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Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Changes in Green Food Consumption Behavior in Hanoi: From Online Reviews to Actual Purchasing Behavior

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Abstract

Green food consumption has become increasingly critical in the context of sustainable development and public health, particularly in emerging economies like Vietnam. Despite rising awareness, adoption of green food remains limited, partly due to gaps in understanding the behavioral drivers influencing consumer choices. This study addresses a key research gap by examining how electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)—specifically its trustworthiness and frequency—alongside belief in green food benefits, subjective norms, and consumer attitudes, affect the intention to purchase and actual behavior of green food consumers in Hanoi. Prior research has not adequately explored how these digital and psychological factors interplay within the Vietnamese urban context. A quantitative survey was conducted with 589 residents in Hanoi, and data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Findings reveal that all examined factors significantly and positively influence purchase intention, with frequency of eWOM exerting the strongest effect. Furthermore, purchase intention significantly predicts actual purchase behavior. These insights provide practical implications for stakeholders aiming to promote green food consumption and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in digitally connected, urban environments of emerging markets.

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1. Introduction

In recent times, global warming and climate change have presented significant challenges to society [1, 2]. The task of lowering environmental damage while accomplishing sustainable development is critical for not only governments and organizations but also researchers and practitioners. Green consumption and green food intake are key factors contributing to this situation. In recent years, although an increase in global warming and climate change has been witnessed, authorities, companies, scholars, and consumers have placed an emphasis substantially on establishing sustainable development and minimizing environmental pollution [3]. The concept of sustainability has become a pivotal issue in contemporary discourse, with numerous discussions focused on the role of sustainable consumption in alleviating adverse environmental impacts. Additionally, there is considerable interest in understanding the factors that drive consumers towards environmentally friendly purchasing practices, thereby fostering green consumer behavior [4]. Sustainable production, while environmentally friendly use, should be integrated to achieve environmentally friendly growth [5] . The consumption of green food, characterized by its sustainable attributes and health benefits, is regarded as a viable approach to addressing issues related to sustainable development and food safety. Prolonged consumption of traditional foods contaminated with chemical residues can jeopardize health conditions, which may worsen chronic illnesses and elevate the incidence of cancer [6]. Green consumption refers to environmentally friendly consumption for both the present and the future [2,7]. It has been shown that consumers can support sustainable development through their consumption preferences by increasing their consumption of organic foods in many countries across the globe [8]. Green food is gaining popularity in emerging economies like Vietnam, but many consumers remain apprehensive about embracing it [9]. Ecological consciousness or green consumption also involves the acquisition, utilization, and release of products that reduce disruption to the ecosystem and society without sacrificing quality or quantity [10]. Green food consumption raises both ethical and environmental concerns [11], which initiated a unique marketplace [12].

Researchers and marketers have widely recognized the significant influence of word-of-mouth on consumers' buying habits [13]. In digital contexts, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has gained prominence among consumers, industry professionals, and marketing academics [14]. Furthermore, eWOM demonstrates a remarkable effect when juxtaposed with alternative marketing strategies and advertising techniques. Moreover, recent research on eWOM indicates that social media has become the primary channel through which consumers both engage in and seek out eWOM [15]. Numerous studies have been published that explore the connections between eWOM, social influence, and various consumer behavior variables. Mishra and Satish [16] examined the importance of electronic word of mouth, highlighting its significance in the development of marketing and communication strategies, which primarily concentrated on different facets of eWOM, including its impact on consumers' purchasing decision processes and their overall purchasing behaviors. Furthermore, marketers have increasingly emphasized the importance of social media to convince their customers through eWOM, which delivers an easy and sufficient means of communication [17]. This trend has created new opportunities for interaction between companies and clients, thereby transforming the dynamics of eWOM in modern society. eWOM on social media exerts a powerful influence over consumers' purchasing decisions. According to Chivandi et al. [18], customers frequently turn to social media as their go-to source for product information, particularly insights on names, producers, and vendors, as part of their buying decisions. Although a growing number of studies, the association between eWOM on social media platforms

and consumers' purchase intentions is still not clearly defined [19]. According to Tien et al. [20], the restricted statistical data available complicates the job of comprehending the precise connection between a client's interaction with eWOM on social media platforms.

