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HO CHI MINH CITY STUDENTS' INTENTIONS OF BUYING GREEN PRODUCTS

Vo Thi Anh Dao
University of Finance-Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine and understand the impact of environmental concern, perceived price, subjective norms, and green promotion on green buying intention of students who live in Ho Chi Minh City. This research implements a survey model, in which questionnaires as tools to collect the data needed for this research. he result of this research shows that factors (environmental concern, subjective norms, and green promotion) have a positive and impact on green buying intention, except perceived price has a negative impact on green buying intention of students in Ho Chi Minh City.

Keywords: Environmental Concern, Perceived Price, Subjective Norms, Green Promotion, Green Buying Intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Reason for selecting the topic

Nowadays, green consumption is already quite popular in developed countries and has made initial steps in developing countries when personal income and consumption consciousness go up day by day. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the environment and give more importance to environmentally friendly buying behavior. Environmental experts observe green consumption as a remedy to "save the earth" against the consequences of unfriendly environmental activities. Therefore, the trend of producing and using environmentally friendly products is expected to grow strongly in the future. Not outside of the world's development, Vietnam is also implementing a figure of activities related to sustainable production and consumption, in which green consumption is also starting to receive more attention. The survey result of Nielsen Vietnam Company announced at the Workshop "Brand strategy associated with green development" illustrates that Vietnamese consumers are increasingly interested in "green" and "clean" issues., they are willing to pay more for brands with a commitment to "green" and "clean". Specifically, up to 80% of consumers are concerned about the long-term harm of artificial ingredients and 79% are willing to pay extra to buy products that do not contain unfriendly environmental ingredients. In Viet Nam society, more and more students are paying attention to products that include environmentally friendly components. In addition, many green models have been developed in Vietnam, and these models have received favorable consumer feedback, specifically from youngsters. Pupils have taken advantage of the popularity and widespread use of social networks to create environmental trends and campaigns such as #Nostrawchallenge, #Noplasticbag, etc. Besides, many workshops, selling environmentally friendly products have been held throughout the country, especially in big cities, attracting a large figure of participants. All of these things show that future generation - Gen Z does pay attention to protecting the environment by using green products.

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1. 1.2 Objectives of the research.

- Identify the factors that impact green buying intention on young people, specifically HCM students.
- Identify the impact of green buying components such as environmental awareness, pricing, green product features, subjective norms, and green marketing on students' buying intention, specifically students at HCM.
- Suggest management implications to help better understand the factors affecting the green shopping behavior of HCM students, thereby helping businesses and sellers to come up with appropriate strategies to increase their ability about the intention to buy green products among young people.

1.1.3 Research method.

Qualitative research through discussion groups of experts identifies factors and calibrates the scale. Quantitative research through the survey (about 250 surveys). After that, SmartPLS 3 software was used to run the data to analyze.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1 Literature Review.

2.1.1 Green product definition.

According to Durif, F et al.(2010), There are many definitions of green products. In general, the green product may be understood as a product whose design or qualities (production or strategy) uses recycling (renewable/toxic-free/biodegradable) resources and enhances environmental impact or decreases harmful damage to the environment over its entire life cycle. Furthermore, green products are products that use fewer resources, have lower impacts and risks to the environment, and prevent waste generation already at the conception stage (the Commission of the European Communities, 2001). For the customer, a green product is primarily a "biodegradable product," "non-toxic for nature" "having a small influence on the environment," and "safe for the planet.". According to consumer survey, consumers may be more concerned with the tangible features of a green product, particularly those that may affect environmental preservation and human health. (Durif, F et al.(2010)).

2.1.2 Green buying intention.

Consumer behaviors that essentially do not pollute or damage natural, as well as biodegradable products, for the most part, are referred to as sort of green buying intentions, or so they essentially thought. The intention actually is defined as a person's subjective ability to basically accomplish a given activity, or as customers\' willingness to basically buy and use a product in a kind of big way. The actual behavior of a person definitely is determined by his or her intention, which basically is a necessary precondition for behavior in a very major way. If there for all intents and purposes is enough demand for a product or service, consumers will particularly collect information and essentially contemplate assessing and purchasing options, forming a purchase intention in the process, fairly contrary to popular belief. Theory of reasoned action (TRA) and

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Theory of planned behavior (TPB).

