



Research on Green Consumption Situation in Vietnam and Proposing Promoting Measures

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ABSTRACT

In Vietnam, green consumption trend has started to attract the attention of consumers, especially young, and knowledgeable consumers. They are considered as the leading consumer group with green consumption in the near future. This study was conducted to analyze main factors affecting the green consumption intention of young people in Vietnam. The results gained from the study showed that young consumers in Vietnam is quite interested in green consumption and their green consumption intentions are positively affected by factors: Attitudes, Subjective norm, Environment concerns, Individual Expectations and Beliefs about social norm of consumers. Among these affecting factors, the factor that has the most direct and strongest impact on Green Consumption Intention is the Subjective Norm, followed by the Attitude towards green consumption behavior and the lowest impact is the Environmental Concern variable. The research results are the basis for proposing measures to promote green consumption intentions of young people in Vietnam who will be the main consumers in the future.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green consumption is defined as the purchase and use of environmentally friendly products that do not negatively affect human health and threaten the natural ecosystem. Currently, green consumption that is clean and environmentally friendly has almost become a global development trend. In recent years, many green consumption models have been supported by the community in Vietnam such as wrapping vegetables, tubers, and fruits with banana leaves; using glass water bottles, bamboo or paper straws; using paper cups instead of plastic cups, fabric bags instead of plastic bags, etc. Besides, a number of activities related to sustainable production and consumption are also being implemented in Vietnam, in which green consumption is also starting to receive more attention. Many documents related to green consumption have been signed. At the same time, programs that are related to green products such as the Ecological Labeling Program (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment); Energy saving label (Ministry of Industry and Trade); Eco-labels for the tourism industry have been deployed.

However, to aim for green production models, the promotion of sustainable consumption needs to focus on both appropriate support mechanisms, policies, and programs of the government and business community as well as knowing to identify the specific factors that affect the changes in the purchasing habits and use of green

products (green consumption) of the consumers themselves. From there, creating a demand for green consumption in society towards a sustainable green consumption culture.

In the world, many studies have been carried out with the aim of studying the factors affecting the Green Consumption Intention and Green Consumption Behavior of consumers. In 2005, research on the relationship between values - attitude - behavior, the main premise of green consumption behavior was carried out by Yeonshin Kim and Sejung Marina Choi. At the same time, a model was also developed by them to explain their effect on ecological consumption [1]. Research on the Premise of Green Consumer Behavior conducted by Anastasios Pagiaslis and Athanasios Krystallis Krontalis (2014) referred to how the main factor which is Environmental Concern and factors such as Consumer Knowledge and Belief affect Behavioral Intention (i.e. willingness to use and pay) green consumption. The results of this research model showed a positive impact of the Environmental Concern factor on the Intention of Green Consumption Behavior [2]. Kumar and Ghodeswar's research on green consumer purchasing decisions in China suggested a number of new factors, including individual orientation, collective individualism, ecological knowledge, and consumer attitudes toward green product purchasing decisions [3].

In Vietnam, many research works studied on this issue have been recognized. Typically, the research topic of lecturer Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen and international

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economics students of Foreign Trade University is one of the outstanding works [4]. Research has come to the most accurate conclusions by providing methods to understand behavior. Research by the authors at the University of Economics, Hue University [5] investigated the factors affecting the green consumption behavior of consumers in Hue City. The research model of this study was established based on the Theory of Planned Behavior model TPB to determine the factors affecting the green consumption behavior of consumers. Since then, solutions and directions to promote green consumption in Hue City were proposed. Another study by Ho Huy Tuu's research group, which was carried out in 2018 on the topic of Factors affecting the Green Consumption Behavior of Nha Trang people, built a model based on the theory of planned behavior TPB and expanded the research variables. Thereby, the basis was established to propose some application implications to build an effective communication strategy to promote green consumption in Nha Trang. [6].