Vietnam, an emerging economy experiencing rapid urbanization, green food adoption is increasingly relevant but not yet widespread, particularly in urban centers like Hanoi [21]. Concerns about food safety and the harmful effects of chemically contaminated conventional foods further accentuate the need for green alternatives [9]. Despite the rising demand, many Vietnamese consumers remain hesitant to adopt green food, due in part to limited understanding of the factors influencing their purchasing behavior [22]. At the same time, the digital age has transformed how information is exchanged, with eWOM emerging as a key influencer in consumer decision-making [19,23]. In Vietnam, where internet penetration and social media usage are high, eWOM serves as a critical channel through which consumers gather product information and validate purchase choices [13]. However, existing research has yet to adequately investigate the interaction between eWOM dimensions—particularly trustworthiness and frequency—and consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and beliefs in the benefits of green food within the Vietnamese context. This gap is particularly significant given the lack of robust empirical evidence from studies conducted in Vietnam. This research thus aims to explore these relationships and provide actionable insights into green food consumption behavior in Hanoi. As a result, the authors identify this gap in research as an opportunity for further investigation and propose strategies to enhance green purchasing intentions within the Vietnamese context. Consequently, an investigation into the impact of eWOM on green food intake becomes significant. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of eWOM on green food consumption behavior in Hanoi.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was first presented as an expansion that complied with the Theory of Reasoned Action [24]. According to Ajzen [25], it is widely used to explain human decision-making and behavioral intention. It posits that intention, which is shaped by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, is the primary determinant of actual behavior. In the context of green food consumption, TPB helps explain how favorable attitudes, social pressures, and beliefs in benefits shape consumers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products [25]. According to Ajzen [26], intention is the primary element influencing behavior, and intention is influenced by several constructs such as subjective norms and attitudes. Additionally, Ajzen [26] elucidated that attitudes are the scale to which an individual obtains a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question, whereas subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure that influences an individual's decision to execute or abstain from the behavior.

TPB is frequently used to forecast customers' behavioral intentions about green food [27–29]. The theoretical framework of Albayrak et al. [30], which focused on green buying, was based on TPB. TPB has been used as the theoretical foundation by other investigations, outside of the ones mentioned above, to investigate whether or not consumers want to engage in environmentally beneficial behavior [31–33].

2.1.2. Social Influence Theory

The explanation provided by Social Influence Theory has been crucial in understanding the behavioral and attitudinal effects of online influencer marketing [34]. The theory specifically asserts that individuals accept social influence by explaining the behaviors and speech of those who have the ability to affect them [35, 36]. In addition, Social Influence Theory focuses on the mechanisms through which external social stimuli shape individual behavior. This theory emphasizes the impact of online reviews, social conformity, and internalization processes in influencing consumer decision-making. In digital spaces, eWOM serves as a powerful form of social influence that can reinforce or modify consumer perceptions of product quality, credibility, and trust-

worthiness [13]. Following exposure to influences, attitudes and behaviors can change on three different levels: compliance, identification, and internalization.

