

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON GREEN FOOD PURCHASE INTENTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Bui Hong Diep

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade

Email: diepbh@huit.edu.vn

Received: 25 March 2026; Revised: 26 April 2026; Accepted: 16 May 2026

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of social media marketing on consumers' purchase intention toward green food in Ho Chi Minh City. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and prior studies on green consumption and digital marketing, the research proposes an extended model incorporating social media marketing, attitude, subjective norm, perceived value, green product knowledge, and environmental concern. Data were collected from 220 consumers and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results indicate that social media marketing significantly influences consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived value, and green product knowledge. Among these factors, subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge have significant positive effects on purchase intention, while environmental concern also plays an important role. However, attitude does not directly influence purchase intention, suggesting the dominant role of social and cognitive factors in shaping green consumption behavior in a collectivist context. Additionally, mediating effects are confirmed for subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge, highlighting the indirect influence of social media on purchase intention. The model explains 54.3% of the variance in purchase intention, indicating a satisfactory explanatory power. The findings contribute to the literature by integrating social media into the TPB framework and provide practical implications for green food businesses and policymakers in promoting sustainable consumption through digital platforms.

Keywords: Social media marketing, green food, purchase intention, sustainable consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainable consumption and environmentally friendly products have become increasingly important worldwide due to growing concerns about environmental degradation, climate change, and food safety. Among sustainable products, green food has attracted significant attention because it is associated with both environmental protection and consumer health benefits [1], [2]. As consumers become more environmentally conscious, demand for green food products has continued to increase, especially in urban areas and emerging economies.

At the same time, the rapid growth of digital technologies and social media platforms has transformed the way firms communicate with consumers. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are now widely used as marketing tools for promoting products and influencing consumer behavior. Through online interactions, advertising content, and user-

generated information, social media can significantly shape consumers' perceptions and purchase decisions [3], [4].

In the context of green consumption, previous studies have shown that social influence, perceived value, product knowledge, and environmental concern are important factors affecting consumers' purchase intention toward environmentally friendly products [5]-[7]. Social media marketing is also increasingly recognized as an important driver of sustainable consumption behavior because it enables firms to deliver product information and enhance consumer awareness regarding environmental issues [8], [9].

Despite the growing literature on green consumption, empirical research examining the influence of social media marketing on green food purchase intention remains limited, particularly in emerging markets such as Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh City is one of the most dynamic urban areas in Vietnam, characterized by high social media usage and increasing demand for healthy and environmentally friendly products. However, evidence regarding how social media influences green food purchase intention in this context is still insufficient.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of social media marketing on green food purchase intention among consumers in Ho Chi Minh City. The study also examines the mediating roles of attitude, subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge, as well as the effect of environmental concern on purchase intention. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on sustainable consumption and provide practical implications for businesses and policymakers in promoting green consumption through digital platforms.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Green food and purchase intention

Green food has emerged as an important component of sustainable consumption, particularly in the context of increasing environmental concerns and food safety issues. Green food generally refers to products that are produced using environmentally friendly processes, with limited use of chemicals and strict quality control standards to ensure consumer health. The consumption of green food not only reflects consumers' environmental awareness but also their concern for personal health and social responsibility [1], [2].

From a behavioral perspective, purchase intention is considered a key predictor of actual buying behavior. According to the TPB, behavioral intention represents an individual's readiness to perform a particular action and is influenced by various psychological factors [10]. In the context of green consumption, purchase intention can be defined as the likelihood that consumers will choose and purchase environmentally friendly products. Prior studies have consistently shown that purchase intention serves as a critical link between consumer perceptions and actual behavior [5], [6].

Recent research has highlighted the growing interest of consumers in environmentally friendly products, particularly in the food sector. Factors such as environmental awareness, perceived benefits, and product knowledge have been found to significantly influence consumers' intention to purchase green products [7], [11]. As a result, understanding the determinants of green food purchase intention has become an important research area for both academics and practitioners.

2.2. Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen [10], is one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks for explaining behavioral intention and consumer decision-making. According to TPB, behavioral intention is primarily determined by three factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a behavior, while subjective norm refers to perceived social pressure from important others. Perceived behavioral control represents an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty associated with performing the behavior and is often linked to the availability of resources, opportunities, and self-confidence in carrying out the behavior [10].

