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Ý ĐỊNH CỦA THẾ HỆ Z ĐỐI VỚI CÁC SẢN PHẨM THƯƠNG MẠI CÔNG BẰNG TẠI VIỆT NAM: VAI TRÒ CỦA KIẾN THỨC, CHUẨN MỰC CHỦ QUAN VÀ NHẬN THỨC VỀ CÁC CÔNG CỤ RA QUYẾT ĐỊNH DỰA TRÊN TRÍ TUỆ NHÂN TẠO (AI)

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Tóm tắt

Với xu thế tiêu dùng xanh, hành vi của người tiêu dùng liên quan đến sản phẩm thương mại công bằng đã thu hút sự chú ý của các nhà nghiên cứu, đặc biệt là mảng trí tuệ nhân tạo (AI). Thế nhưng, việc áp dụng các sản phẩm này vẫn chưa được khai thác mạnh mẽ ở Việt Nam. Nghiên cứu này khảo sát việc ý định của người mua hàng đối với sản phẩm thương mại công bằng bị ảnh hưởng bởi Thái độ, Chuẩn mực đạo đức, Chuẩn mực cá nhân, Kiểm soát hành vi nhận thức, Kiến thức và các thuộc tính liên quan đến AI. Dữ liệu được thu thập từ 352 phản hồi hợp lệ thông qua khảo sát trực tuyến và áp dụng Mô hình Cấu trúc Bình phương Nhỏ nhất Từng phần để thử nghiệm khung lý thuyết nêu trên. Kết

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quả cho thấy Chuẩn mực đạo đức, Chuẩn mực chủ quan và Nhận thức về các công cụ sử dụng trí tuệ nhân tạo có ảnh hưởng đáng kể đến ý định của người mua, trong khi các yếu tố còn lại tác động không đáng kể. Kết quả của bài viết góp phần củng cố cho lý thuyết nền và đưa ra để xuất trong việc thúc đẩy việc sử dụng sản phẩm thương mại công bằng trong thế hệ Z.

Từ khoá: thương mại công bằng, sản phẩm thương mại công bằng, thế hệ Z, trí tuệ nhân tạo

UNDERSTANDING GENERATION Z'S INTENTION TOWARDS FAIR-TRADE PRODUCTS IN VIETNAM: THE ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE, SUBJECTIVE NORMS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF AI-BASED DECISION TOOLS

Abstract

With the growing trend towards green consumption, consumer behavior regarding fair-trade products has gained increasing attention from researchers, particularly in the area of artificial intelligence (AI). However, the adoption of fair-trade products remains underexplored in emerging markets such as Vietnam. This research investigates how consumers' intentions towards fair-trade products are influenced by Attitudes, Personal Norms, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Knowledge about fair-trade products and AI-related attributes. This study collected data from 352 responses from an online survey using a snowball sampling method. We applied Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the proposed framework. The results show that Personal Norms, Subjective Norms, and Perception of AI-driven tools have a significant impact of Intention towards fair-trade products while other determinants exert little impact. The results contribute to the theory by integrating AI factors into the Theory of Planned Behavior, and to practice by offering recommendations and insights for marketers, researchers, and policy-makers in promoting the use of fair-trade products among Generation Z.

Keywords: fair trade, fair-trade products, generation Z, artificial intelligence

1. Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed the increased concern of social and environmental issues, thus the emergence of ethical consumption and fair-trade products have played a significant role in enhancing the livelihoods of producers in developing nations. Nevertheless,

the attitude-behavior gap persists in the market, whereby the consumers have negative attitudes towards the fair-trade products, although the purchase rates are still relatively low.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been used to explain this phenomenon in many studies that propose Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control determine behavioral intention. However, TPB does not provide a complete explanation of altruistic actions like the fair-trade consumption where personal gains are not the only reasons but also moral duty. Thus, to incorporate the moral aspect of consumer decision, it may be appropriate to include Personal Norms (PN) of the Norm Activation Theory (NAT).