Building upon inheriting the research works in Vietnam and the world, this article was carried out to investigate the factors affecting the green consumption intention of Vietnamese youth - the main consumer group of society in the future. The study was conducted through a survey with nearly 1000 students

from various faculties at one of the largest universities in Vietnam (Hanoi University of Science and Technology) to investigate the factors (internal factors of consumers) influencing the intention of green consumption among Vietnamese youth. The results of the study are expected to contribute to the understanding of the groups of factors that affect the green consumption intention of consumers. From there, solutions have been proposed to improve the green consumption intention and behavior of Vietnamese youth - the consumer group of society in the future.

2. THE CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

The problems of environmental pollution, unsafe food, and dirty goods are always problems that threaten the health of people in any country in the world. Especially, with the population growth combined with the increase of consumption of society in today's global trend, sustainable environmental protection is an urgent task of the world in general and Vietnam in particular.

Facing significant challenges in the country's development, Vietnam continues to actively integrate, innovate, and sustainably develop within the global arena. The government of our country has promptly issued development guidelines and guidelines on green consumption and sustainable consumption. Specifically, the above concepts have been incorporated into the Prime Minister's Decision No. 1393/QĐ-TTg on green growth for the period 2011-2020 and a vision to 2050 with the mission of greening production and greening consumption. Accordingly, the strategies proposed by the government

include greening production, implementing a clean industrialization strategy through reviewing and adjusting existing sector plans, using resources economically and efficiently, and encouraging the development of green technology and green agriculture.

The legal basis can reduce the environmental impacts related to green production activities of enterprises. However, it does not address the effects related to the intention, choice, use, and disposal of products by consumers [7]. Therefore, choosing green products to protect health and the environment is becoming a trend that receives the attention of many consumers.

However, in order to develop sustainable green consumption, the first important factor is people's awareness and attitudes about green consumption behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a survey on the above factors of people to evaluate, consider and make more important strategies in the future. The survey will be conducted in large cities, where population density and green consumer demand are increasing. In this study, the surveyed participants are young people in Hanoi city, one of the key cities in promoting green and sustainable consumption.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Green consumption intention.

Before defining Green Consumption Intent, it is necessary to understand the definitions of green products and green consumption.

Green products: In the world, green products are defined as products that do not pollute the earth or damage natural resources and can be preserved and recycled [8]. Green products are also known as environmentally sustainable products that reduce the impact on the environment [9]. In Vietnam, a more comprehensive concept, green products encompass both products and services that are manufactured using environmentally friendly materials. They are formed entirely or partially from recycled components which are produced in an energy-efficient manner and then brought to market in an eco-friendly manner.

Green consumption: In the world, the concept of green consumption was first introduced in 1970 in the United States [10] and since then many studies have extended this concept. In Vietnam, green consumption does not just green shopping behavior, but it is also a series of behaviors seen from the perspective of sustainable development: buying ecological food, recycling, reusing, saving and using environmentally friendly transportation systems [11]. Along with the trend of global integration, the definition of green consumption in Vietnam is increasingly expanding. Accordingly, today's green consumption is not only green shopping behaviors but also a series of behaviors seen from the perspective of sustainable development, including buying ecological food, recycling, reusing, saving, and using the environmentally friendly transport system [11].

Green consumption intention is defined as the intention to act. It means that people's actions are guided by the consideration of three factors including belief in behavior, belief in norm, and belief in control.

In the psychological literature, intention is assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence the behavior, thus, it is an indicator of people's willingness to try in order to behave in a specific manner to achieve a goal [12]. As beliefs become stronger, the intention to take action by individuals increases [13]. Or, green consumption intention is an individual's ability and will to give his/her preference to green products rather than everyday products in consideration of shopping [14].

According to Hoang Thi Bao Thoa (2016), there are many concepts of green consumption behavior, which are basically developed based on the concept of green consumption behavior and the concept of green products. In summary, green consumption behavior is a series of behaviors, including buying green products and using them sustainably (saving, reusing, recycling, using green packaging, and treating waste) [15].

