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INVESTIGATING FACTORS INFLUENCING GENERATION Z'S INTENTION TO SELECT SUSTAINABLE FASHION PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FACTORS

NGUYEN THI VAN ANH
PhD, Associate Professor, University of Labour and Social Affairs.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4703-2014, Email: nguyenvananh83@ulsa.edu.vn

LAM JOHN
Mater Dei High School. Email: lamj.27@stu.materdei.org

TRUONG THI TUYET
National Economics University. Email: tuyettruongdrf@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to identify the factors influencing the intention to select sustainable fashion products among Generation Z in Vietnam, while clarifying the role of social media communication in the factors shaping this intention. The research model is constructed based on an extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), incorporating additional variables: Social Media (SM) and Cultural-Environmental Concern (CE). A quantitative research method was employed through an online survey, yielding a sample of 205 Generation Z consumers (aged 15 to 25). Data were analyzed using SMARTPLS 4 software to evaluate the measurement model and test the PLS SEM. The findings indicate that social media communication exerts a significant positive impact on all four mediating factors: Attitude (AT), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Cultural-Environmental Concern (CE). Among these, three factors were found to directly and statistically significantly stimulate Selection Intention (PI), specifically: Perceived Behavioral Control (path coefficient of 0.334), Subjective Norms (0.243), and Attitude (0.240). Conversely. Cultural-Environmental Concern (CE) did not demonstrate sufficient statistical significance to establish a relationship with the intention to select sustainable fashion products. Based on these results, the paper proposes managerial implications for fashion enterprises to optimize social media content strategies and enhance product accessibility to promote sustainable consumption.

Keywords: Influencing Factors, Selection Intention, Products, Sustainable Fashion, Generation Z, Social Media Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of global climate change, the fashion industry faces severe challenges, accounting for approximately 8-10% of total carbon emissions and 20% of industrial wastewater worldwide (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2024). The rise of "fast fashion" models has not only fueled overconsumption but also generated a massive waste burden, with an estimated 92 million tons of textiles discarded annually (Beall, 2022). Consequently, the transition toward sustainable fashion has become an urgent imperative. In the Vietnamese market, Generation Z (1997–2012) is emerging as a pivotal consumer force characterized by high social awareness; a report by First Insight (2022) indicates that 75% of consumers in this demoChartic prioritize sustainable brands and are willing to pay a premium for responsible products.

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However, an “attitude-behavior gap” persists in practice, as the selection intentions of young consumers are intricately influenced by factors such as financial barriers, social norms, and, notably, the explosion of social media communication. According to Chu et al. (2020), digital platforms serve not only as information providers but also as powerful regulators of consumer trust in green values. Driven by these practical realities, this study aims to identify and measure the impact of various factors on Generation Z’s intention to select sustainable fashion, while testing the impact of social media communication on those factors. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to green consumer behavior models and provide practical recommendations to assist domestic enterprises in developing effective communication strategies, thereby fostering sustainable consumption trends in Vietnam.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Related concepts

Sustainable fashion

Sustainable fashion, often referred to as green fashion (Dickenbrok & Martinez, 2018), essentially integrates the three pillars of sustainability—environmental, economic, and social - into the fashion sector, encompassing both production and consumption processes (Garcia-Torres et al., 2022).

This concept defines a fashion production and consumption model that emphasizes environmental and social stewardship. This includes the consideration of ecological and ethical factors, alongside the pursuit of equitable and profitable business systems. The concept is subject to various classifications: while some frameworks focus on raw materials, others relate to production processes or emphasize localism (Kim & Oh, 2020).

Gen Z and consumption intention

From a generational perspective, a significant proportion of Generation Z consumers strongly advocate for sustainability values. Empirical research indicates that environmental awareness and sustainability attributes can actively drive both behavioral intentions and actual actions (Nguyen et al., 2019). Within the fashion industry, Generation Z exhibits a keen interest in tracing the origins and compositions of textiles, while simultaneously avoiding products involving animal testing (Kamenidou et al., 2019).

Social Media Marketing

For a “digital native” generation such as Generation Z, communication channels play a decisive role in shaping perception and trust. El-Shihy and Awaad (2025) demonstrate that both Brand-Generated Content (BGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC) on platforms like TikTok or Instagram exert a positive influence on selection intentions, with professional content (BGC) often carrying greater emotional weight. The most appropriate and influential advertising formats for this demoChartic are branded content and hybrid

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messaging (Palomo-Domínguez & Zemlickiene, 2022). Furthermore, the credibility and authenticity of influencers are pivotal factors in shifting the attitudes of young consumers in major markets such as the UK and China (Ge, 2024). Continuous exposure to sustainability-oriented messages on social media helps bridge the gap between knowledge and actual behavior (Tran et al., 2025).

2.1.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB – Ajzen, 1991)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was developed from the original Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by incorporating the construct of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). Together with Attitude and Subjective Norms, these three factors collectively influence Behavioral Intention. Specifically, Perceived Behavioral Control refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behavior, which is closely linked to the availability of necessary resources, knowledge, and the perceived competence required to execute the action (Ajzen, 1991).