Different behavioral reactions might arise from the three degrees of influence acceptance [37]. Since internalization is independent of situational and social context as well as normative views, it is thought to be the best predictor of long-term commitment to the induced behavior among the three acceptance processes. In order to investigate the connections between the views of virtual reviewers and the corresponding cognitive and behavioral reactions, we apply the Social Influence Theory to our research. Furthermore, we contend that the Social Influence Theory is helpful in examining how customers behave after accepting an influence. Purchase intention and actual behavior adoption are included in the behavioral responses in this study, which captures both the commercial and non-commercial effects of involvement.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study integrates these theories to propose a comprehensive framework for analyzing green food purchasing behavior. Specifically, the following constructs are examined: the trustworthiness of eWOM, the frequency of eWOM, the belief in the benefits of green food, subjective norms, and attitudes toward green food. These constructs are hypothesized to influence purchase intention, which in turn affects actual purchase behavior. Each relationship is grounded in theoretical and empirical literature. The proposed framework recognizes the role of both internal factors (e.g., attitudes and beliefs) and external influences (e.g., eWOM) in shaping purchase behavior, particularly in the Vietnamese context where digital and social networks are increasingly prominent in consumer decision-making processes. This integrative approach addresses the literature gap by offering a localized understanding of the drivers of green food consumption in Hanoi. Among the concepts proposed by previous scholars, the authors found that the idea of Hennig-Thurau et al. [38] is suitable for the research topic: "eWOM is all positive or negative affirmations created by both old, current and potential customers about a product or a company; these affirmations are made available to community groups or organizations via the Internet.". Thus, eWOM in this study can be understood as comments and feedback from customers about products on e-commerce platforms, and it can be measured through variables such as authenticity, trustworthiness and frequency of occurrence.

2.2.1. Trustworthiness of eWOM

When information is perceived as coming from an unreliable source, the recipient begins to question the reliability of the information [39]. If the claim is regarded as accurate, truthful, and concise, the source is regarded as reliable [40]. According to Ho and Chien [41], in the context of eWOM, trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence that a message recipient places in the credibility and honesty of the communicator. According to Cheung et al. [42], source credibility is thought to be a significant determinant of how compelling eWOM messages will be. Online review sites offer users a number of indicators that they can use to determine how reliable the reviewer is [43]. A reviewer's material is seen as credible and convincing when a significant portion of the community finds them trustworthy [44]. It is proposed that confidence in the source precedes purchasing intention by using TPB and TRA [45]. Cheung et al. [42] conducted laboratory studies with forty individuals and discovered that source trustworthiness positively impacts behavioral intention. Saleem and Ellahi [45] discovered in another study that purchasing intention on social media platforms related to fashion items is influenced by the message provider's credibility. As a result, the subsequent hypothesis is proposed:

H1. *Trustworthiness of eWOM positively influences the purchase intention of green food.*

2.2.2. Frequency of eWOM

Online reviews are a primary source of eWOM communication [46–48] and have become a crucial tool in marketing, as many consumers consult them as their initial step when making online purchase decisions. These reviews significantly influence shoppers' online behavior [49]. These reviews significantly influence shoppers'

online behavior. Social networks provide consumers with a virtual space to freely share their personal moments and interact with other consumers through various forms such as liking, commenting, and sharing. Consumers are increasingly relying on the information and opinions of others posted on social networks as a reference point before deciding to purchase or using a service or product. Accordingly, the hypothesis below is presented:

H2. *Frequency of eWOM positively influences the purchase intention of green food.*

2.2.3. Belief in Benefits of Green Food

Previous studies on green marketing suggest that customer purchasing behavior is favorably influenced by consumers' trust in green products [50]. Anxiety and uncertainty are lessened when green consumers have a high level of trust in green products. Green product trust is defined by Karatu and Mat [51] as the willingness to place trust in a product because of the persuasion that it can achieve environmental performance standards. According to the TPB model, one's behavior indicates one's tendency towards trust. It directly precedes eco-friendly behavior [25]. According to several research studies, green behavior is favorably influenced by green product trust [51, 52]. This study identifies green product trust as a unidimensional construct, aligning with previous research [51]. Based on the model's specifications, consumer purchase decisions may be shaped by their belief in the benefits of green foods, as such beliefs increase their likelihood of choosing environmentally friendly products. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3. *Belief in the benefits of green food positively influences the purchase intention of green food.*