In the study of Sinnappa and Rahman [20], behavioral intention is defined as a measure of an individual's level of willingness to attempt to perform a particular action. It is a motivating factor affecting an individual's behavior that is a factor that is influenced by many other factors. This study also mentioned that based on the Theory of Planned Behavior TPB, behavioral intention is predicted through psychological factors such as attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

3.2 Factors affecting green consumption intention.

The intention of green consumption behavior is driven by various factors. Following the approach of Ajzen and Fishbein in both models of Theory of Rational Action TRA [16] and Theory of Planned Behavior TPB [17], there are two factors that positively affect Green Consumption Intention including Attitude towards behavior and Subjective Norms. In which, the Theory of Planned Behavior TPB is considered to be one of the most popular and powerful models of researching intentions, which is used by researchers to test people's attitudes and behaviors [18]. This model refers to factors that are considered indirect factors affecting Behavioral Intention. These include the element of individual expectations and beliefs about social norms for green consumption behavior.

Besides, according to many approaches from other studies, Environmental concern factor also affects the green consumption intention of consumers. For example, in the study conducted by the University of Economics, Hue University, the factor of Environmental concern has a direct and positive impact on the green consumer behavior intention of consumers in Hue City [5]. Or in the study "Green Consumption Behavior", researchers mentioned the Environmental Concern factor as an antecedent factor that has a positive impact on the Green Consumption Behavioral

Intention of the consumer. According to this research model, the Environmental concern variable acts as an independent variable that directly affects Green Consumption Intention and indirectly affects Green Consumption Intention through the Knowledge and Belief of consumers in green consumption behavior [2].

Based on previous research models and considering their strengths and weaknesses, suitable for the subject and scope of the study, the study proposes 5 factors affecting the green consumption intention of young people including Expected values of the individual, Beliefs about social norms, Attitudes towards behavior, Subjective norms, Concerns about the environment. The relationship of the research variables is shown in Figure 1.

4. HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Hypotheses

The expected values of the individual are the expectations or outcomes that the individual hopes to occur. The higher the individual's expected value of an outcome, the more likely the individual is to have the tendency and intention to perform the behavior. In green consumption, if individuals have expected values about the positive outcome of green consumption, they often have a positive attitude towards this behavior. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H1: the expected value of an individual has a positive effect on Attitude toward green consumption behavior

Beliefs about social norms: According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Expected Value model, attitudes logically develop from people's beliefs about the object of the attitude. Generally, we form beliefs about an object by associating it with attributes, that is, with other objects, characteristics, or facts. In the case of attitudes toward a behavior, each belief associates the behavior with a certain outcome or with some other attribute such as the cost incurred in performing the behavior. Because the attributes associated with the behavior have been evaluated as positive or negative, we automatically and simultaneously acquire an attitude toward that behavior. In this way, we learn to support behaviors that we believe largely produce desirable results. At the same time, adverse attitudes are also formed toward behaviors that we believe most lead to undesirable consequences [17]. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H2a: Beliefs about social norms have a positive impact on Attitudes toward green consumer behavior

In addition, beliefs about social norms relate to the likelihood that individuals or reference groups will approve or disapprove of performing certain behaviors. The strength of each belief is increased by the individual's motivation to conform to the subjective norm [17]. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H2b: Beliefs about social norms have a positive impact on the subjective norm of green consumption behavior

Attitudes towards behavior refer to the individual's level of evaluation, favorably or unfavorably, of the behavior in question. Attitudes also reflect an individual's evaluation of his or her personal desires in making green consumption decisions [19]. In general, a person who believes that the performance of a given behavior will, with high probability, lead to mostly positive outcomes will possess a favorable attitude toward that behavior, in this study, it is green consumption behavior [12]. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H3: Attitudes toward behavior have a positive impact on Green Consumer Intention

Subjective norms, This factor refers to perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior. As a general rule, the more favorable attitudes and subjective norms toward a behavior, the stronger an individual's intention to perform the behavior in question [17].

H4: Subjective norm has a positive impact on Green Consumption Intention

Concerns about the environment are also an important factor affecting Green Consumption Intention. According to a study conducted in 2005, environmental concern measures the attitudes of consumers towards environmental concerns such as population growth, pollution, energy conservation, waste resources and the impact of harmful agents on the atmosphere, and natural environment [1]. Research conducted by Khan & Mohsin (2017) shows that consumers with environmental concerns tend to identify with environmental protection behavior, therefore they intend to consume green products [19]. According to Sreen et al [20], previous studies in different cultures have demonstrated that people with a positive attitude toward the environment are more likely to have green consumption intentions. Therefore, the research hypothesis is:

H5: Concerns about the environment have a positive impact on Green Consumer Intention

In order to test the impact of the above factors on the green consumption intention of Vietnamese youth, the model of factors affecting green consumption intention is proposed as described in Figure 1.

