

# The Influence of Socially Responsible Conduct on Purchasing Intentions

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#### Abstract

This research investigates the relationship between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and personal values in explaining consumers' intention to buy socially responsible products. The sample consisted of 400 Thai adults, both male and female, aged 20 years and above, who had previously purchased socially responsible products. Participants were selected from the metropolitan area of Phitsanulok using purposive sampling techniques. There were 256 female responders and 144 male respondents. Most participants possessed a bachelor's degree and received a monthly income ranging from 15,001 to 20,000 Baht. Questionnaires were administered to collect data. The regression model demonstrated overall statistical significance and accounted for 56.4% ( $R^2$ adj = 0.564, F = 130.147, p < 0.001) of the variance in purchase intention, indicating a robust model fit. The findings revealed that attitude and perceived behavioral control were significant predictors. Attitude had the highest standardized beta coefficient ( $\beta$  = 0.455), making it the strongest predictor among the factors, with a statistically significant effect (p < 0.001). Perceived behavioral control was also a significant predictor ( $\beta$  = 0.386, p < 0.001). The results demonstrate that attitude and perceived behavioral control substantially impact on customers' intentions to purchase socially responsible products. Therefore, companies should prioritize ethical practices and actively promote their social responsibility initiatives, as consumers were more likely to support firms with strong ethical reputations and avoid those with negative ethical associations.

Keywords: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, personal values, purchase intention, socially responsible products

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## Background and Significance of the Research Problem

In recent decades, environmental sustainability has emerged as a fundamental focus on the global agenda. A growing number of organizations worldwide are developing products that prioritize social responsibility, in response to the increasing consumer demand for such options (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). As customers become progressively conscious of the social and environmental implications of their buying, their buying intentions are shaped by a desire to support companies that align with their values (Lopes et al., 2024). Research indicates that the advantages of adopting social responsibility encompass heightened purchase intentions (Mohr and Webb, 2005), favorable word-of-mouth (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002), readiness to pay premium prices (Laroche et al., 2001; Aguilar & Vlosky, 2007; De Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005; Saphores et al., 2007), positive company evaluations (Brown & Dacin, 1997), and resilience against criticism (Peloza, 2006). Due to the significance, it is essential to enhance comprehension of the integration of social responsibility into a company's products and services and its influence on purchasing intentions, as prior evidence is fragmented across regions, with limited integration of Asian and Thai consumer contexts, despite their unique cultural and economic conditions.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a prominent psychological model used for analyzing and understanding consumer behavior, especially in the context of intention to purchase and purchase decisions. TPB mentions that three core components consisting of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control collectively influence an individual's behavioral intentions, which subsequently forecasts actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Schwartz (1994) proposed a classification of human values based on their motivational objectives. These motivational types of values such as universalism, benevolence, conformity have become a widely recognized framework for understanding the role of values in guiding individual behavior, including consumer intention to purchase such as a study of Hansanti (2024) investigated how different value perceptions including personal values affect Thai consumers' intentions to purchase products.

Phitsanulok plays a highly significant role as a center for sustainable city development in the lower northern region of Thailand, especially through its socially responsible approaches to environmental sustainability. Phitsanulok stands out as a significant city for sustainability due to its success in waste management. The city's approach integrates the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and community-based waste management. The city's waste management plan is acknowledged both domestically and globally, receiving awards like the Dubai International Award for Best

Practice and the ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable City Plan for Cities award. Phitsanulok has also applied mechanical-biological treatment (MBT) technology and adapted it locally. This approach has effectively reduced the amount of waste going to landfills and extended landfill life, positioning Phitsanulok as an example for other municipalities (Tantanee & Hantrakul, 2019). Therefore, Phitsanulok is a major city in the lower northern region implementing socially responsible approaches for sustainability.

This study seeks to expand the scope of research by analyzing organizations that engage in social responsibility and assessing consumer purchasing intentions from their perspective. This study aims to examine personal values in conjunction with the components of the theory of planned behavior (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control) to clarify customers' purchasing intention for socially responsible products in Phitsanulok.

## Research Objective

This study examines the relationship among attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and personal values in explaining consumers' intention to buy socially responsible products.