2.2.4. Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is an essential component of the TPB, representing one's perception of social expectations regarding one's behavior. According to Ajzen [25], subjective norms can be described as the assumptions individuals form based on what significant others believe they should do about a specific behavior. In simpler terms, they indicate the extent to which a person feels pressured by others who are significant to them [25, 53]. Empirical research has demonstrated that subjective norms, especially when manifested as moral norms, have a considerable positive impact on the intention to purchase green food products [54, 55]. However, subjective norms are generally considered a less critical underlying factor affecting the intention to buy green products in developing economies, where attitudes tend to have a more substantial influence across various developmental contexts [56–58]. In the Indian context, subjective norms were found to be an insignificant driver of the intention to buy organic products [59]. Research by Yazdanpanah and Forouzani [60] and Qi and Ploeger [28] suggested that when subjective norms are adjusted to account for cultural differences, they provide a more accurate model for understanding green and organic food purchase intentions. Even without such adjustments, subjective norms continue to exert a positive influence on consumers' intentions to purchase green food products. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. *Subjective norms positively influence the purchase intention of green food.*

2.2.5. Attitude towards Green Food

According to Ajzen [24], attitudes toward a particular behavior are constituted by prominent convictions concerning that behavior, each of which associates the behavior with a highly valued outcome or characteristic [33] further emphasized that one's attitude towards a behavior reflects their overall assessment, rooted in the conviction that the action yields desirable results. As one of the three distinct determinants of intention within the TPB, an attitude toward a behavior denotes the extent of one's positive or negative appraisal of that conduct [25, 61].

Several studies, including those by Ahmad and Juhdi [62] and Yogananda and Nair [55] indicate that beliefs related to the safety and health benefits of the product significantly influence the intention to purchase organic and green food. [59] identified that attitudes, particularly environmental attitudes, have a strong positive effect on intentions to buy organic and green food products. Furthermore, research by [56] and [58] has been

established that attitudes are the primary determinants of green product purchase intentions and organic food consumption. Nosi et al. [63] and Phuong et al. [47] this study investigates the antecedents of organic quinoa-based food buying intention. In addition to attitude toward this behavioral intention, the proposed model examines the influence that ecological welfare, political values, and consumer-perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR have also demonstrated that attitudes predominantly drive and substantially boost individuals' intentions to purchase organic and green foods. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is advanced:

H5. *Attitudes towards green food positively influence the purchase intention of green food.*

2.2.6. Purchase Behavior of Green Food

The TPB proposed by Ajzen [25] suggests that intentions are central in predicting and explaining individual behavior, as they directly influence actions. In consumer behavior studies, purchase intention denotes how probable consumers believe it is that they will go through with a purchase. Purchase intention can be viewed as a potential behavioral outcome, encompassing both planned and spontaneous purchases [64]. Furthermore, studies have shown that within the TPB framework, an individual's readiness to engage in a particular behavior is strongly correlated with their intention to purchase [59, 65]. Consumers with a firm intention to buy a particular product are more likely to follow through with the purchase than those who express no intention to buy. In the case of organic foods, the intention to purchase is considered the initial step in generating demand for these products, as it reflects the consumer's preliminary commitment to making a purchase. As a result, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H6. *Purchase intention of green food positively influences the actual purchase behavior of green food.*

Drawing on the foregoing rationale, this study presents its theoretical framework in **Figure 1**.