2.1.3 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), according to Staats, H. (2004), is defined by the desire to do the action, which implies individuals feel they can do it whenever they want. This theory is built around two main components: (1) attitude and (2) subjective norm. Individuals will act in accordance with the outcomes they expect from an action, according to this notion. Through pre-existing attitudes and behavioral intents, this theory is utilized to forecast customer behavior as well as define their behavioral patterns.

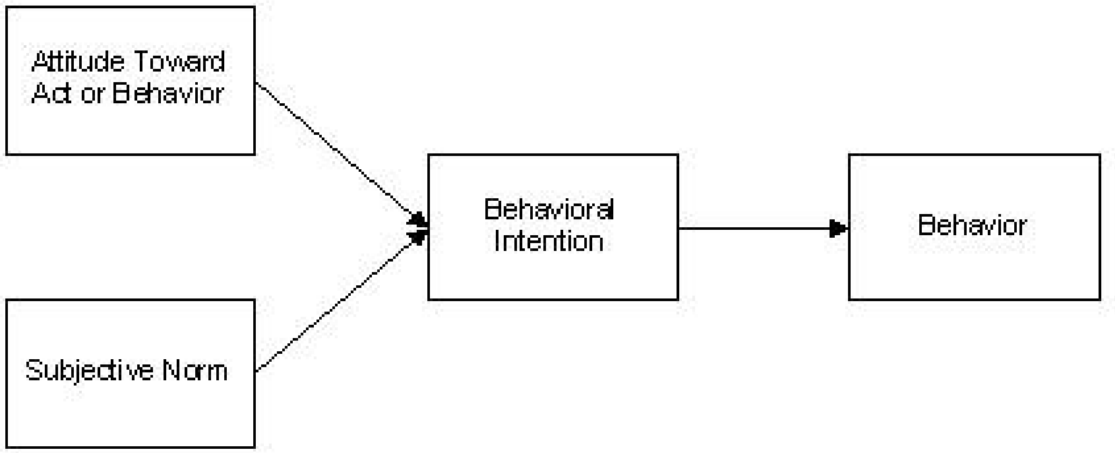

Figure 2-1-Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)

2.1.4 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

TPB is used to investigate the relationship between behavior, behavioral intention, attitudes, and beliefs. According to Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all influence an individual's behavioral intentions and behavior (Alam, Syed S., et al., 2019). Icek Ajzen developed the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to expand the predictive power of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The theory recognizes that most ordinary behaviors are accomplished without significant cognitive effort (Ajzen, 1991). TPB analyzes the human-psycho aspects for consumption sustainability (NGUYEN, N. T., NGUYEN, L. H. A., & TRAN, T. T. (2021)). The Theory of Planned Behavior is the most important social psychological theory for predicting human behavior (Dean et al., 2011). TPB suggested that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls influence the consumers' intentions and affect consumer purchasing behavior (Cheung et al., 2012; Ramayah et al., 2012).

2.2 Hypotheses and research models.

2.2.1 Environmental concern

Consumer environmental concern relates to how worried customers are about environmental concerns and desire to do something, such as buy green products, to help solve these difficulties. Customers that care about the environment are more likely to want to buy green items and believe 'green' promises, according to previous research. According to previous research (Issock et al, 2018; Suki et al, 2019; Maichum et al. 2017; Prakash, G., & Pathak, P. 2017), consumers' environmental concern positively affects their intention to buy green products, and they tend to develop the intention to buy green products to a greater degree when they care deeply about the

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environment.

H1. Environment concern has a positive impact on the green product buying intention of students in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC).

