

Sustainable consumption: The moderating role of perceived inconvenience and trust

Nam Hai Le ^{1*}, Tuan Loc Le ², Truong Vu Bui Vu ¹

¹Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM

²University of Economics and Law, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, VIETNAM

*Corresponding Author: lenamhai@iuh.edu.vn

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable purchasing represents one of the most tangible manifestations of sustainable consumption. This study applies the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) frameworks to examine the moderating roles of perceived inconvenience and trust in the relationship between sustainable purchase intention and sustainable purchase behavior. It also investigates the moderating effect of perceived inconvenience on the relationships between contextual stimuli and organism factors (emotional value and social value). A quantitative research approach was employed to collect data from 398 consumers in Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang, Vietnam, who had purchased sustainable products. The structural equation model was analyzed using SmartPLS 4. The results indicate that both individual and contextual factors positively influence emotional value and social value, which, in turn, enhance sustainable purchase intention and sustainable purchase behavior. Furthermore, the moderating effects of perceived inconvenience and trust are statistically supported. These findings provide business managers and marketers with deeper insights into consumers' sustainable purchasing behavior and offer practical implications for promoting sustainable consumption.

Keywords: sustainable consumption, sustainable purchase behavior, SOR framework, TPB, perceived inconvenience

INTRODUCTION

Statista's 2023 report shows that approximately 82% of consumers are willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products, particularly in major economies such as the United States, Germany, and China. This trend is further reinforced by global initiatives such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, sustainable consumption encompasses various forms of purchasing behavior aimed at minimizing environmental impacts, including the purchase of green products, organic products, recycled products, energy-efficient products, and eco-labeled products. Among these behaviors, sustainable purchasing represents one of the most tangible manifestations of sustainable consumption. Lee (2011) argued that purchasing environmentally friendly products reflects sustainable consumer behavior, which is shaped not only by personal attitudes but also by social influences and practical knowledge. Consequently, sustainable purchasing extends beyond individual choice and reflects consumers' broader sense of environmental responsibility and civic engagement. Despite growing environmental awareness and increasingly favorable attitudes toward sustainable purchasing, the gap between

purchase intention and actual purchasing behavior remains a persistent challenge across many countries (White et al., 2019).

Although sustainable consumption has attracted extensive scholarly attention, sustainable purchasing remains one of its most widely investigated dimensions. Previous studies have examined sustainable purchase intention across different consumer groups, cultural contexts, and product categories. For instance, purchase intention among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia (Hudayah et al., 2023), in Iran (Asl & Khoddami, 2023), sustainable clothing purchasing behavior of German consumers (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021), and sustainable consumption behavior in Vietnam (Minh & Quynh, 2024). Although emotional and social value play a central role in shaping customers' behavioral intentions or significantly influence customers' decisions to continue using or recommend a product/service (Floh et al., 2014), their influences on purchase intention have not been consistent or deeply studied (Asl & Khoddami, 2023; Hudayah et al., 2023). In Vietnam, especially, over 70% of consumers are happy to pay for sustainable products (Ministry of Industry and Trade, 2024). However, there is a lack of in-depth research on how

individual perceptions and contextual factors affect emotional and social value, as well as sustainable purchase intention.

On the other hand, the pathway from antecedent factors to sustainable purchasing behavior has continued to face several notable barriers, such as high costs, limited accessibility, lack of transparency, and time consumption (Caniëls et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2017). These aspects have been conceptualized as perceived inconvenience. It is regarded as a psychological and behavioral barrier that contributes to the widening gap between antecedents, sustainable purchase intention, and actual sustainable behavior. Although prior studies have acknowledged the role of perceived inconvenience as a limiting factor, its underlying nature and moderating effects have not been extensively investigated across specific relationships, particularly the link between intention and actual behavior, as well as the influence of contextual factors on emotional value and social value.

Moreover, Kotler and Keller (2016) posited that trust functions as a metric for assessing the perceived level of risk inherent in the transition from intention to behavior. Therefore, trust is regarded as a critical factor influencing the relationship between sustainable purchase intention and sustainable purchase behavior. Trust plays a pivotal role in fostering a sense of certainty, thereby motivating actual behavior despite cognitive or behavioral barriers (Sirieix et al., 2011). So, trust can be considered a regulatory and evaluative mechanism that significantly affects the conversion of purchase intention into actual sustainable purchasing.

To address the research gap, the objective of this study is

- (1) to assess the influence of individual perceived factors and contextual factors on emotional and social value, which subsequently shape sustainable purchase intention and behavior,
- (2) to investigate the moderating effect of trust and perceived inconvenience on the link between intention and sustainable purchase behavior,
- (3) to examine the moderating effect of perceived inconvenience on the link between contextual factors and emotional and social value.

While previous studies have not clearly explained the simultaneous moderating effects of situational factors (perceived inconvenience) and psychological factors (trust) on sustainable purchasing behavior, this study clarifies this issue. Therefore, the results make a significant contribution to theory based on the combination of the SOR and TPB theoretical frameworks to explain the gap from intention to actual behavior as well as from context factors to emotional and social values.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUNDS

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

According to Ajzen (1991), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a fundamental theoretical framework for studying and understanding human behavior, particularly in the contexts of consumer and social behavior. Ajzen (1991) posited that most studies in the field of sustainable consumption have adopted

TPB to explain how individuals form specific behavioral intentions (Han et al., 2017; Amoako et al., 2020; Ahmmadi et al., 2021). The theory provides an explanation for the specific process by which intention translates into actual behavior. Building upon this well-established theoretical foundation, the present study also incorporates TPB to examine the relationship between intention and behavior in the context of sustainable consumption. Moreover, it seeks to extend the model by exploring the moderating role of trust (TRU), a form of positive emotional attitude rather than treating it solely as an antecedent to intention, as well as exploring the moderating role of perceived inconvenience (PEI) - a barrier situational factor.

Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Framework

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), offers a conceptual lens for analyzing how external environmental factors influence consumer behavior. In retail research, the SOR model has been widely adopted to systematically explain how environmental stimuli affect consumers' affective and cognitive states, which in turn shape their behavioral reactions (Liu & Zheng, 2019). Although various extensions and applications of this framework have emerged across different industries, the core proposition of the SOR model by Mehrabian and Russell remains robust and widely acknowledged (Goi et al., 2014). Furthermore, recent studies have applied the SOR framework to assess the impact of both external and internal stimuli on consumer reactions—particularly in the context of sustainable product purchasing (Pilgrimienė et al., 2020).