In the context of green consumption, TPB has been extensively employed to explain consumers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that attitude and subjective norm significantly influence green purchase intention [5], [6]. Consumers who hold favorable attitudes toward green products and receive support from peers, family members, or social communities are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption behavior.

Although perceived behavioral control is recognized as an important component of TPB, this study focuses primarily on the social and cognitive influences associated with social media marketing. In the context of green food consumption in Ho Chi Minh City, consumers generally have relatively easy access to green food products through supermarkets, online platforms, and retail channels. Therefore, perceived behavioral control is considered less critical in explaining behavioral intention compared to factors such as subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge. Similar approaches have been adopted in previous green consumption studies where TPB was extended or partially applied depending on the research context [5], [7].

Furthermore, recent studies have expanded the TPB framework by incorporating additional constructs such as perceived value, environmental concern, and product knowledge to improve the explanatory power of green consumption models [7], [11]. These extensions are particularly relevant in emerging markets, where consumer awareness and sustainable consumption practices continue to evolve. Overall, TPB provides a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing green food purchase intention, especially when integrated with external factors such as social media marketing and environmental concern.

2.3. Social media marketing

The rapid development of social media platforms has significantly transformed the way firms and consumers interact in the digital environment. Social media refers to Internet-based applications that enable users to create, share, and exchange content, thereby facilitating communication and social interaction among individuals [3]. In the field of marketing, social media has become a powerful tool for disseminating product information, building brand awareness, and fostering customer engagement.

Recent studies suggest that social media marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer perceptions and behavior. Through various activities such as online advertising, user-generated content, and peer reviews, social media can shape consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions [4]. In particular, interactive features and real-time communication allow consumers to access product information more efficiently and develop trust in brands.

In the context of green consumption, social media is especially important in raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainable consumption behavior. Information shared on social media platforms can enhance consumers' understanding of environmental issues and the benefits of green products, thereby encouraging more responsible consumption choices [8], [9]. Furthermore, social media facilitates the dissemination of experiential knowledge and peer influence, which are critical in shaping subjective norms and consumer decision-making [7], [11].

Therefore, social media marketing is not only a communication tool but also a key driver of consumer behavior, particularly in promoting green products such as environmentally friendly food.

2.4. Empirical research on green food consumption

A substantial body of empirical research has examined the determinants of green consumption behavior, particularly in the context of environmentally friendly products. These studies consistently highlight that attitude toward green products, subjective norm, and consumer perceptions play a crucial role in shaping purchase intention [5], [6]. Specifically, consumers who hold positive attitudes toward green products and perceive strong social support are more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing behavior.

In addition, factors such as environmental knowledge and environmental concern have been identified as key drivers of green consumption. Consumers with higher levels of knowledge about environmental issues and product characteristics tend to develop more favorable attitudes toward green products, thereby increasing their likelihood of purchase [9], [11]. Environmental knowledge not only enhances awareness of ecological impacts but also encourages responsible consumption behavior.

Moreover, empirical studies in emerging markets, including Vietnam, have shown that communication-related factors and environmental awareness significantly influence sustainable consumption behavior [7], [8]. In such contexts, consumers are increasingly exposed to information through digital platforms, which plays an important role in shaping their perceptions and decisions regarding green products.

Overall, previous empirical findings emphasize the importance of cognitive, psychological, and social factors in determining green food purchase intention. These insights provide a strong foundation for integrating social media marketing into the analysis of sustainable consumption behavior.

2.5. Hypotheses development

Social media plays a crucial role in providing information and shaping consumer perceptions through shared content, advertising, and online interactions. Social media platforms enable users to create and disseminate content, thereby influencing consumers' perceptions and evaluations [3]. In addition, social media marketing activities have been shown to significantly affect consumers' attitudes toward products [4]. In the context of green consumption, information related to health benefits and environmental sustainability disseminated via social media contributes to the formation of positive attitudes toward green food [8], [9]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: Social media marketing has a positive effect on attitudes toward green food.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude is one of the most important determinants of behavioral intention [10]. When consumers hold a positive attitude toward a product, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to purchase it. Empirical studies in the context of green consumption have consistently confirmed that positive attitudes toward environmentally friendly products significantly influence purchase intention [5], [6], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1b: Attitude toward green food has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

Furthermore, social media marketing not only exerts a direct influence but also affects consumer behavior indirectly through the formation of attitudes. When consumers are exposed to positive information on social media, they tend to develop favorable attitudes, which in turn lead to higher purchase intention. Previous studies have demonstrated that attitude plays a

mediating role in the relationship between marketing activities and consumer behavior [4], [5], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1c: Attitude mediates the relationship between social media marketing and green food purchase intention.

