



Factors Influencing the Purchase Intention of Consumers Towards Vegan Fashion Products : A Case Study in Hanoi, Vietnam

Van Tuan Pham*, Nguyen Ha Minh Anh*, Dinh Tran Ngoc Huy**, Kieu Vu Linh Chi*, Le Minh Ngoc*,
Ho Thi Phuong Thao*

*National Economics University, Ha Noi Viet Nam

**Banking University HCMC Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam - International University of Japan, Japan

ABSTRACT

The fundamental purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate factors influencing Hanoi consumers' intention to purchase vegan fashion products based on the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The collected 423 samples consist of randomly chosen participants whose ages are varied including the participation of experts from the related industries. The ultimate result indicates that there are 6 outstanding factors significantly impact on the intention of Hanoi residents towards vegan fashion products: (i) Self- identity, (ii) Ethical obligation, (iii) Perceived behavioral control, (iv) Attitudes, (v) Product acknowledgement, (vi) Environmental concerns. According to these factors, the level of impacts can be respectively listed in descending order as self-identity ($\beta= 0.369$), ethical obligation ($\beta=0.236$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta= 0.201$), and attitudes ($\beta= 0.129$). Specifically, environmental concern solely impacts the attitudes ($\beta= 0.215$), the product acknowledgement influences the attitudes and the perceived behavioral control ($\beta= 0.467$ and $\beta= 0.442$), in contrast, shows no impacts on the subjective norm. In addition, the product acknowledgement and the environmental concerns indirectly have influence on the intention via attitudes. In particular, the research's output shows that subjective norms do not happen to play any role in stimulating the intention of purchasing vegan fashion products.

This study carries out vital and practical implications for state agencies as well as public organizations for the purpose of stimulating the intention and vegan fashion consumption.

Keywords : Vegan fashion, sustainable consumption, ethical consumption, intentions, TPB.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, 85% raw materials of the fur industry originate from domesticated animals which are raised in fur-producing farms. The captivated animals not only have the tendency to sacrifice their fur but also other body parts like horns, skin, silk... as well as suffering from inhumane tortures for the sake of the fashion industry.

Shouldering a superior responsibility to enhance humanitarian values, “vegan fashion” promises to minimize harmful impacts on fauna during the fur-making process and put in action a myriad of protective solutions to benefit animal welfare.

Therefore, Vegan fashion can be considered as one of the most optimal solutions of ethical consumption to tackle the environmental problems in the fashion industry. This movement can be nourished from a micro trend to become a mainstream in a foreseeable future. However, this concept is unfamiliar to Vietnamese consumers in general and Hanoi consumers in particular.

The following content of this article will demonstrate an overview of the theoretical model to verify the practicality of the research model. The following samples in surveys in Hanoi are conducted based on the proposed framework with the aim of identifying factors that drive the intention of consumers on choosing vegan fashion. Based on research results, the final part of the article will give recommendations and solutions to promote the intention of using the vegan fashion of people from all generations, especially those at the age of 20s to 30s, through a defined quantitative model PLS-SEM.

II. Theoretical model and hypothesis development

2.1. Theoretical model

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) was originally developed and enhanced from the TRA (Theory of Reasoned Action) generated by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1975. The relationship between intention and behavior has been operated and tested experimentally in numerous studies in various fields.

Vegan fashion was defined by the NGOs ProVeg as fashion products that do not involve any animal related materials or gone through any processes that harm the animals, the vegan fashion product is produced from renewable plant-based substitutes instead of feathers, skin, and other animal slaughter materials.

The intention of purchasing vegan fashion products can be considered as a novelty development of purchasing intention definition that includes the motivation of environmental protection as an implement. According to another perspective, the purchasing intention of vegan fashion products stems from an individual's desire and affordability towards the environmentally friendly identity of sustainable products rather than the non-sustainable one. In conclusion, vegan fashion purchase intention in this study can be defined as the consumers' willingness to buy vegan fashion products.

