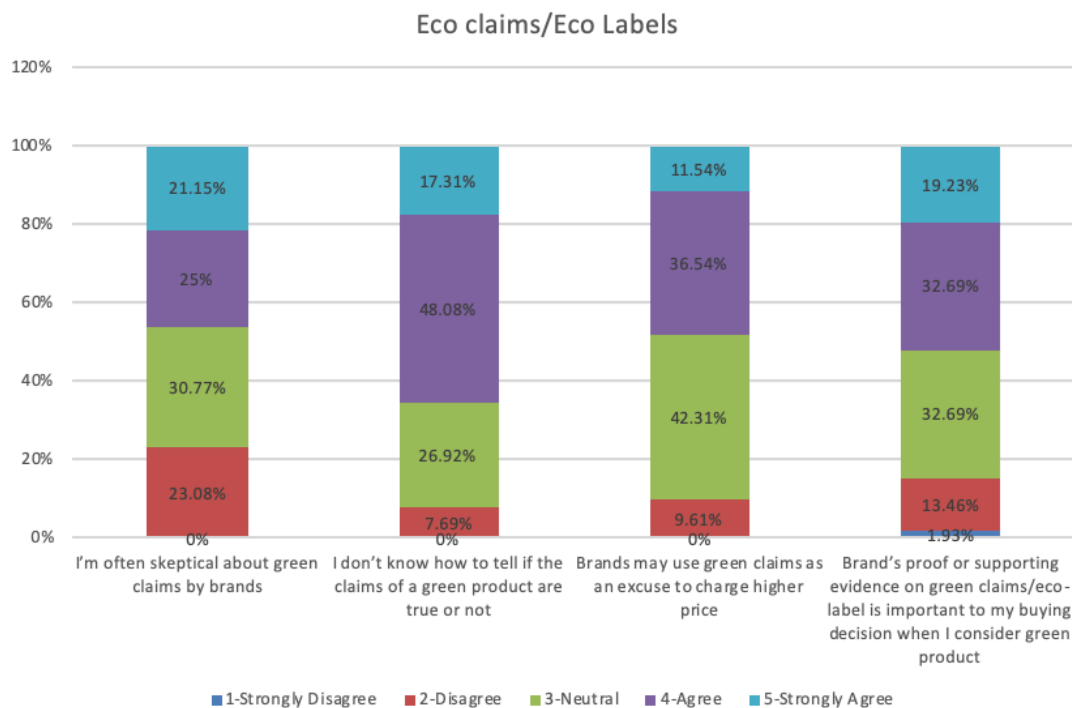


Figure 16: Trust in green claims/eco labels (n=52)

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding eco claims/eco labels to examine their trust in green product claims:

- I'm often skeptical about green claims by brands.
- I don't know how to tell if the claims of a green product are true or not.
- Brands may use green claims as an excuse to charge higher price.
- Brand's proof or supporting evidence on green claims/eco-label is important to my buying decision when I consider green product.

The respondents who have experienced green products or have the intention to purchase them have a certain level of concern about green claims or eco-label by brands. When asked if they feel suspicious about green claims, 25% of the participants showed their skepticism towards the claims while approximately 21% of them were even highly skeptical about them. Meanwhile, 31% of them were neutral with regards to the truthfulness of such claims. 23% said on the contrary that they are not skeptic towards such claims. The skepticism and neutrality towards green claims can be explained in the second statement that is "I don't know how to tell if the claims of a

green product are true or not". A large share of respondents agreed with the statement reflecting that they don't have enough knowledge about green claims or eco-labels, therefore, have skepticism about them. Furthermore, nearly half of the participants revealed that they suspect that brands may take advantage of green claims to charge them more, while 42% of them was neutral about this. Lastly, when asked to indicate if brands' proof or supporting evidences on green claims assist their buying intention, a considerable percentage (approximately 19% strongly agree and 33% agree) of them acknowledged the help of these factors. Hence, it can be said that the trust in green-claims/eco-label is a determinant factor which either facilitates or hinders the green buying intention of the sample group.

o Quality

The respondents were asked to evaluate statements regarding green product quality to examine if this factor impacts their green consumption behavior. Those statements are:

- o Green products that are now available on the market can replace conventional products that I'm using.
- o Green products (sustainable apparels, organic foods, eco-friendly home appliances, etc.) have better quality (durable, fashionable, tasty, healthy, etc.) than the conventional products.
- o Green products' quality concerns me most when I consider them.