In this study, the author adopts the SOR model by incorporating specific types of stimuli: individual factors, namely perceived consumer responsibility (PCR) and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE); and contextual factors, including social norms (SN) and environmental visibility (ENV). These stimuli are proposed to influence internal states represented by emotional value (EV) and social value (SV), which subsequently affect consumer responses in terms of sustainable purchase intention (SPI) and sustainable purchase behavior (SPB) (Figure 1).

Research Hypotheses

Perceived consumer responsibility (PCR), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV)

Perceived consumer responsibility refers to the degree of emotional and moral accountability individuals feel toward minimizing environmental harm (Jaiswal & Bihari, 2020). It also reflects a person's respect for environmental issues and their contribution to improving ecological quality (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015). In this regard, perceived consumer responsibility is conceptualized as an individual's sense of voluntary, personal obligation to engage in environmentally friendly behaviors. This perception often stems from intrinsic beliefs, emotional attachment, and a sense of personal pride when contributing to ecological efforts, thereby enhancing both emotional value and social value.

Activities that foster a heightened sense of environmental and ethical responsibility have been shown to align with social goals, enhancing consumers' perceived value (Peloza & Shang,

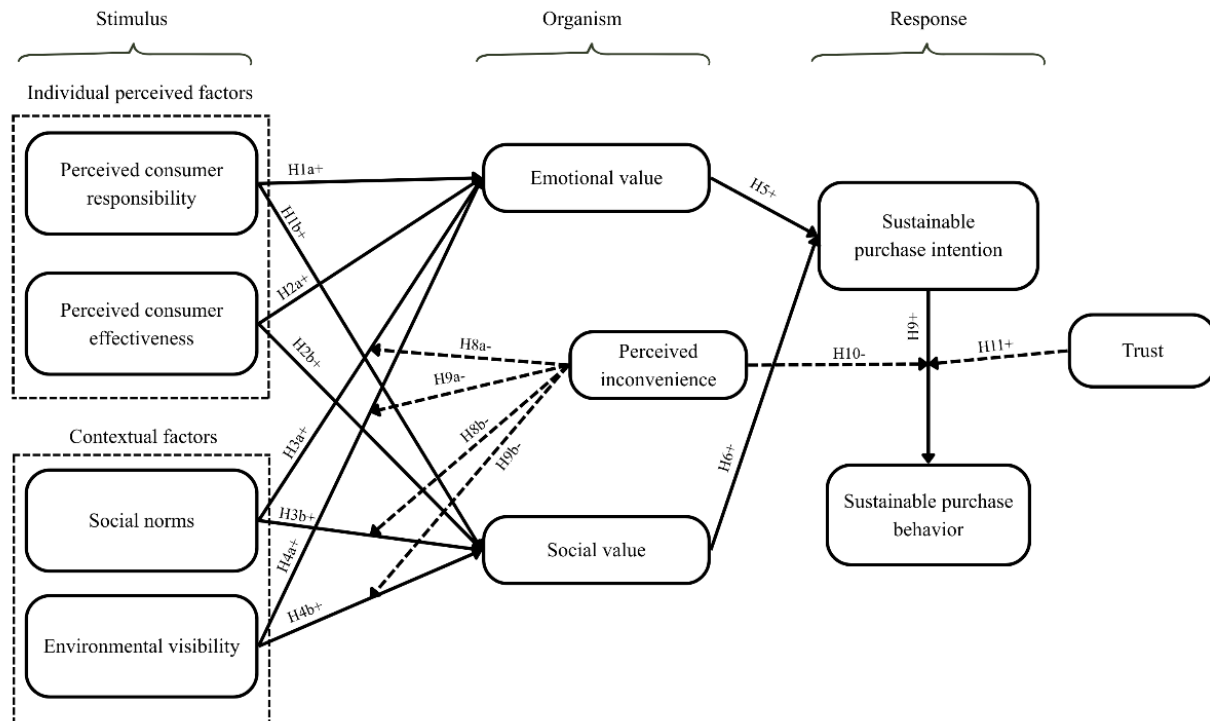


Figure 1. Proposed research model (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

2011). This view is further supported by Servera-Francés and Piqueras-Tomás (2019), who demonstrated that the more individuals feel personally responsible, the greater the value they perceive from consumption.

H1a: PCR has a positive influence on EV.

H1b: PCR has a positive influence on SV.

Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV)

Perceived consumer effectiveness refers to the degree of consumer belief that individual eco-friendly actions can contribute to environmental protection, safeguard health, and reduce ecological damage (Rahman et al., 2019). When individuals believe that their environmentally responsible behavior—such as recycling or choosing sustainable products—can make a meaningful impact, this belief can guide and reinforce their purchasing intentions, particularly for eco-labeled or organic products.

Consumers are more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing behavior when they feel that their actions can lead to positive environmental outcomes. This psychological mechanism not only drives behavioral commitment but also shapes deeper affective responses toward consumption (Lee, 2008). Kabadayi et al. (2015) found a positive association between perceived effectiveness and the formation of sustainable purchase intentions. Furthermore, Rahman et al. (2019) demonstrated that perceived effectiveness exerts a positive influence on sustainable behavior, often mediated by sustainable purchase intention. Within the SOR framework, perceived consumer effectiveness is a stimulus that contributes to promoting sustainable purchasing behavior through emotion and engagement (Pilgrimienė et al., 2020). Similarly, perceived effectiveness also contributes to

increasing perceived consumer value (Servera-Francés & Piqueras-Tomás, 2019).

Based on this reasoning, PCE is expected to positively influence both emotional and social value.

H2a: PCE positively influences EV.

H2b: PCE positively influences SV.

Social norms (SN), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV)

Social norms refer to individuals' interpretations of behaviors that are perceived to impact others' well-being and are typically ineffective when only one person is involved in the decision-making process. This highlights that consumers' motivations are largely shaped by social influence—particularly from family, friends, and acquaintances. Without encouragement or support from these referent groups, individuals are generally less inclined to engage in sustainable purchasing behavior (Asl & Khoddami, 2023). In essence, social norms reflect the perceived expectations and approval of others regarding environmentally responsible behaviors, emphasizing the role of social context in shaping and encouraging sustainable actions.