2.2.2 Perceived price

Perceived pricing, according to Zeithmal (1988), is "an overall appraisal of the utility of the product based on the impression of what is received and supplied." Perceived pricing is becoming increasingly important in this period since it is a substantial predictor of customer buy intention, which plays a critical role in the consumer purchase decision process; therefore consumers will choose a product with a greater perceived price. Furthermore, while some consumers may have a friendly perception toward 'green' products, perceived green pricing is sometimes the primary impediment to green consumption, due to the high cost involved in the process (from material to certification) of green products, following the articles of Yadav, R., et al. (2017), Issock, P. B. I., et al. (2018), Liobikienė, G., et al. (2017), Prakash, G., et al. (2017). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been proposed:

H2. The perceived price has a positive impact on the green product buying intention of students in HCMC.

2.2.3 Subjective norms

The description of subjective norms is the pressure of social feelings from others that are significant to a person, and they capture individuals and affect certain behaviors (Sun, Y et al.,2019). In another way, individual behavior is evaluated by the approval and disapproval of other people (Choi et el., 2015; Han et al., 2010). When the consumers are not unsure about certain behavior, they need support from other people (Bratt, 1999). These " other people " include friends, relatives, family members, peer groups, and other reference groups, who have a high probability significance in making their own decisions (Bhutto, M. Y et al., 2019). According to Kaiser and Gutscher, subjective norms are fundamental predictors of green purchase intention. Some studies point out a positive relationship exists between subjective norms and green intention. But some studies found that there exists an insignificant relationship between subjective norms and green intention (Bhutto, M. Y et al., 2019).

H3. Subjective norms have a positive effect on the green purchase intention of students in HCMC.

2.2.4 Green promotion

The goal of green marketing is to influence customer purchasing behavior by encouraging people to buy items that are not harmful to the environment and to draw their attention to the beneficial effects of their purchasing behavior, both for themselves and for the environment.(Rahbar and Abdul Wahid, 2011). This relates to presenting accurate information about the items in a way that does not jeopardize the materialistic and moral interests of the consumers. (Hashem and Al-Rifai, 2011). Important promotional tools Green advertising is defined as promotional messaging that may appeal to the interests and aspirations of environmentally conscious consumers. (Ankit and Mayur, 2013). Green promotion entails implementing promotional techniques such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing, and promotions on-site, videography, and presentations that prioritize people, planet, and profits (Shil, 2012). Green advertising entails alerting consumers about environmental commitments and company activities.

H4. Green promotion has a positive impact on the green product buying intention of students

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in HCMC.