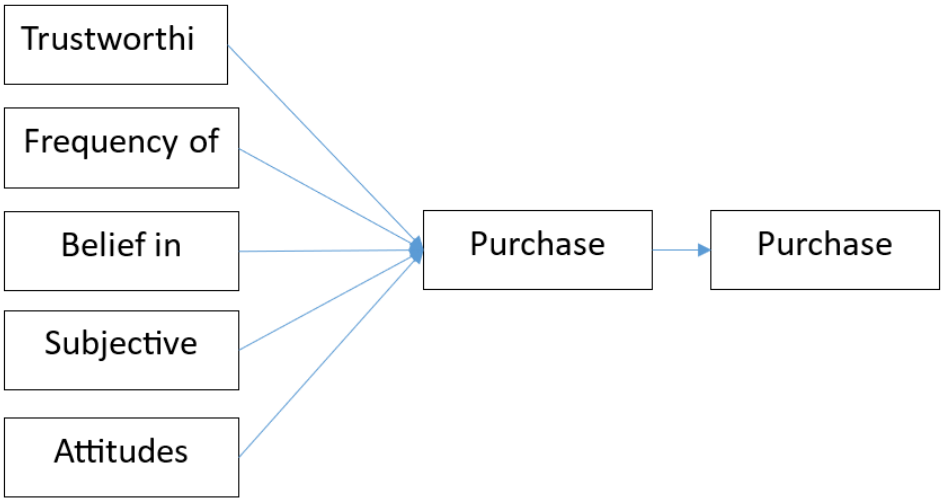

Figure 1. Proposed model.

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the influence of eWOM and other psychological and social factors on green food consumption behavior among residents in Hanoi, Vietnam. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a variance-based technique well-suited for testing complex predictive models. In Stage 1, two districts were randomly selected from the city's administrative list using a computerized random number generator. In Stage 2, three wards from each of these districts were chosen randomly. In Stage 3, respondents were approached within each ward using a random intercept method in both public and residential areas—

this random interception method aimed to minimize selection bias at the individual level.

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

The sampling procedure followed a multi-stage cluster design to ensure geographical representation within Hanoi. The research was carried out in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Survey sites were chosen using a two-stage cluster sampling procedure.

Stage 1: District Selection: From the complete list of districts in Hanoi, two districts were randomly selected using the random number generation software available at random.org. This step aimed to capture potential variations in consumer behavior across different urban areas within Hanoi.

Stage 2: Ward Selection: Within each of the two randomly selected districts, three wards were subsequently chosen at random using the same random.org software. This further narrowed down the geographical focus within the chosen districts, ensuring localized data collection.

Stage 3: Participant Selection: Within each of the six selected wards (two districts, each with three wards), individual respondents were randomly approached and interviewed within the geographical boundaries of the ward. This involved approaching residents encountered in public spaces and residential areas to participate in the survey.

The survey instrument, detailed in **Table 1**, consisted of items designed to measure the constructs of interest, including trustworthiness of eWOM, frequency of eWOM, belief in benefits of green food, subjective norms, attitude towards green food, purchase intention and purchase behavior of green food. Trained enumerators conducted face-to-face surveys during June and July 2024. The final sample consisted of 589 completed responses. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality. While demographic data (e.g., gender, age, education, and income) were collected, these were not used as control variables in the structural model to maintain model parsimony. Future studies may include these to test for moderating effects.

Table 1. Independent variables and items.

STT	Items	Source
Trustworthiness of eWOM		
1	Online reviews about green food are generally reliable.	[42, 52]
2	I trust the opinions of online reviewers about green food.	
3	Online reviews about green food are unbiased and objective.	
4	I believe the sources of online green food reviews are credible.	
5	The expertise of reviewers enhances the trustworthiness of online reviews about green food.	
Frequency of eWOM		
1	I frequently read online reviews about green food before making a purchase.	[49]
2	I often seek opinions from online communities when considering buying green food.	
3	I regularly check social media discussions about green food.	
4.	I spend time reading multiple online reviews before deciding on green food purchases.	
5.	Online reviews influence my purchase decisions more when I read them frequently.	
Belief in Benefits of Green Food		
1	I believe that green food is good for my health.	[66, 67]
2	I believe that consuming green food helps protect the environment.	
3	Green foods minimize negative impacts on the environment.	
4	I believe that green food brings long-term economic benefits.	
5	Using green foods helps save medical costs.	
Subjective norms		
1.	People important to me think I should buy green food.	[25, 68]
2.	My family expects me to consume green food.	
3.	My friends encourage me to purchase green food.	
4.	I feel social pressure to buy green food.	
5.	The social environment influences my decision to purchase green food.	

