

2025-11-11

Green in the cart, not at checkout: the gap between sustainable intent and purchase

Tasnim, J.

School of Business and Entrepreneurship, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

<https://ar.iub.edu.bd/handle/11348/1617>

Downloaded from IUB Academic Repository

Green in the Cart, Not at Checkout: The Gap Between Sustainable Intent and Purchase

Tasnim, J.¹, Rasha, F.A.², Tajdid, M.I.³, Bhuiyan, W.A.⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Business Administration - General, FBS, BUP

¹jarin.tasnim@bup.edu.bd, ²fariahrasha000@gmail.com, ³muzahid6067@gmail.com, ⁴waseeahmed50@gmail.com

PAPER ID: ICEBTM-25-1310

Abstract- This study investigates psychological and situational determinants of the intention-behavior gap in green purchasing based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Despite increasing sustainability awareness, there remains an intention-behavior gap between consumers' behavioral intentions to make green purchases and actual behavior. Total number of 350 respondents answered and verified the proposed hypothesis through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling. The result shows that subjective norm and perceived behavioral control significantly influence actual green purchasing behavior, while attitude toward green products is insignificant but green purchase intention, as mediator performs partial mediation. The results highlight the stronger role of social influence and enabling factors over attitudes or intentions in driving green consumption. The findings offer policy insights to policymakers and firms about reducing cost, accessibility, and convenience barriers to promote sustainable consumption.

Keywords – Attitude toward green products, Green purchase intention, Perceived behavioral control, Subjective norm, Theory of Planned Behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a great concern for both consumers and marketers in recent years. A green product is an environmentally friendly item that minimizes harm to human health and the environment throughout its entire lifecycle, from raw materials and manufacturing to use and disposal. Every year with the growing environmental crisis, the demand for green products has increased. 51% of the consumers now say that environmental sustainability is more important today than it was a year ago [5].

The intention-behavior gap also known as the gap between intentions held by individuals and behavior that is observed, is very important to capture by both marketers as policymakers. Green gap phenomenon has gained great significance as consumers across the globe are found to care about the environment but are not able to constantly convert these attitudes into sustainable buying behavior [7]. This current research is focused on understanding the causes that contribute to the gap between sustainable intentions and buying behavior specifically how consumers' attitude, subjective norms and

perceived behavioral control affect their intention and how that gets transformed into their buying behavior.

Based on the information we have two research questions-

1. How does attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence the gap between sustainable purchase intentions and actual green purchasing behavior?
2. To what extent does green purchase intention mediate the relationship between TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control) and actual green purchasing behavior among consumers?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory of planned behavior (TPB) clarifies that actual behavior is guided by behavioral intention, controlled by attitude, subjective norm, as well as perceived behavioral control. The study tests five main variables that affect green buying behavior. Attitude Toward Green Products (AT) is the consumer's positive or negative perception towards purchasing environmentally friendly products that form their decision [6]. Subjective Norm (SN) is the family and peer pressure that prompts consumers to purchase green products [8]. Perceived Behavioral Control (PB) is the ease or difficulty that consumers encounter in buying green products, pushing their decision to buy green [9]. Green Purchase Intention (PI) is the driving factor that prompts buying behaviors that are green [10]. Green Purchase Intention (PI) is also a mediator that communicates AT, SN, and PB's impacts to Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), as intentions communicate beliefs to behavioral positive attitude towards green products, pressure from significant others (subjective norm), as well as perceived ease or control when purchasing green products give rise to increased odds in the positive direction towards actual green buying behavior [6]; [8]; [9]. Green purchase intention acts as mediator between these constructs in guiding attitudes, norms, as well as control beliefs into actual green buying behavior [10]; [8]; [9]. This paper uses the framework from the TPB to analyze direct as well as mediated influences between these constructs on actual green buying behavior in supporting hypotheses on their positive influences as well as their mediator roles [6]; [10]; [8].