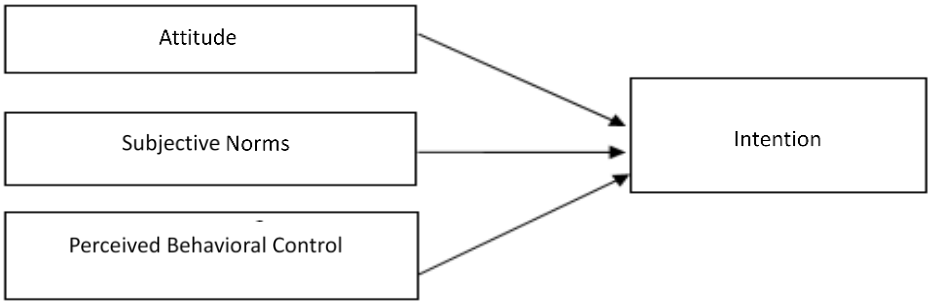

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior Model

Source: Ajzen (1991)

2.1.3. Drivers and Barriers to Consumer Intentions and Behaviors

Despite growing environmental awareness, the actual behavior of Generation Z remains influenced by the interplay between ethical values and personal interests. According to Mazanec and Harantová (2024), while environmental values positively impact attitudes, economic benefits (low prices) and the convenience of online platforms serve as the most potent "levers" driving intentions to purchase secondhand goods. This aligns with the findings of Palomo-Domínguez et al. (2023), who argue that brand attributes and trendiness continue to compete fiercely with sustainability motives. In the Vietnamese market, Tran et al. (2025) emphasize that quality and price represent the most significant barriers, reflecting the reality that Generation Z consistently weighs environmental ideals against personal financial capacity.

A prominent theme throughout studies from 2021 to 2024 is the persistence of the "attitude-behavior gap." Through a systematic literature review, Burger (2025) confirms that although Generation Z expresses strong support for ethical fashion, economic hurdles and the allure of fast fashion make it difficult for them to maintain consistent

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sustainable consumption. Conversely, Kang and Badal (2025) offer a more optimistic perspective, finding no significant gap among consumers with a robust ethical mindset, suggesting that when attitudes are sufficiently resolute, behavior follows accordingly. Furthermore, Dapit Edo et al. (2024) add that enhancing environmental knowledge through education is the key to transforming concern into lasting positive attitudes.

2.2. Research model and hypotheses

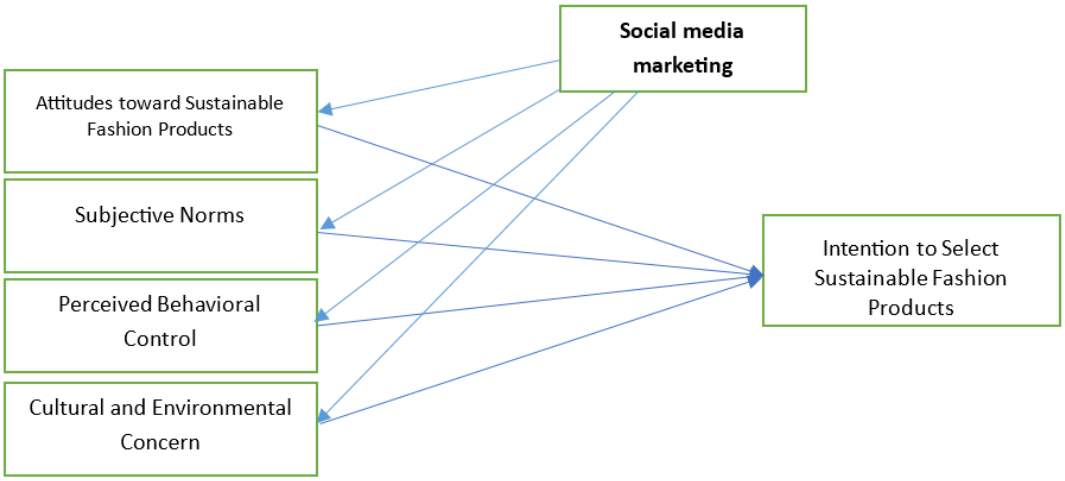

Figure 2: Proposed Research Model

Source: Proposed by the research team

Research Hypotheses:

H1: Social media marketing (SM) has a significant positive impact on Attitude (AT) toward sustainable fashion products.

H2: Social media marketing (SM) is positively correlated with Subjective Norms (SN).

H3: Social media marketing (SM) exerts a positive influence on Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC).

H4: Social media marketing (SM) has a significant positive relationship with Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE).

Table 1: Measurement Scale for Social Media (SM)

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
SM1	I utilize social media platforms as a primary source to seek information regarding sustainable fashion.	El-Shihy, D., & Awaad, S. (2025). Tsai, W. H. S., and Men, L. R., (2013).
SM2	The content related to sustainable fashion on social media is perceived as highly beneficial for my knowledge.	
SM3	Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs) significantly influence my decision-making process concerning sustainable fashion.	