Social media creates an interactive environment where consumers are exposed to others' opinions, evaluations, and behaviors, thereby shaping social norms. Interactions on social media platforms can generate strong social influence on consumer behavior [4]. In addition, information and reviews shared within online communities contribute to the formation of subjective norms [7], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2a: Social media marketing has a positive effect on subjective norm.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), subjective norm reflects the perceived social pressure that individuals experience when performing a behavior [10]. When consumers receive support or encouragement from family, friends, or their social network, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to engage in that behavior. Empirical studies have confirmed that subjective norm has a significant positive effect on green product purchase intention [5], [6], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2b: Subjective norm has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

Furthermore, social media marketing may indirectly influence purchase intention through the formation of social norms. Content and interactions on social media platforms can create social pressure, thereby shaping individual consumption behavior. Previous studies have demonstrated that subjective norm plays a mediating role in the relationship between social influences and behavioral intention [6], [7], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2c: Subjective norm mediates the relationship between social media marketing and green food purchase intention.

Social media plays a crucial role in communicating product benefits, thereby helping consumers better understand the value that a product offers. Perceived value is considered a key determinant of consumer decision-making [1]. In addition, marketing content on social media platforms can enhance consumers' perceptions of product value [7], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3a: Social media marketing has a positive effect on perceived value of green food.

Perceived value reflects consumers' evaluation of the benefits received relative to the costs incurred when purchasing a product. When consumers perceive that a product delivers high value, they are more likely to develop a stronger purchase intention. Previous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between perceived value and purchase intention [1], [9], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3b: Perceived value has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

Furthermore, social media marketing may indirectly influence purchase intention by enhancing consumers' perceived value. When consumers gain a better understanding of product benefits through social media content, they tend to evaluate the product more favorably and increase their purchase intention. Prior research has also confirmed the mediating role of perceived value in consumer behavior [1], [7], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3c: Perceived value mediates the relationship between social media marketing and green food purchase intention.

Social media serves as an important source of information that enhances consumers' knowledge of green products. Through shared content and online interactions, consumers can

better understand the characteristics and benefits of environmentally friendly products. Previous studies have shown that information disseminated through social media can significantly improve consumers' knowledge of green products [8], [9], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4a: Social media marketing has a positive effect on green product knowledge.

Product knowledge enables consumers to better understand product attributes and benefits, thereby increasing trust and purchase intention. Empirical studies have demonstrated that green product knowledge has a significant positive impact on purchase intention [6], [9], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4b: Green product knowledge has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

Furthermore, social media marketing may indirectly influence purchase intention by enhancing consumers' knowledge. When consumers possess sufficient knowledge about green products, they are more likely to trust and choose such products. Previous studies have confirmed the mediating role of knowledge in green consumption behavior [8], [9], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4c: Green product knowledge mediates the relationship between social media marketing and green food purchase intention.

In addition to indirect effects, social media marketing may also directly influence consumers' purchase intention through advertising, content delivery, and online interactions. Prior research has shown that social media marketing activities can directly affect consumer purchasing behavior [4], [7], [8]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Social media marketing has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

Environmental concern reflects the extent to which individuals are aware of and concerned about environmental issues. Consumers with a higher level of environmental concern are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible consumption behaviors, including the purchase of green products. Previous studies have demonstrated that environmental concern has a significant positive impact on green purchase intention [5], [6], [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Environmental concern has a positive effect on green food purchase intention.