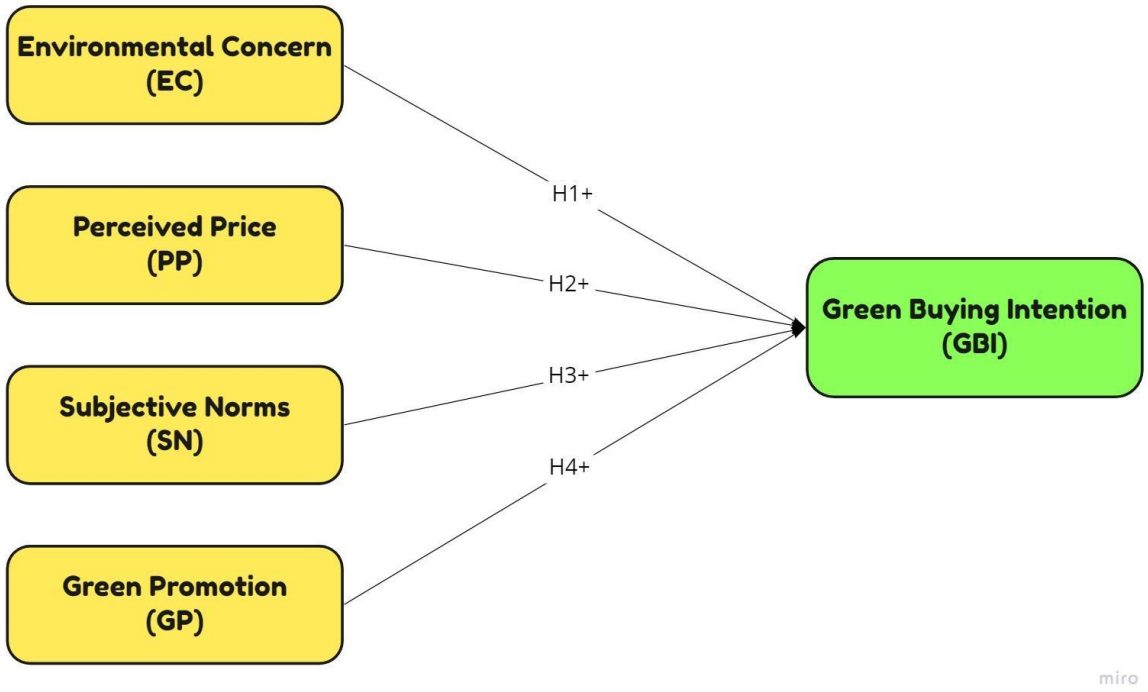

Figure 2-3- *Research framework*

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research process.

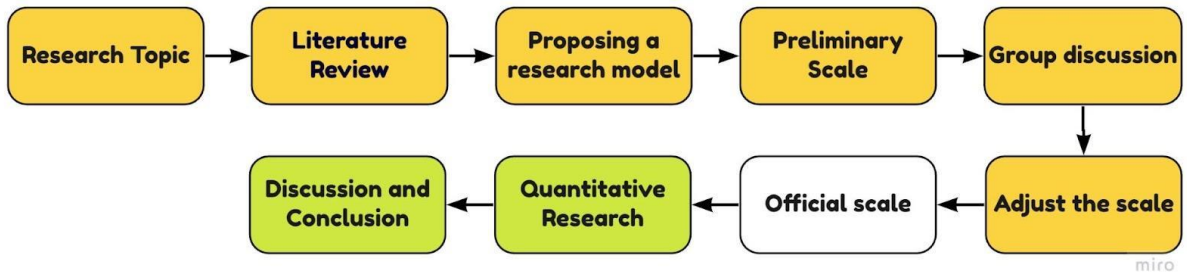

Figure 3-1- *Research Process*

There were two main parts to this research: (1) qualitative research and (2) quantitative research.

With the goal of understanding the factors impacting the intention to buy green products and adjusting the scale, qualitative research was conducted using the depth interview approach (5 experts, who are teachers or students who frequently buy and use green products).

A survey questionnaire was used to perform the formal study on the Facebook platform. Formal

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research was conducted to assess hypotheses, the model's performance, and the level of impact of each element on the intention to buy green products.

3.2 Building a research scale.

3.2.1 Progress

Qualitative research was carried out based on the team discussion method with Sai Gon students to synthesize more accurate, objective, and actual opinions.

This method will discover, supplement and adjust the elements that influence green product buying intentions among students of Ho Chi Minh city.

The qualitative research purpose is to determine the factors that affect the green product buying intention of students and adjust the scale. The study was following as:

- Group discussion directly via texting and calling.
- The subject of discussion is five students who have a specific interest, knowledge, and understanding of green products or bought and used green products.
- The research team used the draft scale as a basis to discuss five students, then synthesized the respondents' opinions to adjust the draft scale and set up the official scale.

3.2.2 Group discussion results

The team discussion results showed that most of the opinions of respondents are relatively similar to the factors proposed by the authors. In which the elements about the environmental concern, perceived price are significant to affect the buying green product intention of the students. With the environmental concern factor, there are opinions that: environmental concerns have a high impact on the intention to buy green products. Regarding the perceived price factor, some respondents said that if they feel the price is suitable for them, their purchase intention will increase. Therefore, affect for buying green product intention of students, the perceived price factor plays an important role.

3.2.3 Preliminary research results

The results of the qualitative research confirm:

The factors are affecting the intention to buy green products are proposed by the research group are the main components that influence the purchase of green product intention of students who live in Ho Chi Minh City.