# Theoretical Background

## Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) emphasizes that purchase intention is collectively influenced by attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). This theory posits that attitudes not only affect an individual's behavior but also their intentions to act. In this context, a consumer is more likely to develop an intention to purchase a product if they have a positive attitude towards it (Bosnjak et al., 2020). Subjective norm represents the perceived social pressures individuals experience over their choice of engaging in a particular behavior. Whereas perceived behavioral control reflects the consumer's belief in their ability to make a purchase (Ajzen, 1991), considering factors such as socially conscious product availability and other external obstacles to perform a behavior.

### Literature Reviews

## Attitude toward Intention to Buy Socially Responsible Products

The correlation among attitude and purchase intention has been extensively studied across various industries. When consumers hold positive attitudes toward a product whether

due to its perceived quality, usefulness, or congruence with their values they are more inclined to have robust purchase intentions (Shanbhogue & Ranjith, 2023; Fahlevi et al., 2023). Attitudes are influenced by convictions regarding environmental benefits, ethical considerations, and perceptions of product value (Wu et al., 2024; Sági et al., 2025).

H<sub>1</sub>: Attitude positively influences the intention to purchase socially responsible products.

# Subjective Norm and Its Consumer Purchase Intention

Subjective norm is the beliefs individuals have about significant people within their social circle (such as family, friends, colleagues, or society at large) think they should do. These social pressures significantly influence individuals' behaviors, including their purchase intentions. Subjective norm describes how one person influences the behavior of another (Ajzen, 1991). According to Paul (2016), it is defined as the impact of individuals who are important to the person, such as close friends, relatives, co-workers, or business partners. It also determines behavioral intentions. Chu and Kim (2011) demonstrate that consumers often turn to social media and online networks for product recommendations, subjective norm significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior.

 $\rm H_2$ : Subjective norm positively influences the intention to purchase socially responsible products.

# Perceive Behavioral Control and Consumer Purchasing Intention

A heightened sense of perceived behavioral control indicates that the consumer possesses confidence and capable of making the purchase, with few obstacles or limitations. When individuals perceive that they have sufficient resources to make a purchase, their perceived behavioral control is high, which in turn increases their purchase intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Consumers who perceive their actions as impactful are more inclined to participate in ecologically sustainable behaviors, such as acquiring environmentally sustainable products (Kim & Lee, 2023). PBC positively influences with purchase intention for sustainable products (Kim & Chung, 2011; Galván-Mendoza et al., 2022).

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived behavioral control positively influences the intention to purchase socially responsible products.

# Personal Values and Intention to Purchase Socially Responsible Products

Personal values are defined as concepts or attitudes that influence an individual's preferred outcome (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values is a prominent model for explaining the influence of values on individual behavior. It also provides an understanding of the relationship between personal values and purchase intention (Primc et al., 2021). Schwartz (1994) identified various types of human values based on their motivational objectives. These motivational types of values such as universalism: protecting the well-being of all individuals and the environment; benevolence: conservation and improvement of human welfare; conformity: restraint of actions, have been widely recognized context for understanding the role of values (Schwartz, 1994). Research consistently demonstrates that consumers' values significantly influence their decision-making processes and intentions to purchase products (Primc et al., 2021).

H<sub>4</sub>: Personal values positively influence the intention to purchase socially responsible products.

# Research Methodology

# Sample and Data Collection

Thai adults, both male and female, aged 20 years and above, who had ever bought socially responsible products for 400 people. The questionnaires were conducted. Adults from the metropolitan city of Phitsanulok were selected and sampled. Questionnaires were administered using purposive sampling techniques. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated. Prior to employing the statistical instrument, a reliability assessment was performed; the values of the coefficient alpha (Cronbach's Alpha) were analyzed. The model employed five components in the questionnaire: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, personal values, and purchase intention. This questionnaire also considered content validity by expert validation. Questions are from Creyer & Ross (1997); Schwartz (1994); Vermeir & Verbeke (2008). The questionnaire's reliability ranged from 0.713 to 0.794. Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) asserted that the data must demonstrate adequate reliability, with all values surpassing the 0.60 threshold for consistency. Kline (2005) observed that a dependability coefficient approximately 0.70 was regarded as satisfactory. The multiple regression analysis was conducted with purchase intention as the dependent variable. Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and personal values were included as independent variables of the multiple regression.