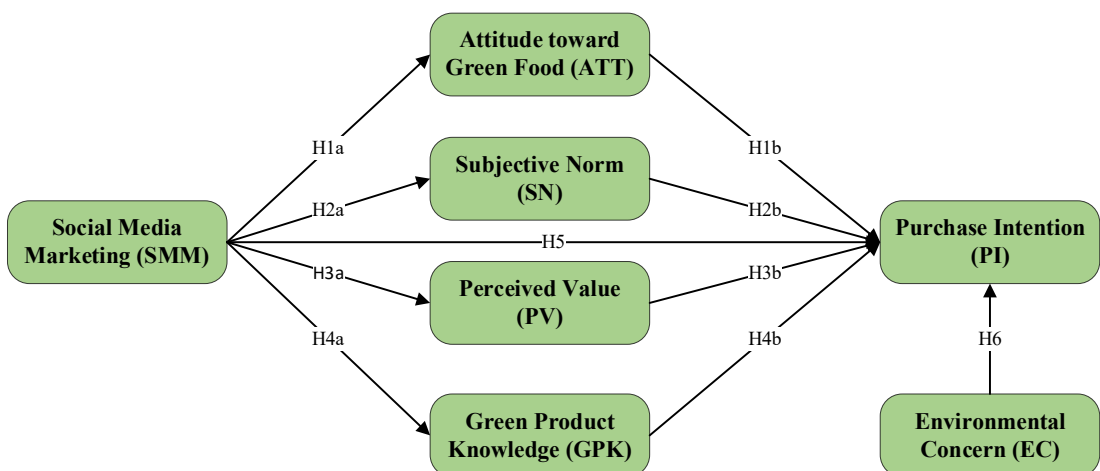


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model (Source: Developed by the author)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the impact of social media marketing on green food purchase intention in Ho Chi Minh City. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey administered to consumers who are active social media users and have awareness of green food products. The questionnaire was developed based on validated measurement scales from prior studies to ensure content validity and reliability. It consists of two main sections: the first section collects respondents' demographic information, while the second section measures the constructs included in the research model, namely social media marketing, attitude, subjective norm, perceived value, green product knowledge, environmental concern, and purchase intention.

All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The use of Likert scales is widely accepted in behavioral and consumer research because it effectively captures respondents' perceptions and attitudes. The measurement items were adapted from previous studies on green consumption and social media marketing to ensure theoretical consistency and empirical validity [5], [6], [9], [11].

The study employed a convenience sampling method due to time and resource constraints, as well as the exploratory nature of the research. The survey was conducted both online and offline in Ho Chi Minh City, targeting consumers who regularly use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. A total of 220 valid responses were collected and used for analysis. Although some studies recommend a sample size of 300 or more for covariance-based SEM techniques, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is considered suitable for smaller sample sizes and exploratory research models [12]. According to Hair et al. [12], the minimum sample size in PLS-SEM depends on model complexity and the maximum number of structural paths directed at a latent construct. Therefore, the sample size used in this study is considered acceptable for PLS-SEM analysis.

To analyze the data, this study employs PLS-SEM using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is appropriate for analyzing complex models with multiple constructs and mediation effects, and it does not require strict assumptions regarding data normality [12]. Therefore, this method is considered suitable for evaluating both the measurement model and the structural relationships proposed in the study.

3.2. Measurement scales

The measurement scales used in this study were adapted from well-established studies in the fields of green consumption and social media marketing to ensure reliability and validity. All constructs in the research model were measured using reflective indicators, as each observed variable is assumed to reflect the underlying latent construct. The questionnaire items were carefully reviewed and slightly modified to fit the context of green food consumption in Ho Chi Minh City while maintaining the original meaning of the scales.

Social media marketing was measured using items adapted from prior studies on digital marketing and social media engagement [4], [7], [8]. Attitude and subjective norm were measured based on the Theory of Planned Behavior framework [5], [10]. Perceived value was adapted from studies on consumer value perception in green consumption contexts [1], [9], [11]. Green product knowledge was measured using items reflecting consumers' understanding of environmentally friendly products [6], [9], [11]. Environmental concern was assessed based on prior studies on pro-environmental behavior [5], [6], while purchase intention was measured using widely adopted scales in consumer behavior and green consumption research [5], [6].

