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Accounting for Environmental Awareness on Green Purchase Intention and Behaviour: Evidence from the Philippines

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Abstract: This study examines the green purchase awareness of Philippine youth consumers and its influence on green purchase intention and, ultimately, their green purchase behaviour. The study used the theory of planned behaviour as a conceptual framework. The research used an online five-point Likert scale questionnaire and gathered data from accounting and business students in the Philippines; data were collected from 923 usable respondents and then validated and analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings suggest that respondents’ awareness of environmental degradation’s consequences influences green purchase intention and positively mediates green purchase behaviour. The attitudes, norms, and respondents’ perceived behavioural control represent the environmental awareness beliefs; they positively and significantly contributed to green purchase intention, which contributed to green purchase behaviour. The study is original in that it examines the applicability of the theory of planned behaviour in the context of the Philippines, which has legislative backing for environmental awareness among the citizens. It also investigates the extent to which subjective norms can influence personal behavioural control and mediate towards green purchase intention. The findings contribute to the Philippine setting; however, it is extensible with further research on emerging nations that share societal cultures. The data obtained sufficiently explain the phenomenon using the theory of planned behaviour; combining it with Hofstede’s model of societal culture can increase explanatory power for societal-based studies on purchase intention and behaviour. In a high-power distance and collective societal-cultural setting, findings support the argument that environmental awareness contributes to green purchase intention and buyer behaviour. The proactive stance of making the population aware of the environmental effects is noticeable. However, they provide a low-level explanation of their intention to purchase green products and a medium-level explanation of translating purchase intention to purchase behaviour. Hence, we recommend the government review their approach to making people environmentally aware, which measurably translates into green purchasing intention and purchasing behaviour.

Keywords: emerging market; environment; green purchase awareness; Philippines; purchase behaviour; purchase intention; students; theory of planned behaviour

1. Introduction

The United Nations Sustainable Development principles are intergenerational equity and intragenerational equity [1], and upholding these principles requires close attention to the environment. An outcome of environmental degradation is climate change. Past decades have witnessed changes in human consumption patterns driven by markets and global population growth, impacting people’s well-being. Consumption patterns can co-create environmental damages such as global warming and increased environmental pollution and change the flora and fauna composition with irreversible effects for present and future generations [2]. The principles [1] point out that youth awareness about these is crucial to establishing economic growth that is socially and environmentally sustainable.
1.1. Motivation

Figure 1 shows the motivations behind the study. There is yet a lack of understanding about youth response to green purchase intention and behaviour through environmental awareness in a legislated policy setting, where societal culture has a hierarchical structure and collective norms in an emerging country. This article aims to account for the environmental awareness beliefs held by youth in the Philippines and how they translate into green purchase intention and behaviour. These intentions arise from the belief systems they hold, comprising attitudes, norms, and behaviours that control them [3]. This study investigated the key determinants affecting consumer green purchasing behaviour. It tested the theory of planned behaviour to advance the contextual understanding of youth belief systems and perceived behaviour in the Philippines. The study uses awareness of environmental concerns as the belief system to examine its impact on perceived green product purchasing as an aspect of behaviour.

The background to the lack of understanding about youth response to green purchase intention and behaviour through environmental awareness are as follows. First, the Philippines is a fruitful site per the 2020 census; the population comprises youth, 57.96% under 29 years and nearly two-thirds (65.3%) of the population under 35 years. With a consistently high crude birth rate (18.6% in 2017), the youth in the Philippines saliently represent the current and immediate future generation [4]. They become the best cohort most concerned about intergenerational and intragenerational equity. They are likely to deliberate upon the effects on the environment seriously. Equity is fairly redistributing resources. Intergenerational equity is a principle that states every generation (past, present, and future) hold the earth fairly in common, and intragenerational equity refers to such fairness within the current generation [5].

Second, there is a scant understanding of the people’s environmental awareness and its influence on green purchase behaviour in emerging markets. A study conducted in Indonesia using the theory of planned behaviour found consumer attitudes towards readiness, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control were significant predictors of purchase behaviour [6]. This study extends such analysis by examining the influence of purchase intention on the perceived purchase behaviour of youth. This study was necessary because the Philippines is a country vulnerable to adverse environmental activities occurring in the world. To arrest this situation, countries such as the Philippines must take proactive action, making people aware of the environmental effects and taking good care of the environment.

Third, The Philippines has legislative backing for promoting environmental awareness. With such a normative stance, we argue that subjective norms can influence the perceived
behavioural control of a person’s purchase intention and further our understanding of applying the theory of planned behaviour.

Fourth, research reports that green purchase intentions and behaviour are specific to societal cultures, where customs and values are embedded in people’s belief systems [7]. Based on Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions, the Philippines has a high-power distance with a score of 94, where less powerful societal members accept unequal power distribution, accepting the hierarchical order descended from authorities and institutions with little justification. The low individualism score of 32 indicates they are a collective society morally bound to respect and follow societal norms [8].

These motivations led to reviewing the relevant literature in this research inquiry to point out that our research questions are worth empirical investigations. The study used the theory of planned behaviour to develop research questions. We obtained data from university students representing the youth cohort using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analysed data using structural equation modelling. The study also conducted a robust analysis to confirm the accuracy of the findings. These findings lead to the contributions and implications and state the limitations of the research inquiry.