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H5: Attitude toward sustainable fashion products (AT) has a significant positive impact on Selection intention (PI).

Table 2: Measurement of Scale for AT

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
AT1	I perceive sustainable fashion products as having high aesthetic appeal and being visually attractive.	Ajzen, 1991 Carman K.M. Lai (2016) Nguyen Thi Minh Hoa, Ha Tuan Anh (2022).
AT2	I experience positive emotional responses when utilizing sustainable fashion items.	
AT3	I believe that sustainable fashion provides a superior consumer experience.	
AT4	I highly value the long-term benefits and enduring quality of sustainable fashion.	

H6: Subjective Norms (SN) have a significant positive impact on Selection intention (PI).

Table 3: Measurement of Scale for SN

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
SN1	My peers encourage me to prioritize the selection of sustainable fashion products.	Ajzen, 1991 Carman K.M. Lai (2016) Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) Deutsch and Gerard (1954)
SN2	My family members support and approve of my decisions to purchase sustainable fashion.	
SN3	Social media trends significantly influence my choices regarding sustainable fashion consumption.	

H7: Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) has a significant positive impact on Selection intention (PI).

Table 4: Measurement of Scale for PBC

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
PBC1	I possess the financial capacity to purchase sustainable fashion products.	Ajzen, 1991, Carman K.M. Lai (2016)
PBC2	I can easily locate reputable retailers that offer sustainable fashion products.	
PBC3	I have access to sufficient information to select appropriate sustainable fashion items.	

H8: Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE) has a significant positive impact on Selection intention (PI).

Table 5: Measurement of Scale for CE

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
CE1	I am deeply concerned about and interested in eco-friendly products.	Ngo TTA et al (2024) Carman K.M. Lai (2016)
CE2	I pay significant attention to the environmental impact generated by the fashion industry.	
CE3	I believe that sustainable fashion consumption is an essential necessity for environmental preservation.	

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Measurement Scale for Selection intention (PI)

Table 6: Measurement of Scale for PI

Code	Measurement of Scale	Source
PI1	I intend to purchase sustainable fashion products in the near future.	Ajzen (1991) Carman K.M. Lai (2016) Seyed Fathollah Amiri Aghdaie (2011)
PI2	I will prioritize choosing sustainable fashion when have demand.	
PI3	I am willing to recommend sustainable fashion to relatives and friends.	

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Data collection method

To investigate ***"Factors influencing the intention to choose sustainable fashion products among Vietnamese Gen Z***," the research team employed two methods: desk research (reviewing published materials in mass media) and sociological surveys (collecting responses from individuals interested in sustainable fashion). The data were synthesized and analyzed using Excel and SmartPLS software.

Through desk research, the team examined documents on sustainable fashion, publications regarding factors affecting the selection intentions of Vietnamese youth, and the characteristics of Vietnamese Generation Z. Based on these findings, a survey questionnaire was developed to conduct a sociological investigation into the factors influencing Gen Z's intention to choose sustainable fashion products and the role of social media in those factors affecting selection intentions.

Regarding the sociological survey method, the team conducted a preliminary survey and discussions with individuals interested in or having used sustainable fashion products. The discussions utilized a preliminary measurement scale consisting of factors influencing the sustainable fashion selection intentions of Vietnamese Gen Z. Participants were encouraged to freely provide opinions on various aspects of sustainable fashion. The preliminary study had a sample size of 10 individuals. The results were used to refine the research questionnaire and the theoretical model. Once the survey was finalized, it was distributed and collected via Google Forms, targeting Vietnamese Gen Z.

Convenience sampling method: Data collection was carried out using convenience sampling and the "snowball" sampling method (identifying subsequent subjects based on referrals from previous participants) to ensure the required sample size. A total of 205 survey responses were collected, of which 203 respondents expressed an intention to choose sustainable fashion products and were included in the data analysis model.

3.2. Processing data method

Quantitative research methods were conducted to process data collected from the survey on factors influencing the intention to purchase sustainable fashion products among Vietnamese Gen Z. SmartPLS software was utilized to test the hypotheses and evaluate the impact levels of these factors.

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Step 1: Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The measurement model is evaluated by examining the values of indicator reliability (outer loadings), internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

Step 2: Evaluation of the Structural Model

After the measurement model meets the requirements, the structural model is evaluated through causal relationships, path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), and the effect size (f^2).

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Description of Survey Participants

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Survey Participants

Characteristics	Category	Number	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	112	54.6%
	Female	93	45.4%
Ages	15 - 20 years old	94	45.9%
	21 - 25 years old	111	54.1%
	26 – 30 year olds	0	0%
Occupation	Student	94	45.9%
	Officer	68	33.2%
	Freelancer	43	21.0%
Monthly income	Below 5 million VND	50	24.4%
	5 - 10 million VND	74	36.1%
	10 - 15 million VND	79	38.5%
	15 - 20 million VND	2	1.0%
	More than 20 million VND	0	0%

Source: Research Survey Results

Regarding gender distribution, the statistical results indicate a slight but non-significant disparity within the sample. Specifically, the number of male participants was 112 (accounting for 54.6%), while female participants totaled 93 (representing 45.4%).