TPB has been used in several other studies in the past to study sustainable consumption behavior of Gen Z, such as green purchasing (Ngo et al., 2025), sustainable clothing purchasing (Ngo et al., 2024), and organic food purchasing (Nguyen et al., 2024). Though these studies validate the role of Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control, the importance of fair-trade consumption is not studied fairly in the context of the Vietnamese.

This paper builds on TPB, but it adds knowledge and artificial intelligence (AI) - driven tools to justify the intention to buy fair-trade products among Gen Z. Sustainable purchasing behavior has already been seen to be affected by knowledge (Testa et al., 2019; Vishnoi et al., 2025; Berki-Kiss and Menrad, 2022), but AI-based tools are increasingly influencing the decision-making process of consumers (Yang et al., 2025). Nevertheless, there is a lack of studies on the AI interaction in sustainable consumption.

The growing literature on ethical and sustainable consumption has extensively applied the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain organic and green purchase intentions. In the Vietnamese context, Le and Nguyen (2022) successfully integrated TPB and NAM to predict organic food purchase intention, emphasizing the roles of attitude, Subjective Norms, and Personal Norms. However, two critical gaps remain. First, while knowledge is often treated as a background or indirect determinant, limited research isolates Knowledge about Free trade systems as a distinct cognitive antecedent within TPB in emerging markets. Existing studies largely focus on organic or general green products rather than fair-trade products, whose ethical foundation lies more strongly in trade justice and socio-economic equity than environmental attributes. Second, despite rapid digitalization, TPB-based ethical consumption studies rarely incorporate perceptions of AI-based decision tools as belief-forming mechanisms that may reshape Perceived Behavioral Control and evaluative processes.

Responding to these calls, this study extends the TPB framework by incorporating Knowledge about Free trade and perceptions of AI-based decision tools into the Vietnamese Gen Z context, thereby advancing theoretical integration between ethical consumption and AI-enabled decision environments while addressing a significant contextual and generational gap.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), has been widely used to explain individual's behaviors in specified contexts. According to the theory, an individual's behavior is primarily determined by their behavioral intention, which is shaped by three core factors including Attitudes, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control. Ajzen (1991) found when Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control are strong, intentions are more likely to transform into actual behavior.

Building on TPB, this study extends the traditional framework by adding Personal Norms, Knowledge about fair-trade and Perception of AI-driven tools. Parker et al. (1995) extend the TPB finding that Personal Norm is a crucial aspect "in the formation of intentions, at least in the domain of driving behavior". Additionally, Knowledge about fair-trade increases leading to more buying behavior (Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007). Although TPB has been applied in many ethical consumption research, limited studies pay attention to how digital technologies affect intention formation. Nguyen et al., (2017) demonstrates positive perceptions of AI-driven tools significantly fosters "green purchasing intention and behavior". By integrating these variables, this research contributes new findings about how technology and knowledge mediate affects decision-making process of Gen Z consumers.

2.2. Hypothesis development

2.2.1. Perceived Behavior Control

The Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is defined as the individual's perception of the ease of performing a specific, and it encompasses both self-efficacy beliefs and perceived availability of facilitating conditions (Ajzen, 1991). A recent study has found a positive effect of PBC on purchase intention, indicating when consumers perceive greater control over resources, opportunities, and abilities, their intention to act becomes stronger (Azjen, 2016). Similarly, evidence from TPB applications in consumption shows that higher perceived control

is associated with stronger behavioral intentions (Shin & Hancer, 2016), and PBC is positively correlated with intention in the context of fair-trade products (Canova et al., 2023).

H1: Perceived Behavioral Control positively influences Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.2. Attitudes towards Fair-trade Products

Attitude is defined as the degree to which a person possesses a positive or negative evaluation or judgment towards performing a given behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Empirical research provides consistent support for the direct and positive relationship between attitudes and purchase intentions in the fair-trade setting. In the emerging economy study, De La Piedra-Vindrola et al., (2022) found that consumers' attitudes towards fair-trade directly influence their intentions to purchase fair-trade products. The emotion-extended TPB model also found that attitude is one of the strongest direct predictors of intentions (Samoggia et al., 2025). De Pelsmacker & Janssens (2007) found that product-specific attitudes play a significant role in influencing fair-trade purchase. This study specifically focuses on buying behaviors, it found that product-specific attitudes play a significant role in influencing fair-trade purchase (De Pelsmacker & Janssens, 2007).