1.2. Environmental Awareness

Island nations are the most at risk due to climate change inducing temperature, rainfall, and sea level; countries closer to the equator are more at risk [9]. Understanding that the Philippines, a country near the equator (1446 km north of the equator), would face adverse climate impacts, the government launched a solid climate policy supported by institutional and financing reforms. The climate change action plan covered five years, from 2011 to 2016, as a basis for having no regrets. The National Framework for Climate Strategy had the vision statement of a climate-risk resilient Philippines with healthy, safe, prosperous, and self-reliant communities and thriving and productive ecosystems. The action plan was formidable because 16 of the regions in the Philippines are among the top 50 most vulnerable areas of South East Asia [10]. A total of 4 cities in the Philippines (Catahoato, Manila, Roxas, and San Jose) are among the 10 most vulnerable cities of Southeast Asia [11].

The Philippine government introduced the Republic Act Number 9512, also known as the National Education and Awareness Act of 2008, noting that the state’s policy is to protect and advance people’s right to a balanced and healthful ecology. In that, the Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Social Welfare and Development by coordinating with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Science and Technology, and other relevant agencies, must integrate environmental education in school criteria at all levels. The government’s emphasis was reinforced by declaring November as Environmental Awareness Month [12,13].

At a local level, community-based forest management is a significant strategy successfully practised in the Philippines, managing and rehabilitating forest lands and conserving natural forests leading to biodiversity. Farm tree plantings have led to preserving water, carbon sequestration (capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide), and biomass production (stored chemical energy from the sun) [14]. A study examining black sand mining (mining for magnetite in black sand beaches in the Philippines) showed that they are often illegally operated. This can increase subsidence (gradual sinking of the land area), which has the irreversible effects of lowering coastal areas to a level that engulfs land by the sea [15]. Yet another study investigated the intensification of commercial shrimp farming that generated employment but diminished mangrove areas converted into shrimp ponds with high salinity levels and increased viral diseases in several provinces in the Philippines. The mangrove areas lost their biodiversity and carbon-storing; the study highlights the challenges faced at the local level in propelling economic growth with sustainable social and environmental development [16]. The national-level policy positions and local-level operational responses have highlighted the importance of environmental awareness issues, and there is an urgent need to identify the collective reactions of youth to these behaviours.
A study was conducted in Malaysia with university business students about their perceived intention to purchase green vehicles. They used environmental knowledge and awareness as attributes, subjective norms, and respondents’ perceived behavioural control as input variables, intention as a mediating variable, and perceived purchasing as the outcome variable. They used a questionnaire comprising several questions for each input variable, analysing the results of 200 students using the partial least square technique, and found weak but significant relationships among them. The study also recommended conducting future studies in emerging nations for further understanding [17]. A study conducted in Iran examined the influence of student attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, self-identity, and moral norms on perceived purchase intention of organic food. They used a structured questionnaire and solicited responses from 389 students, analysing data using structural equation modelling. They found all variables significantly influence purchase intention, except subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, and concluded that more research is needed to fully understand the latter two effects [18].

A study in Indonesia surveyed and collected 916 responses from university students. They analysed the impact of consumer attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, pro-environmental self-identity, and ethical obligation on purchase readiness to be green and purchase intention. They found that except for subjective norms, ethical obligation, and perceived sense of obligation, all other variables showed a significant relationship with purchase intention. Their study acknowledged that moral responsibility and perceived importance of obligation overlap with their prevailing subjective norm construct, meaning a composite construct may have yielded a different result (Arli et al., 2018) [6].

The environmental awareness studies in the Philippines thus far provide mixed findings. A study conducted with pre-service school teachers found that they had low awareness of environmental issues, policies and environmental participation relating to waste management, resource conservation, and environmental initiatives [19]. However, these findings may have been compromised due to the self-administered questionnaire used without pre-validation reliability testing and without underpinning theoretical constructs. One study conducted descriptive-correlation research with science students in a public secondary school and found that they were very aware of the environmental issues and problems, concepts, and the state of the environment. Students also showed a significant positive and high correlation between environmental awareness and environmental practices [20].

1.3. Purchase Behaviour

Some firms have been proactive by manufacturing green products that do not cause pollution on earth or deplete natural resources [21]. Promoting and expanding such green manufacturing requires people’s intention to purchase them. Manufacturing green products is a response, via market-based economics, to providing economic growth with social and environmentally sustainable development. The demand for green products is significantly increasing in the global market and expanding effectively in developed and emerging economies. Although some firms manufacture green products and a sizeable number of individuals welcome these green products, research has argued that this enhanced attitude of individuals has not translated into purchase intention [22]. Despite concerns about irresponsible consumption and its adverse effect on the environment, there is a weak relationship between consumers’ attitudes to purchasing and actual buying behaviour [23]. It is crucial to understand the consumers’ attitudes towards purchasing green products that lead to behavioural intention [24].

Studies on green purchase behaviour have reported a lack of translation from consumers’ favourable attitudes to purchasing practices in Iran [25]. Consumers in China stated their environmental concerns due to irresponsible consumption, but they seldom translated them into green purchase behaviour [2,26]. Yet another study conducted with Polish consumers showed that variations in social (personal financial situation) and demographic factors (age, sex) could influence green purchase behaviour. They also found
that young consumers were sceptical about green products. They concluded that Polish consumers have insufficient knowledge about green products, affecting their purchasing behaviour [27].

An outcome of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was introducing Agenda 21, which required participating nations to prepare national strategies for sustainable development by broadly consulting the public and reporting to the newly established Commission on Sustainable Development. Agenda 21 recognises the value of education to reach its full potential [28]. Education can lead to information, but awareness about environmental degradation must become more than familiarity for an attitudinal change towards behavioural change. The awareness of consequences can arise from belief systems (comprising attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioural control) understood as underpinning intentions to act and behavioural decisions to follow [3]. This study contributes to such understanding in the context of the Philippines with a political landscape that supports sustainable development.