In terms of age groups, the entire sample fell within the 15 to 25 age range, categorized into two primary cohorts: The 21–25 age group constituted the largest proportion with 111 individuals (54.1%). This group primarily consists of seniors in higher education or early-career professionals entering the labor market. The 15–20 age group comprised 94 individuals (45.9%), predominantly high school students and university freshmen. Notably, no respondents were recorded in the 26–30 age bracket. Consequently, the data exhibits generational homogeneity, serving as a representative sample of Generation Z.

Regarding current occupations, students accounted for 45.9% of the sample, followed by office workers at 33.2%, and self-employed individuals at 21.0%. Income levels were predominantly concentrated in two segments: 10–15 million VND (38.5%) and 5–10

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million VND (36.1%). Summing these figures, 74.6% of the respondents earn an average monthly income ranging from 5 to 15 million VND. The lower-income bracket (under 5 million VND) accounted for 24.4%, typically associated with the student group who lack a stable income. In contrast, the high-income segment (over 15 million VND) represented a negligible proportion of only 1%, with no participants earning above 20 million VND. These findings demonstrate that the survey sample is concentrated within the young consumer segment with moderate spending power.

4.2. Sustainable Fashion Selection Trends among Vietnamese Generation Z

The chart reveals a distinct differentiation in the shopping behavior of the respondents, with a strong inclination toward infrequent consumption. The largest segment is the group of customers who shop several times per year, accounting for 73.7%. With nearly three-quarters of the total responses concentrated in this category, it can be concluded that for the majority of consumers in this survey, sustainable fashion is a seasonal or demand-specific purchase rather than a short-term, periodic spending habit.

Options such as "2–3 times/month" and "Weekly" account for only a negligible proportion. This demonstrates that "ultra-fast" fashion shopping behavior or "shopping addiction" is not a characteristic of this customer group. Instead, the target market reflected by this data is primarily the sustainable fashion market, where purchasing decisions are carefully considered or only occur during holidays and special events.

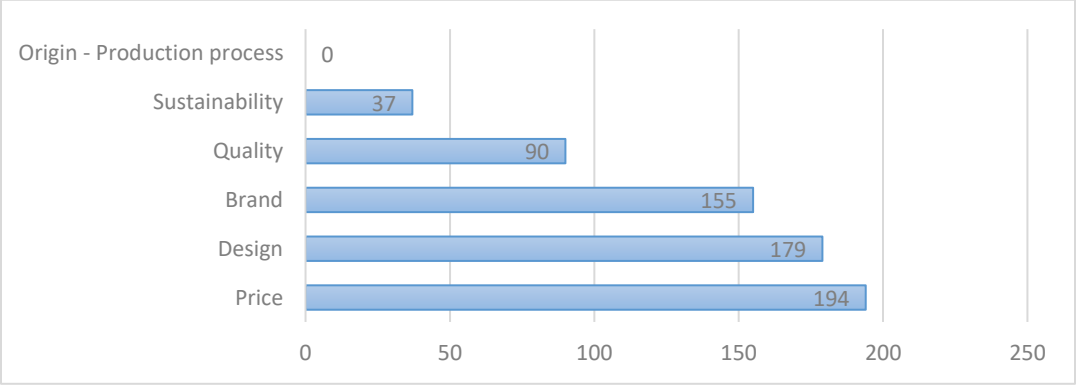

Chart 1: Priority factors in selecting sustainable fashion products

Source: Research Result

The chart shows that “Price” is the most significant factor, with a selection rate of 95.6% (194 respondents). This is followed closely by “Design” at 88.2% (179 respondents) and “Brand” at 76.4% (155 respondents). This indicates that customers prioritize economic feasibility, symbolic value, and the outward appearance of the product when making purchasing decisions. However, the “Quality” factor garnered interest from only 90 respondents (44.3%), which is less than half the rate of the price factor, reflecting a preference for variety and affordability over long-term durability within this customer base. Sustainability-related factors do not yet hold a dominant position. Sustainability accounts

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for 18.2% (37 respondents) of interest, while “Origin – Production” process recorded a rate of 0%. These results point to a major gap in consumer awareness or prioritization regarding ethical and environmental aspects in the fashion industry.