4.2 Methodology

The sample in this study is full-time students of all faculties at Hanoi University of Science and Technology. This research sample was selected because students are young people - key consumers in the near future. In addition, Hanoi University of Science and Technology is home to many students from various fields and groups, from many different regions of the country. Therefore, the research sample can be considered representative of Vietnamese youth – a potential consumer group in the near future.

Based on the proposed research model with 6 variables as shown in Figure 1, the questionnaire was set up with 6 main question groups. Besides, on the basis of the

questionnaires of the previous authors, the questionnaires and expressions were developed and adjusted to suit the purpose of the question. The questionnaire was built with 2 main parts, including personal information and information on factors affecting the green consumer behavior intention of young people.

The information section on factors affecting Green Consumer Behavioral Intention includes Expected values of the individual, Beliefs about social norms, Attitudes towards behavior, Subjective norms, Concerns about the environment, and Green consumer behavior intention. They were measured on a 5-point Likert scale. This type of scale is commonly used in sociological behavioral studies.

After collecting and cleaning, the data was performed research analysis, using multivariate data analysis (Cronbach's Alpha test, EFA, CFA, SEM). Nearly 1000 students currently enrolled at Hanoi University of Science and Technology participated in the questionnaire survey. The collected results show that the green consumption intention of young people in Vietnam is quite good. The factor having the most direct and strongest impact on Green Consumption Intention is the Subjective norm variable, followed by the Attitude variable towards green consumption behavior and the lowest impact is the Environmental concern variable.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Preliminary evaluation of the scale

To assess the reliability of each structure, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with preliminary data were used. According to the research results, all research constructs met the requirements for internal consistency and unidimensionality. All Cronbach Alpha coefficients are greater than 0.6. All 25 observed variables satisfy the condition that the total variable correlation coefficient is greater than 0.3. However, the results of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) for each research concept show that there is a variable with a small load coefficient that should be excluded from the research model.

After this observed variable has been eliminated, the results of the factor discovery analysis for each research concept in turn show that the factors are all unidirectional factors and the use of exploratory factor analysis is suitable for research data: KMO coefficients of 6 factors in the model are all greater than 0.5; Bartlett's test has statistical significance with p-value < 0.05; the sum of the explanatory variances are all greater than 50% and the observed variables all are all grouped into a single factor.

5.2 Official measurement scale test

5.2.1 Confirmatory factor analysis results by measurement model and critical model

After confirmatory factor analysis was performed with the

load factor measurement model, all variables were accepted with a load factor > 0.7 .

The study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the properties of measures with the saturation model (final model). Analysis of the results shows that Chi-square/df = 2.576, CFI = 0.950, TLI = 0.942, IFI = 0.950 are all greater than 0.9 and RMSEA = 0.067 < 0.08 are all satisfactory. This shows that the critical model achieves good compatibility with market data. The factor loading coefficients are all greater than 0.5, showing that the factors in the model have convergent value and the correlation coefficients between the factors are all less than 0.9, showing that the factors have discriminant value.

5.2.2 The results of the analysis using the SEM structural equation modeling

The results obtained after the analysis show that the model fit coefficients maintain the satisfactory value CFI=0.939, TLI=0.921, IFI=0.939 all greater than 0.9, and RMSEA=0.073 <0.08 . That shows that the model is compatible with the actual data.

The results of the estimation of the relationship between the factors in the model show that the relationship between the pairs of variables is a positive relationship, and all hypotheses are accepted.

Besides, comparing the CR value of the model with 1.96 (value of the normal distribution), it can be seen that the CR value < 1.96 so the p-value < 0.05 . This shows that the relationship of the factors in the model can be completely trusted in SEM structural equation modeling.

5.3 Summary of research results

The measurement results of factors show that all 5 factors affect the green consumption intention of young people with 3 variables having direct effects and 2 variables having indirect effects.