Previous studies have used the theory of planned behaviour to examine various environmental concerns, but not environmental degradation. Those studies were also conducted in locations with no mandatory legislation promoting environmental awareness. Additionally, those locations do not necessarily have a predominantly youth population. The investigation of this study aims to contribute to this lack of understanding. We aim to increase knowledge about these by causally examining the relationship between belief systems of attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioural control about environmental degradation, contributing to intentions to purchase green products, and those intentions contributing to perceived purchase behaviour in the context of the Philippines. In doing so, we contribute to further understanding of the theory of planned behaviour discussed next.

2. Theories and Hypotheses

2.1. Theoretical Background

Research has used the theory of planned behaviour to explain various behavioural phenomena in the service sector, such as early childhood businesses [29], manufacturing sector, such as sustainable green vehicles [30]. Research has successfully used the theory of planned behaviour in understanding food purchasing behavioural intentions and their effect on purchasing behaviours [18,31]. The theory of planned behaviour [3] extends the Theory of Reasoned Action [32] as a way of understanding phenomena in specific contexts, and with an added construct of perceived behavioural control, found to provide an additional explanation of the actual behaviour [3].

Attitude is part of the behavioural belief system. It considers whether the perceived behaviour is worthy of the undertaking and evaluates the consequences of undertaking the perceived behaviour. There is a cognitive or information processing approach to attitude formation. A person’s concept of perceived behaviour develops a person’s attitudes. Subjective norm is about how much pressure it is for a person to undertake the perceived behaviour. One aspect of the norm is the perception that the person holds that others expect them to comply with the norm, such as societal pressure. The other aspect of the norm concerns to what extent the person wants to adhere to the norm. Perceived behavioural control beliefs are the ease or difficulty of undertaking the behaviour. They can arise from one’s past expectations and experiences. Others, such as friends and relatives whom the person consults in their decisions, can also influence those decisions [33,34]. All these three constructs (attitude, norm, behavioural control) comprise belief systems that influence the intention. The intention is the cognitive readiness of the person to perform the behaviour [35]. The intention is the willingness to act, and behaviour is the affirmation to act. The intention and behaviour lie on the same axis of making a decision. However, the intention is more about considering to make a decision and less about actually being decided. Behaviour is less about thinking to make a decision and more about actually making a decision. Hence, there is some overlapping of consideration and actuality in
the intention and behaviour. Behavioural intention is more general to act. Behavioural purchase is more specific to act [36].

2.2. Conceptual Framework for Hypothesis Development

In this study, the collective belief system is green product awareness. The basis is the Republic Act Number 9512 (also known as the National Education and Awareness Act of 2008) in the Philippines, which has a core focus on environmental awareness [12,13]. The study focuses on environmental degradation as representing environmental awareness. In this study, the attitude towards environmental degradation’s consequences represents the cognitive or behavioural elements of a person’s belief system. The Republic Act Number 9512 has set the societal norms on environmental aspects and the practices that have been followed through environmental education in the Philippines, which can influence a person’s perceived behavioural control about green purchase intentions. The norms in this study are the ways a person identifies green products. How much an individual perceives having control over making their own decision about green products represents behavioural control. The cumulative cognisance of these constructs contributes to green purchase intention and can lead to green purchase behaviour. This study also proposes that norms about identifying green products influence the perceived behavioural control of identifying green products’ attributes. Since a person has legislative policy support to perceive and form a green purchase intention, that person does not need to go against any behavioural and normative beliefs and does not need to perceive behavioural control to engage in green purchase behaviour. Although the theory of planned behaviour has proposed a direct relationship between perceived behavioural control and purchase behaviour, for a reason just noted, this study omitted it from the theoretical model [3]. The study used the theory of planned behaviour in hypothesis development to test whether the collected data fit the theory.

The three primary input constructs are attitude, norms, and perceived behavioural control (see Figure 2). The output construct is purchase intention, which is then related to the outcome construct of purchase behaviour. Green purchase behaviour is the consumption of products benevolent or beneficial to the environment, recyclable or conservable and sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns [37]. Environmental awareness of green products is essential in guiding persons’ green consumer purchasing behaviour [17].

2.3. Attitude (Behavioural Belief towards Environmental Degradation) and Purchase Intention

Environmental concerns indirectly influence consumers’ purchasing behaviour. Consumers’ perception of the environmental consequences of products influences green purchase behaviour [38]. Consumers’ environmental commitment and perception of eco-products are the strongest determinants of green purchase intention [39]. Greater adverse environmental concerns among customers facilitate their development towards green purchase intentions [40], as people pay increasing attention to environmental concerns and the consequences (e.g., global warming and destruction of the ozone layer and natural habitats). Thus, the study hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Attitude influences green purchase intention.

2.4. Subjective Norms (Normative Beliefs of Identifying Green Products) and Perceived Behavioural Control (in Identifying Green Product Attributes)

Subjective norms intervene between objective product features and ultimate brand evaluations. When they are applied, the recognition of green products is subjected to norms, which leads to product preference [41]. Green products are positively associated with normative product evaluations [42]. This association is less researched in the literature. This study points out that the Republic Act Number 9512 (National Education and Awareness Act of 2008) has made environmental awareness a formidable social norm about green products to influence the perceived behavioural control of people in the Philippines in iden-
tifying green product attributes. The study points out that subjective norms predominantly represent societal culture. The Philippines is a collective culture where they make decisions based on group thinking [8], and subjective norms are likely to influence the perceived behavioural control of people. It is hypothesised that:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Subjective norms influence perceived behavioural control.