2.2. Hypothesis development

According to Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), the notion of PEBs (pro-environmental behaviors) is generally understood as “ The conscious behaviors conscious behavior aimed proactively towards minimizing the negative impacts of human

activities on the natural world, as well as the artificial world". Therefore, the consumption of vegan fashion products can also be acknowledged as one of the PEBs. Yet, studies and research focus on vegan fashion are still limited on a global scale, not to mention Vietnam particularly. Consequently, this study makes use of the previous researchers within the "Green consumption", "Sustainable consumption", "Ethical consumption", "Sustainable fashion" and "Slow fashion" fields as a judicious basis for ethical consumption and vegan fashion since green, sustainable and ethical consumption are also considered as environmental behaviors in the FEBs.

The purchasing intention of vegan fashion product is stimulated by myriad factors. Many studies of pro-environmental behavior have used the Theory of Planned Behavior - Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as the basis for their conceptual frameworks (e.g: Morren & Grinstein, 2016; Sinnappan và Rahman, 2011). Most of the determinants of actual behavior are behavioral intent determined by three basic factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. *Attitudes* in the study of Verbeke and Viaene (1999) was stated as a crucial element in terms of motivating the ethical consumption intentions. In addition, several researchers have shown that a positive attitude toward ethical products leads to the likelihood of buying intention. In Vietnam, where the definition of vegan fashion seems to be alien with the majority of consumers, it is essential to scrutinize the effect of attitudes on purchasing intentions. Discovering this tremendous gap of researching, the authors concentrate on exploiting the attitudes factor. In this study, attitude is determined as an individual's perception towards vegan fashion products.

H1: Attitude has positive effect on vegan fashion purchasing intention

Subjective norms is one of the factors that positively influence consumption intentions. Through the study of "Determinants Influencing Consumers Purchasing Intention for Sustainable Fashion: Evidence from Ho Chi Minh City" (2015), Nguyen The Khai and Nguyen Thi Lan Anh successfully confirmed the significant impact of the subjective norm to green consumption intention. On the other hand, the study of Vu Anh Dung et al (2012s) found out that social determinants such as the influences of family members or reference groups have a considerable impact on an individual's concern of sustainable products. In a further study (2012b), these authors constructed and evaluated their model on the basis of TPB theory (Ajzen, 1991) which contains the impact of the social components (family, society, government, media) besides attitude to elucidate for the sustainable behavior of Vietnamese consumers. Hence, in this particular study on consumer intentions within the Hanoi area, the subjective norm is understood as the personal perception of the reference group's expectations to use vegan fashion products.

H2: Subjective norms have a positive influence on vegan fashion purchasing intention.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is a determinant stimulating the possibility of buying intention. The PBC, in fact, is accentuated as a direct factor possessing significant impact on the intention of adopting green products in the study of Shih-Chih Chen and Chung-Wen Hung (2015): "Elucidating the factors influencing the acceptance of green products". In addition, the ability to access and afford sustainable clothings hinders consumers' decisions on choosing eco-friendly products, not to mention other barriers like the insufficiency of

stores and the limitation in choice of designs, and sizes (Connell, 2010). In comparison to other textile products, eco-friendly products serve at a stratospheric price, therefore unsuitable for consumers with low and average financial status (Hines & Swinker, 1996). According to this study, perceived behavioral control can be seen as the awareness of the ability to consume vegan fashion products.

H3: Perceived behavioral control positively affects the intention to buy vegan fashion products

Self-identity can be incorporated into the intended behavioral theory model to predict the specific behavior of consumers, the researchers suggest. Actual experimental evidence has demonstrated that individual identity can predict behavioral intention after considering attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Biddle, Bank, & Slavings, 1987). In the study, the group of authors defines an individual's identity as a combination of characteristics that each individual labels for themselves.

H4: Self-identity has a positive influence on the intention to buy vegan fashion products

Ethical obligation has a positive effect on consumption intentions. In a recent study by Deirdre Shaw and Edward Shiu, 2002, the authors show that ethical obligation has a significant and independent impact on the ethical consumption attitudes and intentions of consumers. Therefore, in this study, ethical responsibility is considered as what consumers think should or should not do under the ethical viewpoint based on individual perceptions.