Table 1. *Cont.*

STT	Items	Source
Attitudes towards green food		
1.	I have a positive attitude toward purchasing green food.	[25, 32, 65]
2.	Buying green food is a good decision for me.	
3.	Purchasing green food makes me feel responsible.	
4.	I enjoy consuming green food products.	
5.	I would recommend green food to others.	
Purchase intention of green food		
1.	I intend to purchase green food in the near future.	[42, 69]
2.	I am willing to pay more for green food.	
3.	I prefer green food over non-green alternatives.	
4.	I plan to buy green food regularly.	
5.	I will continue purchasing green food even if prices increase.	
Purchase Behavior of Green Food		
1.	I have purchased green food in the last three months.	[7,21]
2.	I frequently buy green food.	
3.	Most of my food purchases include green food items.	
4.	I choose green food whenever possible.	
5.	I have switched from regular to green food.	

3.2. Measures

All measurement items were adapted from previously validated scales in the literature. **Table 1** lists the constructs, items, and their sources. Modifications were made to ensure cultural relevance and linguistic clarity for Vietnamese respondents. Constructs include trustworthiness and frequency of eWOM, belief in the benefits of green food, subjective norms, attitudes toward green food, purchase intention, and actual purchase behavior.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data were examined using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS version 4.1. This variance-based SEM approach is particularly well-suited for handling complex model structures and exploratory research. The reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_A and rho_C), and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was evaluated through the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The structural model was tested using bootstrapping (5,000 resamples), and significance was assessed via path coefficients, T-statistics, and P-values. The analysis involved assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model, followed by testing the hypothesized relationships within the structural model. Specifically, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE were used to evaluate internal consistency and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. To assess the structural model, path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values were examined through bootstrap resampling, allowing for the determination of the significance of the proposed relationships. To address concerns of common method bias, the use of separate constructs, assurance of respondent anonymity, and the post hoc use of Fornell-Larcker diagnostics were employed. However, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits the ability to make causal inferences. Additionally, while actual purchase behavior was self-reported, it was measured through multiple items reflecting recent purchasing actions, frequency, and preferences to approximate behavioral outcomes.

4. Results

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of the structural model using PLS-SEM. The results offer empirical support for the proposed hypotheses and provide insight into the relationships between eWOM components, psychological variables, purchase intention, and actual purchase behavior.

4.1. Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in **Table 2**, summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table details the frequency and percentage distribution across categories of gender (47.5% male, 52.5% female), age (with the largest groups being less than 35 years old), education level (with a significant proportion holding a Bachelor's degree or higher), and family income per capita (with the majority earning less than 10 million VND per month). A significant portion of the sample (62%) was under the age of 35, indicating a young and potentially more digitally engaged demographic. Regarding education, nearly 40% of respondents held a bachelor's degree or higher. In terms of income, 43.1% of participants reported earning above 20 million VND per month (Exchange rate: 1 USD = 25,740 VND, Vietcombank, 24 May 2025). This data provides insight into the extent to which the findings can be generalized to the broader population of Hanoi.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Criteria		Frequency (People)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	309	52.5
	Male	280	47.5
Age	Less than 22	172	29.2
	22 to less than 35	193	32.8
	35 to less than 55	105	17.8
	55 and above	119	20.2
	Secondary school and lower	65	11.0
	High school	104	17.7
	Vocational	185	31.4
	Bachelor and higher	235	39.9
Income (million VND/month)	Less than 10	104	17.7
	10 to less than 20	231	39.2
	20 and above	254	43.1
Total		589	100.0

Source: Survey, 2024.