All measurement items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). Before the official survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of the measurement items. This process helped improve the wording and contextual suitability of the questionnaire before large-scale data collection

Table 1. Variables, items, and explanations used in the PLS-SEM

Construct	Code	Measurement items	Sources
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM1	I frequently see information about green food on social media.	Alalwan [4]
	SMM2	Social media helps me understand more about green food products.	Alalwan [4]
	SMM3	Advertisements about green food on social media attract my attention.	Alalwan [4]
	SMM4	Information shared on social media increases my interest in green food.	Wagdi et al. [13]
	SMM5	Social media is an important source of information about green food.	Xie et al. [9]
Attitude toward Green Food (ATT)	ATT1	Buying green food is a good idea.	Ajzen [10]; Paul et al. [5]
	ATT2	I have a positive attitude toward consuming green food.	Paul et al. [5]
	ATT3	Consuming green food is beneficial for my health.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	ATT4	Buying green food contributes to environmental protection.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
Subjective Norm (SN)	SN1	People who are important to me think that I should buy green food.	Ajzen (1991) [10]
	SN2	My family and friends encourage me to consume green food.	Paul et al. [5]
	SN3	People around me prefer environmentally friendly food products.	Verma & Chandra [6]
	SN4	Social expectations influence my decision to buy green food.	Paul et al. [5]
Perceived Value (PV)	PV1	Green food provides good value for my health.	Chen [1]
	PV2	Green food products are worth the money.	Chen [1]
	PV3	Green food has better quality than conventional food.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	PV4	Buying green food is a valuable choice for consumers.	Chen [1]
Green Product Knowledge (GPK)	GPK1	I know the characteristics of green food products.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	GPK2	I understand the environmental benefits of green food.	Yadav & Pathak [11]

Environmental Concern (EC)	GPK3	I can distinguish green food from conventional food products.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	GPK4	I have knowledge about environmentally friendly food production.	Wagdi et al. [13]
	EC1	I am concerned about environmental problems.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	EC2	I feel responsible for protecting the environment.	Paul et al. [5]
	EC3	I prefer products that are environmentally friendly.	Yadav & Pathak [11]
	EC4	I try to reduce environmental impact through my consumption choices.	Wagdi et al. [13]
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	I intend to buy green food in the future.	Ajzen [10]; Paul et al. [5]
	PI2	I will consider buying green food when purchasing food products.	Verma & Chandra [6]
	PI3	I am willing to pay more for green food.	Chen [1]
	PI4	I am likely to choose green food rather than conventional food.	Yadav & Pathak [11]

(Source: Adapted from previous studies)

3.3. Data analysis method

This study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the research model using SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM is widely applied in social science research due to its ability to handle complex models with multiple constructs and relationships, as well as its suitability for relatively small sample sizes and non-normal data distributions [12].

The data analysis procedure consists of two main stages: assessment of the measurement model and evaluation of the structural model. In the first stage, the measurement model is assessed to ensure reliability and validity. Internal consistency reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), with recommended thresholds above 0.70. Convergent validity is assessed through the average variance extracted (AVE), which should exceed 0.50, while indicator reliability is examined using outer loadings, with acceptable values above 0.70 [12]. In addition, discriminant validity is evaluated using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), with recommended values below 0.85 [12].

In the second stage, the structural model is evaluated to test the proposed hypotheses. This includes examining path coefficients, t-values, and p-values obtained through bootstrapping procedures to determine the significance of relationships between constructs. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to assess the explanatory power of the model, indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. Multicollinearity is also assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF) values to ensure the robustness of the model. Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test is conducted to assess the potential issue of common method bias, since all data were collected using self-reported measures.

Overall, the application of PLS-SEM allows for a comprehensive evaluation of both the measurement properties and the structural relationships in the proposed research model.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Sample characteristics

The sample consists of 220 respondents in Ho Chi Minh City, with females accounting for 54.55% and males 45.45%. The majority of respondents are young, with 50.91% aged 18–25 and 24.09% aged 26–35. Most participants hold a university degree (45%) and are mainly students (33.64%) or office staff (28.64%). In terms of income, the largest group earns 5–10 million VND per month (39.09%). Notably, most respondents use social media between 1 and 5 hours daily (65.45%), and over half (53.64%) are familiar with and have used green food. Overall, the sample is appropriate for examining the influence of social media on green food purchase intention