Figure 2. Hypothesised conceptual framework.

2.5. Subjective Norms and Perceived Purchase Intention

Green products are products that “consumers perceive to be environmentally friendly, whether due to the production process, materials or ingredients used to manufacture the product, packaging, marketing and communications” [43]. Knowledge of green products has caused consumers to develop environmental awareness and has bolstered their interest in fortifying the environment while preventing its degradation [22].

Youth consumers gain knowledge through advertisements such as printed media or social media. Advertising is vital to reach prospective young adults to influence their intention [44]. Previous studies failed to address how product green product attributes affect young adults’ purchase intention. Consumers will first undergo several influences that determine their intention to purchase green food products, set by societal expectations [45].

The eco-label has influenced consumers’ purchase intention for green products when attached to this packaging. The intention to buy eco-labelled products is reflected most clearly in consumers’ search for and attention to this information based on their normative beliefs [46]. Thus, the hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Norms of identifying green products influence green purchase intention.

2.6. Perceived Behavioural Control and Purchase Intention

Perceived behavioural control is an essential construct to include as it increases the explanation content of the purchase intention. How much it explains depends on whether people think they have little control over the resources and have fewer opportunities to engage in a behaviour. If they think they do not, then their intention to do so can become
weak [47]. The purchase process is one in which consumers evaluate alternative products on the strength of various attributes [48]. Products’ functional attributes are determinants of consumer green purchase intention [23]. Perceived behavioural control can include external factors perceived as challenging for behavioural control, such as whether the consumers can quickly obtain green products. Perceived behavioural control also contains internal factors for the consumer to be effective in contributing to the solution of a problem such as environmental degradation by forming a green product purchase intention [49].

Green product attributes are dichotomised into intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, with involvement and knowledge regarded as consumers perceived factors over which they have perceived control. The final judgement is influenced by those attributes with the consumer’s involvement and knowledge [50]. One study found that healthiness is essential for consumers of green products. However, product attributes of quality, assortment, sales service, and price play a role [48], while another study reported that product attributes were not related to green purchase intention [51]. The following is the hypothesis formulated:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** Perceived behavioural control influences green purchase intention.

### 2.7. Purchase Intention (in Green Purchase) and Purchase Behaviour (in Green Purchase)

Green purchase intention refers to consumers’ willingness to purchase green products [6]. Green purchasing refers to purchasing environmentally friendly products and avoiding products that harm the environment [52]. Literature shows that intention may be the primary predictor of such behaviour [36, 53]. Green purchasing is measurable as green purchase intention and behaviour (Khoiruman and Haryanto, 2017) [54]. The theory claims that measuring behavioural intentions is the ideal method for predicting consumer behaviour [3]. Still, there are also findings regarding online purchase intention showing they do not automatically translate into purchase behaviour [7]. From these findings, the hypothesis stated is:

**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** Green purchase intention influences green purchase behaviour.

### 3. Research Methods

#### 3.1. Measures of the Constructs

Studies have used Likert scales to measure and show the subjective probabilities of the relationships of theoretical constructs in the theory of planned behaviour [3, 18]. This study used previously validated scales to build the research questionnaire to measure the constructs described in the conceptual framework. The study obtained questions from a previous study and adapted them to suit this research context [55]. It used a five-point Likert scale to evaluate the respondents’ awareness of the consequences and ability to identify green product attribute variables anchored at 1 for “very low awareness” and 5 for “very high awareness”. A 5-point Likert scale anchoring at 1 “strongly disagree”, 2 “disagree”, 3 “neutral”, 4 “agree”, to 5 “strongly agree” was used for the purchase intention and buying decision variables. Since purchase intention and purchase behaviour have some theoretical overlapping in the two constructs, the study minimised such overlap by asking questions about purchase intention that inquire into their willingness and consideration towards green purchase behaviour.

The study measured the reliability of constructs using the Cronbach alpha score (α) to compute the level of convergence by the average item values for given constructs [56]. In designing the questionnaire, the study aimed to decrease social desirability bias to mitigate the possibility of respondents answering socially desirable questions based on their belief systems [57]. The survey ensured that it did not collect data on personal or sensitive issues. Personality traits are associated with social desirability bias. Accounting and business students are likely to have higher moral codes and be more truthful [58]. On the other hand, purchase behaviour questions comprised knowing to purchase, loyalty to purchase, and purchasing green products.
3.2. Data Collection and Sample

Before the data collection, a pilot study was conducted to check whether the survey was developed correctly to fulfil the research objectives mentioned to increase the validity of the questionnaire. The pilot research involved thirty (30) students in a large Philippine University. After this initial testing, the consistency of the questionnaire was confirmed; thus, it was then distributed to the business and accounting students, excluding those involved in the pilot research feedback. This cohort was chosen as they are likely to become the future leaders who make organisational finances decisions. The link for the survey questionnaire was sent through the various groups of business and accounting students and groups’ social media accounts. Sometimes, the survey questionnaire link was sent to their e-mail addresses. The study obtained consent from the participants and expected a three to five-day return from the respondents. A quick turnaround was expected because they were sent during the school holiday break. A total of 923 valid and usable responses were received.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire items were tested for validity and reliability to ensure constructs were well represented using the factor loading technique. The questionnaire items with a factor loading of less than 0.5 were reviewed for removal. The questionnaire items with factor loadings more than >0.5 that were not significant were also reviewed for removal [59,60]. The study used structural equation modelling (SEM). The minimum sample size to provide a power of accuracy by eliminating type-one errors and type-two errors in SEM is to have at least 50 observations [61] to 500 observations [62]. This technique can determine the extent to which a proposed theoretical model is expressed by a set of relations among different constructs, supported by the collected data, and has been satisfactorily used in green purchase behaviour studies [18,31]. SEM is a statistical procedure for confirmatory instead of exploratory analysis. It combines factor analysis, path analysis, and multiple regression with two types of variables: exogenous and endogenous variables. Researchers prefer it because it estimates multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis [63].