Observable variables measure the elements affecting the intention to purchase green products of students suggested by the authors in the draft scale have fully reflected the fundamental attributes of the factors that affect the buying green product intention of students. The research team will use the draft scale to make the official scale for surveying.

3.2.4 Draft scale

There are 21 measured variables on the scale of factors influencing HCM students' intention to buy green products.

The scale of environmental concern (EC) - 5 items.

Developed from the environmental concern (EC) measure attributes of Suki, N. M., & Suki, N. M. (2019); Saut, M., & Saing, T. (2021); NGUYEN, N. T., NGUYEN, L. H. A., & TRAN, T. T. (2021).

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EC1 The green environment is a major concern.
EC2 I am worried about the worsening of the quality of the environment.
EC3 I think about how the environmental quality can be improved.
EC4 To help protect the environment, I am willing to reduce my consumption of products that have a negative impact on the environment.
EC5 I have high environmental awareness (pick up garbage, reduce the use of plastic bags, etc).

The scale of perceived price (PP) - 4 items.
Developed from the perceived price (PP) measure attributes of Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. (2017); Niedermeier Et al. (2021); Zhen, J. S. Et al. (2012); Piper, L. Et al. (2021).
PP1 The perceived price is an important factor influencing my intention to buy green products.
PP2 The price of a product is a good indicator of its quality.
PP3 Green products cost more than non-green products.
PP4 The price of green products is reasonable.

The scale of subjective norms (SN) - 4 items.
Developed from the subjective norms (SN) measure attributes of Sun, Y., & Wang, S. (2019).
SN1 People whose opinions I appreciate influence my intention to buy green products.
SN2 My family, my friends, who are important to me advise me to buy green products for consumption.
SN3 Most of the people who are important to me supports my purchases of green products.
SN4 If I purchase green products, people who are important to me will also do so.

The scale of green promotion (GP) - 4 items.
Developed from the green promotion (GP) measure attributes of Rahbar, E., & Wahid, N. A. (2011); Hashem, T. N., & Al-Rifai, N. A. (2011).
GP1 Environmental promotion enhances my knowledge about green products.
GP2 I enjoy watching broadcast environmental promotion.
GP3 Environmental promotion guide me to make an informed green purchasing decision.
GP4 Some companies contribute to supporting the environmental centers that make me want to purchase green products.

The scale of green buying intention (GBI) - 4 items.
Developed from the green buying intention (GBI) measure attributes of Maichum, K., Parichatnon, S., & Peng, K. C. (2017); Ahmad, W., & Zhang, Q. (2020); Saut, M., & Saing, T. (2021); Alam, S. S., et al. (2019).
GBI1 I will collect and comprehend information about green products.
GBI2 I plan to purchase green products because of their green performance.
GBI3 I am willing to buy green products even if they are more expensive than normal products.
GBI4 I would highly recommend buying green products for other people.

3.3 Sampling method.
3.3.1 Sampling method and data collection
The sampling method used in this study is a convenient, non-probability sampling method.

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The subjects of the research sample in this study are people between the ages of 18 and 22 years old, currently studying in Ho Chi Minh City, who used to purchase or never buy green products, regardless of gender, occupation, and education level.
The questionnaire is designed in the form of a Likert scale (5 points) with a choice from 1 being "Strongly disagree" to choosing from number 5 "Strongly agree" to assess and analyze factors affecting the intention to use green products of consumers. The questionnaire has a total of 25 questions corresponding to 4 questions about personal information and 21 observed variables. Data collection is done by surveying consumers who used to purchase or never buy green products who are currently studying in Ho Chi Minh City through sending a direct survey.

3.3.2 Analytical sample size

Theo Hair et al. (1988), the general rule for exploratory factor analysis for a sample size of at least 50 and preferably 100, has a ratio to the observed variable of 5:1, that is, there must be at least 5 samples on 1 observed variable. In this study, there are all 21 observed variables that need to be estimated. Thus, the minimum sample size required is 5x21= 105. Therefore, the group that chooses a sample size of more than 250 is suitable for the study.