H1: Attitude Toward Green Products (AT) has positive impact on Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H2: Subjective Norm (SN) has positive impact on Actual

Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H3: Perceived Behavioral Control (PB) has positive impact on Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H4: Green Purchase Intention (PI) has positive impact on Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H5: Green Purchase Intention (PI) mediates the relationship between Attitude Toward Green Products (AT) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H6: Green Purchase Intention (PI) mediates the relationship between Subjective Norm (SN) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

H7: Green Purchase Intention (PI) mediates the relationship between Perceived Behavioral Control (PB) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB).

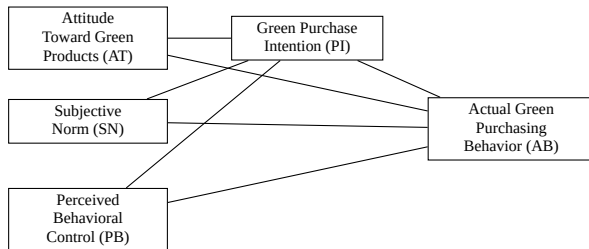


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on examining actual green purchasing behavior. A structured questionnaire was developed based on the TPB constructs and relevant past research. The target population was consumers with an interest in sustainability or experience in buying eco-friendly products. A non-probability convenience sampling method was applied, distributing over 400 questionnaires and collecting 350 valid responses, which is statistically adequate for PLS-SEM. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire with multi-item constructs measured on a 5-point Likert scale. SPSS20 was used for descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS4 was applied for measurement and structural model testing. The PLS-SEM approach ensured validity, reliability, and examination of hypothesized relationships within the conceptual framework.

IV DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A. Respondents' Profile

The 350 respondents include both male and female, majority of respondents are young adults aged 25–34 (45.7%), while the smallest group is aged 55–64 (1.1%). In terms of education, most participants hold a post-graduate degree (41.4%), whereas very few preferred not to disclose their education (0.6%). Employment status is dominated by employed individuals (48.6%), followed by students (33.1%),

while the smallest groups are self-employed and retired respondents, each representing only 1.1%. Shopping behavior indicates that most people use a mix of both in-store and online channels (58.9%), with online-only shopping being the lowest (10.3%). Within households, a larger proportion are not the primary shopping decision-makers (36.3%), compared to those who are (18.3%). In terms of shopping frequency, weekly purchases are most common (29.4%), while less than monthly shopping is rare (4%). Finally, in product categories, personal care items are the most frequently purchased (12.3%), while very niche multi-category combinations such as “Groceries, Home/DIY, Electronics” are lowest purchase by respondents (0.6%).

V MEASUREMENT MODEL

A. Convergent Validity

The loading value assessment showed that all variables have AVEs greater than the required 0.50. Two items from attitude toward green products (AT), Subjective norm (SN), Green purchase intention (PI) were deleted as the loading values were less than 0.65. The construct reliability (CR) ranged from 0.887 to 0.936, showing a strong reliability rate for the variables. This is well above the recommended 0.70 threshold [1]. The Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values for the variables ranged from 0.789 to 0.920, which is above the recommended cut-off of 0.70 [2]. This confirms that our measurement model is highly reliable.

Table 1
ITEM LOADING, CONVERGENT VALIDITY AND
RELIABILITY

Constructs	Items	Loading Value	CA	CR	AVE
Attitude Toward Green Products (AT)	AT3	0.731	0.843	0.887	0.611
	AT4	0.730			
	AT5	0.783			
	AT6	0.836			
	AT7	0.822			
Subjective Norm (SN)	SN1	0.816	0.860	0.899	0.641
	SN2	0.787			
	SN3	0.829			
	SN4	0.820			
	SN5	0.749			
Perceived Behavioral Control (PB)	PB1	0.775	0.920	0.936	0.675
	PB2	0.800			
	PB3	0.854			
	PB4	0.870			
	PB5	0.839			
	PB6	0.796			
	PB7	0.812			
Green Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.780	0.789	0.860	0.608
	PI2	0.902			
	PI3	0.746			
	PI6	0.673			
Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB)	AB1	0.815	0.911	0.930	0.656
	AB2	0.869			
	AB3	0.815			
	AB4	0.869			
	AB5	0.850			
	AB6	0.868			
	AB7	0.678			