Specifically, in this research, the exogenous or independent variables investigated for green product awareness are measured with three constructs operationalised. Attitude is represented by consequences of environmental degradation; norms are described as ways of identifying green products; and perceived behavioural control is operationalised as identifying green product attributes. The exogenous or dependent variables were purchase intention, affecting green purchase behaviour.

4. Results

4.1. Sample Profile and Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the final sample’s demographic profile and the student profile by enrolled courses with the majority of the students in the later years of their degree course.

| Course/Degree                  | Frequencies | Percentages |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Accountancy                   | 547         | 59.30%      |
| Business and Management       | 337         | 36.50%      |
| Graduate School of Business   | 39          | 4.20%       |

| No. of Years in the Program   | Frequencies | Percentages |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1st year                      | 183         | 19.80%      |
| 2nd year                      | 378         | 41.00%      |
| 3rd year                      | 361         | 39.10%      |
| 4th year                      | 1           | 0.10%       |
4.2. Construct Reliability and Validity

In Table 2, the internal consistency of the items measured using composite reliability and convergent validity using factor loadings and with average variance extracted (AVE) were gauged and reported. Studies show that the coefficient of the composite reliability must be at least 0.70 to say that internal consistency is observed in each of the latent constructs used in the study [64,65]. As seen in the results in Table 2, CED (CR = 0.901), IGPA (CR = 0.915), WIGP (CR = 0.862), PI (CR = 0.819), and PB (CR = 0.908) passed the requirement for internal consistency test.

Table 2. Summary of items and properties.

| Variables and Items                                      | Factor Loadings | Mean  | SD    | Ave. Variance Extracted | \alpha |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|--------|
| **Attitude—Consequences of Environmental Degradation (CED)** |                 |       |       |                         |        |
| i. "The increase in temperature across the globe is a result of global warming." | 0.699           | 4.57  | 0.467 | 0.504                   | 0.901  |
| ii. "Climate change caused by greenhouse gases has some destructive impacts such as the melting of glaciers and change in seasons.” | 0.736           |       |       |                         |        |
| iii. "The ozone layer is being destroyed by CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), which are used in industries and everyday life.” | 0.653           |       |       |                         |        |
| iv. "Hazardous waste from households, hospitals, manufacturing, and laboratories, and many other establishments causes environmental destruction.” | 0.702           |       |       |                         |        |
| v. "The introduction of harmful substances into rivers, oceans, lakes, and ponds, changes the physical, chemical, or biological condition of the water called water pollution.” | 0.755           |       |       |                         |        |
| vi. "Due to climate change, air and water pollution caused by environmental destruction, health problems among humans arise.” | 0.731           |       |       |                         |        |
| vii. "Loss and destruction of habitat increase the number of endangered species.” | 0.709           |       |       |                         |        |
| viii. "Water and air pollution, water shortages, and technological/industrial practices cause a reduction of natural resources.” | 0.705           |       |       |                         |        |
| ix. "Toxic substances such as lead poisoning, heavy metal, pollutants, and pesticides, industrial wastes bring a serious impact to the environment.” | 0.694           |       |       |                         |        |
| **Norm—Identification of green Product Attributes (IGPA)** |                 |       |       |                         |        |
| i. "Green products are recyclable products or those that can be reused.” | 0.729           | 4.18  | 0.622 | 0.519                   | 0.915  |
| ii. "Green products are non-toxic products that are NOT poisonous and don’t harm the environment.” | 0.780           |       |       |                         |        |
| iii. "Green products are made from recycled waste or made from natural renewable materials.” | 0.768           |       |       |                         |        |
| iv. "Green products are products with natural ingredients.” | 0.764           |       |       |                         |        |
| v. "Green products come in eco-friendly packaging.” | 0.772           |       |       |                         |        |
| vi. "Green products are originally developed products.” | 0.701           |       |       |                         |        |
| vii. "Green products have low embodied energy.” | 0.594           |       |       |                         |        |
| viii. "Green products are products that will not be tested on animals.” | 0.643           |       |       |                         |        |
| ix. "Green products are non-polluting.” | 0.715           |       |       |                         |        |
| x. "Green products are healthy for users.” | 0.715           |       |       |                         |        |
| **Perceived Behavioural Control—Ways of Identifying Green Products (WIGP)** |                 |       |       |                         |        |
| i. "Green products are labeled with the word ‘organic’.” | 0.614           | 3.947 | 0.651 | 0.512                   | 0.862  |
| ii. "Green products are packaged in recycled biodegradable materials.” | 0.606           |       |       |                         |        |
| iii. "Green products have an ‘Energy Star’ or ‘Green seal’ label.” | 0.722           |       |       |                         |        |
| iv. "I can identify green products through the experience of using the brands.” | 0.788           |       |       |                         |        |
| v. "I can identify green products through the help of green product usage.” | 0.795           |       |       |                         |        |
| vi. "I can identify green products through self-perception knowledge.” | 0.744           |       |       |                         |        |
| **Purchase Intention (PI)** |                 |       |       |                         |        |
| i. "I will likely choose to buy green products if they are available in the store where I usually shop.” | 0.839           | 4.336 | 0.617 | 0.601                   | 0.819  |
| ii. "I am consistently considering buying green products to protect the environment.” | 0.748           |       |       |                         |        |
| iii. "I am willing to shift from non-green to green products.” | 0.735           |       |       |                         |        |
| **Purchase Behaviour (PB)** |                 |       |       |                         |        |
| i. "Knowing a product can be recycled, reused or repaired after you use it, is it a reason for me to buy these particular products?” | 0.752           | 3.948 | 0.761 | 0.622                   | 0.908  |
| ii. "I remain loyal to companies which practices are environmentally friendly (decrease wastes, recycle materials, etc.).” | 0.803           |       |       |                         |        |
| iii. "When I learn about the negative and harmful impact a product has in the environment, I stop buying it.” | 0.703           |       |       |                         |        |
| iv. "In case there is an alternative, I prefer products which cause less pollution.” | 0.848           |       |       |                         |        |
| v. "Choosing between two products, I always buy the one which has the minimum impact to people and environment.” | 0.833           |       |       |                         |        |
| vi. "I change products when they do not comply with the ecological condition/rules.” | 0.783           |       |       |                         |        |

