Research on Some Factors Affecting the Intention and Behavior towards Sustainable Consumption of Vietnamese Consumers

Nguyen Thi Phuong Linh, Tran Le Huy, Nguyen Ngoc Anh, and Tran Thi Diu

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors affecting on sustainable consumption intention and behavior of Vietnamese customers by applying quantitative and qualitative approaches. Research data was collected from a survey of 551 consumers with diverse demographics and used to be processed with SPSS and Smart PLS software. Since then, the authors proposed a research model, in which sustainable marketing, environmental awareness, government policy were identified as major drivers for generating sustainable consumption intention and behavior. These findings have provided a direction for future studies on sustainable consumption behavior and created an initial foundation to help government and enterprise come up with solutions to promote this behavior in Vietnam.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, government policy, sustainable consumption, sustainable marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainable development is one of the important and urgent issues that the Vietnamese government has prioritized in the development process of the country. In the Sustainable Development Strategy for the period 2021-2030 with 17 core goals, sustainable consumption is emphasized with a particularly important role in promoting Vietnam to soon achieve the goal of comprehensive sustainable development. Moreover, this problem is more urgent than ever when the level of environmental pollution takes place globally and in Vietnam, which is on red alert and extremely serious.

Regarding the Vietnamese context, research is mainly on green consumption behavior but rarely on the topic of sustainable consumption. These studies are still limited in terms of sample size, so they have not explored deeply the distinct behavioral characteristics of Vietnamese consumers. Our research aims to research and analyze factors such as: government policy, sustainable marketing, and environmental awareness (corresponding to the target groups are government, business, and consumer respectively) have an impact on sustainable consumption behavior in Vietnam. From there, the authors propose effective solutions for each target group to promote consumption behavior in a comprehensive way. Furthermore, this study will raise people's awareness of the importance of sustainable development, especially about sustainable consumption.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

A. Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable consumption is defined as the use of goods and services that fulfill fundamental requirements and improve people's quality of life while limiting the use of natural resources, hazardous materials, and emissions, so as not to endanger the needs of future generations (Svarstad et al., 1994). Specifically, behaviors such as consuming healthy foods, saving electricity and water, not smoking, not drinking alcohol, beer, participating life-enhancing activities, purchasing ecologically friendly products... are considered sustainable consumption behaviors.

B. Sustainable Consumption Behavior

Sustainable consumption behavior is often associated with environmentally friendly consumption behavior, which is an aspect of individual behavior that helps reduce their negative impact on the environment (Dhandra, 2019). According to the point of view of the product life cycle, sustainable consumption behavior includes purchase, use and disposal elements, namely purchase and use of sustainable products, and disposal and disposal of used products (Geng et al., 2017).
C. Sustainable Consumption Intention

Intention was defined as a person’s motivation behind their decision to strive to achieve a particular behavior. The intention to perform a particular act precedes the actual act; the stronger the intention, the greater the motivation to perform the behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1985). Currently, many hypotheses about the positive impact of intention on behavior have been demonstrated in many studies about pro-environmental behavior, such as recycling (Davies et al., 2002), renewable energy use (Bang et al., 2000), and purchase of organic food (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). Regarding sustainable consumption behavior, many studies have also concluded the positive impact of intention on behavior (Wang et al., 2014; Saari et al., 2021).

D. Environmental Awareness

An environmentally conscious consumer can be defined as “an ecologist” who understands his own impact on environmental pollution and has a sense of responsibility towards the next generation. Future and all of humanity in the use of its resources. Environmentally aware consumers can assess environmental resources, the costs of their use, and the impact of these uses on the environment and on themselves (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993).

E. Government Policy

It is increasingly recognized that sustainable consumption cannot be achieved by consumer action alone and that government interventions are needed to shape discourse, norms, incentives, and infrastructure (Prothero et al., 2011). However, in most of the existing papers on sustainable consumption, discussions of the role of “government” rarely specify the level of government, or only assume that it is national government (Geels et al., 2015; OECD, 2008). Therefore, this study focuses on sustainable consumption interventions that can be implemented by national government agencies.

F. Sustainable Marketing

Environmental marketing, more commonly known as green marketing or sustainable marketing can be defined as a company’s effort to design, promote, price, and distribute a product in a manner that promotes environmental protection (Polonsky, 2011). One of the marketing tools used by organizations is environmental advertising or green advertising. Green advertising is defined as a promotional message that appeals to consumers' needs and wants in relation to the environment (Zinkhan & Carlson, 1995).

G. Conceptual Framework

From previous research stated above, the authors propose the theoretical framework below.

The hypotheses in this study can be described as below based on the shown conceptual framework:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Environmental awareness has a positive effect on sustainable consumption intention.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Government policy has a positive effect on sustainable consumption intention.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Sustainable marketing has a positive effect on sustainable consumption intention.
- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Sustainable consumption intention has a positive effect on sustainable consumption behavior.

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Source of Data

The author used primary and secondary data sources in this study. With primary data sources, they were collected from online and direct surveys at supermarkets, businesses, and schools in Vietnam, using tools such as Google Form, Excel; the survey took place in November 2021. With secondary data sources, the author used the sources of documents from Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight and the library of National Economics University.

B. Questionnaire

This survey was designed by the authors with 26 items basing on previous studies (Ali et al., 2021; Figueroa-García et al., 2018; Kim & Cha, 2021; Haytko, 2008), focusing on 4 factors: sustainable consumption behavior, sustainable consumption intention, environmental awareness, government policy, sustainable marketing. Variables are measured on a 5-likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree).

C. Methods of Data Analysis

The variables were encrypted, and the data was double-checked before the analysis to guarantee that each questionnaire was legitimate. The data collection revealed that 600 response sheets were gathered, with 551 of them being legitimate (91.83%). Next, all data were processed through the SPSS 22.0 and Smart PLS 3.0 software. The author used Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and Structural equation modeling (SEM).