#### Common Method Bias

Common method bias in behavioral research was considered to avoid any measurement error. Podsakoff et al. (2003) claimed that the likely cause of common method bias results from the predictor and criterion variables being taken from the same source. This study was aware of the problem. Therefore, the most likely existence of common method bias was assessed with Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). All the variables were loaded into an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the unrotated factor solution. This EFA aimed to determine if a singular factor could explain most of the covariance among the measurements. The unrotated factor solution indicated that one factor accounted for 18.613% of the variance. It is much less than the threshold value of 50% (Harman, 1976). Consequently, the findings indicated that common method variance was not a significant issue in this study.

### Results

### Demographic Profiles

There were 256 female participants and 144 male participants. The data revealed 64% of participants were female and 36% were male. The participants' age group (20-35) had a mean age of 24.78 (SD = 2.828). The largest group of participants was equivalent to 12.5% (50 respondents) was 21 years of age, while the minority of respondents was 35, representing only 0.3%. Most respondents (352 respondents) had a bachelor's degree and this equaled 88%. The respondents who studied in Diploma and Master Courses were only 8.2% and 3.8%, respectively. According to the monthly allowance, the majority (105 respondents) earned in the range of 15,001-20,000 Baht which equated to 26.30%, while the minority of respondents (12 respondents) earned 30,001 Baht up, representing only 3%.

#### Attitude

More than half of respondents perceived that it is very satisfying to discover that the companies from which they purchase have conducted business responsibly (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.75) as the most common attitude towards intention to buy socially responsible products. They are truly concerned about the ethical reputation of the stores they buy, which showed the second mean score of 4.05 (SD = 0.79). The respondents perceived three attitudes with the distribution of the mean scores in a similar range between 3.90 and 3.96. These attitude questions were: it is crucial for them that the companies they engage with possess an ethical reputation (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.71); they are significantly concerned to discover that a company

from whom they purchase has engaged in unethical conduct (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.91); and they are genuinely concerned about the reputation of unethical behavior from the stores they visit (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.89).

# Subjective Norm

Most respondents agreed and mentioned people who were important to them as those who influenced their buying intention and thought they should buy sustainable products. It indicated a mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.83). Over fifty percent of respondents agreed that people who were important to their family who influenced their buying intention thought they should buy sustainable products and revealed a mean score of 3.54 (SD = 0.97). In addition, the respondents claimed that people who were important to society influenced their buying intention thought they should buy sustainable products, and this revealed a mean score of 3.40 (SD = 0.92).

#### Perceive Behavioral Control

More than half of respondents perceived that they typically make intentional effort to restrict their use of things composed of or utilizing scarce resources (Mean = 3.97, SD = 0.72) as the most common perceived behavioral control. When given an option, they consistently select things that generate the least pollution and, whenever feasible, purchase items packaged in reusable containers shown the second mean score of 3.93 (SD = 0.81). The respondents perceived three perceived behavioral control with the distribution of the mean scores in a similar range between 3.87 and 3.90. These perceived behavioral control questions were they will refrain from purchasing things with heavy packaging (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.83); They refrain from purchasing household products that are harmful to the environment (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.72); if they understand the possible environmental harm that things can cause, they refrain from purchasing these items (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.77).

### Personal Values

Most respondents mentioned universalism: their purchasing intentions for sustainable items were impacted by understanding and the protection of the welfare of all individuals and nature. Unity with nature (fitting into nature) indicated a mean score of 4.00 (SD = 0.75), wisdom (a profound understanding of nature) indicated a mean score of 4.00 (SD = 0.78), a beauty of nature (a world of beauty) indicated a mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.77) and protecting the environment (preserving nature) indicated a mean score of 3.81 (SD = 0.83). More than half of respondents agreed that benevolence: enhancement of the welfare of others with whom one

has regular personal interactions affects their purchasing intentions. Loyal (faithful to friends, groups) revealed a mean score of 4.24 (SD = 0.76), honest (genuine, sincere) revealed a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.77), helpful (working for the welfare of others) revealed a mean score of 4.01 (SD = 0.77) and responsible (dependable, reliable) revealed a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.75).