H2: The Attitude towards fair-trade products positively influences Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.3. Knowledge about Fair-trade Products

Knowledge about fair-trade refers to how well the consumers understand and perceive fair-trade principles, product certification labels, ethical practices, and the socio-economic impacts associated with the products. Prior research has demonstrated that intention to purchase products is shaped by consumer knowledge, which can significantly increase brand equity dimensions (Lee & Zhao, 2023) and increase sustainable behavior (Lee & Lee, 2025). From a theoretical perspective, this relationship can be explained through the extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), where knowledge functions as an antecedent to attitude formation, thereby indirectly strengthening behavioral intention. Previous empirical studies also incorporated awareness and knowledge variables in to TPB model to test whether it improves explanatory power (Magwegwe & Shaik, 2024; Mohamad Saleh et al., 2022). However, existing literature shows limitations in exploring developing countries such as Vietnam, indicating a need to explore how knowledge can influence within a culturally TBP framework.

H3: Knowledge about Fair-trade positively influences Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.4. Subjective Norms

Ajzen (1991) defined the Subjective Norms as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior", a significant predictor of sustainable consumption intentions under the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Subjective Norms of fair-trade products is an individual's perception of social pressure to engage in or not supporting such products. Wang & Chou (2020) revealed that Subjective Norms affected consumer purchasing intentions through Attitudes and Personal Norms. Samoggia et al. (2025) also finds that Subjective Norms play a significant role in shaping buying fairness-oriented products intentions. Specifically in Vietnam, the collectivistic cultural values, the characteristics of Gen Z, and the vibrant economy in emerging nations substantially affect Gen Z's Subjective Norms, consequently increasing their intentions to make environmentally-friendly purchases (Ngo et al., 2025).

H4: Subjective Norms positively influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.5. Personal Norms

According to Norm Activation Theory (NAT) (Schwartz, 1997), Personal Norms (PN) represents ethical norms that are internalized, creating intrinsic obligation instead of extrinsic pressure (Zerbini et al., 2019). In a fair-trade context, PN is a positive self-reflection for aligning actions with personal values, manifesting as the responsibility to assist producers or feelings of guilt when using unethical products (de Leeuw et al., 2014; Shin & Hancer, 2016). However, Zerbini et al. (2019) argued that most research mainly focuses on "willingness to buy" instead of "willingness to pay for a premium" - the prerequisite of fair-trade products. Notably, it is crucial to validate this relationship among Gen Z in Vietnam to assess whether the specific cultural context alters their sense of moral obligation.

H5: Personal Norms positively influence on Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.6. Perception of AI-driven tools

In Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Perception of AI-driven tools can be understood as a belief-based cognitive evaluation that shapes consumers' attitudes towards the behavior and Perceived Behavioral Control when making purchase decisions. This variable shows how