Evaluating the influencing factors and their influencing levels on green consumption intention of young people: there are 3 factors that directly affect the green consumption intention of young people, including: "Attitude towards behavior" ($\lambda=0.254$), "Subjective norms" ($\lambda=0.574$), "Concern about the environment" ($\lambda=0.15$); 2 factors that have an indirect impact on young people's green consumption behavior intention including "Expected Values of the individual" ($\lambda=0.541$), "Beliefs about social norms" ($\lambda=0.799$).

Considering three variables that directly affect the green consumption intention of young people: The subjective norms of green consumption behavior have the greatest impact on Green consumption intention (0.574), followed by the Attitude variable for green consumption behavior and the lowest impact is the variable of Concern about the environment.

Research also shows that young people in Vietnam are not really aware of all aspects of Green Consumption Intent.

Green consumption intention is only at a moderate level (about 3.5/5 rating points).

6. PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE GREEN CONSUMPTION INTENTION IN YOUNG CONSUMERS IN VIETNAM.

According to the research results, young people are not really aware of all aspects of Green Consumption Intention. Green consumption intention is only at a moderate level (approximately 3.5/5 on the evaluation scale).

The results show that the two factors that have the most direct and strongest impact on Green consumption Intention are the subjective norm factor and the Attitude factor toward green consumption behavior. In particular, the subjective norm factor is considered to be the most influential factor.

Subjective norm is described as an individual's perception of societal pressures to perform or not to perform a behavior, in this case, green consumption behavior. Research on Subjective norms shows that the media has a great positive impact on the behavior of implementing Green Consumption Intention. Therefore, in order to promote better behavior of green consumption intentions among young people, there should be more propaganda, contests, information, etc. about Green Consumption Intentions for everyone to know and perform together.

In addition, in the context that the level of green consumer intention among Vietnamese young people is only at a moderate level (approximately 3.5/5 on the evaluation scale), it is very important to strengthen green consumption communication programs on a large scale. The State needs to further promote this activity because this is an important factor in enhancing the green consumption intention of Vietnamese young people.

In recent years, many green consumption models have been supported by the community in Vietnam such as wrapping vegetables, tubers, and fruits with banana leaves; using glass water bottles, bamboo or paper straws; using paper cups instead of plastic cups, fabric bags instead of plastic bags, etc. Besides, a number of activities related to sustainable production and consumption are also being implemented in Vietnam, in which green consumption is also starting to receive more attention. Many related documents have been signed such as International Declaration and National Action Plan on Sustainable Production and Consumption (1999), legal documents related to consumer protection; the Law on Economical and Efficient Use of Energy; the International Declaration on Cleaner Production (1999), etc. At the same time, programs that are related to green products such as the Ecological Labeling Program (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment); Energy saving label (Ministry of Industry and Trade); Eco-labels for the tourism industry have been deployed. This is a bright spot in the policy of encouraging green consumption by the macro management agency in

order to build a civilized and modern green consumer society, following the global general development trend.

In general, based on the research results, to improve Green Consumption Intention, the study suggests some proposals as follows:

General proposals: Actively promoting awareness of green consumer intention so that everyone becomes aware and participates in it together. Implementing methodical and specific educational policies on the concept, composition, and meaning of Green Consumer Intention to young people to help raise awareness among young people. Providing specific incentive, reward, and punishment mechanisms to help improve young people's positive attitudes about Green Consumption Intention. It is necessary for each individual to be self-conscious, proactive, and actively learn and fulfill their social responsibilities. When all young people join in, it will influence the awareness of people around them. From there, a positive attitude toward implementing Green Consumption Intention has been raised, promoting behaviors to implement Green Consumption Intention.

Specific proposals for the university: Actively promoting the significance of implementing Green Consumption Intention on websites of unions, associations, and volunteer teams. Organizing seminars and contests on the implementation of propaganda on ethics, law, and environmental protection. Praising and honoring specific examples of charitable actions and courageous contributions to green consumption. Encouraging and supporting shopping and charitable activities environmental protection, and activities showing Green Consumption Intention by pulsing practicing points to students. Launching and replicating green shopping movements: "Recycled products", "Green products", etc. Enhancing education on Green Consumer Behavior for young people through a new or integrated module in a specific module, combining and integrating the meaning of green consumption in mainstream subjects and extracurricular activities.