IV. RESULTS

A. Respondent Characteristics

As the data of 551 respondents that the authors collected, the percentage of male and female consumer is 49.9% and 50.1% respectively. The proportions of age groups include under 18 (11.1%), 18-24 (29.6%), 25-35 (19.2%), 36-45 (16.9%), 46-55 (13.8%) and over 56 (9.4%). Most Vietnam consumer are below 6 million VND of monthly income (56.8%).

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2022.7.2.1346
B. Reliability Analysis

The measurement model tests the association between observed data and latent variables through some of the following tests: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and composite reliability coefficient. The convergence value is tested through the factor loading (outer loading) and the average extracted variance (AVE); the discriminant value is tested through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) coefficient.

The reliability of the scale is assessed through two indicators including composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. However, PLS-SEM will prioritize variables based on their individual reliability. Chin (1998) suggested that in exploratory research, CR must be 0.6 or higher. With confirmatory studies, the threshold of 0.7 is the appropriate level of the CR index (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013). Many other researchers also agree that 0.7 is an appropriate threshold for many cases, such as Hair et al. (2014). The results presented in Table I shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all variables are in the range 0.907 - 0.950, this result is much higher than the proposed value of 0.6. Thus, this scale is assessed as reliable when both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability CR are satisfied.

The Fornell-Larcker criteria compares the square root of the average variance extracted AVE with the correlation coefficients of the two latent variables. Specifically, the square root of the AVE of a factor must be greater than the maximum correlation coefficient of that factor and other factors. According to Table II, the square root AVE value for all latent variables is higher than all correlations between latent variables.

With the HTMT index, the discriminant value between the two latent variables is ensured when the HTMT index is less than 1 (Garson, 2016). If this value is below 0.9, discrimination value will be guaranteed. SMARTPLS prioritizes threshold selection of 0.85 in the evaluation (Watson et al., 1995; Kline, 2015). When evaluating that the HTMT value has a result greater than 0.85, bootstrapping should be performed to see if this value is statistically different from 1. The results from the table below show that all HTMT values are below 0.85 and satisfy the researchers' recommendation (Watson et al., 1995; Kline, 2015). Therefore, we do not need to check the bootstrapping value to see the type and statistical significance.

C. Linear Regression Analysis

We use Bootstrapping repeated random sampling method to test the significance of the regression coefficients in the model. Thus, if sig < 0.05, we reject H0 and conclude that the variable is statistically significant. Conversely, if sig > 0.05, we accept H0 and conclude that the variable is not statistically significant.

If the results of hypothesis testing with T- value higher than 1.96 and P-value lower than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. The results in Table IV show that all hypotheses are accepted. The results show that environmental awareness (β = 0.309, t = 8.576 > 1.96, p < 0.05), government policy (β = 0.285, t = 6.329 > 1.96, p < 0.05), sustainable marketing (β = 0.210, t = 5.439 > 1.96, p < 0.05) have significant and positive effects on sustainable consumption intention. Hypothesis H4 between the impact of sustainable consumption intention and sustainable consumption behavior results in β = 0.431, t = 9.896 > 1.96, p < 0.05. All indicators are satisfactory, so hypothesis is accepted.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Discussion

1) Government policy

The role of the government is emphasized in formulating policies to promote and encourage consumers to choose to use and implement sustainable behaviors for long-term sustainable development goals (Prothero et al., 2011; Geels et al., 2015; OECD, 2008). In this study, the government policy variable has a positive impact on sustainable consumption intention with the results β = 0.285, t = 6.329 > 1.96, p < 0.05.

2) Sustainable marketing

Irandust and Bamdad (2014) define sustainable consumer marketing as a marketing strategy that supports the environment by creating benefits for the environment, based on what consumers expect. This study has shown a positive relationship between sustainable marketing and sustainable consumption intentions.

3) Environment awareness

The environmental awareness factor is expected by the authors to bring about a positive change, contributing to promoting people's intention to consume sustainably. With the result β = 0.309, t = 8.576 > 1.96, p < 0.05, the environmental awareness factor in this factor has the third strongest positive influence on the intention to consume.
sustainably. This conclusion agrees with previous studies of Simmons and Widmar (1990), Follows and Jobber (2000).  

B. Implications  
Firstly, the study has established the importance of understanding the factors: government policy, sustainable marketing, and environmental awareness, which belonging to important groups in society (government, business, and consumers respectively), effect on sustainable consumption behavior especially for Vietnamese consumers. Moreover, previous studies have mainly focused on researching and exploiting this topic with factors belonging to consumers, but it is quite rare that studies show the influence of factors coming from government and business.  
Secondly, based on the research results of some factors affecting the intention and behavior towards sustainable consumption of Vietnamese consumers, the authors give the following suggestions for the government, business, family, and community. Company should build marketing strategies to encourage Vietnameses people to prioritize choosing sustainable products. Educational programs on sustainable consumption should be included in schools and taught in a structured way. Moreover, building a sustainable consumption culture in the family and community is an extremely necessary activity to motivate each family member to voluntarily implement sustainable consumption.  

C. Conclusion  
From the results, the conclusion can be drawn based on proving the hypotheses that were built in this study. This research showed that environmental awareness, government policy and sustainable marketing have a positive impact on sustainable consumption intention. In which, environmental awareness is the most influential factor on intention. Based on the research results, the authors propose some recommendations for businesses; state management agencies, policy activists; family and society in promoting sustainable consumption behavior in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
The author thanks the respondents, schools, supermarkets, and companies who participated and supported in completing this study.

FUNDING  
The author pays for the cost of this research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

REFERENCES  