B. Discriminant Validity

Table 2 shows that all values below the crosswise line are smaller than the values on the crosswise line (square root of AVE), confirming adequate discriminant validity. This means there is no correlation between the variables, and each variable is distinct without significant issues. According to [3], the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is another way to assess discriminant validity. The recommended cut-off value is 0.85 [1]; [4]. Table 3 confirms that all HTMT values are below this threshold, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. Therefore, the evaluated variables demonstrate adequate validity and reliability for further structural model analysis.

Table 2
CORRELATIONS AMONG THE CONSTRUCTS
(FORNELL AND LARKER TEST)

	AB	AT	PB	PI
AB	0.810			
AT	0.556	0.782		
PB	0.547	0.623	0.822	
PI	-0.087	-0.027	-0.079	0.780
SN	0.640	0.712	0.563	-0.077

Table 3
HETEROTRAIT MONOTRAIT (HTMT) RATIO

	AB	AT	PB	PI
AB				
AT	0.616			
PB	0.586	0.699		
PI	0.102	0.061	0.097	

VI. STRUCTURAL MODEL

A. Direct Path Analysis

Here, AT (H1: $AT \rightarrow AB$ $\beta=0.096$, Standard Deviation (SD)= 0.070, $t= 1.381$ and $p= 0.167$) was not significantly related to AB since the significance level is more than the required 0.05. SN (H2: $SN \rightarrow AB$ $\beta=0.433$, Standard Deviation (SD)= 0.065, $t= 6.657$ and $p=0.000$) and PB (H3: $PB \rightarrow AB$ $\beta=0.241$, Standard Deviation (SD)= 0.057, $t= 4.196$ and $p=0.000$) were significantly related to dependent variable, AB since the significance level is less than the required 0.05.

Table 4
DIRECT PATH ANALYSIS

H	Path	β	SD	T stat.	P val.	Decision
H1	$AT \rightarrow AB$	0.096	0.070	1.381	0.167	Not Supported
H2	$SN \rightarrow AB$	0.433	0.065	6.657	0.000	Supported
H3	$PB \rightarrow AB$	0.241	0.057	4.196	0.000	Supported
H4	$PI \rightarrow AB$	-0.033	0.044	0.745	0.456	Not Supported

B. Specific Indirect Path Analysis

This table presents the specific indirect path analysis because of mediating effect on dependent and independent variable. Here, PI has insignificant positive impact between Attitude Toward Green Products (AT) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), Subject Norm (SN) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), Perceived Behavioral Control (PB) and Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB). p values are 0.639, 0.610 and 0.617 respectively, more than 0.05.

Table 5
SPECIFIC INDIRECT PATH ANALYSIS

H	Path	β	SD	T stat.	P val.	Decision
H5	$AT \rightarrow PI \rightarrow AB$	-0.003	0.007	0.470	0.639	Not Supported
H6	$SN \rightarrow PI \rightarrow AB$	0.003	0.006	0.510	0.610	Not Supported
H7	$PB \rightarrow PI \rightarrow AB$	0.003	0.005	0.500	0.617	Not Supported

C. Total Path Analysis

The results of the total path analysis are detailed in Table 6. PI has partial mediation effect between SN and AB, PB and AB as the result are still significant. However, no mediation between AT and AB as the result are still insignificant.