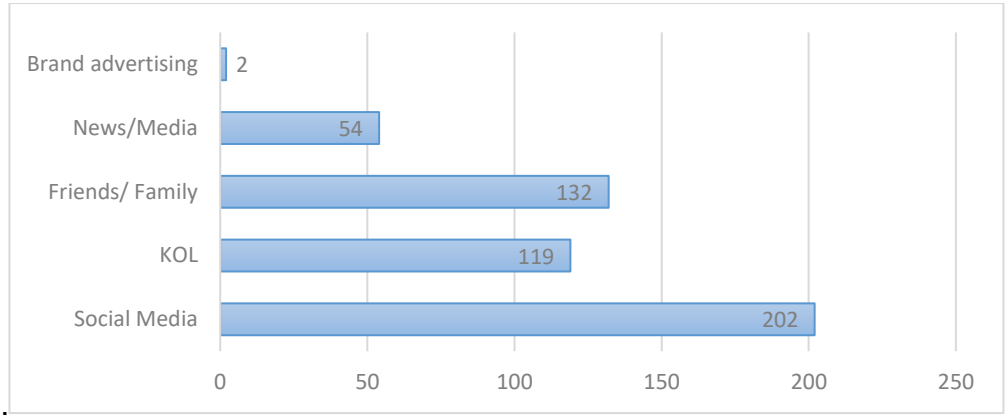

Chart 2: Information Channels for Sustainable Fashion Products

Source: Research Result

The chart indicates that social media serves as the most pivotal information channel, with a near-absolute reach of 99.5%. This confirms the pervasive influence of online platforms in educating and shaping new perceptions of sustainable consumption within the community. Two information sources with high personal interactivity follow: “Friends/Family” at 65% (132 respondents) and “KOLs/Influencers” at 58.6% (119 respondents). These results suggest that information regarding sustainable fashion is more effectively acquired through trusted social connections or influential figures rather than direct messaging from brands. Traditional channels, such as “News/Media,” account for only 26.6% (54 respondents). Notably, “Brand advertising” recorded the lowest proportion at a mere 1% (2 respondents). This disparity indicates that contemporary consumers tend to proactively seek or receive information from more objective sources rather than placing trust in self-promotional corporate advertising content.

4.3. Test Results of Factors Influencing the Intention to Select Sustainable Fashion Products Among Vietnamese Generation Z

4.3.1. Quality Assessment of Observed Variables

In SmartPLS, outer loadings represent the square root of the absolute R2 value in a linear regression from a latent variable to its manifest (observed) variables. Hair et al. (2016) suggest that outer loadings should be greater than or equal to 0.708. For ease of recall, researchers often round this threshold to 0.7 instead of the precise value of 0.708.

Upon the initial model execution, the quality of the observed variables is evaluated through their outer loadings. All correlation coefficients for the independent variables influencing selection intention (PI) exhibit outer loadings exceeding 0.7, indicating that these observed variables are statistically significant.

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Table 8: Outer Loadings of Factors Influencing the Intention to Select Sustainable Fashion Products Among Generation Z

	AT	CE	PBC	PI	SM	SN
AT1	0.907					
AT2	0.821					
AT3	0.731					
AT4	0.866					
CE1		0.949				
CE2		0.889				
CE3		0.945				
PBC1			0.880			
PBC2			0.882			
PBC3			0.871			
PI1				0.906		
PI2				0.909		
PI3				0.940		
SM2					0.928	
SM3					0.911	
SN1						0.869
SN2						0.927
SN3						0.877
SM1					0.919	

Source: Testing Results of the Research Group

4.3.2. Reliability Assessment of Measurement Scales

The reliability of measurement scales in SmartPLS is assessed through two primary indices: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Chin (1998) suggests that in exploratory research, the CR must satisfy the condition of 0.6. For confirmatory studies, a threshold of 0.7 is considered an appropriate level for the CR index (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2015). Hair et al. (2017) and Bagozzi & Yi (1988) also concur that 0.7 is a suitable evaluation threshold for the vast majority of cases. Consequently, the reliability of measurement scales in SmartPLS is established when Cronbach's Alpha 0.7 and CR 0.7.

Reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the factors yielded the following results: Attitude toward sustainable fashion products (AT) reached 0.851; Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE) reached 0.919; Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) reached 0.852; Intention (PI) reached 0.907; Social Media Marketing (SM) reached 0.909; and Subjective Norm (SN) reached 0.871. Thus, all measurement scales satisfy the condition of > 0.7 and do not violate any variable exclusion rules; therefore, they are acceptable in terms of reliability. The Composite Reliability (CR) of all observed variables

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also exceeds 0.7. Consequently, the measurement scales demonstrate reliability and analytical significance, allowing them to be utilized in subsequent factor analyses.

Table 9: Reliability Coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) and Composite Reliability (CR) of Factors Influencing the Intention to Select Sustainable Fashion Products Among Vietnamese Generation Z

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
AT	0.851	0.862	0.901	0.695
CE	0.919	0.920	0.949	0.861
PBC	0.852	0.860	0.910	0.770
PI	0.907	0.914	0.942	0.843
SM	0.909	0.910	0.943	0.845
SN	0.871	0.874	0.921	0.795

Source: Model Testing Results

4.3.3. Assessment of Convergent Validity

Convergent validity in SmartPLS is evaluated based on the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index. A measurement scale achieves convergent validity if the AVE value reaches 0.5 or higher. This 0.5 (50%) threshold implies that, on average, the latent variable explains at least 50% of the variance of each manifest (observed) variable. Thus, convergent validity is assessed using the criterion of AVE $\geq$ 0.5 (Hock, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2010).