Social norms have traditionally been recognized as a key antecedent of sustainable purchase intention (Othman & Rahman, 2014), a viewpoint also reinforced in Wang's (2014) study. More recently, Asl and Khoddami (2023) considered social norms as a contextual antecedent influencing the perceived value consumers derive from eco-friendly behaviors. Accordingly, in this study, social norms are proposed to positively affect both emotional value and social value.

H3a: SN positively influences EV.

H3b: SN positively influences SV.

Environmental visibility (ENV), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV)

Environmental visibility refers to consumers' awareness, observations, and beliefs regarding the extent to which individuals in their surroundings participate in environmentally responsible activities (Asl & Khoddami, 2023). This concept captures the perceived prevalence of eco-friendly behaviors in one's environment, which can shape individual motivation and behavior through social influence and observational learning.

When sustainable products clearly convey ecological solutions, they tend to stand out and become more easily recognized. As a result, they are more likely to resonate with consumers' environmental beliefs and awareness. The more visible environmental actions are within a given context, the stronger the perceived environmental visibility becomes, contributing to enhanced perceived value and increased sustainable purchase intention (Wang, 2014). Expanding the visibility of pro-environmental initiatives has also been found to encourage greater interest in sustainable product consumption (Ghouri & Haq, 2018). Therefore, this study proposes that environmental visibility exerts a positive influence on both emotional value and social Value.

H4a: ENV positively influences EV

H4b: ENV positively influences SV

Emotional value (EV), social value (SV), and sustainable purchase intention (SPI)

Consumer value is shaped by internal psychological factors, personal consciousness, and broader social norms. As Wesley et al. (2012) suggested, values represent a collection of beliefs aligned with both individual and societal benefits. In particular, emotional value refers to the perceived emotional utility that motivates consumers' affective responses (Candi & Kahn, 2016). In this study, perceived value is conceptualized through two key dimensions: emotional and social. Emotional value includes positive feelings such as pleasure, comfort, and enjoyment derived from using environmentally friendly products. Social value, on the other hand, relates to recognition from others, social approval, a sense of contributing to meaningful societal causes, and enhancing one's personal image through distinct, eco-conscious behavior.

Asl and Khoddami (2023) demonstrated that consumers' intentions and behaviors are largely driven by perceived value. Similarly, Haba et al. (2017) found that both internal and external factors influence purchase intention through perceived value in the context of smartphone consumption in Malaysia. Floh et al. (2014) further identified perceived value as a central factor in shaping customer behavioral intentions, significantly impacting their decisions to continue using or recommending a product or service. Watanabe et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of examining how multiple dimensions of perceived value influence sustainable purchase intention, given their mediating role between internal dispositions and external contexts. Building on this prior work, the present study proposes that emotional value and social value serve as organism variables that promote sustainable purchase intention.

H5: EV positively influences SPI.

H6: SV positively influences SPI.

Sustainable purchase intention (SPI) and sustainable purchase behavior (SPB)

Sustainable purchase intention (SPI) refers to the likelihood that a consumer will seek out environmentally friendly or organic products based on their ecological concerns and personal values (Kong et al., 2014). SPI captures consumers' level of commitment to choosing environmentally friendly products, while simultaneously rejecting products deemed harmful to the ecosystem. This shift toward sustainable choices reflects a more profound transformation in consumption priorities—favoring products that are better aligned with ecological preservation and responsible consumption.

Kanchanapibul et al. (2014) highlighted intention as the most immediate and influential determinant of sustainable purchase behavior, as proposed by the theory of planned behavior (TPB). Within this framework, SPI represents the probabilistic component in the decision-making process, shaped by individual traits, contextual factors, and perceived value dimensions (Afroz et al., 2015). De Silva et al. (2021) further emphasized that intention is a necessary precursor to action—it signals consumers' readiness and commitment to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. Accordingly, this study treats sustainable purchase intention as a direct antecedent of sustainable purchase behavior.

H7: SPI positively influences SPB.

The moderating effect of perceived inconvenience (PEI)

Moderating the relationship between social norms (SN) and emotional value (EV), social value (SV)

In the context of sustainable consumption, social norms often motivate consumers to perceive positive value—such as emotional value from doing the “right thing” and social value from gaining recognition or approval from their social circles (Asl & Khoddami, 2023). However, this influence may be weakened by perceived inconvenience (PEI), which encompasses barriers such as high prices, limited availability, lack of transparency, and time-consuming processes (Gleim et al., 2013). These perceived inconveniences can make social pressure feel insufficient to overcome real-world consumption challenges (Bray et al., 2011), particularly in situations where sustainable consumption demands more effort than conventional alternatives (Barbarossa & De Pelsmacker, 2016).

Caniëls et al. (2021) emphasized that social recognition only positively influences behavior when the consumption process is convenient. When the level of inconvenience is high, consumers may forgo perceived benefits and revert to familiar behaviors. In this sense, PEI may reduce the emotional satisfaction (EV) and social validation (SV) typically associated with eco-friendly consumption—even when social expectations exist.

H8a: PEI weakens the positive relationship between SN and EV.

H8b: PEI weakens the positive relationship between SN and SV.

Moderating the relationship between environmental visibility (ENV) and emotional value (EV), social value (SV)

Past research has shown that sustainable products often cost more, are harder to find, and are less verifiable in terms of their actual environmental impact (Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Barbarossa & Pastore, 2015). Sustainable products may have more limited availability, and suitable substitutes for conventional products are not always present (Bray et al., 2011; Gleim et al., 2013). These challenges - central to the concept of PEI - are frequently linked to the intention-behavior gap in sustainable consumption. Barbarossa and De Pelsmacker (2016) found that PEI negatively affects both intention and behavior, as consumers often experience frustration in finding, evaluating, and trusting sustainable products.

Some studies suggest that perceived value can, at times, outweigh inconvenience (Aagerup & Nilsson, 2016; Bartels & Onwezen, 2014), though this may depend on product category and consumer segment. Caniëls et al. (2021) added that even when consumers recognize high levels of environmental visibility, the perceived benefits may be undermined if PEI is high.

Therefore, this study proposes that.

H9a: PEI weakens the positive relationship between ENV and EV.

H9b: PEI weakens the positive relationship between ENV and SV.