4.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated for internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. As shown in **Table 3**, all constructs achieved satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs range from 0.725 to 0.854, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for each construct's items. Additionally, the table provides two measures of composite reliability, rho_a and rho_c, with values ranging from 0.727 to 0.865 and 0.844 to 0.895, respectively.

Table 3 outlines the construct reliability and validity of the measurement scales used in this study. Regarding convergent validity, the AVE values for all constructs are above the recommended minimum of 0.50, ranging from 0.575 to 0.677. This suggests that more than 50% of the variance in each construct's items is explained by the construct itself, establishing adequate convergent validity. In conclusion, the results presented in **Table 3** show that the measurement scales used in this study demonstrate satisfactory reliability and va-

lidity, supporting their suitability for further analysis of the proposed theoretical model.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity.

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Attitudes towards green food	0.807	0.805	0.875	0.637
Belief in Benefits of Green Food	0.824	0.823	0.877	0.588
Frequency of eWOM	0.761	0.78	0.862	0.677
Purchase Behavior of Green Food	0.725	0.727	0.845	0.645
Purchase intention of green food	0.743	0.745	0.854	0.661
Subjective norms	0.854	0.865	0.895	0.63
Trustworthiness of eWOM	0.754	0.761	0.844	0.575

Source: Survey, 2024.

Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion in **Table 4**, where the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs, demonstrating that each construct was empirically distinct. This criterion assesses the distinctiveness of each construct by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with its correlations to other constructs. Discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of the AVE for a construct is greater than its correlations with any other construct. In **Table 4**, the diagonal values represent the square root of the AVE for each construct, while the off-diagonal values show the correlations between pairs of constructs. As seen in the table, each diagonal value is higher than the corresponding values in its row and column, providing evidence that each construct is conceptually distinct from the others. This confirms the discriminant validity of the measurement scales used in this study.

Table 4. Discriminant validity – Fornell-Larcker criterion.

	Attitudes Towards Green Food	Belief in Benefits of Green Food	Frequency of eWOM	Purchase Behavior of Green Food	Purchase Intention of Green Food	Subjective Norms	Trust of eWOM
Attitudes towards green food	0.798						
Belief in Benefits of Green Food	0.236	0.767					
Frequency of eWOM	0.495	0.256	0.823				
Purchase Behavior of Green Food	0.285	0.303	0.343	0.803			
Purchase intention of green food	0.502	0.489	0.617	0.491	0.813		
Subjective norms	0.283	0.322	0.374	0.294	0.505	0.794	
Trustworthiness of eWOM	0.285	0.323	0.32	0.232	0.467	0.422	0.758

Source: Survey, 2024.

Table 5 presents the outer loading coefficients utilized in the research model. This table enumerates the observed variables (items) under each latent construct and provides the corresponding outer loading value

for each item. Specifically, **Table 5** displays the outer loadings for the following items belonging to their respective constructs: Attitudes towards green food (ATT1, ATT2, ATT3, and ATT5), Purchase Behavior of Green Food (BEH1, BEH2, and BEH3), Belief in Benefits of Green Food (Belief1, Belief2, Belief3, Belief4, and Belief5), Frequency of eWOM (Freq1, Freq3, and Freq4), Purchase intention of green food (INT1, INT2, and INT3), Subjective norms (SNO1, SNO2, SNO3, SNO4, and SNO5), and Trustworthiness of eWOM (Trust1, Trust2, Trust3, and Trust4). The outer loading coefficient indicates the strength of the relationship between each observed variable and its corresponding latent construct. Higher outer loading values (typically 0.70 or above) suggest a stronger correlation and that the observed variable is a good indicator of the latent construct. In summary, **Table 5** details the extent to which each measurement item contributes to defining its respective latent construct within the research model. Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all predictors were below 5, indicating no concerns about multicollinearity.

Table 5. Outer loading coefficients used in the model.