Table 2. Profile of the samples

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	120	54.55
	Male	100	45.45
Age	18-25	112	50.91
	26-35	53	24.09
	36-45	34	15.45
	46+	21	9.55
Education	Bachelor	99	45.00
	College	53	24.09
	High school	42	19.09
	Postgraduate	26	11.82
Occupation	Business/Self-employed	33	15.00
	Office staff	63	28.64
	Other	27	12.27
	Public employee	23	10.45
	Student	74	33.64
Income	10–20 million	43	19.55
	5–10 million	86	39.09
	<5 million	66	30.00
	>20 million	25	11.36
Social Media Usage	1–3 hours	82	37.27
	3–5 hours	62	28.18
	<1 hour	38	17.27
	>5 hours	38	17.27
Green Food Awareness	Heard but unclear	63	28.64
	Know and used	118	53.64
	Never heard	39	17.73

(Source: Results from survey data analysis)

4.2. Measurement model

The results of the measurement model assessment presented in Table 3 indicate that all constructs achieve satisfactory reliability and convergent validity. Specifically, the outer loadings of all observed variables exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.739 to 0.905, demonstrating strong correlations between the indicators and their respective latent constructs. The values of Cronbach's alpha (0.773–0.897) and composite reliability (0.854–0.928) are all above the threshold of 0.70, confirming the internal consistency of the measurement scales. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs is greater than 0.50 (ranging from 0.594 to 0.764), indicating adequate convergent validity. Furthermore, the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) values are all below 0.85, confirming discriminant validity among the constructs. Overall, the measurement model is considered reliable and valid, and thus suitable for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 3. Results of Measurement Model Assessment: Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

Latent Variable	Indicators	Outer loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ATT	ATT1	0.781	0.791	0.864	0.614
	ATT2	0.770			
	ATT3	0.807			
	ATT4	0.778			
EC	EC1	0.751	0.794	0.864	0.614
	EC2	0.762			
	EC3	0.807			
	EC4	0.814			
GPK	GPK1	0.792	0.773	0.854	0.594
	GPK2	0.777			
	GPK3	0.775			
	GPK4	0.739			
PI	PI1	0.864	0.897	0.928	0.764
	PI2	0.876			
	PI3	0.850			
	PI4	0.905			
PV	PV1	0.820	0.831	0.888	0.664
	PV2	0.819			
	PV3	0.793			
	PV4	0.827			
SMM	SMM1	0.799	0.874	0.908	0.665
	SMM2	0.832			
	SMM3	0.807			
	SMM4	0.815			
	SMM5	0.823			
SN	SN1	0.784	0.804	0.872	0.630
	SN2	0.803			
	SN3	0.823			
	SN4	0.763			

(Source: Results from survey data analysis)

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Assessment Using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	ATT	EC	GPK	PI	PV	SMM	SN
ATT							
EC	0.218						
GPK	0.529	0.275					
PI	0.526	0.459	0.585				
PV	0.55	0.169	0.477	0.576			
SMM	0.726	0.265	0.665	0.675	0.814		
SN	0.341	0.17	0.359	0.611	0.438	0.53	

(Source: Results from survey data analysis)

4.3. Structural model

The results of the structural model assessment indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern, as all variance inflation factors (VIF) values are below the threshold of 3, confirming the robustness of the model.

The hypothesis testing results show that social media marketing has significant positive effects on attitude ($\beta = 0.605$, $p < 0.001$), subjective norm ($\beta = 0.446$, $p < 0.001$), perceived value ($\beta = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$), and green product knowledge ($\beta = 0.554$, $p < 0.001$). Regarding purchase intention, subjective norm ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < 0.001$), perceived value ($\beta = 0.146$, $p < 0.05$), green product knowledge ($\beta = 0.169$, $p < 0.01$), environmental concern ($\beta = 0.253$, $p < 0.001$), and social media marketing ($\beta = 0.169$, $p < 0.05$) all exhibit significant positive effects, whereas the effect of attitude on purchase intention is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the mediating effects of subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge are supported, while the mediating role of attitude is not confirmed.