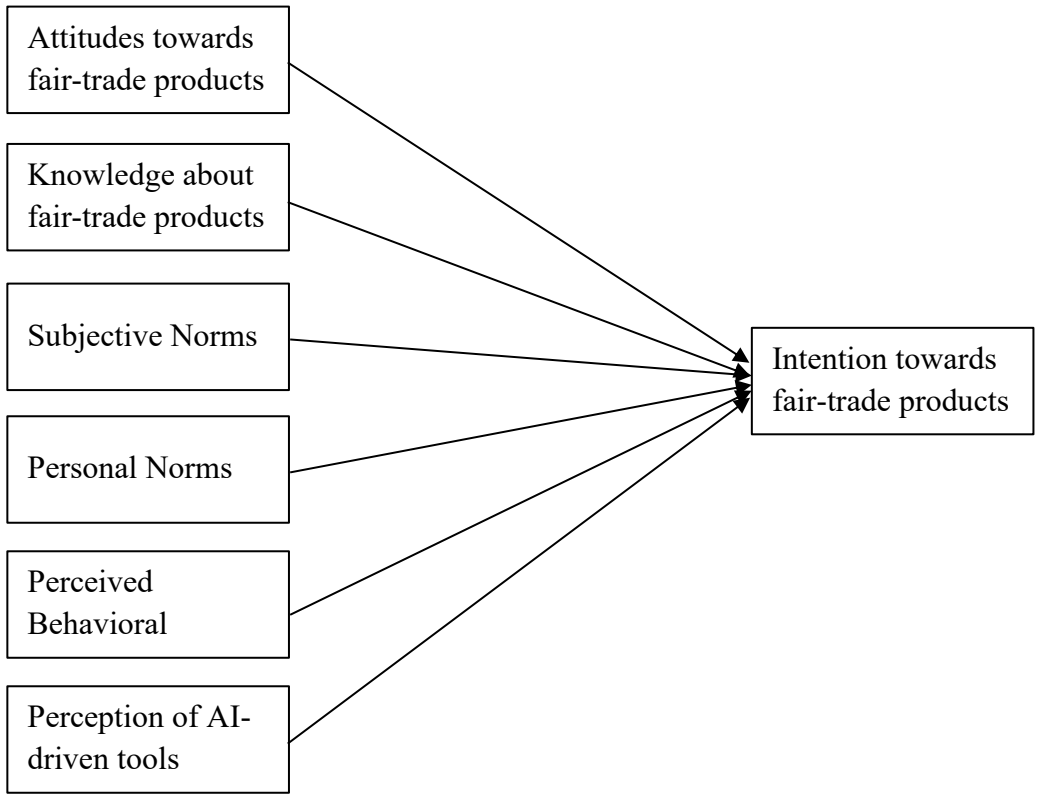
consumers perceive AI systems in terms of reliability, transparency, usefulness, and decision-support capability in consumption contexts. Shankar (2021) demonstrated that positive AI perceptions improve consumers' attitudes towards AI-assisted shopping and therefore increase purchase intention. Similar findings were demonstrated in the study of Tamilmani et al. (2021) which confirmed that AI-enabled decisions can influence behavioral intention. However, AI perception is recently investigated in general online retail contexts, leaving alone ethical and fair-trade consumption, which calls for further discussion on this context.

H6: Perception of AI-driven tools positively influences Gen Z consumers' purchase intention towards fair-trade products.

2.2.7. Intention towards Fair-trade products

Ajzen (1991) stated that intention is a measurable indicator for the readiness to perform a given behavior. This number not only shows the motivational factors but also reflects the effort and commitment to complete behavior in the foreseeable future. The meta-analysis from Scalco et al. (2017) based on sustainable products explored that there is a significant correlation between intention and actual behavior. However, this correlation is not always absolute due to intention - behavior gap. Ladhari & Tchetgna (2017) argue that despite the high intention, situational constraints may hinder customers' behavior. Consequently, intention is necessary but it is an imperative mission to explore actual behavioral control. The research model is presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Research model



3. Methodology

3.1. Research sample

The proposed research examined the data collected from 431 participants who are part of Vietnamese Gen Z, including people born between 1997 and 2012. The questionnaire was designed in Google Forms and sent through emails and direct messaging services, over a period of three weeks. Only 352 valid responses were used for further analysis.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents *(n = 352)*

Demographic variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Gender	Male	144	59.1
	Female	208	40.9
Region	Northern Vietnam	72	20.5
	Central Vietnam	76	21.6

	Southern Vietnam	204	58
Education	Below undergraduate	102	29
	Undergraduate	225	63.9
	Postgraduate	25	7.1
Income	Less than 5 million VND	241	68.4
	Between 5 and 10 million VND	76	21.6
	Between 10 and 20 million VND	20	5.7
	Between 20 and 30 million VND	10	2.9
	More than 30 million VND	5	1.4

3.2. Data collection

A pretest with 48 participants was conducted to ensure the clarity and readability of the survey items. Measurement scales were translated into Vietnamese using a translation–back translation procedure, and several items were revised for better comprehension. Participants were recruited through an online survey using non-probability snowball sampling.