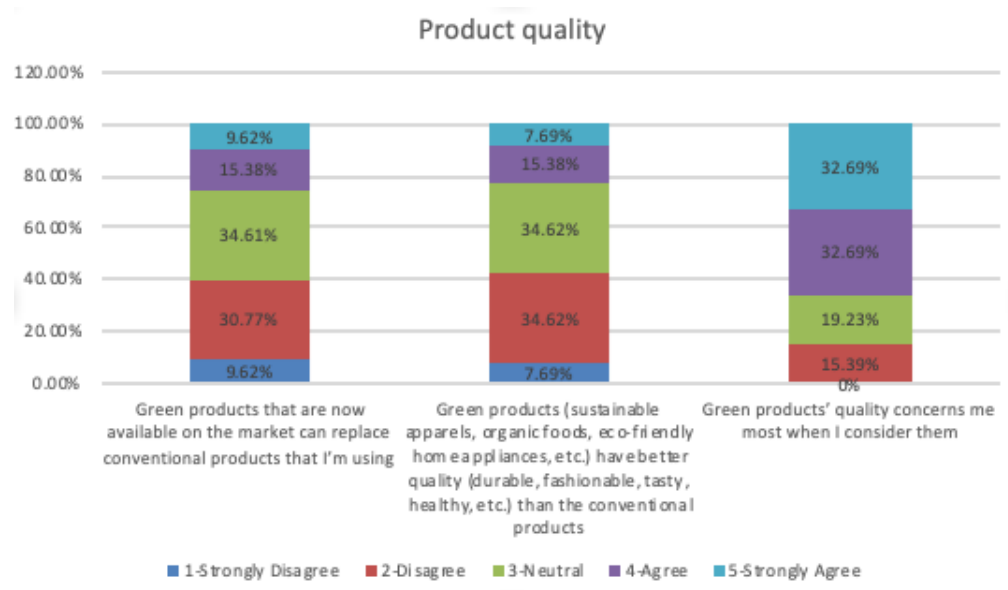


Figure 17: Green products' quality (n=52)

Respondents who have purchased green products or intended to do so expressed a negative perspective for green products' quality. The statement "Green products that are now available on the market can replace conventional products that I'm using" only got an insignificant share of positive responses, indicating a negative evaluation of respondents about the ability of green products to substitute conventional products. It can be observed from the chart above (Figure 17), 41% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement and 35% of them was neutral about the quality of this type of products. Even though the respondents are aware of the environmental value of green products, they suggested that these products which are now accessible to them still cannot be considered as alternatives to the conventional products. Additionally, the shares of responses of the statement "Green products (sustainable apparels, organic foods, eco-friendly home appliances, etc.) have better quality (durable, fashionable, tasty, healthy, etc.) than the conventional products" support the previous statement well. Respondents see green products as non-alternative to conventional products as the latter option is still advance in quality. Similar to the previous statement, only a minority (approximately 23%) perceived that green products are high-quality comparing to conventional products, while the rest perceived opposite or neutral about it. Therefore, green product's quality becomes one of the most concerning factors in respondents' green buying behavior. In total, there are 66% of the respondents supporting the statement "green products' quality concerns me most when I consider them". Hence, green product quality appears to be a notable factor that can either hinders or facilitates the respondents' intention in buying green products.

5 CONCLUSION

With the aim to study the determinant factors of young Vietnamese people's green consumption, the study has been carried out by thoroughly assessing previous literature reviews and conducting a survey on a sample group. As a result, the findings have well supported the theories and been able to answer the research questions.

The study findings showed that environmental awareness is an important factor in shaping green consumption intention of young Vietnamese people. The collected data shown that these young people have a good consciousness of the over-consumption and conventional consumption's harmfulness, which has urged them to find solutions to the problem. Additionally, by applying the theory of planned behavior, the study further found out that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are three other factors forming their intention. It can be said that Vietnamese young consumers view green consumption as one of good solutions to the current environmental problems and have a positive attitude towards it. Besides, they are also influenced by their friends/family members/colleagues, etc. in forming up an intention to buy green products. The endorsement from their important people has been proved to be helpful in their green consumption. Furthermore, the last factor that can be used to explain their green product purchasing intention is the fact that they don't perceive it is challenging to do so if they are willing to. In the survey, they disclosed that they are confident in having resources to search for or consider green products.