Note: n = 2570; FLs: factor loadings; SD: standard deviation; all factor loadings are significant at p < 0.05.

On the other hand, convergent validity requires that the factor loading must be at least 0.50 and must be significant (p < 0.05) [59,60]. Furthermore, the AVE of each latent variable must be at least 0.50 [59,66]. When factor loadings are less than 0.50, these are considered
offending items. Hence, they must be removed from the analysis [67,68]. Consequently, two items were removed from consequences of environmental degradation (CED), two items removed from purchase intention (PI), and one item removed from purchase behaviour (PB) due to low loadings. After the deletion of the offending items, the results showed that all latent constructs passed the requirement for convergent validity.

Part of the evaluation of the measurement model is the gauging discriminant validity of the constructs. The study utilised the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to measure discriminant validity. According to studies conducted, the HTMT ratio threshold is 0.90 [66,69]. Based on Table 3, all latent constructs exhibit HTMT ratios of less than 0.90; hence, discriminant validity of all latent variables was established.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and discriminant validity using HTMT ratios.

|       | CED     | IGPA   | WIGP   | PI       | PB       |
|-------|---------|--------|--------|----------|----------|
| CED   | 0.554   |        |        |          |          |
| IGPA  | 0.422   | 0.758  |        |          |          |
| WIGP  | 0.516   | 0.501  | 0.516  |          |          |
| PI    | 0.326   | 0.314  | 0.394  | 0.853    | -        |

Note: CED—consequences of environmental degradation; WIGP—ways of identifying green products; IGPA—identification of green product attributes; PI—green purchase intention; PB—green purchase behaviour.

4.3. Path Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

SEM was conducted to test the hypotheses. Figure 3 and Table 4 manifest the assessment of the structural model. This section presents the path coefficients of each direct hypothesised relationship, their corresponding p-values, and effect sizes. In measuring the effect size, following is recommended thresholds [70]: 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large).

![Figure 3. The structural model with parameter estimates. Note: CED—consequences of environmental degradation; WIGP—ways of identifying green products; IGPA—identification of green product attributes; PI—green purchase intention; PB—green purchase behaviour.](image-url)

4.4. Robustness Testing

To examine the robustness of the model, the study used the common method bias test, coefficient of determination (R²), and measured the predictive validity (Q²). The common method bias test is performed to gauge whether lateral and vertical collinearity exists.
Table 4. Summary of path analysis and hypothesis testing.

| Hypotheses       | Path Coefficient | p-Value | Effect Size | Findings   |
|------------------|------------------|---------|-------------|------------|
| H1: CED → PI     | 0.246            | < 0.001 | 0.098       | Supported  |
| H2: WIGP → IGPA  | 0.631            | < 0.001 | 0.398       | Supported  |
| H3: WIGP → PI    | 0.216            | < 0.001 | 0.085       | Supported  |
| H4: IGPA → PI    | 0.133            | < 0.001 | 0.053       | Supported  |
| H5: PI → PB      | 0.648            | < 0.001 | 0.420       | Supported  |

Note: CED—consequences of environmental degradation; WIGP—ways of identifying green products; IGPA—identification of green product attributes; PI—green purchase intention; PB—green purchase decision.

Analysis of the data revealed that consequences of environmental degradation are significantly and positively related to green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.246, p < 0.001$) with a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.098$). Moreover, ways of identifying green products were found to have a significant and positive relationship with the identification of green product attributes ($\beta = 0.631, p < 0.001$) with the large size of the effect ($f^2 = 0.398$). Hence, both H1 and H2 are supported.

Furthermore, ways of identifying green products and green purchase intention were found to be significantly and directly related ($\beta = 0.216, p < 0.001$) with a small effect size ($f^2 = 0.085$). Additionally, the identification of green product attributes was also found to be significantly and positively related to green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.133, p < 0.001$) with a small effect size as well ($f^2 = 0.053$). Therefore, H3 and H4 are likewise supported.

Finally, the results showed that green purchase intention was significantly and positively related to green purchase behaviour ($\beta = 0.648, p < 0.001$) with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.420$). Hence, H5 is supported.