Table 6
TOTAL PATH ANALYSIS

Path	β	SD	T stat.	P val.	Decision
$AT \rightarrow AB$	0.093	0.070	1.330	0.184	Not Supported
$SN \rightarrow AB$	0.437	0.065	6.722	0.000	Supported
$PB \rightarrow AB$	0.243	0.057	4.249	0.000	Supported
$PI \rightarrow AB$	-0.033	0.044	0.745	0.456	Not Supported

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study explores the factors influencing Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB) using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) constructs: Attitude toward Green Products (AT),

Subjective Norm (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PB), and Green Purchase Intention (PI) as mediator. Results indicate that attitudes towards green products do not have a significant direct impact on Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), indicating that consumers may value sustainability conceptually but are unable to act upon such attitude because of constraints such as higher prices, limited availability, or distrusting green claims. Secondly, the Subjective Norm (SN) has the strongest and significant impact on Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), which indicates that the social pressure and the influence of peer, family and society are significant factors to influence green purchasing behavior. Perceived Behavioral Control (PB) was significantly positively correlated to Actual Green Purchasing Behavior (AB), which means that individuals are confident in their ability to purchase green products through affordability, availability and knowledge. Green Purchase Intention (PI) does not have a significant impact on actual behavior and does not mediate the relationship of AT, SN, PB, and AB. The study emphasizes the importance of focusing on external influences such as social norms and practical enabling factors rather than relying solely on internal perceptive based evaluations or intentions to explain green purchasing behavior. The findings reflect that green purchase intention plays a crucial role in this study.

VIII. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Future studies can explore additional factors, such as environmental concern, personal values, eco-literacy, and trust in eco-labels, to better explain the gap between attitudes, intentions, and actual green purchasing behavior. Cross-cultural comparisons can study how social norms influence consumption in different societies. Research can also investigate situational barriers like product availability, affordability, and quality, as well as policy influences. In future research, researcher may use qualitative or mixed-method approaches may provide deeper insights into consumer motivations and challenges. Longitudinal studies could track how attitudes and intentions evolve over time as green markets and awareness grow.

IX. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The factors affecting actual green purchasing behavior were investigated in this study, and it was pointed out that Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control are the key drivers of consumer behavior, whereas Attitude and Purchase Intention are not sufficient to predict behavior. The results show the intention-behavior gap and highlight the importance of social influence, situational factors and supportive policies for sustainable consumption. Marketers and policymakers can make social proof effective, make products more accessible and affordable. It helps to build consumer trust through education and transparency and reward repeat green buying

with incentives or loyalty programs. Overall, the study offers theoretical contributions as well as practical recommendations to promote environmentally responsible consumer behavior.

REFERENCES

- [1] Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- [2] Hair, J., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using R- A workbook* (3rd Edition). Springer Nature.
- [3] Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- [4] Kline, R. B. (2023). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling*. Guilford Publications.
- [5] Simon-Kucher. (2024). Simon-Kucher unveils 2024 Global Sustainability Study: Majority willing to pay more for green products. Retrieved from <https://www.simon-kucher.com/en/who-we-are/newsroom/simon-kucher-unveils-2024-global-sustainability-study-majority-willing-pay-more>
- [6] Tandon, S., & Sethi, G. (2017). The impact of attitudes towards green products, perceived behavioral control, and environmental concern on green purchase behavior. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 9(7), 1-9. <https://ijcsrr.org/single-view/?id=23832&pid=23653>
- [7] Tawde, S., Kamath, R., & Shabbirhusain, R. V. (2023). 'Mind will not mind' – Decoding consumers' green intention-green purchase behavior gap via moderated mediation effects of implementation intentions and self-efficacy. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 394, 136366.
- [8] Wibowo, S., Wicaksono, D., & Kurniawati, D. (2024). Examining the mediating role of green purchase intention in influencing youth's green purchasing behavior in emerging economies. *International Journal of Innovation*, 12(3), 245-260. <https://ijirss.com/index.php/ijirss/article/view/7936>
- [9] Witek, M., Koralewska, M., & Witek, A. (2023). Examining the role of perceived behavioral control and green purchase intention on green purchase behavior. *Human Societies Studies*, 18(4), 29-40. <https://journals.prz.edu.pl/hss/article/download/1657/1242/>
- [10] Wu, H., Li, Y., & Zhou, Q. (2024). The mediating role of green purchase intention between antecedents of green purchase intention and consumer's green buying behavior: Empirical evidence in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 16(2), 50-64. <https://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijms/article/view/0/48357>