Moderating the relationship between sustainable purchase intention (SPI) and sustainable purchase behavior (SPB)

Under the theory of planned behavior (TPB), sustainable purchase intention is considered the most immediate and robust predictor of sustainable purchase behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Wei et al. (2017) confirmed that strong sustainable intentions often translate into concrete behaviors, such as buying and using environmentally friendly products. However, the intention-behavior gap remains a persistent issue in sustainable consumer research (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). One critical barrier is perceived inconvenience, encompassing factors such as high costs, lack of accessibility, insufficient product information, and complex or time-intensive purchasing processes (Bray et al., 2011; Gleim et al., 2013). Barbarossa and De Pelsmacker (2016) argued that even consumers with sustainable intentions may not act on them if they perceive sustainable purchasing to be overly burdensome.

Thus, PEI is positioned as a key moderating factor in the extended TPB framework. When perceived inconvenience is low, the link between intention and behavior is likely to be strong. Conversely, high PEI may interrupt or weaken this pathway (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002), a view echoed by Nguyen et al. (2017), who noted that practical barriers such as high prices and inconvenience significantly hinder sustainable behaviors among Vietnamese consumers. Perceived inconvenience will have a negative moderating effect on the relationship between sustainable purchase intention and behavior.

H10: PEI weakens the positive relationship between SPI and SPB.

The moderating effect of trust

Mayer et al. (1995) defined trust as “the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, without the need for monitoring or control.” Similarly, Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen (2017) conceptualized trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.” In line with this, Doney and Cannon (1997) described trust as “the perceived credibility and benevolence of the trusted party”. From this perspective, trust in the context of sustainable consumption can be interpreted as the belief that regulatory bodies or product certifying agencies will ensure transparency, objectivity, and proper oversight of sustainable product claims. This trust reduces uncertainty and fosters confidence in the integrity of sustainable product offerings.

Kotler and Keller (2016) also noted that trust functions as a metric for assessing perceived risk in decision-making contexts. Previous studies have confirmed that trust plays a vital role in encouraging consumer behavior (Hsu et al., 2013) and serves as a key mechanism for monitoring and validating consumer decision-making (Dost et al., 2015). Therefore, trust not only supports confidence in market offerings but also helps close the gap between sustainable purchase intention and sustainable purchase behavior. As a result, the relationship between intention and behavior is strengthened as beliefs increase.

H11: TRU strengthens the positive relationship between SPI and SPB.

METHODOLOGY

Measurement

The scales used in this study were adapted from established scales in prior research. As the target respondents were Vietnamese, the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese and carefully reviewed by five experts to ensure linguistic clarity, conceptual consistency, and cultural appropriateness. Next, a pilot test involving 25 respondents was conducted to assess clarity, comprehensibility, and cultural appropriateness. Following this validation and refinement process, the final version of the instrument used for the primary survey consisted of 10 constructs comprising a total of 38 observed variables, as presented in **Table 1**.

Data Collection

A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was employed in this study. Data were collected in Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang from June to July 2025. Potential respondents were approached directly at supermarkets and shopping malls where sustainable products were available. The same questionnaire was also distributed online via social media platforms and consumer communities interested in sustainable purchasing. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the research objectives before completing the survey. Respondents were also informed that their responses would be kept confidential.

Table 1. Measurement items

Symbol	Scale name	Number of observed variables	Source
PCR	Perceived consumer responsibility	5	Kumar and Ghodeswar (2015)
PCE	Perceived consumer effectiveness	4	Lee (2008)
SN	Social norms	3	Rausch and Kopplin (2021)
ENV	Environmental visibility	3	Wang (2014)
EV	Emotional value	3	Floh et al. (2014)
SV	Social value	4	Floh et al. (2014)
SPI	Sustainable purchase intention	4	Rausch and Kopplin (2021); Kanchanapibul et al. (2014)
SPB	Sustainable purchase behavior	4	Rausch and Kopplin (2021)
PEI	Perceived inconvenience	4	Caniëls et al. (2021)
TRU	Trust	4	Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen (2017)

Table 2. Demographic information

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	179	45%
	Female	219	55%
Education	High school	25	6%
	College	51	13%
	University	171	43%
	Postgraduate degree	151	38%
Age	18 – 25	86	22%
	26 – 35	172	43%
	36 – 45	117	29%
	Above 45	23	6%
Income (million VND)	Below 7	29	7%
	7 - 15	54	14%
	15 - 23	164	41%
	23 - 30	123	31%
	Above 30	28	7%

and anonymous, and that completing the questionnaire was considered informed consent. This study complied with the research ethics and integrity regulations of the Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City (Decision No. 296/QĐ-DHCN, dated 24 February 2023). Under these regulations, anonymous questionnaire-based research involving adult participants and posing no more than minimal risk is exempt from formal ethical review. Accordingly, formal ethical approval was not required for this study. Before proceeding to the main questionnaire, survey participants were asked to identify at least one sustainable product they had purchased in the previous 12 months by answering the question, “In the last 12 months, have you purchased or used any sustainable products?” After data collection, the responses were screened and cleaned to remove incomplete or invalid responses. A total of 398 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis using SmartPLS 4.0. The analytical procedures and techniques, including measurement and structural model analyses, were applied in accordance with the standards of Hair et al. (2022).

Moreover, at the research design stage, the questionnaire was developed with clearly separated items, ensuring anonymity during evaluation to reduce common method bias (CMB). Accordingly, part 1 consists of screening questions, part 2 applies a 5-point Likert scale to assess customer agreement with 38 items, and part 3 includes demographic questions such as gender, age, education level, and income. Moreover, this study uses the full collinearity assessment approach proposed by Kock (2015) to evaluate CMB. The result indicates that all inner VIF values in the inner model ranged from 1.046 to 2.211 (Table 5), which meet the standard (below 3.3). So, the model can be considered free of CMB (Kock, 2015)

Of the total number of respondents, 55% were female, and 45% were male. In terms of education, university degree has the highest number of respondents, with 171 people (43%), followed by postgraduate degree (38%). The subsequent education group, college, comprised 51 individuals (13%), while high school comprised 25 individuals (6%). Out of the total surveyed, the age group of 26-35 years old has the highest number of respondents, with 172 people (43%), followed by the age group of 36- 45 years old (29%). Respondents aged 18 to 25 years old constituted a smaller proportion of 86 individuals (22%), and the lowest proportion was observed among the age group over 45, with only 6%. In terms of income, the highest proportion of surveyed participants, at 41 %, had an income ranging from 15 million VND to 23 million VND. 31% of the respondents had an income ranging from 23 million VND to 30 million VND, while the remaining individuals had incomes ranging from 7 million VND to 15 million VND (14%) and above 30 million VND (7%) (Table 2).

