

Original Article

The Influence of Brand Image on Generation Z's Sustainable Fashion Purchase Intention in Hanoi: The Mediating Role of Minimalist Consumption Tendency

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors influencing sustainable fashion purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Hanoi, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of minimalist consumption tendency. Employing a quantitative research design, survey data were collected from 518 Generation Z individuals currently studying and working across Hanoi. The data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 21.0 software. The empirical findings indicate that green marketing, green knowledge, attitude, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) each exert significant positive effects on both minimalist consumption tendency and sustainable fashion purchase intention. Additionally, the results underscore the critical importance of minimalist consumption tendency as a key psychological mediator in the transition toward sustainable fashion consumption.

Keywords: Brand Image, Sustainable Fashion, Minimalist Consumption Tendency, Generation Z.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainable development has emerged as a central strategic orientation across numerous industries. The fashion sector, in particular, faces considerable pressure due to its intensive resource consumption and substantial environmental emissions. According to a United Nations report, the global fashion industry accounts for approximately 10% of carbon emissions and 20% of industrial wastewater discharge [1]. In this context, the study of sustainable consumer behavior carries not only urgent societal implications but also significant academic value, contributing to a deeper understanding of the attitude-behavior gap among consumers. With an estimated compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.5%, the global sustainable fashion market is projected to reach approximately USD 39.6 billion by 2034 [2]. Sustainable fashion enterprises have increasingly endeavored to promote sustainable consumption values among a broad consumer base through various means, among which brand image construction and positioning are regarded as strategic instruments for enhancing consumer awareness, reinforcing trust, and thereby stimulating purchase intention. Furthermore, brand image may exert an indirect influence through the emergence and cultivation of novel consumption orientations, such as the minimalist lifestyle.

According to a Nielsen (2015) survey, as many as 66% of global consumers indicated a willingness to pay a premium for products from brands demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development [3]. This finding suggests that, beyond functional value, contemporary consumers place considerable emphasis on the symbolic and ethical dimensions associated with brand identity [4]. Concurrently, minimalist consumption tendency has emerged as a potentially significant mediating variable. Unlike conventional consumption patterns that encourage excessive purchasing, minimalist consumption is oriented toward the principle of “buying less but prioritizing quality, sustainability, and alignment with personal values” [5]. Based on this, we hypothesize that the propensity for minimalism consumption may act as a mediating mechanism through which brand image can influence purchase intention towards sustainable fashion - allowing consumers to translate perception into actual behavior by aligning brand associations with their values.

In Vietnam, there has been a significant increase in environmental awareness among young consumers, demonstrated through widespread green living movements, recycling initiatives and eco-friendly product support. However, an evident gap between environmental awareness and consumption in practice is observed. UNDP (2021) suggested in a report that the Vietnamese youth had a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion, with 74% of them agreeing, yet only nearly 25% are willing to pay more for these products [6]. The study highlights the necessity of examining the underlying factors for this behavioral gap and emphasizes on further study in these areas.

The present study is guided by three research questions:

- First, how does brand image influence the sustainable fashion purchase intention of Generation Z consumers in Hanoi?
- Second, what mediating role does minimalist consumption tendency play in the relationship between brand image and sustainable fashion purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Hanoi?



- Third, what strategic measures should sustainable fashion enterprises adopt to strengthen brand image and align with minimalist consumption trends in order to enhance purchase intention and foster brand loyalty among Generation Z consumers in Hanoi?

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH MODEL

The brand image is defined as the sum of perceptions, impressions and associations that consumers have about a brand based on direct or indirect experience with that brand. This construct is vital in the brand equity structure, describing what consumers think and feel when assessing a brand and heavily impacts consumers' attitudes toward the brands as well as their behavioral intentions [7], [8].

Minimalist consumption is defined as a lifestyle with the desire for material simplicity, while increasing inherent value, where people actively reduce unnecessary ownership and consumption in order to pursue freedom, balance and deeper meaning of life [9]. There has already been increasing scholarly interest, specifically in the context of sustainable consumption and corporate social responsibility.

Sustainable fashion purchase intention is defined as the consumer's willingness and tendency to opt for sustainable fashion products instead of traditional ones [10]. This construct is considered a salient predictor for actual purchasing behavior, particularly within the context of fashion.

In order to accomplish its research objectives, the research team utilized the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model to explore the influence green marketing, green knowledge, attitude and electronic word - of - mouth (eWOM) have on sustainable fashion purchase intention mediated through minimalist consumption tendency.