### Purchase Intention

Most respondents agreed and mentioned companies that exhibit high ethical standards are likely to be successful in the marketplace. It indicated a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.74). More than half of respondents agreed that unethical businesses should perform poorly in the marketplace and revealed a mean score of 4.02 (SD = 0.85). In addition, the respondents claimed that unethical firms should not be permitted to achieve profits exceeding those of ethical firms and this revealed a mean score of 3.98 (SD = 0.82). When presented with a choice between two businesses, one unethical and another ethical, people would select for purchasing from the ethical business, and this was revealed to have a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 0.72). Moreover, they would pay more for a product from a company recognized for its exceptional ethical standards (Mean = 3.83, SD = 0.89).

# **Hypotheses Testing**

Preliminary analyses were performed to confirm no violation of the regression assumptions that occurred. The findings indicated that the data set adhered to the assumptions required for regression analysis. Pearson correlation coefficients among the study variables were carried out. The correlation coefficients (r) represented the degree and direction of the linear association between each variable pair. All correlations were statistically significant at the p < 0.001 level. The correlation coefficients (r) were between 0.071-0.688 considered acceptable (Evans, 1996). Moreover, Collinearity statistics like the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance were critical for diagnosing multicollinearity in regression models. For this research, the VIF were between 1.047-1.769 considered generally acceptable and Tolerance were between 0.565-0.955 considered acceptable (negligible multicollinearity) (Hair et al., 2010).

The multiple regression analysis was conducted with purchase intention as the dependent variable. Attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and personal values were included as independent variables of the multiple regression. The enter regression method was employed to construct a model for predicting the impact of many variables on purchase intention. In the enter method, all predictors are entered into the regression equation at once, and each is evaluated for its unique contribution to explaining the outcome, controlling for the effects of all other predictors. The regression statistics results are shown in Table 1.

Variables	β	SE	t	p-value
Purchase intention				
Attitude	0.455	0.043	10.981	0.000***
Subjective norm	-0.026	0.024	-0.775	0.493
Perceived behavioral control	0.386	0.046	8.773	0.000***
Personal values	0.011	0.038	0.291	0.771

**Table 1** Regression analysis testing purchase intention based on various variables

Table 1 shows the findings of a regression analysis investigating how attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and personal values predict purchase intention. The regression model demonstrated overall statistical significance and accounted for 56.4% (R²adj = 0.564, F = 130.147, p < 0.001) of the variance in purchase intention, indicating a robust model fit. The findings revealed that attitude and perceived behavioral control were significant

Z = 0.455 (Attitude) + 0.386 (Perceived behavioral control)

predictors. The standardized predictive equation is as follows.

 $F = 130.147, R_{adi}^2 = 0.564, p-value < 0.001^{***}$ 

Attitude had the largest standardized beta coefficient (0.455), indicating it was the strongest predictor among the variables. Its effect was statistically significant (p = 0.000). This indicates that an increase in favorable attitudes correlates with a rise in buying intention.

Perceived behavioral control was also a significant predictor ( $\beta$  = 0.386, p=0.000), suggesting that individuals who felt more in control of their behavior were more likely to intend to purchase.

Subjective norm ( $\beta$  = -0.026, p = 0.493) and Personal values ( $\beta$  = 0.011, p = 0.771) were not statistically significant predictors. This meant that, in this model, subjective morns and personal values did not meaningfully influence purchase intention.

Therefore, the regression model was strong and statistically significant. Attitude and perceived behavioral control were statistically significant predictors. It was evident that respondents think attitude and perceived behavioral control influenced consumers' purchase intention toward socially responsible products.

#### Conclusion and Discussion

This research examined the correlation among attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and personal values in explaining consumers' purchase intention toward socially responsible products. The study examined empirical research in Phitsanulok and demonstrated its contribution to the understanding of customers' purchasing intentions regarding socially responsible products. Respondents clearly believed that attitude and perceived behavioral control affected consumers' buying intentions for socially responsible products.