For the main study, respondents were required to show interest in fair-trade products. Two screening questions were used: (1) "What generation are you?" and (2) "Are you aware of, attentive to, or intend to use fair-trade products?". Respondents outside the Gen Z group or answering "No" to the second question were excluded.

Before completing the survey, participants received a brief explanation of the research topic and the definition of fair-trade products. The questionnaire required approximately five minutes to complete and confidentiality was ensured. Of the 431 responses, 79 were removed, resulting in 352 valid observations for hypothesis testing and model validation using SmartPLS 4. Respondent characteristics are reported in Table 1, indicating a higher proportion of females and respondents mainly from the Southern region.

3.3. Measurements

The study employed a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Measurement items are reported in Table 2.

Subjective Norms and Attitudes were adapted from Samoggia et al. (2025), while Perceived Behavioral Control was based on Shin and Hancer (2016). Knowledge about fair-trade products and Perception of AI-Driven Tools were adapted from Nguyen et al. (2017). Personal Norms were derived from Vining and Ebreo (1992) and Zerbini et al. (2019), and Intention toward fair-trade products was adapted from Kaushal and Kumar (2016) and Zerbini et al. (2019). These measurement items are derived from well-established widely used in prior research in fair-trade field and published theories of customer behavior to ensure the reliability and validity of items. Furthermore, these items are adapted to the context of the this study enhancing the relevance and clarity for respondents.

Table 2. Measurement items

Constructs	**Items**	**References**
Subjective Norms	SN1. My peers (i.e., family, close friends) approve the purchase of fairness-oriented food products. SN2. I want to adapt to my peers that purchase fairness-oriented food products (i.e., family, close friends). SN3. Many like-minded people would prefer fairness-oriented food products.	Samoggia et al. (2025)
Attitudes towards FT products	ATT1. Purchasing fair-trade products is pleasant for human kind. ATT2. Purchasing fair-trade products has a positive influence on the working conditions of the farmers. ATT3. Choosing fair-trade products contributes to the solution of global fairness issues.	Samoggia et al. (2025)
Perceived Behavioral	PBC1. I am confident that I could	Shin & Hancer (2016)

Control	purchase fair-trade products if I want to. PBC2. For me, purchasing a fair-trade product is easy. PBC3. The decision to purchase fair-trade products is not beyond my control. PBC4. Whether I purchase fair-trade products is entirely up to me.	
Knowledge about FT	KNF1. I am familiar with Fair Trade products. KNF2. I am knowledgeable about the social and environmental impact of Fair-Trade products. KNF3. I am knowledgeable about Fair Trade certification labels. KNF4. I am knowledgeable about how Fair-Trade products are produced.	Nguyen et al. (2017)
Personal Norms	PN1. I feel a strong personal obligation to buy fair-trade products. PN2. I am willing to put extra effort into buying fair-trade products on a regular basis. PN3. I would feel guilty if I didn't buy fair-trade products.	Vining and Ebreo's (1992) Zerbini et al. (2019)
Perception of AI-Driven Tools	PAT1. I trust AI-powered tools when they provide information or recommendations about fair-trade	Nguyen et al. (2017)

	products. PAT2. I believe AI offers objective and unbiased evaluations of whether products are fair-trade PAT3. I feel safe relying on AI-based systems when choosing or comparing fair-trade products. PAT4. I find AI-based tools helpful when searching for or researching fair-trade products. PAT5. Using AI improves my efficiency in understanding fair-trade labels, certifications, and product origins. PAT6. AI helps me make more accurate decisions about which fair-trade products to purchase.	
Intention towards FT products	INT1. I intend to try fair-trade products. INT2. I am interested in buying fair-trade products. INT3. Possibly I will buy fair-trade products. INT4. I will recommend fair-trade brands to others.	Kaushal and Kumar (2016) Zerbini et al. (2019)

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model

The results indicated that all outer loadings of all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, showing ideal indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2022). Concerning the internal consistency reliability, the Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs surpassed the recommended benchmark of 0.7, satisfying the criteria of Hair et al. (2022). Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.8150 to 0.909, demonstrating a good reliability. Furthermore, rho_A values were recorded larger than 0.7, confirming robust construct reliability Hair et al. (2022).