FINDINGS

Measurement Model Results

The outer loadings of all observed variables exceeded the threshold of 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability for each item (Hair et al., 2022). The evaluation of internal consistency reliability also showed that all constructs met the recommended threshold of 0.70. These results confirm that the constructs in the model demonstrate excellent internal consistency (Table 3).

Table 3. Measurement model evaluation results

Construct	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Environmental visibility (ENV)	ENV1	0.950	0.873	0.921	0.796
	ENV2	0.877			
	ENV3	0.846			
Emotional value (EV)	EV1	0.854	0.880	0.926	0.806
	EV2	0.930			
	EV3	0.907			
Sustainable purchase behavior (SPB)	SPB1	0.928	0.931	0.951	0.829
	SPB2	0.894			
	SPB3	0.887			
	SPB4	0.932			
Sustainable purchase intention (SPI)	SPI1	0.859	0.904	0.933	0.776
	SPI2	0.876			
	SPI3	0.897			
	SPI4	0.891			
Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE)	PCE1	0.847	0.852	0.900	0.692
	PCE2	0.822			
	PCE3	0.861			
	PCE4	0.797			
Perceived consumer responsibility (PCR)	PCR1	0.840	0.892	0.920	0.698
	PCR2	0.841			
	PCR3	0.839			
	PCR4	0.854			
	PCR5	0.802			
Perceived inconvenience (PEI)	PEI1	0.888	0.886	0.919	0.741
	PEI2	0.889			
	PEI3	0.736			
	PEI4	0.918			
Social norms (SN)	SN1	0.909	0.870	0.920	0.792
	SN2	0.911			
	SN3	0.848			
Social value (SV)	SV1	0.907	0.907	0.935	0.782
	SV2	0.864			
	SV3	0.864			
	SV4	0.902			
Trust (TRU)	TRU1	0.885	0.888	0.922	0.747
	TRU2	0.850			
	TRU3	0.868			
	TRU4	0.855			

Table 4. HTMT ratio

	ENV	EV	SPB	SPI	PCE	PCR	PEI	SN	SV	TRU
ENV										
EV	0.324									
SPB	0.160	0.177								
SPI	0.244	0.427	0.441							
PCE	0.248	0.333	0.113	0.376						
PCR	0.182	0.456	0.106	0.229	0.259					
PEI	0.038	0.053	0.216	0.074	0.052	0.048				
SN	0.298	0.450	0.274	0.263	0.273	0.261	0.101			
SV	0.349	0.396	0.301	0.393	0.496	0.580	0.093	0.472		
TRU	0.256	0.206	0.506	0.503	0.240	0.227	0.178	0.321	0.478	

As shown in **Table 3**, the values of average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs were above the 0.50 benchmark. These results indicate that all constructs achieved good levels of convergent validity, meeting the required thresholds for the measurement model.

In addition, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was employed to assess discriminant validity, as it is a reliable method for detecting issues related to construct distinctiveness (Henseler et al., 2015). As presented in **Table**

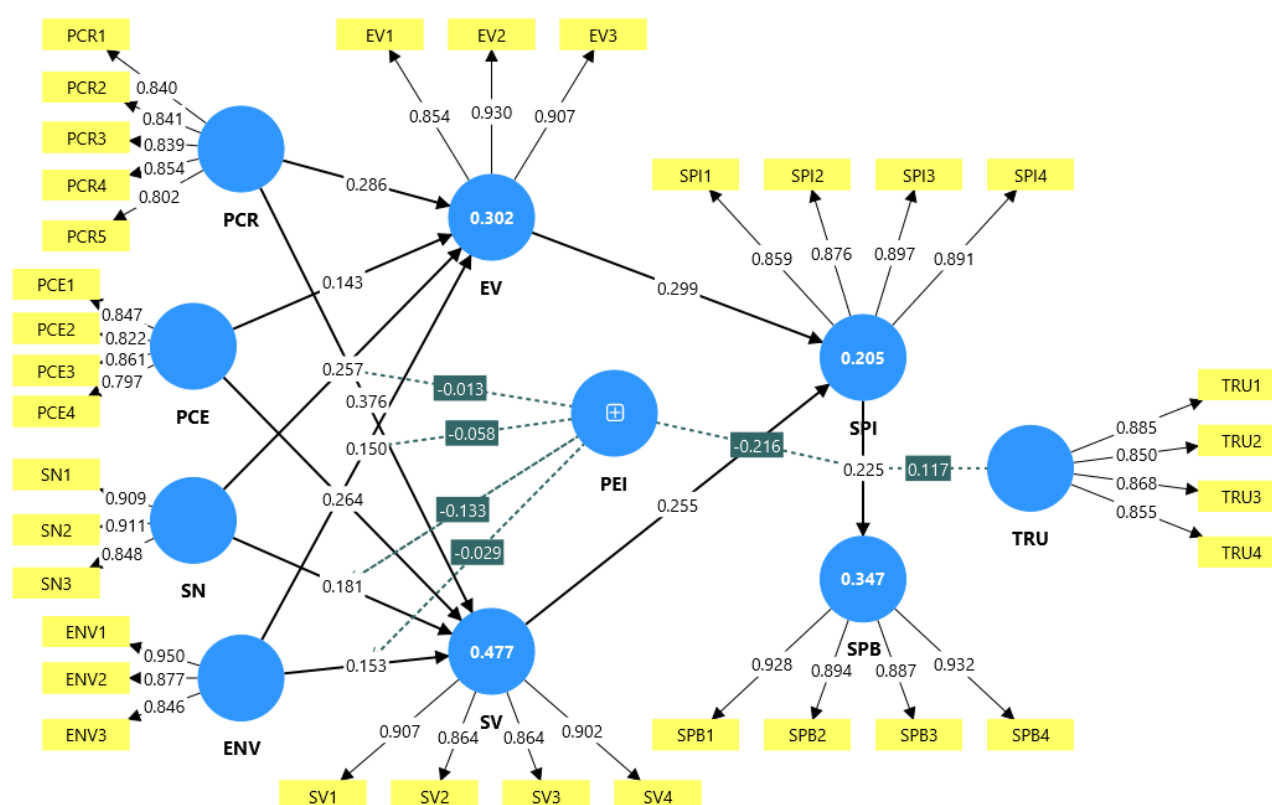
4, all HTMT values for construct pairs were below the threshold of 0.85, indicating a satisfactory level of discriminant validity.