Table 5. Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	t-value	p-value	Decisions
H1a	SMM -> ATT	0.605	13.007	0.000	Accepted
H1b	ATT -> PI	0.081	1.447	0.148	Rejected
H1c	SMM -> ATT -> PI	0.049	1.412	0.158	Rejected
H2a	SMM -> SN	0.446	8.157	0.000	Accepted
H2b	SN -> PI	0.287	5.278	0.000	Accepted
H2c	SMM -> SN -> PI	0.128	4.202	0.000	Accepted
H3a	SMM -> PV	0.695	19.707	0.000	Accepted
H3b	PV -> PI	0.146	2.327	0.020	Accepted
H3c	SMM -> PV -> PI	0.101	2.309	0.021	Accepted
H4a	SMM -> GPK	0.554	12.92	0.000	Accepted
H4b	GPK -> PI	0.169	2.788	0.005	Accepted
H4c	SMM -> GPK -> PI	0.093	2.702	0.007	Accepted
H5	SMM -> PI	0.169	2.179	0.029	Accepted
H6	EC -> PI	0.253	5.203	0.000	Accepted

(Source: Results from survey data analysis)

As illustrated in Figure 2, social media marketing significantly influences the mediating variables, which in turn affect purchase intention. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for purchase intention is 0.543, indicating that the model explains 54.3% of the variance in purchase intention, suggesting a moderate level of explanatory power. Overall, the results support most of the proposed hypotheses and highlight the important role of social media marketing in promoting green food purchase intention.

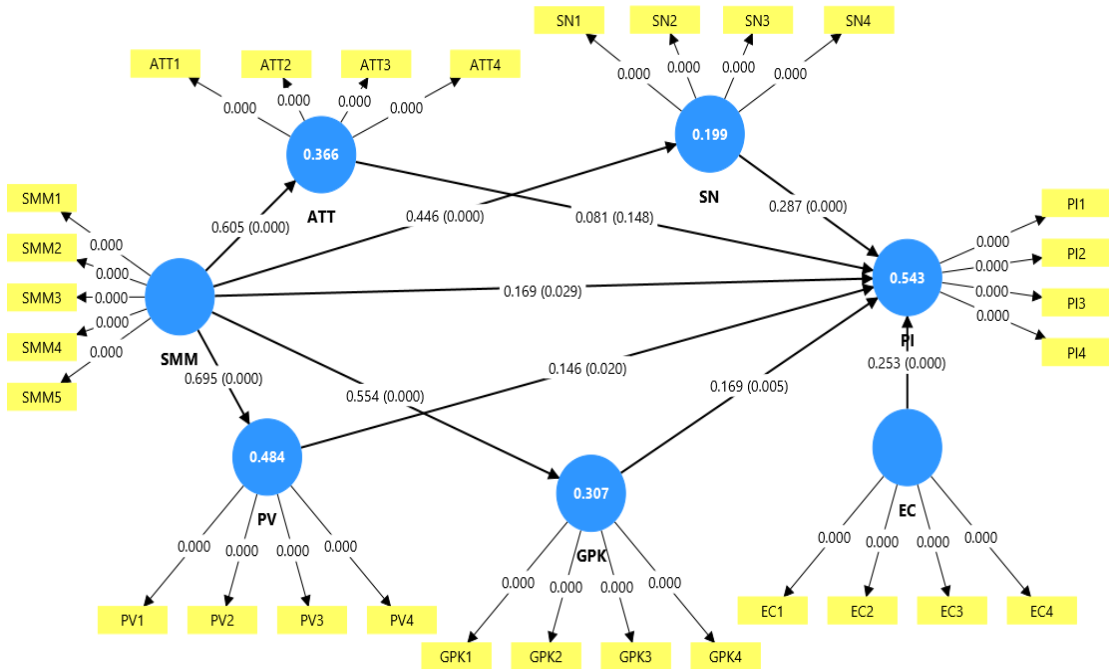


Figure 2. Output of the PLS-SEM (Source: Results from survey data analysis)

4.4. Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the role of social media marketing in shaping green food purchase intention in an emerging market context. The results confirm that social media marketing significantly influences key psychological and cognitive factors, including attitude, subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge [4], [7]-[9]. These findings reinforce the growing body of literature suggesting that social media is no longer merely a communication channel but has become a central mechanism through which consumers obtain information, interact with online communities, and form perceptions regarding sustainable products. Compared with traditional marketing channels, social media platforms provide more interactive, real-time, and user-generated information, which can substantially influence consumer evaluations and purchasing decisions [3], [4].