Convergent validity was measured using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which if it exceeds 0.5, it implies that each latent variable explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022). In this study, the AVE for all items is above 0.5, meeting the requirements of (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and Hair et al. (2022). Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All HTMT values (see Table 4) were below the conservative cutoff point of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2022), and the square root of the AVE for each construct (see Table 3) exceeded its highest correlation with any other construct. Therefore, these results strengthen the reliability and validity of the measurement model through fulfilling the discriminant validity and Fornell - Larcker criterion.

Table 3. The reliability and convergent validity

Constructs	FL	CA	CR	AVE
Attitudes (ATT)		0.815	0.890	0.730
ATT1	0.859			
ATT2	0.869			
ATT3	0.835			
Intention towards fair-trade products (INT)		0.857	0.903	0.701
INT1	0.813			
INT2	0.821			
INT3	0.865			

INT4	0.849			
Knowledge about fair-trade (KNF)		0.883	0.919	0.738
KNF1	0.873			
KNF2	0.852			
KNF3	0.838			
KNF4	0.873			
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)		0.853	0.899	0.691
PBC1	0.807			
PBC2	0.798			
PBC3	0.849			
PBC4	0.869			
Perception of AI-driven tools (PAT)		0.909	0.930	0.688
PAT1	0.826			
PAT2	0.817			
PAT3	0.821			
PAT4	0.842			
PAT5	0.849			
PAT6	0.819			
Personal Norms (PN)		0.816	0.890	0.731
PN1	0.878			
PN2	0.852			
PN3	0.834			
Subjective Norms (SN)		0.831	0.898	0.747
SN1	0.870			

SN2	0.871
SN3	0.851

Abbreviations: AVE: average variance extracted; CA: Cronbach's alpha; CR: composite reliability; FL: factor loading.

Table 4. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Constructs	ATT	INT	KNF	PBC	PAT	PN	SN
ATT							
INT	0.498						
KNF	0.155	0.174					
PBC	0.071	0.165	0.072				
PAT	0.099	0.569	0.136	0.145			
PN	0.214	0.490	0.156	0.140	0.168		
SN	0.108	0.503	0.048	0.053	0.176	0.124	

Abbreviations: ATT: Attitude; INT: Intention towards fair-trade products; KNF: Knowledge about fair trade (KNF); PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control; PAT: Perception of AI-driven tools; PN: Personal Norms; SN: Subjective Norms.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Constructs	ATT	INT	KNF	PBC	PAT	PN	SN
ATT	0.854						
INT	0.418	0.837					
KNF	0.129	0.154	0.859				
PBC	0.008	0.145	0.062	0.831			
PAT	0.085	0.503	0.121	0.121	0.829		
PN	0.176	0.412	0.131	0.115	0.144	0.855	
SN	0.077	0.424	0.029	0.038	0.153	0.104	0.864

Note: The diagonal values represent the square root of AVE, while the off-diagonal values represent the inter-construct correlations.

4.2. Structural model

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were tested in order to identify possible multicollinearity amongst predictor constructs. The values of all VIF were lower than the conservative level of 3.0 (Hair et al., 2019) (see Table 6), which means that multicollinearity was not an issue.

To measure the explanatory ability of the model, the coefficient of determination (R2) was employed. Table 8 indicated that the Intention toward Fair-trade products (INT) was an endogenous variable with an R2 value of 0.573, indicating that the independent variables explained between 57.3 and 100 percent of the purchase intention of Gen Z which is moderate to high explanatory power. The predictive relevance of the model was also confirmed with the help of the blindfolding procedure which resulted in the Q2 value of 736.860 (Q2 > 0), indicating predictive accuracy.