H5: Ethical obligation has a positive influence on the intention to buy vegan fashion products

The study "Implicit connections with nature", Schuzltz et al (2004) showed a *correlation between environmental concern and consumer attitudes*. In addition, Kim and Choi (2005) also found that environmental concerns directly affect ethical buying behavior. According to Ajzen (1991) the concern about environmental issues, as well as the awareness of environmental protection will result in the impact on attitudes, subjective standards and perceived behavioral control. Within this study, the authors decided to include the environmental concern in the research model to re-test the correlation of this factor with subjective standards and behavioral control perception.

In this study, the the *environmental concern* is defined as the awareness or understanding about the impact of human behavior on the environment, from which people can carry out proper attitudes and actions to protect the environment.

H6: Environment concern has a positive effect on attitudes

H7: Environmental concern has a positive effect on subjective standards

H8: Environmental concern has a positive effect on perceived of behavioral control

Consumers with product acknowledgement can distinguish between green products and traditional products.

Meanwhile, the awareness of ethical products has a positive impact on the intentions of consumers to consume ethically (Hessami and Yousefi, 2013). The previous studies mostly concern about the direct effect of product acknowledgement on consumption intentions or the direct effect of product acknowledgement on attitudes, (we still include

these factors in the research to verify). Kang et al. (2013) confirm a positive correlation between consumer perception of intentional purchases for sustainable clothing.

In this study, product acknowledgement is understood as a person's understanding of product-related factors (the comparative advantage of vegan fashion compared to conventional ones and closed-end vegan fashion; its contribution to animal habitats, vegan fashion brands, designs, physical and chemical properties, distribution channels, ...).

H9: Product knowledge has a positive effect on attitudes

H10: Product knowledge positively affects subjective norms

H11: Product knowledge has a positive effect on perception of behavioral control

Suggestive models:

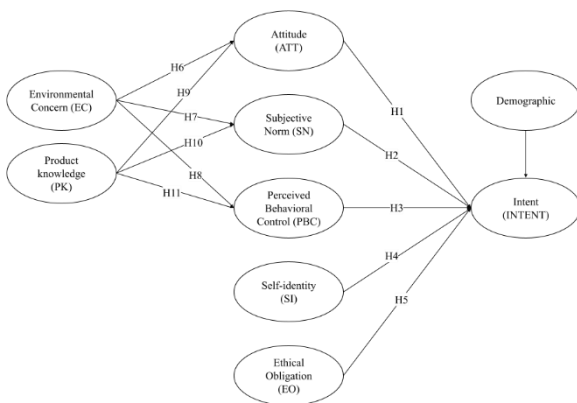


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

III. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCESS

In the initial steps of the research process, the authors gather information related to the research through given reliable domestic and foreign thesis, reports, studies, and theories.

The research team collects data through quantitative research methods to test the impact of each factor. Quantitative research methods require establishing survey questionnaires based on the scale of each factor of the proposed model and combining qualitative research methods in the same questionnaire. For this study, the research team used SPSS 23.0 software to process descriptive and frequency statistics commands, SMARTPLS 3.3.3 software for synthesis, coding and analysis.

Research description

The sample of this study is the entire population living and working in Hanoi. In the case of using factor analysis (EFA) method, according to Hair et al. (2014) on the minimum sample size and ratio of measurement variables, this study has a sample size of N = 423 defined as a reliable sample size. The number of collected surveys was 440, after screening out the invalid surveys, the authors used 423 valid surveys (including 100 responses from the direct ballot and 323 responses from the online questionnaire) to conduct the official analysis.

After unifying the questionnaires, the survey is designed on the Google Form platform and distributed via online forms (group associations on Facebook platforms, email) and directly (survey directly crowded places such as shopping malls, neighborhoods, fashion stores, ...). The questions apply the use of Likert scale from 1 to 5 (1 - Totally disagree, 5 - Totally agree).