4.4. Robustness Testing

To examine the robustness of the model, the study used the common method bias test, coefficient of determination ($R^2$), and measured the predictive validity ($Q^2$). The common method bias test is performed to gauge whether lateral and vertical collinearity exists among the latent constructs. A previous study [60] recommended measuring the full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) with a threshold of 3.30 to assess any collinearity problem. As seen in Table 5, all latent constructs exhibit full collinearity VIFs of less than 3.30; hence, the model is free from vertical and lateral collinearity.

Table 5. Common method bias test, $R^2$, and $Q^2$.

| Latent Construct | Full Collinearity VIF | $R^2$ | $Q^2$ |
|------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| CED              | 1.417                 |       |       |
| IGPA             | 1.96                  | 0.398 | 0.399 |
| WIGP             | 1.744                 |       |       |
| PI               | 1.953                 | 0.236 | 0.236 |
| PB               | 1.753                 | 0.42  | 0.419 |

Note: CED—consequences of environmental degradation; WIGP—ways of identifying green products; IGPA—identification of green product attributes; PI—green purchase intention; PB—green purchase behaviour.

The $R^2$ values were also measured. The $R^2$ shows the proportion of the variance for a dependent (endogenous) variable that independent (exogenous) variables can explain. The $R^2$ value of 0.398 signifies that ways of identifying green products can explain 39.8% of the variability of identifying green product attributes. Moreover, the $R^2$ value of 0.236 suggests that 23.6% of the variability of green purchase intention can be attributed to environmental degradation, ways of identifying green products and identifying green product attributes. The $R^2$ value of 0.420 indicates that green purchase intention explains 42% of the variability of green purchase behavioural decisions when assessed using criteria listed in the literature [71]: 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.67 (substantial), the $R^2$ values of the structural model are within weak to moderate levels.
And last, Stone-Geisser $Q^2$ was gauged. Research has highlighted that, to say that the latent constructs exhibit predictive validity, their $Q^2$ values must be greater than zero [67]. As seen in Table 5, all latent variables passed the predictive validity test.

5. Discussion

This study sought to determine the green purchase awareness of business and accounting students in the Philippines. The majority of the respondents were accounting and business management students. This study has established that the respondents’ awareness of environmental degradation consequences, identifying green products, and identifying green product attributes positively and significantly contributed to green purchase intention. The purchase intention also influenced the purchase behaviour. The findings support that the theory of planned behaviour is a suitable way to explain the phenomenon; the Hofstede model of societal culture can enhance the explanatory power of green purchase intention and behaviour studies relating to societal cultures. The theory assists in understanding the fact that youth environmental awareness can influence intention to purchase green products and translate to purchase behaviour.

Youth environmental awareness has a low level of influence on green purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.24$). However, the results show that green purchase intention only moderately explains green purchase behaviour ($R^2 = 0.42$). These results are consistent with previous studies that examined green purchase intention in Malaysia [17]. However, a study conducted in Iran found that attitude only contributes to green purchase intention [18]. Different findings can be due to societal cross-cultural differences between Iran and the Philippines. However, a study conducted in Indonesia showed that subjective norms do not influence green purchase intention, which could have been due to how that study defined subjective norms rather than societal culture, as acknowledged by them as a limitation [6].

The potential beneficiaries of this study include young consumers, university students, and several stakeholders by understanding the drivers of the young consumers’ purchase decisions towards sustainability in an emerging economy—the Philippines.

The findings show that the environmental awareness belief system shared as attitudinal beliefs, normative beliefs, and perceived behavioural control beliefs contribute to green purchase intentions among the youth. The findings indicate that although green purchase intention strongly influences green purchase behaviour ($R^2 = 0.42$), youth respond to negative environmental news with a low level of green purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.24$).

Literature shows that intention may be the primary predictor of any behaviour [36]; thus, purchase intention is considered the primary antecedent of purchase behaviour. The data gathered in this study confirmed that green purchase intention is significantly and positively related to green purchase behaviour and support the body of the existing literature. What is new in the findings is that subjective norms positively influence perceived behavioural control. We point out that although the theory of planned behaviour is a sound theoretical model, it requires considering the Hofstede model of societal culture in understanding the green purchase intention and behaviour at a societal level. Hofstede’s model explains societal culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others [72]. That model comprises six different societal dimensions. They are: large versus small power distance in a hierarchical scale, strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance in responding to uncertainty, individualism versus collectivism in a social framework, masculinity (for instance, achievement) versus femininity (for example, caring for others), long-term versus short-term orientation (outlook), and indulgence versus restraint [73]. Societal culture is a collective phenomenon with some variations among individuals. The cultural level is the normative level. Therefore, we point out that in applying the theory of planned behaviour, the subjective norms are represented mainly by national societal cultures, and individuals in the societal nation carry attitudinal beliefs and perceived behavioural control. As shown in the findings, subjective norms primarily shaped by the societal culture can influence an
individual’s behavioural perception about how much control they have towards forming a green purchase intention.

The previous research findings have shown that consumers’ environmental commitment and awareness of eco-products are the strongest determinants of green purchase intention [39]. However, at a societal level, they are influenced by the high societal power distance where the Philippines Government has enacted the Republic Act Number 9512 (National Education and Awareness Act of 2008).