A) *The Influence of Green Marketing*

Green marketing is understood not simply as a mechanism for communication but as an avenue for redirecting consumer value systems towards sustainability. Green marketing activities help enhance consumer awareness and willingness to pay for sustainable products [11] by signalling a stronger commitment to environmental sustainability. The impact mechanism of green marketing is mainly triggered by the "impulsive buying" upgrade to "conscious consumption" model of psychological conditions. Research indicates that consumers prefer eco - friendly options and actively avoid pointless accumulation when green messages are effectively conveyed [12]. This is the first step behaviorally toward a minimalist life, where product volume comes secondary to product value.

- H1.a: Green marketing exerts a significant positive influence on minimalist consumption tendency.
- H1.b: Green marketing exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

B) *The Influence of Green Knowledge*

Green knowledge serves as a rational cognitive foundation, enabling individuals to distinguish between genuine sustainability commitments and instances of greenwashing. Beyond the recognition of environmental symbols, green knowledge encompasses a nuanced awareness of the ecological implications of supply chains on natural resources [13]. An understanding of one's "ecological footprint" functions as a cognitive filter, enabling consumers to recognize material restraint as the most effective means of environmental protection. In the fashion industry, knowledge of recycled materials and clean production processes serves to reduce information ambiguity, thereby reinforcing trust and promoting ethically motivated consumption intentions [14].

- H2.a: Green knowledge exerts a significant positive influence on minimalist consumption tendency.
- H2.b: Green knowledge exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

C) *The Influence of Attitude*

Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), attitude is identified as the most critical endogenous factor in predicting individual behavioral intention [15]. A positive attitude toward sustainability establishes an "ethical filter" within the decision-making process. As beliefs regarding environmental benefits become more firmly held, consumers tend to voluntarily abandon accumulation-driven consumption patterns in favor of value-driven consumption - a defining characteristic of the minimalist consumption orientation [16]. For Generation Z, attitude represents not merely an evaluation of product attributes but also a means of asserting personal identity through the selection of brands that align with their ethical values [17].

- H3.a: Attitude exerts a significant positive influence on minimalist consumption tendency.
- H3.b: Attitude exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

D) *The Influence of Electronic Word - of - Mouth (eWOM)*

Electronic word - of - mouth (eWOM) refers to online exchanges among consumers regarding products or services. According to D'Acunto et al. (2025), through the lens of Generational Cohort Theory (GCT), Generation Z consumers tend to place greater

trust in user-generated content (UGC) than in conventional advertising [18]. For this generational cohort, eWOM functions not only as a source of verified information but also as an instrument for shaping personal identity and ethical values.

The influence mechanism of eWOM operates to narrow the attitude-behavior gap by establishing group - level social norms. Upon exposure to positive evaluations of sustainable lifestyles, Generation Z consumers tend to internalize these values, subsequently adjusting their behavior toward minimalist consumption patterns and prioritizing fashion products with extended lifecycles. In this regard, eWOM functions as a stimulus, enabling consumers to overcome ambiguity regarding green information claims and directly reinforcing their intention to support sustainable fashion brands.

- H4.a: eWOM exerts a significant positive influence on minimalist consumption tendency.
- H4.b: eWOM exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

E) The Influence of Minimalist Consumption Tendency

Minimalist consumption tendency embodies the philosophy of "less but better", emphasizing the elimination of superfluous elements in order to concentrate on essential value [19]. Within the SOR framework, minimalist consumption tendency constitutes the internal organism state (Organism) that mediates the transformation of environmental stimuli into specific behavioral responses. Factors such as green marketing and environmental knowledge are unlikely to achieve effective behavioral conversion unless they succeed in shifting consumer cognition toward a minimalist orientation. When consumers internalize a restrained lifestyle centered on quality over quantity, they are inclined to regard sustainable fashion as the preferred choice for maintaining a balance between individual needs and social responsibility [20].

- H5: Minimalist consumption tendency exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.
- H6: Minimalist consumption tendency exerts a significant positive influence on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

Based on the hypotheses presented above, the following research model is proposed:

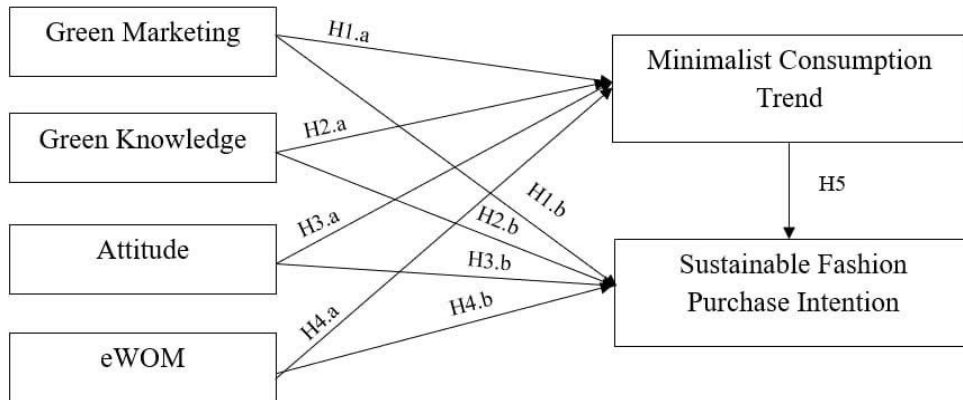


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

(Source: The authors)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes a quantitative framework, adopting and adapting measurement scales depicted in previous studies to ensure reliability and validity of the measurements. Scale adaptation was conducted in accordance with the research context of sustainable fashion consumer behavior, particularly referring to Vietnam. We collected data online through a Google Form using a structured questionnaire divided into several independent sections targeting students and people working in Hanoi (living and working). Through data screening, 518 valid responses remained for use with an adequate sample size to perform more extensive statistical analyses. SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 21.0 software were used for processing all data. The analysis was performed stepwise in the ways of: reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling to determine interrelations between constructs that are proposed in the model.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

A) Measurement Scale Validation

Table 1: Reliability and Variance Extracted Indices

Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	PI	MCT	GM	AT	EW	GK
PI	0.950	0.793	0.247	0.891					
MCT	0.930	0.727	0.247	0.497	0.852				
GM	0.885	0.606	0.241	0.446	0.430	0.778			

AT	0.858	0.548	0.225	0.402	0.368	0.474	0.740		
EW	0.849	0.532	0.114	0.337	0.333	0.239	0.312	0.729	
GK	0.889	0.669	0.241	0.369	0.368	0.491	0.288	0.172	0.818

(Source: Data analysis results from AMOS 21.0 software)

In this study, measurement scales were assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, with all observed variables demonstrating satisfactory reliability. Subsequently, EFA and CFA were conducted, confirming that the measurement scales exhibit unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Specifically, all CR values exceeded 0.7, and all AVE values exceeded 0.5. Furthermore, MSV values were found to be smaller than the corresponding AVE values, and the square root of each AVE exceeded the inter-construct correlation coefficients. These results collectively confirm that all measurement scales in the model meet the required psychometric standards, and the dataset is suitable for further analyses (Table 1).

B) Hypothesis Testing

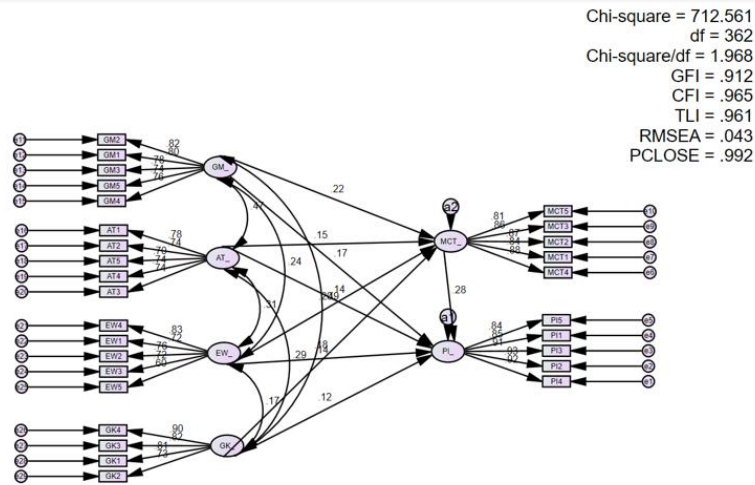


Figure 2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

(Source: Data analysis results from AMOS 21.0 software)

The SEM model fit assessment results indicate that the proposed research model achieves a good fit with the empirical data. The Chi-square/df (CMIN/df) index is $1.968 < 3$; the GFI (0.912), CFI (0.965), and TLI (0.961) indices all exceed 0.9, reflecting an excellent degree of fit between the model and the data. Additionally, the RMSEA index is 0.043 (< 0.05), and the PCLOSE index is 0.992 (> 0.05), confirming that the model achieves a high level of compatibility with the observed data.