Samples

The information of researched samples from SPSS statistical analysis

After conducting surveys targeting consumers in Hanoi, the sample has reached the size of N = 423. Sample characteristics are described as follows:

Among 423 respondents: Women make up a higher rate with 336 people, accounting for 79.4% and men with 82 people, accounting for 19.4%. The other gender group takes up to 12% with 5 respondents. Among the age groups given by the research group, the age of 18 - 34 accounts for the largest number

with 326 people, accounting for 77.1%. The research team investigated the perception of vegan fashion products among study subjects. The results showed that the group of young people including under 18 and 18 - 34 years old and the adult group (from 35-45 years old) are those who have heard and are aware of vegan fashion. In contrast, the middle-aged (46 - 54 years) and the elderly (55 years and over) are those who have never heard of and known vegan fashion.

IV. RESULTS

Verify convergence and differentiation values of variables (Figure 2)

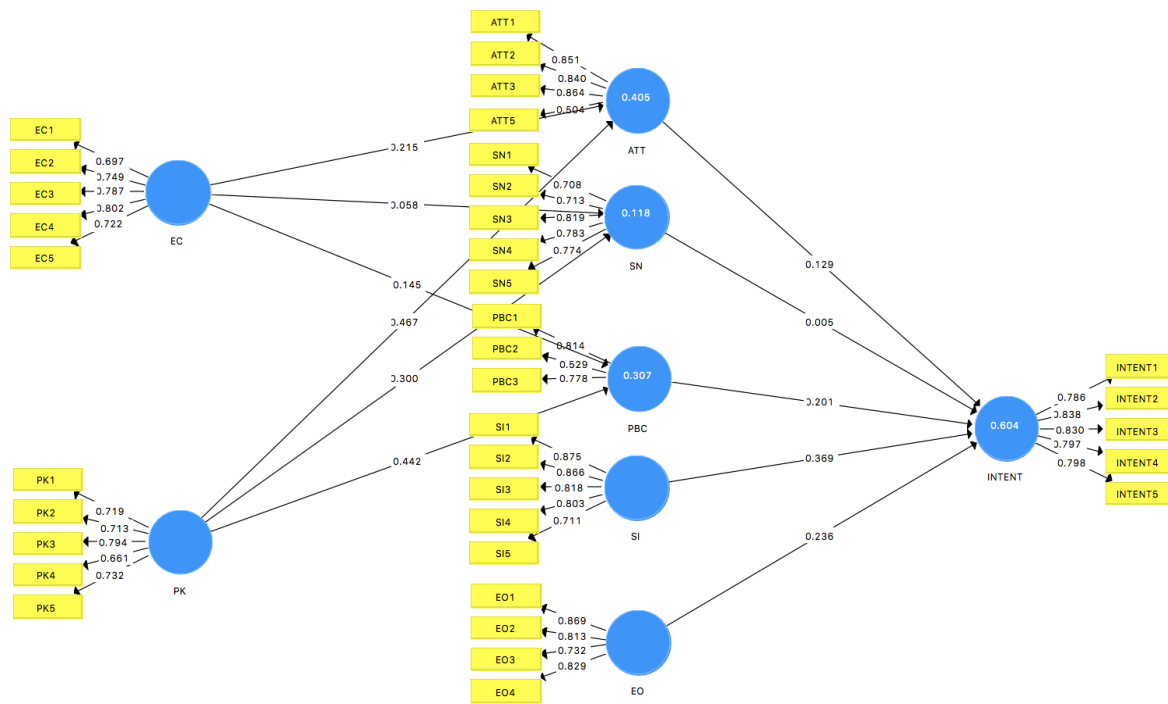


Figure 2. Estimation model via SMART PLS-SEM

It is shown that on the first estimate, the outer loadings of the observed variables are above 0.7. The result also illustrates that 4 variables ATT4, ATT6, PBC4 and PBC5 with outer loadings less than 0.7 are removed. After removing the above 4 variables, the team continues to run the test data with the official model as shown in Figure 2.