A PLS bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples with a 5 percent level of significance was used to test the hypotheses. Table 7 summarizes the results such as path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values as shown in Figure 2.

As can be analyzed, four out of six hypotheses were confirmed. The highest predictors of purchase intention were perception of AI-driven tools (PAT) (= 0.382, t = 11.069, p < 0.001), then Subjective Norms (SN) (= 0.312, t = 9.170, p < 0.001), and Attitudes (ATT) (= 0.312, t = 8.933, p < 0.001). The personal Norms (PN) also had an important positive impact on intention (= 0.260, = 6.874, = 0.001). H1, H4, H5 and H6 were, therefore, supported.

On the other hand, the correlation between Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) and Intention (t = 1.471, p > 0.05) and Knowledge about fair-trade (KNF) and Intention (t = 0.588, p > 0.05) were also found to be insignificant. It is therefore that H2 and H3 were rejected.

Table 6. Outer VIF Values

Construct	VIF
ATT1	1.773
ATT2	1.928
ATT3	1.739

INT1	1.805
INT2	1.870
INT3	2.220
INT4	2.096
KNF1	2.294
KNF2	2.122
KNF3	2.314
KNF4	2.309
PAT1	2.225
PAT2	2.178
PAT3	2.252
PAT4	2.374
PAT5	2.462
PAT6	2.220
PBC1	1.894
PBC2	1.845
PBC3	2.005
PBC4	2.013
PN1	1.914
PN2	1.797
PN3	1.731
SN1	2.026
SN2	1.899
SN3	1.828

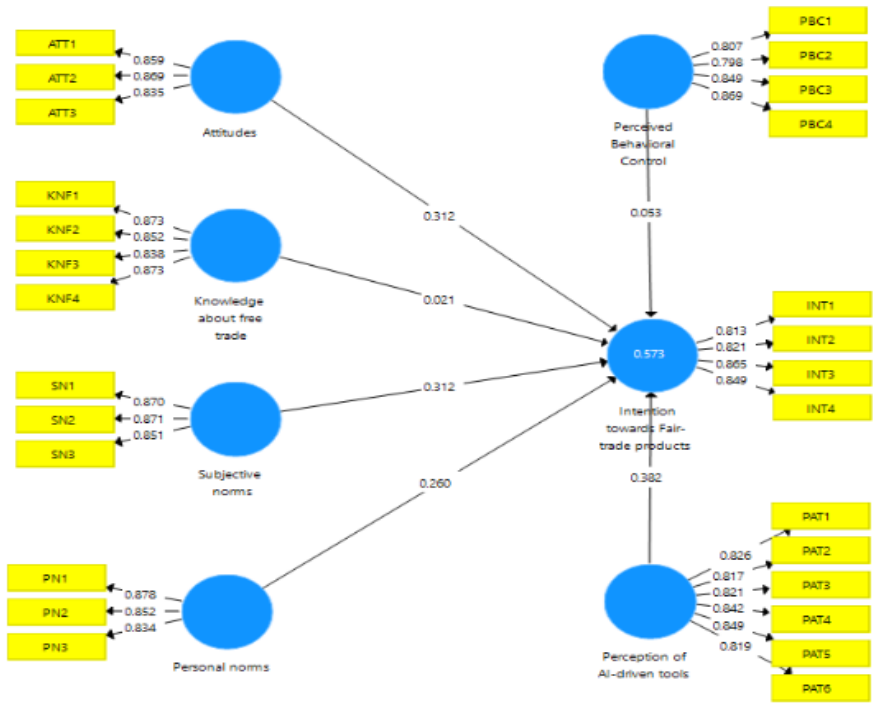


Figure 2. Structural equation modeling results

Table 7. Hypothesis testing path coefficients - mean, STDEV, T-values, p-value

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p Value	Decision
ATT → INT	0.312	0.313	0.035	8.933	0.000	Accepted
KNF→ INT	0.021	0.025	0.036	0.588	0.557	Rejected
PBC → INT	0.053	0.057	0.036	1.471	0.141	Rejected
PAT → INT	0.382	0.381	0.035	11.069	0.000	Accepted
PN → INT	0.260	0.260	0.038	6.874	0.000	Accepted
SN → INT	0.312	0.312	0.034	9.170	0.000	Accepted