Table 2: Regression Weights for the Research Model

Relationship	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	S.E.	C.R.	P	Decision
MCT ← GM	.240	.223	.061	3.961	***	Accepted
MCT ← AT	.186	.147	.066	2.814	.005	Accepted
MCT ← EW	.243	.203	.056	4.374	***	Accepted
MCT ← GK	.182	.181	.050	3.649	***	Accepted
PI ← GM	.237	.165	.076	3.103	.002	Accepted
PI ← AT	.239	.142	.083	2.887	.004	Accepted
PI ← EW	.220	.138	.070	3.128	.002	Accepted
PI ← GK	.159	.119	.063	2.530	.011	Accepted
PI ← MCT	.378	.284	.062	6.055	***	Accepted
MCT		.284				
PI		.363				

(Source: Data analysis results from AMOS 21.0 software)

At the 5% significance level, the results indicate that green marketing, green knowledge, attitude, and eWOM each exert a significant positive influence on minimalist consumption tendency and on sustainable fashion purchase intention. Concurrently, minimalist consumption tendency is also found to exert a significant positive effect on sustainable fashion purchase intention. All identified effects are positive in direction.

Table 3: Regression Weights of the Mediating Variable

	Standardized Regression Coefficient	P
GK→MCT→PI	0.052	0.006
EW→MCT→PI	0.058	0.004
AT→MCT→PI	0.042	0.008
GM→MCT→PI	0.063	0.001

(Source: Data analysis results from AMOS 21.0 software)

Based on the results presented in Table 3, the mediation pathways - GK → MCT → PI ($\beta = 0.052$), EW → MCT → PI ($\beta = 0.058$), AT → MCT → PI ($\beta = 0.042$), and GM → MCT → PI ($\beta = 0.063$) - all achieve statistical significance ($P < 0.05$), thereby confirming the mediating role of minimalist consumption tendency in the model. Notably, green marketing demonstrates the strongest effect on purchase intention, followed by eWOM, green knowledge, and attitude, respectively. Although the magnitude of indirect effects remains relatively modest, all are statistically significant, indicating that minimalist consumption tendency serves as a partial mediator in transmitting the influence of cognitive and communicative factors on sustainable fashion purchase intention.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

A) Conclusion

The research findings confirm that the components of brand image - comprising green marketing, green knowledge, attitude, and electronic word - of - mouth (eWOM) - each exert significant positive effects on minimalist consumption tendency and sustainable fashion purchase intention among Generation Z consumers in Hanoi. Green marketing is identified as the factor with the greatest degree of influence, reflecting the importance of environmentally oriented brand communication activities in shaping sustainable consumption behavior among Generation Z.

The study also elucidates the mediating role of minimalist consumption tendency in the relationship between brand image and purchase intention. These findings suggest that the process by which awareness of a brand's sustainable values is converted into actual purchasing behavior is channeled through consumers' preference for high-quality, long-lasting products that align with their personal value systems.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings are consistent with the TPB and the S-O-R model: green marketing, green knowledge, and eWOM function as stimuli (Stimulus); minimalist consumption tendency constitutes the intermediate internal state (Organism); and purchase intention represents the behavioral response (Response), thereby reinforcing the applicability of the model in the Vietnamese market context. Furthermore, by incorporating the mediating role of minimalist consumption tendency, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the mechanism through which awareness is translated into sustainable consumption behavior.

B) Managerial Implications

Drawing on the research findings, several managerial implications are proposed:

First, enterprises should intensify green marketing activities by communicating transparently about environmentally friendly production processes, sustainable sourcing, and the brand's corporate social responsibility commitments. The transparent disclosure of information will serve to strengthen consumer trust and consolidate a sustainable brand image in the minds of consumers.

Second, enterprises should devote greater attention to enhancing green knowledge among consumers through market education campaigns, informational content, and community engagement activities related to environmental protection and sustainable consumption. When consumers develop a thorough understanding of product value, they are more likely to form positive attitudes and exhibit a greater propensity to select sustainable products.

Third, the power of electronic word - of - mouth (eWOM) should be strategically leveraged through social media platforms and online communities. Positive consumer reviews and shared experiences have the potential to amplify brand image and increase the perceived credibility of sustainable fashion products.

Fourth, enterprises should develop product lines that are aligned with minimalist consumption trends, with an emphasis on quality, durable design, and long-term usability. This approach not only addresses the practical needs of Generation Z consumers but also reinforces the connection between brand value and responsible consumption lifestyles.

Finally, enterprises should establish a coherent brand strategy closely associated with the values of sustainable development and minimalist living. The integration of green brand positioning, creative communication, and positive product experiences will serve to enhance purchase intention while simultaneously fostering the development of a loyal customer community in the long term.

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