Table 1 : Analysis result for coefficient of external factors and convergent validity

	ATT	EC	EO	INTENT	PBC	PK	SI	SN	
ATT1	0.851								
ATT2	0.84								
ATT3	0.864								
ATT5	0.504								
EC1		0.697							
EC2		0.749							
EC3		0.787							
EC4		0.802							
EC5		0.722							
EO1			0.869						
EO2			0.813						
EO3			0.732						
EO4			0.829						
INTENT1				0.786					
INTENT2				0.838					
INTENT3				0.83					
INTENT4				0.797					
INTENT5				0.798					
PBC1					0.814				
PBC2					0.529				
PBC3					0.778				
PK1						0.719			
PK2						0.713			
PK3						0.794			
PK4						0.661			
PK5						0.732			
SI1							0.875		
SI2							0.866		
SI3							0.818		
SI4							0.803		
SI5							0.711		
SN1								0.708	
SN2								0.713	
SN3								0.819	
SN4								0.783	
SN5								0.774	

Source: Model estimation via Smart PLS

Verify the consistent reliability of factors

Analysis results show that all factors achieve reliability with a Composite Reliability coefficient

greater than 0.7, specifically ranging from 0.756 - 0.909. Finally, the total coefficients of variance extracted (AVE) of the factors are greater than 0.5,

ranging from 0.516 - 0.607 that meeting the test requirements (Hair et al., 2014).

Structure model testing

Apply a non-parametric bootstrap procedure (Hair et al., 2014) to test significance. In this study, the authors conducted the Bootstrapping technique 500 times to ensure the requirement of testing a linear structural model.

Tests on the Multicollinearity violation assumption

The collinearity problem of the model needs to be tested on the relationship between the factors. The variance magnification factor (VIF) is tested for multicollinearity. The results show that the results of VIF show the association between the predictor factors that do not violate the assumption of multicollinearity, because all coefficients are in the acceptable range (VIF = 1.128 - 2.09 < 2).

Verify the model fit

Table 2. Tested by R and R²

	R ²	Adjusted R ²
SN	0.118	0,114
PBC	0,307	0.304
ATT	0.405	0,403
INTENT	0.604	0,599

Source: Model estimation via SmartPLS

The suitability of the model is verified by the value of R².

The analysis results show that the adjusted R² value of Intention is 0.599, Attitude is 0.403, perceived behavioral control is 0.304 and Subjective norms is

0.114, The indicators have just met the statistical standard on the appropriateness of the model.

Result value of f² and influence level

Using coefficient f² to evaluate values of R², the value f² = 0.00 shows that there aren't any non-affected factors, the coefficients 0.163 and 0.185 (significantly impact) and the remaining coefficients work average kinetic energy of the external structure over an endogenous structure. It can be clearly seen that the Subjective Norms do not have any stimulation on the Intention. The Impact of Environmental Concern on Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control is very little. From there, it helps to come up with solutions that affect influential variables such as Product Knowledge or Self - Identity and the modest use of solutions that have an impact on Environmental Concern.

Results of linear structure

The results of testing the relationship between variables are shown in Table 3

Table 3. Results of direct effects of relationships

Hypothesis	Relationship between variables	Impact level	Standard deviation	t-test	p-value
H1	ATT → INTENT	0.129	0.048	2.688	0.007
H2	SN → INTENT	0.005	0.038	0.124	0.901
H3	PBC → INTENT	0.201	0.046	4.348	0
H4	SI → INTENT	0.369	0.057	6.427	0
H5	EO → INTENT	0.236	0.049	4.853	0
H6	EC → ATT	0.215	0.059	3.636	0
H7	EC → SN	0.058	0.081	0.716	0.474
H8	EC → PBC	0.145	0.079	1.849	0.065
H9	PK → ATT	0.467	0.047	9.962	0
H10	PK → SN	0.3	0.078	3.866	0
H11	PK → PBC	0.442	0.067	6.603	0