The AVE indices obtained from the research results for the factors are as follows: AT reached 0.395; CE reached 0.861; PBC reached 0.770; PI reached 0.843; SM reached 0.845; and SN reached 0.795. Consequently, the AVE indices for all variables exceed 0.5, and the model satisfies the conditions for convergent validity.

4.3.4. Assessment of Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is used to examine whether a research variable is truly distinct from other variables in the model. To evaluate discriminant validity, two criteria are considered: cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker (1981) criterion.

Cross-loadings are typically the first approach used to assess the discrimination of observed variables. The loading of an observed variable on its associated factor (latent variable) must be greater than any of its cross-loadings (i.e., its correlations) on other factors. Furthermore, Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend that discriminant validity is ensured when the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is higher than all correlations between that latent variable and others.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion results for the model indicate that the variables AT, CE, PBC, PI, SM, and SN all maintain discriminant validity, as all AVE values on the diagonal are higher than their respective off-diagonal values. Therefore, both criteria - cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion - have been satisfied regarding discriminant validity.

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Table 10: Fornell-Larcker Criterion for the Research Model of Factors Influencing the Intention to Select Sustainable Fashion Products Among Vietnamese Generation Z

	AT	CE	PBC	PI	SM	SN
AT	0.834					
CE	0.715	0.928				
PBC	0.592	0.555	0.878			
PI	0.646	0.579	0.667	0.918		
SM	0.735	0.715	0.530	0.617	0.919	
SN	0.750	0.765	0.703	0.685	0.729	0.892

Source: Model Testing Results

4.4. Structural Model Assessment

4.4.1. Assessment of Causal Relationships

To evaluate the causal relationships, the results of the Bootstrap analysis are utilized. The assessment is primarily based on two columns: (1) Original Sample (path coefficients) and (2) P-value (significance level of 0.05). The R^2 coefficient (R-square) is used to assess the explanatory power of the independent variables regarding the dependent variable. R-square ranges from 0 to 1; the closer it is to 1, the more the independent variables explain the variance of the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2017).

The relationships and the extent of influence among factors affecting the intention to select sustainable fashion products of Vietnamese Gen Z in SmartPLS are illustrated in Figure 3.

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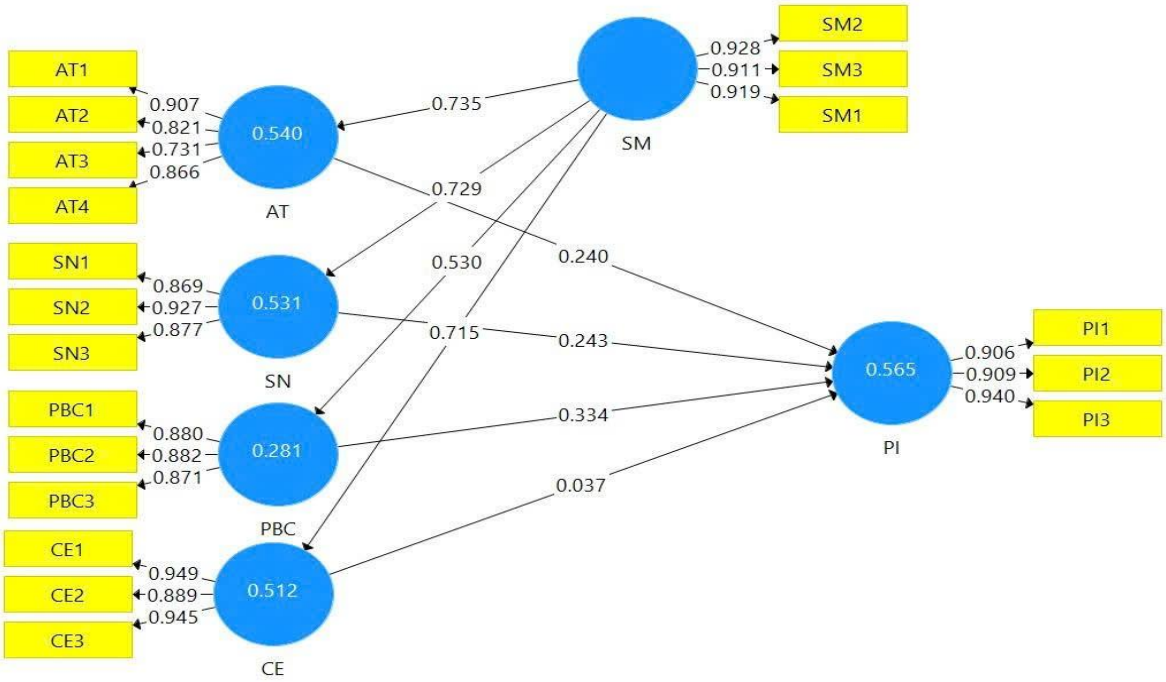

Figure 3: Factors Influencing the Intention to Select Sustainable Fashion Products Among Generation Z

Source: Testing Results via SmartPLS

The results of the Bootstrap analysis used to evaluate the causal relationships are presented in Table 11. Accordingly, Social Media Marketing (SM) significantly influences Attitude (AT), Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Subjective Norm (SN), as these factors exhibit P-values < 0.05. Furthermore, AT, PBC, and SN have a significant impact on selection intention (PI), with P-values < 0.05. However, the P-value for the CE variable is 0.968 (> 0.05), indicating that the CE factor lacks statistical significance in its relationship with the intention to select sustainable fashion products among Generation Z.