Table 8. R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intention towards Fair-trade products	0.573	0.566

5. Discussion

The results confirm the direct effect of Attitudes on intention towards FT products. This finding aligns with Ajzen (1991) which showed that Attitudes remains a strong predictor of intention. Subjective Norms and Personal Norms also exert significant influence, supporting prior findings that moral obligation and social expectations are particularly salient in ethical consumption contexts (Berberyan et al., 2025; Kumar et al., 2023).

However, contrary to classical TPB assumptions, Perceived Behavioral Control does not significantly affect intention. Previous evidence from Abrahamse (2007) also suggested that knowledge alone may be insufficient to trigger behavioral commitment, which requires additional affective or normative components to support sustained behavior change. A recent study on sustainable consumption among Generation Z also confirms this finding by indicating that external constraints such as price sensitivity and product accessibility weaken the role of perceived control, even when pro-environmental attitude remain strong (Jegorow, 2025). This may reflect that Vietnamese Gen Z consumers perceive access barriers (price, availability) as structural rather than controllable. Knowledge about fair trade also does not directly influence intention. This can be due to the problem that Vietnamese Gen Z may have limited exposure to Knowledge about fair-trade products, which may contribute to this gap.

The most theoretical finding is the positive relationship impact of Perception of AI-driven tools on Intention towards FT products. Extending on previous TPB studies that focus on internal cognitive determinants, our study indicates that AI perception can present as a digital facilitator, enhancing consumers' decision-making process. When consumers perceive AI tools as reliable, useful, and supportive, they are more likely to form stronger purchase intentions. Importantly, in ethical consumption contexts where information asymmetry is high, AI tools may reduce cognitive burden and signal product credibility. Research in digital retail context confirms that algorithmic recommendations can increase consumer confidence and reduce uncertainty in complex decision environments (Wang et al., 2021). In the context of our

research, the authenticity and trade fairness of FT products are difficult to verify, therefore, AI-based tools may function as a contributor to enhance consumer trust. This extension is particularly relevant to Gen Z, a digitally native group whose buying decisions are heavily shaped by online algorithms and digital platforms.

6. Conclusion

This research supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which proves the applicability of the TPB in forecasting the behavioral intention in an emerging economy and AI-driven decisions setting. The research expands TPB introducing Perception of AI-driven tools, Knowledge about fair trade, and Personal Norms as structural variables in the intention development. The result illustrates the significant role of AI interventions and Personal Norms in establishing fair-trade purchase intentions among Vietnamese Gen Z. These findings provide several practical implications for organizations seeking to promote fair-trade consumption among Gen Z in Vietnam. Marketers should conduct communication campaigns in which ethical value, sustainability, and benefits of the products are highlighted in order to reinforce a positive attitude. The retailers and e-commerce platforms may integrate AI-driven tools to support Gen Z consumers making fair-trade purchase decisions. Moreover, collaborations with social media influencers and student communities may foster fair-trade consumption behavior among young consumers.

However, this research still has limitations in the data collection process. As it employed a non-probability convenience sample design and cross-sectional design, where most respondents were university students in Southeast Vietnam and were observed at a specific time, which can reduce the generalizability of the results (Etikan, 2016). Additionally, it is vulnerable to some response bias because of social desirability when data was based on self-reported information (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Future research needs to increase the sample to enhance representativeness among Vietnamese Gen Z. A longitudinal research design would be useful in testing the hypotheses in the long-term. Also, further studies can examine moderating factors like income level, education level and environmental concern, which might differ among the demographic samples and culture.

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