3.3.3 Analytical methods

According to Henseler & Chin (2010), the research model is evaluated through two steps: the evaluation of the measurement model and the structural model. First, the measurement model is evaluated by evaluating the reliability, convergence value, and discriminant value of the measurement concepts in the model (Nguyen Quoc Nghi et al., 2017).
The structural model evaluation consists of 5 steps:

1. Evaluate the degree of multicollinearity (VIF).
2. Evaluate the level of statistical significance between the relationships in the structural model.
3. Evaluate coefficients R2 and R2adj.
4. Evaluate the impact factor f2.
5. Evaluation of forecast accuracy (Q2).

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Sample Descriptive Statistics.

Data were obtained using an online survey in Vietnam, with a total of 250 answers collected, however, only 239 answers were allowed to analyze data after filtering rigorously to exclude poor quality surveys.

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Measure	Value	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	187	74.8%
	Male	63	25.2%
Expenses	Less than 1 million VND	55	22%
	1 to 2 million VND	61	24.4%
	2 to 3 million VND	79	31.6%
	Above 3 million VND	55	22%
Education	Freshman	33	13.2%
	Sophomore	62	24.8%
	Junior	81	32.4%
	Senior	74	29.6%

***Figure 4-1**- Respondents profile*

Figure 4-1 illustrates the demographic details of the sample. Of 250 usable surveys, 74.8% of them were female, and 25.2% were male. Relating to education, participants are fairly distributed from freshman to senior, however the number of third-year students accounts for the lion's share (31.6%). The percentage of expenses was distributed quite similarly. In conclusion, the sample is rather unbalanced in terms of gender and education, but the expenses are quite comparable.

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4.2 Evaluation of the reliability of the Cronbach Alpha scale.

Construct	Measurement	Outer Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Environmental concern (EC)	EC1	0.794	0.639	0.898	0.858
	EC2	0.759			
	EC3	0.823			
	EC4	0.814			
	EC5	0.804			
Perceived price (PP)	PP1	0.678	0.504	0.801	0.675
	PP2	0.808			
	PP3	0.650			
	PP4	0.693			
Subjective norms (SN)	SN1	0.731	0.639	0.876	0.810
	SN2	0.833			
	SN3	0.854			
	SN4	0.772			

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Green promotion (GP)	GP1	0.796	0.636	0.875	0.810
	GP2	0.762			
	GP3	0.812			
	GP4	0.820			
Green buying intention (GBI)	GBI1	0.744	0.603	0.859	0.780
	GBI2	0.803			
	GBI3	0.784			
	GBI4	0.773			

Figure 4-2-Convergent validity of the measurement model

The outer model is used to evaluate the model validity and dependability. The validity evaluation was carried out through two criteria, namely convergent validity, and discriminant validity, while the reliability appraisal was accomplished based on two criteria, namely Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. In Table 2, based on a result of the calculation of the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, not all of them exceed the specified conditions, according to Hair et al. (2016), the outer loading coefficient needs to be greater than or equal to 0.708 so that the observed variable is quality. However, PP1, PP3, and PP4 indicators are unsatisfactory (indicators the values of the outer loading obtained are only 0.678, 0.650, and 0.693), except for PP2. Therefore, it is necessary to consider and remove the unsatisfactory variables. Analysis of the average variance extract (AVE) for evaluating convergent validity, the condition is the AVE value is more than 0.5, all latent variables have an AVE > 0.5, they are significant. From the result of the output (Figure 4-2), all variables show Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values have an index exceeding the level of 0.7. Although the PP indicator the value of Cronbach's alpha obtained at only 0.675, this figure is acceptable. Thus, it can be concluded that the structure has good reliability because most of the parameters are all high from 0.75 or more.