Among the antecedents examined in this study, social media marketing exhibits the strongest effect on perceived value ($\beta = 0.695$). This finding suggests that digital content related to environmental benefits, health consciousness, and product quality plays a critical role in enhancing consumers' perceptions of the value of green food products. The result is consistent with previous studies emphasizing that perceived value is one of the most important drivers of green consumption behavior [1], [9], [11]. In the context of Vietnam, where consumers are increasingly concerned about food safety and health issues, social media appears to function as an influential information source that helps consumers evaluate the benefits of green food more effectively.

The results also indicate that subjective norm, perceived value, green product knowledge, environmental concern, and social media marketing have significant positive effects on purchase intention. These findings are generally consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior and prior empirical studies on green purchasing behavior [5], [6]. In particular, the significant impact of subjective norm confirms the important role of social influence in shaping consumers' decisions in collectivist cultures such as Vietnam. Consumers are more likely to purchase green food when they perceive support or positive expectations from family members, friends, and online communities. This finding aligns with previous studies conducted in emerging markets, which emphasize the importance of social pressure and peer influence in sustainable consumption behavior [6], [7].

However, one of the most notable findings of this study is that attitude does not have a statistically significant effect on green food purchase intention. This result differs from many previous TPB-based studies, which generally report a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intention [5], [6]. A possible explanation is that although consumers may hold favorable attitudes toward green food, such attitudes alone may not be sufficient to translate into actual purchase intention in the Vietnamese context. Consumers may still face practical concerns such as product price, product accessibility, trust in green certifications, or uncertainty regarding product quality. As a result, external and socially driven factors, including subjective norm and social media influence, may play a more dominant role than personal attitude in determining behavioral intention.

Another possible explanation is related to the nature of social media communication itself. Consumers are increasingly exposed to user-generated content, peer reviews, influencer recommendations, and social interactions on digital platforms. Consequently, purchasing decisions may be shaped more strongly by social validation and perceived credibility rather than by individual attitudes alone. This finding highlights the contextual variability of TPB components and suggests that the predictive power of attitude may weaken in highly social and digitally connected environments. Similar inconsistencies regarding the role of attitude have also been reported in several recent green consumption studies conducted in developing countries [7], [9].

Furthermore, the mediating effects of subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge are supported, indicating that social media marketing influences purchase intention not only directly but also indirectly through cognitive and social mechanisms. This finding strengthens the argument that social media serves as a central construct in the research model because it simultaneously affects multiple psychological pathways leading to purchase intention. In contrast, the mediating role of attitude is not supported, further confirming the relatively limited explanatory role of this construct in the current research setting.

Overall, the study extends existing literature by integrating social media marketing into the TPB framework and empirically demonstrating both its direct and indirect effects on green food purchase intention. The findings contribute to the sustainable consumption literature by providing evidence from an emerging economy where digital platforms are becoming increasingly influential in consumer decision-making.

5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines the impact of social media marketing on consumers' green food purchase intention in Ho Chi Minh City based on an extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework. The findings reveal that social media marketing plays a significant role in shaping key psychological factors, particularly subjective norm, perceived value, and green product knowledge, which in turn positively influence purchase intention. In addition, environmental concern is confirmed as an important driver of sustainable consumption

behavior. These results highlight the critical role of both social influence and cognitive evaluation in promoting green food consumption in an emerging market context.

From a practical perspective, the study provides several important implications for businesses and policymakers. Firms should effectively leverage social media platforms to deliver informative and persuasive content that emphasizes the health and environmental benefits of green food. In particular, enhancing perceived value and product knowledge through digital communication can strengthen consumers' trust and purchase intention. Moreover, the use of social influence strategies, such as customer reviews, online communities, and influencers, can further reinforce subjective norms and encourage sustainable consumption behavior. Policymakers may also utilize social media as a communication tool to raise environmental awareness and promote responsible consumption practices.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The use of a convenience sampling method and the focus on a single geographic area may limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research should consider expanding the sample size and geographical scope, as well as incorporating additional variables or alternative research methods to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the results.

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