Structural Model Results

The structural model was tested using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. The VIFs for all observed variables ranged from 1.018 to 2.086, well below the 3.3 threshold recommended for full collinearity assessment (Hair

Table 5. Hypotheses testing results

Endogenous variables	EV	SV			SPI		SPB
	R ² adjusted = 0.302	R ² adjusted = 0.477			R ² adjusted = 0.205		R ² adjusted = 0.347
	Q ² = 0.278	Q ² = 0.454			Q ² = 0.132		Q ² = 0.227
Hypothesis	Relationship	β	Standard deviation	VIF	P values	f ²	Conclusion
Direct effects							
H1a	PCR -> EV	0.286	0.053	1.111	0.000	0.107	Supported
H1b	PCR -> SV	0.376	0.047	1.111	0.000	0.247	Supported
H2a	PCE -> EV	0.143	0.046	1.148	0.002	0.026	Supported
H2b	PCE -> SV	0.264	0.044	1.148	0.000	0.118	Supported
H3a	SN -> EV	0.257	0.054	1.262	0.000	0.076	Supported
H3b	SN -> SV	0.181	0.063	1.262	0.004	0.051	Supported
H4a	ENV -> EV	0.150	0.056	1.118	0.008	0.029	Supported
H4b	ENV -> SV	0.153	0.062	1.118	0.014	0.041	Supported
H5	EV -> SPI	0.299	0.056	1.147	0.000	0.099	Supported
H6	SV -> SPI	0.255	0.066	1.147	0.000	0.072	Supported
H7	SPI -> SPB	0.225	0.052	1.354	0.000	0.058	Supported
Moderating effects							
H8a	PEI x SN -> EV	-0.013	0.045	1.142	0.781	0.000	Not supported
H8b	PEI x SN -> SV	-0.133	0.053	1.142	0.012	0.031	Supported
H9a	PEI x ENV -> EV	-0.058	0.065	1.046	0.374	0.004	Not supported
H9b	PEI x ENV -> SV	-0.029	0.056	1.046	0.607	0.001	Not supported
H10	PEI x SPI -> SPB	-0.216	0.055	1.094	0.000	0.064	Supported
H11	TRU x SPI -> SPB	0.117	0.05	2.211	0.018	0.025	Supported

**Figure 2.** Structural model (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

et al., 2022). The results show that hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, H3a, H3b, H4a, H4b, H5, H6, H7, H8b, H10, and H11 are all supported (p -value < 0.05), with 95% confidence (Table 5). However, no support is found for H8a, H9a, and H9b (p -value > 0.05).

The adjusted R-squared values for EV, SV, SPI, and SPB are 0.302, 0.477, 0.205, and 0.347, respectively. These results indicate that exogenous variables explain 30.2%, 47.7%,

20.5%, and 34.7% of the variation in EV, SV, SPI, and SPB, respectively (Figure 2).

According to Hair et al. (2022), the strength of relationships between independent and dependent constructs can vary from small (0.02) to large (above 0.35). As shown in Table 5, except for hypotheses H8a, H9a, and H9b, the remaining observed relationships all had f^2 effect sizes above 0.02. Regarding predictive relevance (Q^2), the Q^2 values of all observed variables are higher than 0. In particular, only the Q^2

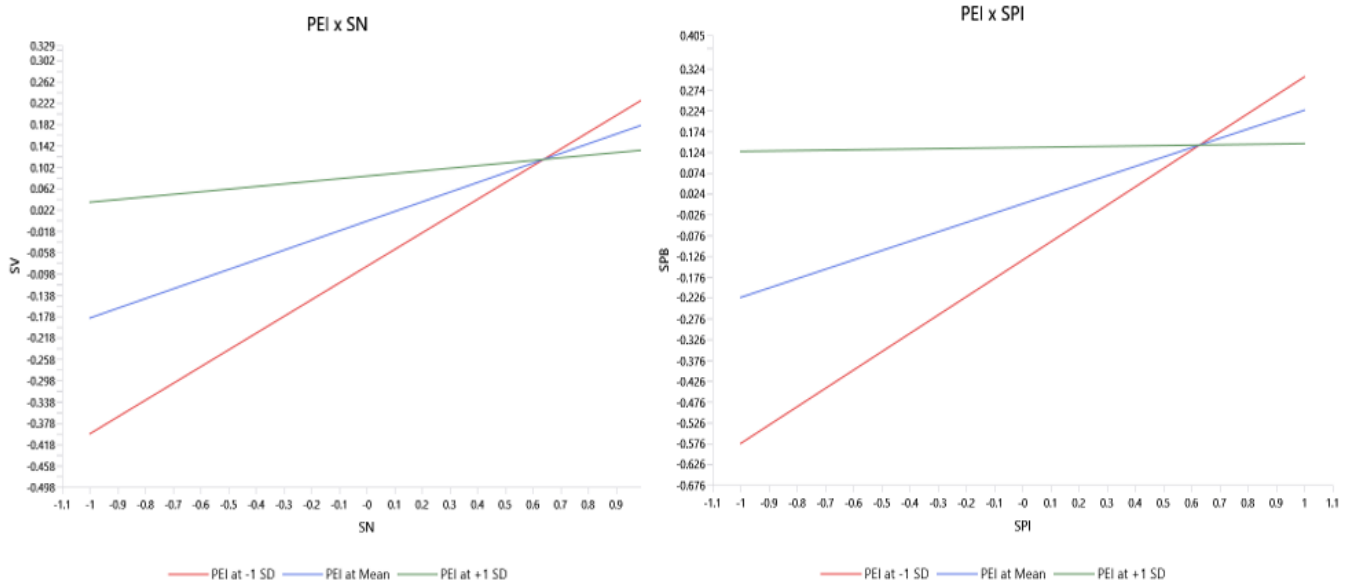


Figure 3. Moderation diagram of PEI (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

value of SPI is below 0.15. The remaining three constructs, EV, SV, and SPB, had Q^2 values ranging from 0.15 to above 0.35, indicating medium to high levels of predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2022).