The results also indicated some details that should be noticed in order to better promote the green consumption to the Vietnamese young consumers. The collected data has signaled that even most Vietnamese consumers are well aware of environmental issues, some of them are still not active in finding solutions or highly paying attention them. Additionally, a considerable number of survey participants admitted that they don't received any encouragement from their close, important people (family, relatives, friends, colleagues, etc.) to purchase green products. Therefore, even though the endorsement from important people appears to be a strong factor in one's green consumption behavior, it hasn't been widely utilized. Correspondingly, there is a need for better strategies and practices to raise public environmental awareness as well as green consumption knowledge and motivate consumers to take more proactive steps to combat the problem.

The study also studied important factors that facilitate/hinder young Vietnamese consumers in transforming their green purchasing intention into actual purchase. Availability is the most concerning factor, followed by product quality, eco-claims/eco-label and perceived consumer effectiveness. Currently, perceived consumer effectiveness factor is more likely to expand the gap between intention and actual behavior of the young consumers. Most young consumers are not confident in their individual contribution, therefore, hesitate to buy green products. At the same time, the scarcity of green products on Vietnamese markets is also preventing young consumers in making actual purchases. Moreover, product quality which is currently one of the most concern of Vietnamese consumers, is also applied in the green product category. Manufacturers and brands need to constantly improve and develop green products' quality as they are still considered to be inferior in quality competence comparing to conventional products. Last but not least, there is a need for attention in using eco-claims/eco-label as consumers are also showing concerns about them. Supporting evidence on eco-claims/eco-label should be considered by brands as it is suggested from the data that they facilitate the young consumers in their buying decision. Beside these studied factors, other factors are also mentioned by respondents to be their concerns, including price, brand and green product information. Therefore, future studies are suggested to take these factors into account.

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Appendix:

Survey (in English)

PART I

Question 1: Gender

- Male
- Female

Question 2: Age

- Below 20 years old
- From 20 to 25 years old
- From 26 – 30 years old
- From 31 – 35 years old
- Above 35 years old

Question 3: What is your employment status

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Student

Question 4: What is your monthly income range?

- < 8 million Vietnamese Dong
- 8 million to 13 million Vietnamese Dong
- 14 – 19 million Vietnamese Dong
- Above 20 million Vietnamese Dong

Question 5: Have you ever bought a green product?

- Yes
- No

If no, do you intend to?

- Yes
- No

PART II

Indicate your opinion about following statements by using assessment: 1 - Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 - Strongly agree

		1	2	3	4	5
Environmental Awareness	I'm worried about the current environmental problems					
	I'm aware that over-consumption and conventional consumption are burdening the environment					
	I'm interested in finding solutions for the environmental issues					
Attitude	Green consumption is a good idea to solve environmental issues					
	I have a positive/favorable attitude towards green consumption					
Subjective Norms	My family/relatives/friends is/are consuming green products					
	My family/relatives/friends is/are encouraging me to buy green products					
	I will consider buying green products if people who are important to me encourage me to					
Perceived Behavioral Control	I don't find it challenging to buy green products if I want to					
	I have enough time and resources to look for green products' information and consider green products					

PART III

Question 4: Factors concerns me when/if I consider green products (Choose more than one option)

- Availability/Convenience
- Green claims/Eco labels
- Product quality
- Other...

Indicate your opinion about following statements by using assessment: 1 - Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 - Strongly agree.

		1	2	3	4	5
Perceived Consumer Effectiveness	When purchasing products, I try to consider how my use of them will affect the environment					
	I believe each individual can make meaningful difference to the environment					
	I believe that as a consumer, I can create positive effect on the environment via every single green purchase					
Product availability	Green products are available in stores/market places that I usually shop in					
	I know where to buy green products					
	I find it difficult finding green products to replace conventional products					
	Availability and convenience concern me most when I consider green products					
Green claims trust	I'm often skeptical about green claims by brands					
	I don't know how to tell if the claims of a green product are true or not					
	Brands may use green claims as an excuse to charge higher price					
	Brand's proof or supporting evidence on green claims/eco-label is important to my buying decision when I consider green product					

Product Quality	Green products that are now available on the market can replace conventional products that I'm using					
	Green products (sustainable apparels, organic foods, eco-friendly home appliances, etc.) have better quality (durable, fashionable, tasty, healthy, etc.) than the conventional products					
	Green products' quality concerns me most when I consider them					

Eco-labels/Green claims in Vietnam





VINAMILK.



0-6 tháng | 350g

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