The results demonstrated that consumers' attitudes significantly influenced their purchase intentions toward socially responsible products. The respondents expressed strong satisfaction in discovering that the companies they support act ethically. This finding underscored the importance consumers placed on the ethical reputation of firms, as they did not only care about the ethical behavior of the stores, they patronized but also actively avoided companies with a reputation for unethical practices. These findings aligned with previous research, which demonstrated that positive attitudes, regardless of whether they originated from perceived product quality, usefulness, or alignment with personal values, were significantly associated with stronger purchase intentions (Shanbhogue & Ranjith, 2023; Fahlevi et al., 2023). Wu et al. (2024) discovered that the tendency of consumers to purchase socially responsible was significantly predicted by their favorable attitudes towards these products. Additionally, the development of these attitudes was influenced by several factors, such as the perceived value of the product, ethical considerations, and beliefs regarding environmental benefits (Wu et al., 2024; Sági et al., 2025). This implied that consumers exhibited significant worry for the overarching social and ethical consequences of their purchasing intentions.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) significantly influenced consumers' purchase intentions. Respondents reported making conscious efforts to limit their use of products that deplete scarce resources and consistently preferred products that minimize environmental pollution. Furthermore, they showed a strong tendency to purchase items packaged in reusable containers and to avoid products with excessive packaging or those that are harmful to the environment. These findings aligned with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). When consumers perceived that they had sufficient resources, knowledge, and opportunities to choose sustainable products, their sense of control was heightened, leading to stronger purchase intentions. The study's results were consistent with previous research e.g. Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; Kim & Chung, 2011; Galván-Mendoza et al., 2022, which found that higher levels

of PBC enhanced the probability of participating in pro-environmental conduct, such as buying eco-friendly products. Respondents who believed their choices could positively impact the environment were more likely to avoid products that are harmful or excessively packaged, and to seek out alternatives that are less polluting. Overall, these findings highlighted the importance of empowering consumers by reducing barriers and increasing their perceived control over sustainable purchasing intentions.

However, subjective norms and personal values did not meaningfully influence purchase intentions. Subjective norms may not significantly predict purchase intention because individuals often feel they have high control over purchasing socially responsible products, such as having the necessary resources, opportunities, and knowledge; thus, the influence of subjective norms is diminished. As Schüler & Tapachai (2025) mentioned, when consumers intend to buy products with consumption aspects like sustainable goods, they tend to rely more on their attitudes than on perceived social pressure. Therefore, the subjective norm often loses predictive power. The result also shows personal values may not be a significant predictor of purchase intention. These results might be because purchase intention is often shaped by a combination of situational and product-specific variables that can overshadow the underlying influence of personal values. For instance, the perceived value of people might relate to product features, convenience, price, and brand reputation and often has a more immediate impact on purchasing intentions than personal values (Wang et al., 2023).

This research offered practical insights for companies aiming to improve consumer buying intentions. The results indicated that maintaining and communicating an ethical reputation was crucial for attracting ethically conscious consumers. Companies should prioritize ethical practices and actively promote their social responsibility initiatives, as consumers were more likely to support firms with strong ethical reputations and avoid those with negative ethical associations. The results also suggested that interventions designed to enhance consumer's perceived behavioral controls such as delivering explicit information regarding the environmental consequences of products, increasing the availability and visibility of eco-friendly options, as well as reducing barriers to purchasing sustainable goods could effectively increase the purchasing behavior. The findings underscored the importance of not only raising awareness but also facilitating the conditions that enabled consumers to act on their socially responsible intentions.

This research enhances theoretical comprehension of consumer behavior by emphasizing the significance of attitude in influencing purchase intentions for socially responsible products.

The findings supported that attitudes shaped by perceptions of ethical reputation and environmental benefits were strong predictors of purchase intention. By demonstrating that consumers were not only influenced by product attributes but also by the ethical conduct of firms. This study also contributed to theoretical understanding of consumer behavior by reinforcing the critical role of perceived behavioral control (PBC) within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The findings confirmed that PBC was a significant predictor of consumers' purchase intentions toward socially responsible products, supporting Ajzen (1991) proposition that individuals' confidence in their ability to perform a behavior strongly influences their intentions. By demonstrating that consumers who felt capable of making environmentally responsible choices were more likely to act on these intentions, this research extended the application of TPB to the context of sustainable consumption.

### Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study has certain limitations and offers recommendations for future research. Firstly, this study analyses the factors that can affect the buying intention of socially responsible products. The correlation between socially responsible behaviors and buying intention is evaluated, but there is limited analysis of this relationship in the extant literature. Secondly, the study has a limited geographical focus in that it analyses only one province in Thailand. As such, the responses are not representative of all consumers in other areas. Thirdly, this study investigates the determinants of consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions. Thus, the actual purchasing behavior of people should be further examined in future studies. Finally, the common method bias should be considered for future research. Future research can mitigate common method bias by acquiring measures of dependent and independent variables from separate sources.

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