Source: Model estimation via SmartPLS

From the statistics table analyzing the regression coefficients in Table 3, it illustrates that the model consists of all relationships is statistically significant except for the relationship from EC to ATT, SN, PBC due to the coefficient $p > 0.05$

Table 4. Results of indirect effects of relationships

Relationship between variables	Impact level	Standard deviation	t-test	P-value
EC → ATT → INTENT	0.028	0.012	2.263	0.024
EC → SN → INTENT	0	0.012	0.07	0.944
EC → PBC → INTENT	0.029	0.018	1.613	0.107
PK → ATT → INTENT	0.06	0.024	2.456	0.014
PK → SN → INTENT	0.001	0.023	0.119	0.906
PK → PBC → INTENT	0.089	0.004	3.776	0

Model estimation via SmartPLS

From Table 4, only 3/6 indirect relationships through the intermediate variables reached the statistical significance. In the correlation between environmental concern and intention to use vegan fashion: there is only an effect through attitudes, with an impact coefficient of 0.028. The relationship through Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control was rejected because the $p\text{-value} = 0.944 > 0.05$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.107 > 0.05$, respectively. In the correlation between knowledge of vegan fashion and the intention to use vegan fashion: there is an impact through attitudes (0.06) and through perceivedn of behavior control (0.089). The relationship through Subjective norms was rejected because the $p\text{-value} = 0.906 > 0.05$.

Comparing the impact level of 6 independent variables on the dependent variable of satisfaction in descending order as follows: SI, EO, PBC, PK, ATT, EC. Thus, the hypotheses are accepted at 95% confidence level except the hypothesis H2. This shows that: Self - Identity, Ethical Responsibility,

Perceived Behavioral Control, Product Knowledge, Attitudes and Environment Concern all influence consumer intentions. In contrast, the analytical results show that there is one factor that does not affect consumption intent, Subjective norms factor. The Subjective Norms in this study according to the respondents' assessment are not important.

As a result, the majority of Hanoi consumers use vegan fashion for the purpose of expressing their self- identity ($\beta = 0.369$) and for the particular reason that they want to show ethical obligation ($\beta=0.236$) to the animals and the environment through consumption. Attitude ($\beta=0.129$) and perceived behavioral control ($\beta=0.201$) also create certain effects. Besides, environmental concern and knowledge of vegan fashion products do not affect Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control but do have an effect on consumers' attitude towards this product. On the basis of the research model and hypotheses given, the survey with 423 respondents of the research team can give some conclusions about the following factors:

Self- identity has the most positive and powerful impact of the group of motivating factors. Specifically, if consumers appreciate their personal identities and want to express themselves through fashion, their intention to consume vegan fashion will become stronger. In the fashion industry, the sense of style is the way an individual expresses himself or herself to the world and functions as a language of communication. This idea gives the particular reason for the circumstance of consumers when choosing fashion products, they are prone to choose those that are able to represent their lifestyle.

Ethical obligation ranks the second significance in influencing the intention to consume vegan fashion.

Hanoi residents state that they recognise the accomplishment and the contribution to preserve the animal habitat as well as the civilization development through the replacement of fast fashion consumption to vegan fashion.

The attitudes and perceived behavioral control also have certain effects on consumer intentions. Therefore, it is essential to propose activities to help consumers have a positive attitude about this product as well as have a correct awareness of ethical consumption intentions.

Besides, **environmental concerns** and **product knowledge** do play an important part in purchasing intentions but are yet to be strongly encouraged. These factors will create a positive influence on consumption intent of many generations, making them more conscious about their responsibility to their surroundings, animal welfare and ethical purchasing.