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	EC	GBI	GP	PP	SN
EC	**0,799**				
GBI	0,643	**0,777**			
GP	0,590	0,698	**0,798**		
PP	0,633	0,567	0,620	**0,710**	
SN	0,531	0,619	0,653	0,538	**0,799**

Figure 4-3-Discriminant validity

4.3 Multiple regression analysis

	R square	Q square
Green buying intention (GBI)	0.594	0.339

Figure 4-4- R square and Q square

Figure 4-3 reveals the R square value of GBI is 0.594 showing that independent variables such as SM, PP, SN, and GP have a moderate influence on GBI. Because the Q square value is greater than zero, the GBI variable is required for the model.

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4.4 Discussing research results

Hypothesis	Coefficients (β)	P-Value	f^2	Support
H1: Environment concern → green product buying	0,290	0,000	0,108	Accepted
H2: Perceived price → green product buying intention	0,050	0,519	0,003	Rejected
H3: Subjective norms → green purchase intention	0,199	0,000	0,052	Accepted
H4: Green promotion → green product buying intention	0,367	0,000	0,149	Accepted

Figure 4-5-Results for the structural model and hypotheses testing

The discriminant validity of table 3 is established. The square root of the AVE values of each structure is higher than that of the other latent structures, which shows that all structures have discrimination. In short, the findings of the measurement model show that constructs are reliable and valid.

We also examine the Collinearity Statistics (VIF) of the model, and consequently, the VIF values are below 5 so there are no collinearity problems with this model (ranges from 1,241 to 2,063).

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	VIF
EC1	1.860
EC2	1.727
EC3	2.063
EC4	1.920
EC5	1.905
GBI1	1.370
GBI2	1.681
GBI3	1.587
GBI4	1.560
GP1	1.706
GP2	1.554
GP3	1.695
GP4	1.666
PP1	1.447
PP2	1.506
PP3	1.369
PP4	1.241
SN1	1.410
SN2	1.921
SN3	2.009
SN4	1.613

Figure 4-6- -Results for Collinearity Statistics (VIF)

The results of Table 4 illustrate the relationship of the structural model, three hypotheses are accepted, and one hypothesis is rejected. The relationship between environmental concerns and intention to buy green products of HCMC students is accepted ($_{\beta}$ = 0, P-value = 0.000). This finding is consistent with previous research Issock et al, 2018; Suki et al, 2019; Maichum et al. 2017; Prakash, G., & Pathak, P. 2017. Moreover, the intention to buy green products of HCM City students is affected by green incentives, subjective norm by positive influence coefficients at $_{\beta}$ = 0.367 (P-value = 0.000), $_{\beta}$ = 0.199 (P-value = 0.000), accept H3, H4, respectively). The results are consistent with other studies on these indicators (Bhutto, M. Y et al., 2019; Ankit and Mayur, 2013). However, besides the above three hypotheses, the hypothesis of perceived price was determined to be not statistically significant ($_{\beta}$ = 0.050; P-value = 0.519). Thus, among the proposed hypotheses, hypothesis H2 does not accepted.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion.

The study's research goal is to examine the factors that influence customers' decisions to purchase green product. We collected samples from 250 people online, but due to some mismatched results, we filtered the remaining 239 samples. The findings show that factors such as environmental

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concern, subjective norms, and green promotion have a positive and significant impact on green buying intention.

Through this study, if we want to increase intention to purchase green products, we have to concentrate on some factors that have positive influence. In this study, for example, environmental concern, subjective norms, and green promotion are the four factors that customers consider when deciding whether or not to buy green goods.

5.2 Limitations and future research

There are currently some limitations that must be investigated further in the future. To begin with, this study's empirical conclusions were based on data in Ho Chi Minh City, thus they cannot potentially reflect the whole inhabitants in Vietnam. A larger sampling range might increase the application of the findings and thus recommended for future investigation greater sampling from other big cities and provinces to have the comparison between different cities.

The second limitation provides an understanding of the influence of different cultures on the green purchase intention. Such an investigation would considerably increase our help of the factors in this research.

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