Moderation Analysis

The results of the moderation analysis indicated that PEI had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between SN and SV, between SPI and SPB.

Specifically, H8b was supported, with the interaction term $PEI \times SN \rightarrow SV$ showing a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.133$; $p = 0.012$). When perceived inconvenience is low (-1 SD), the relationship between subjective norms and social value exhibits the steepest positive slope, indicating that subjective norms has the strongest positive influence on social value. In contrast, at high levels of perceived inconvenience ($+1$ SD), the slope becomes much flatter, suggesting that increases in subjective norm lead to only marginal improvements in social value (Figure 3). In contrast, no significant moderating effects were found for the other paths: $PEI \times SN \rightarrow EV$ ($\beta = -0.013$; $p = 0.781$), $PEI \times ENV \rightarrow EV$ ($\beta = -0.058$; $p = 0.374$), and $PEI \times ENV \rightarrow SV$ ($\beta = -0.029$; $p = 0.607$), as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance threshold.

Additionally, PEI was found to significantly moderate the relationship between sustainable purchase intention (SPI) and sustainable purchase behavior (SPB) ($\beta = -0.216$; $p = 0.000$), thereby supporting H10. At high PEI levels ($+1$ SD) – the green line – the regression line is almost flat and has the smallest slope. This indicates that the effect of SPI on SPB becomes very weak when PEI is high (Figure 3).

In summary, the findings provided empirical support for H8b and H10, confirming the moderating role of perceived inconvenience in these two relationships. Meanwhile, hypotheses H8a, H9a, and H9b were not supported.

The moderating role of Trust (TRU) in the relationship between SPI and SPB was also tested. The statistical results confirmed a significant moderating effect ($\beta = 0.117$; $p = 0.018$). Accordingly, H11 was supported, indicating that trust

strengthens the relationship between intention and actual sustainable purchasing behavior. The moderation plot indicates that the relationship between SPI and SPB is stronger when TRU is high ($+1$ SD) compared to when TRU is low (-1 SD), as evidenced by the steeper slope (Figure 4).

DISCUSSION AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Discussion

The acceptance of hypotheses H1a, H1b, H2a, and H2b indicated that individual factors exerted a direct and positive influence on both dimensions of perceived value (emotional and social value). These findings were consistent with previous studies by Jaiswal and Bihari (2020) and Lee (2008), reaffirming that personal perception significantly shaped sustainable consumer behavior in Vietnam. This indicates that the higher the perceived consumer responsibility and perceived consumer effectiveness regarding environmental issues and activities, the higher the perceived value.

Contextual factors also demonstrated a statistically significant and positive impact on EV and SV, as evidenced by the support for hypotheses H3a, H3b, H4a, and H4b, which aligned with Wang's (2014) findings. This suggests that family, friends, influential individuals, and the surrounding environment played a persuasive role in shaping sustainable consumption decisions. Therefore, in this study, contextual factors served as reliable predictors of value perception, purchase intention, and behavior.

Moreover, the acceptance of H5 and H6 confirmed that both EV and SV positively and directly influenced SPI, consistent with the findings of Asl and Khoddami (2023). However, this contrasts with the findings of Hudayah et al. (2023). Notably, emotional value exhibited a stronger influence on intention than social value. Sustainable products are often ethical and linked to personal values, where emotions act as a behavioral reinforcement mechanism. Therefore, when consumers feel that purchasing sustainable

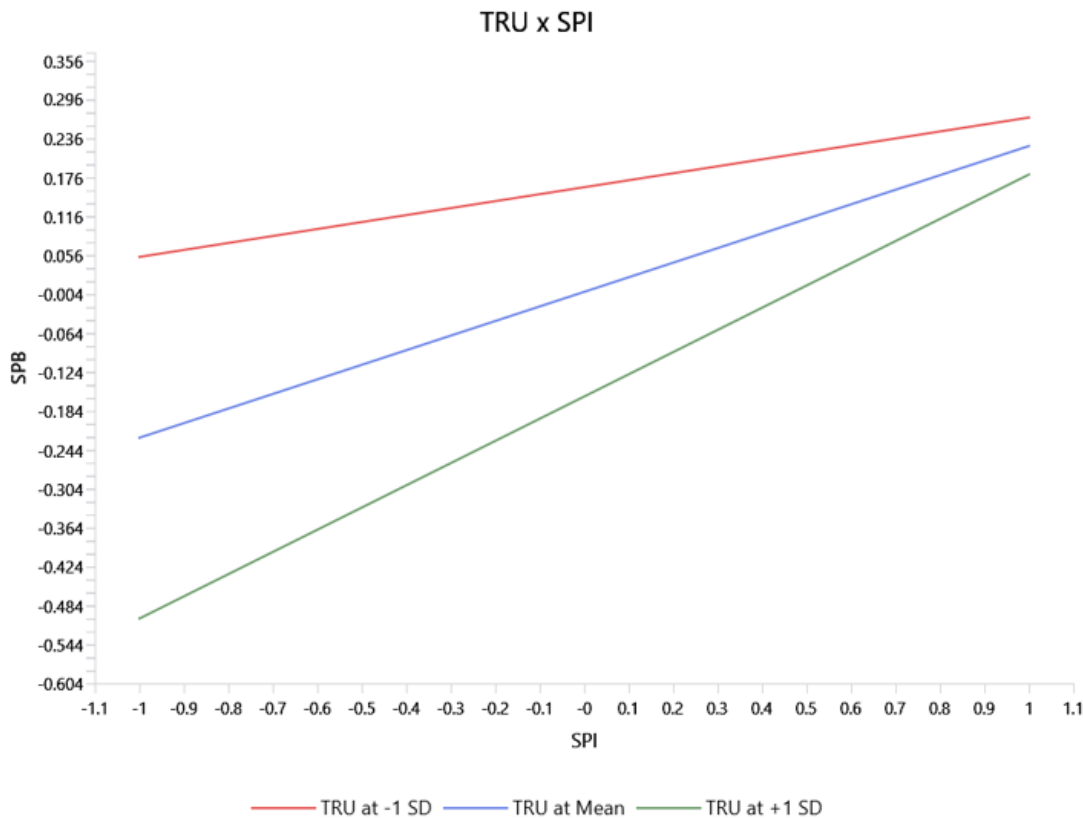


Figure 4. TRU moderates SPI to SPB (Source: Authors' own elaboration)

products makes them “feel better about themselves,” they are more likely to form stronger purchase intentions. Moreover, as society increasingly values sustainability, sustainable products are becoming a way to express personal identity and ethical values, thereby boosting purchase intentions. In addition, the acceptance of H7 demonstrated that SPI significantly and positively affected SPB, reinforcing previous evidence from Kanchanapibul et al. (2014) and De Silva et al. (2021), and thereby providing additional support for the theory of planned behavior (TPB).