Table 11: Structural Model Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
AT => PI	0.240	0.257	0.117	2.051	**0.041**
CE => PI	0.037	0.031	0.094	0.388	**0.698**
PBC => PI	0.334	0.325	0.081	4.150	**0.000**
SM => AT	0.735	0.732	0.071	10.373	**0.000**
SM => CE	0.715	0.718	0.061	11.718	**0.000**
SM => PBC	0.530	0.532	0.062	8.502	**0.000**
SM => SN	0.729	0.729	0.044	16.680	**0.000**
SN => PI	0.243	0.242	0.114	2.133	**0.033**

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Source: Testing Results via SmartPLS

Thus, we obtain the following structural equations:

*PI = 0.240*AT + 0.334*PBC + 0.243*SN*

*AT = 0.735*SM*

*CE = 0.715*SM*

*PBC = 0.530*SM*

*SN = 0.729*SM*

4.4.2. Assessment of the Overall Coefficient of Determination R^2

The results of the PLS Algorithm provide the R^2 values, which reflect the degree to which the independent variables explain the variance of the dependent variables. The R^2 index (R-square value) measures the overall coefficient of determination, serving as an indicator of the model's goodness-of-fit (the explanatory power of the model). Hair et al. (2016) suggest that R-square values can be categorized at levels of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25, representing substantial, moderate, or weak explanatory power, respectively.

According to the model results, the AT variable has an R^2 of 0.540 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.538; the CE variable has an R^2 of 0.512 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.509; the PBC variable has an R^2 of 0.281 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.278; the PI variable has an R^2 of 0.565 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.556; and the SN variable has an R^2 of 0.531 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.529. Consequently, the independent variables AT, PBC, and SN explain 56.5% of the variance in the PI variable. Furthermore, SM explains 54.0% of the variance in AT, 51.2% in CE, 28.1% in PBC, and 53.1% in SN.

Table 12: The explanatory power of independent variables on dependent variables (R Square)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
AT	0.540	0.538
CE	0.512	0.509
PBC	0.281	0.278
PI	0.565	0.556
SN	0.531	0.529

Source: Testing Results via SmartPLS

4.4.3. Assessment of Path Coefficients f^2

The f^2 effect size represents the impact on the structural model when a specific construct (factor) is removed. According to Cohen (1988), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 correspond to small, medium, and large effects of the exogenous variables, respectively. An effect size below 0.02 is considered negligible or having no impact. In this model, the f^2 values for the factors affecting Selection intention (PI) are as follows: AT reached 0.051, PBC reached 0.127, and SN reached 0.036 (all satisfying $0.02 < f^2 < 0.15$, indicating a

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small effect). The CE factor reached 0.001 (< 0.02), signifying no impact. Furthermore, the Social Media Marketing (SM) factor exhibited f^2 values of 1.173 for AT, 1.049 for CE, 0.392 for PBC, and 1.133 for SN, all of which demonstrate a large effect size.

Table 14: Summary Table of Model Results (f^2 value)

	AT	CE	PBC	PI	SM	SN
AT				0.051		
CE				**0.001**		
PBC				0.127		
PI						
SM	**1.173**	**1.049**	**0.392**			**1.133**
SN				0.036		

Source:Testing Results via SmartPLS

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Model Testing Results and research hypotheses using PLS-SEM via SmartPLS and testing the differential impacts of qualitative factors, all research hypotheses were accepted.

Table 15: Testing Results of the Research Hypotheses

No.	Hypothesis	Content	Conclusion
1	H1	Social media marketing (SM) has a positive correlation with the attitude towards sustainable fashion products	Accepted
2	H2	Social media marketing (SM) has a positive correlation with Subjective Norm (SN)	Accepted
3	H3	Social media marketing (SM) has a positive correlation with Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	Accepted
4	H4	Social media marketing (SM) has a positive correlation with Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE)	Accepted
5	H5	Attitude towards sustainable fashion products (AT) has a positive impact on selection intention (PI)	Accepted
6	H6	Subjective Norm (SN) has a positive impact on selection intention (PI)	Accepted
7	H7	Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) has a positive impact on selection intention (PI)	Accepted
8	H8	Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE) has a positive impact on selection intention (PI)	Statistically insignificant to conclude