Subjective norms do not affect the intention to consume vegan fashion products. Most of the survey respondents are at a young age, so it can be seen that for young people today, factors of social attitudes do not affect their purchasing intention but they will use a product based on personal characteristics

Among the 3 factors in the TPB model, after the removal of subjective norms and considering the 2 factors that meet the standards, perceived behavioral control has a stronger impact on intentions than attitudes. Meaning that perceptions of the ability to perform a behavior influence more profoundly on buying intent than mere consumer perception (attitude). In the hypotheses about the relationship between environmental concern and attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral

control (H6 - H8), only H6 is significant that the environmental concern does not influence Subjective norms and will not put pressure on the reference group as well as the awareness of the ability to perform consumer behavior. In the relationship between product knowledge and attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control (H9 - H11), the only factor rejected is H10 despite the impact coefficient is $\beta = 0.3$. However, due to the fact that the Subjective norms is excluded from the model, it leads to the elimination of H10, product knowledge affects the pressure coming from the consumer reference group, but the reference group does not have a positive influence on the intention to use vegan products.

V. Recommendations

Based on the research results, the authors propose a number of recommendations aimed at 3 main subjects: state agencies, businesses and consumers.

Recommendations for state agencies

In order to promote ethical consumption behavior of the people, the state needs to raise individual attitudes, understanding of the environment and moral responsibility. The proposed methods include: Raising awareness of the people in protecting the environment and consuming vegan fashion; launching the movement of consuming vegan fashion through organizations and unions; Information and policies related to ethical consumer products and vegan fashion consumption must be widely disseminated to everyone through the mass media and other social media.

In addition, the state needs to develop policies to protect and reduce risks for consumers when purchasing vegan fashion products. This is done through: forcing manufacturers to disclose their

production processes; require businesses to provide complete and clear commitment policies on products and warranty policies for consumers.

Recommendations for businesses

Businesses need to reinforce their ethical responsibilities, build the image of sustainable development, for the environment, for the community in the heart of customers through practical actions. Vegan fashion businesses should focus on investing in product aspects, raising standards in order to gain domestic and international certifications of vegan standards. Disclosure of production process and reputable certificates, commitment to vegan standards, this will be the answer for customers about the price and quality of a product that is as new as vegan fashion. Vegan fashion businesses should expand their distribution channels, use multiple platforms to make products easier to reach customers, as they still have difficulty finding points on sale of these items.

For communication activities, in addition to transmitting environmental information, businesses should also publish content related to vegan consumer products, focusing on conveying familiar, relatable messages so that customers are more exposed to this concept. Enterprises should take advantage of forms of information transmission such as TVC, short videos, ... cooperate with KOLs, Influencers to inspire animal protection, to consume ethically. Further, businesses can create community groups to connect, share and provide knowledge about animal welfare and vegan consumer products so that consumers can easily access information, spread the word, encourage a vegan lifestyle and build a potential customer base for the business.

Recommendations for consumers

For consumers, they need to be aware of their own needs, whether they care about the environment, ecosystems and animal rights issues and whether that interest is sufficient to be the driving force behind the intent to seek and use vegan fashion or not. Research shows that if an individual perceives himself as an ethical consumer, for the environment and for the community, they will tend to choose vegan fashion products. Consumers need to clearly identify their personal image and the values they aim for in relation to vegan fashion. When consumers perceive themselves to have an interest in this fashion line, they need to find out the information carefully before making a purchasing decision. Consumers need to show their own responsibility when seeking vegan fashion products, making sure to eliminate fashion brands that presume on the “vegan” label. Access to reliable sources of information is to avoid mistakenly supporting brands labeled “vegan” to polish their names without actually meeting the accreditation standards. Consumers can find out about vegan fashion on the websites of reputable vegan organizations such as PETA, The Vegan Society, Leaping Bunny, ... These are also organizations that provide censorship and certification for vegan fashion brands around the world.

VI. Limitations and future research directions

Like other studies, this research also has certain limitations. First, the factors that can influence the intention to consume vegan fashion are not only limited by the factors mentioned in this research, but there may also be other factors that influence the motivation of usage of these products. Second, the risks that customers may encounter include: financial risks, seller risks, product risks,.. have not

been thoroughly examined in this paper. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to study the effects of possible negative factors or possible risks. Third, this study is limited to consumers in Hanoi, so in the future, studies need to expand the subject of investigation to get a more general conclusion.

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