Hypothesis H8b was supported, suggesting that perceived inconvenience (PEI) negatively moderated the relationship between SN and SV. As perceived inconvenience increases, consumers may begin to trade off between social benefits and personal costs. If engaging in sustainable behavior is seen as time-consuming, inaccessible, or inconvenient, individuals may feel that the “cost of implementation” outweighs the social benefits received. This reduces the ability to translate social norms into social value.

Conversely, the moderating role of PEI was not significant in the relationships between SN and EV. Hypothesis H8a was thus rejected due to p-values exceeding the 0.05 threshold. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), subjective norms reflect pressure or expectations from important people in society. When individuals feel that sustainable consumption behavior is encouraged by family, friends, or the community, they often develop positive emotions such as comfort, pride, and acceptance. In addition, emotional value is formed through intrinsic emotional responses rather than social cost-benefit assessments.

Furthermore, hypotheses H9a and H9b were rejected (p -value > 0.05). The process of forming emotional value from environmental perception is primarily intuitive and emotional rather than a rational evaluation of cost or convenience. Therefore, even if consumers perceive some inconvenience, clear environmental signals still generate relatively stable emotional value. This makes PEI insufficient to adjust the strength of ENV's influence on EV. Similarly, products with clearly expressed environmental characteristics help consumers project a socially responsible image, showing concern for the environment and aligning with modern consumption norms. When a product's “green” characteristics are easily recognizable, consumers still receive social image benefits regardless of whether the product causes any inconvenience during purchase or use. This explains why PEI neither weakens nor strengthens ENV's impact on SV. In the Vietnamese market, consumer goods such as organic milk, paper straws, vegan cosmetics, bottled water made from recycled plastic, and biodegradable bags are primarily communicated through packaging and label design. Therefore, consumers can easily recognize sustainability and “green” elements. As consumers become increasingly familiar with environmental messages and symbols, they respond fairly uniformly to “sustainability” signals, regardless of the level of inconvenience. Consequently, perceived inconvenience is not a crucial factor in translating environmental awareness into emotional and social value.

Notably, the finding indicated that perceived inconvenience (PEI) negatively moderated the relationship between SPI and SPB, weakening the strength of this link. This implies that even when consumers hold strong sustainable

intentions, the presence of barriers—such as high costs or lack of product clarity—can inhibit the actualization of those intentions into real behaviors.

Finally, hypothesis H11 was supported, indicating that trust positively moderates the relationship between SPI and SPB. Accordingly, strengthening trust through transparent and credible information may enhance the likelihood that sustainable intentions are turned into concrete behavior.

Theoretical Contributions

The examination of the moderating roles of psychological factors (trust) and situational factors (perceived inconvenience) in sustainable consumer behavior has expanded the TPB theoretical framework. Accordingly, the gap between intention and actual behavior is explained. The transition from intention to sustainable consumer behavior can be simultaneously driven or hindered by both psychological and situational factors. When trust is high and perceived inconvenience is low, intention is most likely to translate into actual behavior. When trust is low and perceived inconvenience is high, intention is almost unlikely to lead to behavior.

Furthermore, the results also contribute to the SOR theoretical framework by demonstrating that perceived inconvenience moderates the impact of social norms (stimulus) on social values (Organism - subjective factor). The relationship between the stimulus and Organism may be impaired by the moderating effect of adverse situational factors (perceived inconvenience), leading to a decrease in the positive response to the sustainable product (purchase intention and actual purchase behavior).

Practical Implications

The results also help businesses promote sustainable consumer behavior through effective marketing policy suggestions.

Firstly, businesses should pay attention to both individual cognitive factors and contextual factors in promoting emotional and social value. Specifically, businesses should focus on researching and developing products that use recycled materials, reduce waste, or are certified as environmentally friendly. In addition, businesses should carry out sustainable communication campaigns and environmental protection activities to evoke positive emotions and enhance community responsibility.

Secondly, businesses also need to pay attention to marketing activities or policies to minimize the impact of inconvenience, such as information transparency, preferential prices for groups or first-time buyers, and increased product accessibility. Moreover, other strategies might include increasing product visibility and labeling clarity, and providing informative content to guide customers through the buying process.

Finally, enhancing trust is crucial, as it strengthens the conversion of intention into action. Companies should participate in recognized sustainable certification programs, such as organic labels, eco-standards, or sustainability certifications and display these credentials in product packaging, and promotional materials. Transparent

communication supported by reputable third-party endorsements increases product credibility and reinforces consumer trust in the brand's sustainable commitment.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

By combining the SOR theoretical framework and TPB theory, the results have addressed three research objectives. Accordingly, individual cognitive factors (perceived consumer responsibility, perceived consumer effectiveness) and contextual factors (social norms, environmental visibility) all have positive impacts on emotional value and social value, with perceived consumer responsibility having the strongest effect. It means that intrinsic motivations play a more substantial role in shaping emotional and behavioral responses to sustainable consumption – sustainable consumption.

Notably, the results demonstrating the dual moderation of trust and perceived inconvenience answered the question of why consumers with sustainable intentions find it difficult or impossible to engage in sustainable consumption. Trust strengthens the relationship, while perceived inconvenience weakens the relationship between intention and sustainable consumption behavior.

Limitations

Although the study has made significant contributions, it still has certain limitations. Firstly, the data analysis focuses on two major cities in Vietnam, therefore the results are limited in terms of universality. Besides expanding the scope, further research could consider a comparative study across countries. Secondly, the current study focused on only two dimensions of perceived value. Therefore, future research could consider the remaining dimensions. Finally, researchers could focus on a separate product group to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

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AI statement: The authors stated that AI tools were used solely to support translation and grammatical refinement during the preparation of this manuscript.

Declaration of interest: No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

Data sharing statement: Data supporting the findings and conclusions are available upon request from corresponding author.

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