Specific proposals for young people: It is necessary for young people to actively learn knowledge and the significance of Green Consumption Intention. In any respect, each action to realize the Green Consumption Intention of young people also contributes to building a better and better society. Especially, in the context of environmental issues, green products and green consumption in the world are increasingly becoming a heated issue. Young people need to implement effective green shopping behaviors to enhance social responsibility and contribute to the construction of a green environment. In addition, it is necessary for them to promote and mobilize their families, friends, and relatives to actively implement Green Consumption Intention by using resources efficiently, towards sustainable consumption behaviors, complying with the law and ethics regarding green consumption, and

helping people with difficulties in accessing green products, etc.

Proposal for State management agencies: The State needs to have a mechanism to encourage businesses to gradually convert their model to green production by providing support measures such as tax exemptions or reductions, prioritizing companies with green labels, and promoting the production of sustainable green products. Ministries, departments, and sectors continue to develop and perfect mechanisms and policies for trade promotion, export, and import to meet green standards, creating conditions to promote green export transformation. The Ministry of Industry and Trade should continue to direct overseas Vietnamese trade agencies to closely monitor regulations and policies as well as update market information. From there, the commercial affairs have timely advised policies and recommendations, guided localities, industries, and businesses to adjust plans, production, and business methods, and adapt to new development conditions.

In addition, people should also be encouraged to consume green such as high taxes on non-green products, mandatory payment of extra money if using plastic bags in supermarkets, etc. According to the experience of countries that have gone ahead in green consumption, with limited financial and technological potential, the transition to green and sustainable production is not easy for many businesses. However, to stay in the game, businesses need to change their mindset and focus on the 'greenness' of their production and supply chains. Vice President of the European Business Association in Vietnam Jean Jacques Bouflet shared that the European Union (EU) is a market that constantly updates its policies towards the goal of green and sustainable growth. Therefore, businesses that want to export goods to the EU need to pay special attention to green and sustainable growth.

In addition to enhancing the use of materials derived from nature, recycled materials, using clean, renewable, and energy-saving energy, experts say that applying advanced technology in production also needs to be carried out by businesses; at the same time, ensuring product traceability, focusing on building a management apparatus, monitoring and complying with regulations on reducing greenhouse gas emissions domestically and internationally.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study has made a significant contribution to forecasting the impact of various factors on Green consumption intention, thereby proposing some proposals in promoting the Green Consumer Behavior Intention of young people, the key consumers in the future.

However, the study still has some limitations as the sample is quite small, so it may not be highly representative and may not be generalizable to young people across the

country. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu chưa thực hiện phân tích sự khác In addition, the study has not analyzed the differences on demographic factors, has not gone into the analysis of the differences in Green Consumption Intention of students attending specific academic programs or majors.

In the future, the study can be extended with a larger sample, and a larger scope. At the same time, it can propose more research variables, valuable hypotheses to improve research significance, serve analysis as well as offer solutions to help improve green consumption intention among young people in particular and people in general across the country.

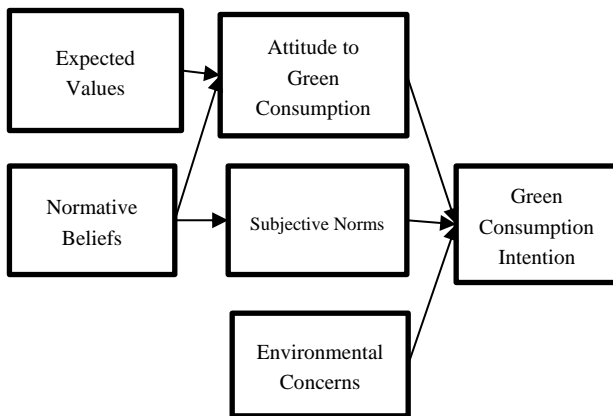


Fig. 1. Research model of factors affecting green consumption intention.

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