Source: Testing Results via SmartPLS

5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Discussion

With the significant level of 95%:

The impact of Social Media Marketing (SM) on mediating factors

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With a path coefficient of 0.735, attitude towards sustainable fashion products (AT) is the factor most strongly influenced by social media marketing activities; specifically, when SM increases by 1 unit, Gen Z's positive attitude towards sustainable fashion increases by 0.735 units. SM has a positive impact on subjective norm (SN) with an influence level of 0.729, indicating that when social media marketing campaigns increase by 1 unit, social pressure and support from others for sustainable fashion consumption increase by 0.729 units. With an impact level of 0.715, SM positively influences cultural and environmental concern (CE). As SM increases by 1 unit, Gen Z's level of concern for cultural and environmental values increases by 0.715 units. Finally, SM impacts perceived behavioral control (PBC) with an effect size of 0.530, showing that when social media marketing activities increase by 1 unit, Gen Z's confidence in their ability to purchase sustainable products increases by 0.530 units.

The Impact of Factors on Sustainable Fashion Product selection intention (PI)

Perceived behavioral control is the most significant factor influencing intention, with a path coefficient of 0.334. This indicates that when perceived behavioral control increases by 1 unit, Gen Z's intention to choose sustainable fashion products increases by 0.334 units. Subjective norm, with an impact level of 0.243, shows that when community influence increases by 1 unit, intention (PI) increases by 0.243 units, confirming that the role of the community significantly affects the sustainable fashion selection intentions of young people. Attitude (AT) has a positive impact on PI with a path coefficient of 0.240, signifying that when positive attitude increases by 1 unit, intention (PI) increases by 0.240 units.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the empirical results, the research team proposes several managerial implications to promote sustainable fashion consumption among young people. First, as Social Media Marketing (SM) exerts an extremely strong influence on all antecedent factors - especially Attitude and Subjective Norm - businesses should prioritize building a content ecosystem on TikTok and Instagram. Instead of focusing solely on product features, companies should invest in environmental education through "storytelling" to establish a green lifestyle as a new social norm. Collaborating with Micro-Influencers or KOCs who authentically pursue sustainable living will make messages more genuine and relatable to Gen Z.

Second, the Attitude (AT) factor plays a crucial role with an impact coefficient of 0.240. This result indicates that when Gen Z holds a favorable view and appreciates the aesthetics and long-term value of sustainable products, they tend to prioritize them. This attitude goes beyond simple preference; it represents emotional recognition when using "green" products, creating a powerful psychological drive to switch from fast fashion to sustainable fashion.

Third, businesses need to pay special attention to Subjective Norm (SN), which significantly influences selection intention (0.243). Gen Z is a generation heavily influenced by their community and peers. Therefore, marketing campaigns should focus

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on building “Green Communities” and encouraging viral activities, such as social media challenges or referral programs. When using sustainable fashion becomes a “trend” or a symbol of civility within peer groups, individual selection intentions will be more strongly stimulated.

Fourth, since Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is the most decisive factor (0.334), businesses must focus on removing practical barriers. Specifically, it is essential to transparently provide information regarding pricing and sourcing to eliminate the prejudice that sustainable fashion is “luxurious” or “inaccessible.” Expanding online distribution channels, combined with support services such as accurate size guides and flexible return policies, will help Gen Z feel more confident in their ability to perform the purchase behavior.

Finally, Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE) was found to be statistically insignificant in directly impacting intention. This suggests that while environmental awareness may be high, it is not yet sufficient to serve as an independent motive for purchasing. Therefore, businesses should not only “sell” ethical values. Sustainable fashion products must first satisfy criteria for aesthetics and economic value. Manufacturers need to ensure that designs keep up with trends so that young people choose products based on personal preference and suitability, with environmental protection serving as a secondary benefit.

CONCLUSION

The study has successfully achieved its objective of identifying and measuring the factors influencing the sustainable fashion selection intentions of Gen Z in Vietnam. The empirical results confirm the pivotal role of Social Media Marketing in shaping the perceptions and attitudes of young people through intermediary factors. Specifically, Perceived Behavioral Control (0.334), Subjective Norm (0.243), and Attitude (0.240) are the three primary factors directly driving selection intention. Notably, the study identifies a “gap” between environmental awareness and action, as Cultural and Environmental Concern (CE) does not have a statistically significant direct impact on selection intention without the support of personal resources and community influence.

Despite achieving meaningful results, this paper still possesses certain limitations. The sample size of 205 respondents and the convenience sampling method may not fully reflect the characteristics of the entire Gen Z generation in Vietnam. Additionally, the lack of statistical significance for the CE factor may be due to age-specific psychological traits, where individual benefits and social recognition are prioritized over abstract environmental ideals.

Consequently, future research could expand the sample size to increase representativeness and conduct comparisons across different geographical regions. In particular, investigating the indirect relationships of the CE factor through other mediating

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variables, or introducing moderating variables such as “income” and “environmental knowledge,” would be potential directions to refine the theory of sustainable consumption.

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