Research using factor analysis has shown that individualism versus collectivism and low- versus high-power distance highly but negatively correlate into a single factor. The short-term versus long-term orientation and indulgence versus restrain; are highly but negatively correlated into a single factor [73]. They become important in increasing the explanatory power of the theory of planned behaviour by including the Hofstede model of societal culture. For instance, in Australia, individualism is 90 (high), and power distance is 38 (low). The long-term orientation is 21 (low), and indulgence is 71 (high). In the Philippines, individualism is 32 (low), and power distance is 94 (high). The long-term orientation is 27 (low), and indulgence is 42 (moderate) [8]. The societal norms between the two countries are different. Hence, societal culture can be crucial in green purchase intention and behaviour.

6. Conclusions
6.1. Practical Implications

In different societal cultures, effective learning and awareness strategies can differ, such as environmental degradation, and appropriate strategies are crucial to increasing awareness [74]. Some approaches can assist in raising environmental awareness in the Philippines. They are strategic, partner with others, and have government policies.

In the strategic approach, one strategy is that most young adult consumers gain knowledge through advertisements such as printed media or social media. Advertising is important to reach prospective young adults to influence their intention and buying behaviour [44]. The respondents identified the green products mostly by their packaging and labels, which were the most visible features of the green product package that attracted them. The second strategy requires buyers to read and understand the environmental impact on their products and services. Identifying green products by looking for the “energy star” or “green seal” must be convenient for buyers. The third strategy is to obtain certification from the government about the green content of every product and its environmental impact and visibly display it on product labels. The policymakers can reset these strategies by partnering with organisations and reviewing existing plans by policymakers outlined next in the context of subjective norms of the Philippine society.

In the partnering with organisations approach, environmental awareness can lead to knowledgeable attitudinal change and behavioural perception towards green purchase intention [44,68]. Primary, secondary, and higher education curriculums can play a crucial role in increasing such awareness. Businesses that wish to take a proactive role in protecting the environment can also play an important role by engaging their staff with community projects to protect the environment. Non-governmental organisations that have environmental protection objectives can also include the community in raising environmental awareness.

The third approach is that policymakers review the effectiveness of public money invested in environmental awareness programs by measuring their outcomes (green purchase intention) and impacts (green purchase behaviour). Further, the Philippine government can offer generous tax deductions for organisations that manufacture green products as it can increase the health and well-being of society and decrease healthcare costs.

6.2. Social Implications

Social norms in a collective society such as the Philippines moderately influence perceived behavioural control ($R^2 = 0.4$). This confirms that social norms can mediate
the perceived behavioural control of youth towards green purchase intention. However, this study did not examine the direct effect of perceived behavioural control on green purchase behaviour that future research can include in their model. Perceived behavioural control has two aspects: proactive about environmental protection and reactive to delayed harmful action [49]. These two scenarios can become important for purchase intention and behaviour, depending on green products being widely available at affordable prices. Concerning the perceived behavioural control belief, in a recent survey, more than 75% of Filipinos stated their intention to buy green products. However, more than 55% said either green products are not readily available or when they are available, they are more expensive than alternative products. As a societal-cultural nuance, 92% of Filipinos prefer products made from natural ingredients, and 90% of Filipinos are more inclined to buy locally made green products, supporting the local economy and employment [74,75]. The report indicates that consumers have a solid intention to purchase green products. Thus, this study recommends that government and businesses work together in promoting the local green production industry and review the supply chain bottlenecks for product availability. The government can offer enterprises incentives to produce green products at competitive prices. These incentives can benefit the government and enterprises; fiscal policy can provide a higher tax deduction for green product production; monetary policy can provide businesses lower-interest loans.

Research shows that societal culture is a vital determinant in purchase behaviour (Ghali-Zinoubi, 2022) [76]. Some countries in East Asia have cultural similarities to the Philippines, facing severe climate change risks. For instance, Indonesia has a high-power distance score (78) and low individualism score (14); Vietnam has a high-power distance score (70) and a low individualism score (20). These findings are extendible to those countries for policymaking and increasing societal and environmental awareness. In these societal-cultural settings, the study recommends using a hierarchical approach to making people aware of the environment and encouraging people to collectively think to reinforce green purchase intention, which translates into purchase behaviour.

6.3. Research Limitations

Like any research, this study has demographic and theoretical limitations. Concerning demographics, the study sought to understand the green purchase awareness of the business and accounting students at a single large university in the Philippines. The findings of this study apply to business university students; thus, they cannot be generalised to other schools and colleges. Future research directions may focus on other universities and populations of both students and employees to capture a broader picture of green purchase awareness. In addition, future research could also focus on corporate settings and assess employees’ green purchase awareness. The theoretical constructs contain random measurement errors, showing reliability scores of less than 0.8 [77]. As a result, the relationships among construct coefficients are less than 0.6. The delays from intention to purchase can make intentions unstable and can adversely affect the purchase decision, reducing the predictive validity [78,79].

This study delivered a clearer picture of the university students’ green purchase awareness. The above conclusions revealed that as consumers become aware of environmental issues, their instinct to become environmentally responsible increases. Thus, the provision of an environmental awareness program in schools and universities to expose students to the detrimental issues involving the environment and strengthen their awareness of the distinction between green and non-green product attributes is suggested. In addition, school policies and campaigns on implementing a clean and green campus that will educate students on the usage and attributes of green products to build their green purchase intention must be strengthened [80]. On the part of companies offering green products, it is suggested that they improve their efforts in establishing a green product image through their marketing communication activities and by ensuring the efficacy of the quality of green products.
Furthermore, a more specific study is recommended. Future researchers could consider the moderating effects of the respondents’ demographics on their environmental awareness and green purchase intention. A prospective study can increase the scope by involving other students from various colleges and universities in the Philippines and by investigating community-wide acceptance.

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