Items	Attitudes Towards Green Food	Belief in Benefits of Green Food	Frequency of eWOM	Purchase Behavior of Green Food	Purchase Intention of Green Food	Subjective norms	Trustof eWOM	VIF
ATT1	0.852							4.496
ATT2	0.853							4.506
ATT3	0.739							1.412
ATT5	0.739							1.419
BEH1				0.796				1.458
BEH2				0.802				1.418
BEH3				0.811				1.403
Belief1		0.81						4.129
Belief2		0.726						1.498
Belief3		0.738						1.488
Belief4		0.726						1.408
Belief5		0.825						4.317
Freq1			0.847					1.792
Freq3			0.744					1.340
Freq4			0.872					1.759
INT1					0.82			1.522
INT2					0.781			1.385
INT3					0.838			1.590
SNO1						0.743		1.609
SNO2						0.799		4.676
SNO3						0.814		4.896
SNO4						0.826		2.200
SNO5						0.785		1.964
Trust1							0.741	1.353
Trust2							0.721	1.402
Trust3							0.795	1.475
Trust4							0.774	1.574

Source: Survey, 2024.

4.3. Structural Model Assessment

Table 6 provides an assessment of the structural model's overall fit using several indices. It presents the values for Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d_ULS, d_G, Chi-square, and NFI for both the Saturated model and the Estimated model. SRMR) value for our model as 0.073, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, supporting an acceptable model fit. These indices are used to evaluate how well the proposed model aligns with the observed data. The sources specifically note the SRMR value as supporting an acceptable model fit.

Table 6. Model fit.

Indicators	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.073	0.073
d_ULS	2.302	2.345
d_G	1.862	1.864
Chi-square	4208.519	4215.863
NFI	0.577	0.577

Source: Survey, 2024.

The structural relationships were assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples. **Table 6** presents the path coefficients, standard deviations, t-statistics, and p-values for each hypothesized path. All proposed relationships were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1 through H6. **Table 7** presents the results of the bootstrap testing for the structural model. This table offers detailed insights into the relationships between the latent constructs as outlined in the research model. Specifically, for each path (e.g., Attitudes towards green food -> Purchase intention of green food), the table displays the original sample coefficient (O), which is the estimated path coefficient from the initial dataset. The bootstrap sample mean (M) indicates the average estimate of the path coefficient across the generated bootstrap samples. The standard deviation (STDEV) measures the variability of these bootstrap estimates. Most importantly, the table provides the T statistics (|O/STDEV|), calculated by dividing the original sample coefficient by the bootstrap standard deviation, and the corresponding P values. The P-value indicates the statistical significance of each relationship. In **Table 6**, all P-values are 0, which demonstrates that all proposed relationships in the structural model are statistically significant at conventional levels (e.g., $p < 0.05$). This suggests that Attitudes towards green food, Belief in the Benefits of Green Food, Frequency of eWOM, Subjective Norms, and Trustworthiness of eWOM all exert a positive and statistically significant influence on the Purchase Intention of Green Food. Similarly, the Purchase Intention of Green Food has a positive and statistically significant impact on the Purchase Behavior of Green Food. The T-statistics, all exceeding 1.96 (for a 0.05 significance level), further validate the significance of these relationships. In conclusion, the bootstrap testing results presented in **Table 6** strongly support the hypothesized effects of these factors on both green food purchase intentions and actual purchase behavior.

Table 7. Bootstrap testing results of the structural model.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Attitudes towards green food -> Purchase intention of green food	0.176	0.176	0.029	6.008	0
Belief in Benefits of Green Food -> Purchase intention of green food	0.252	0.252	0.028	9.077	0

Table 7. *Cont.*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Frequency of eWOM -> Purchase intention of green food	0.351	0.351	0.032	10.852	0
Subjective norms -> Purchase intention of green food	0.181	0.181	0.039	4.653	0
Trustworthiness of eWOM -> Purchase intention of green food	0.147	0.148	0.031	4.692	0
Purchase intention of green food -> Purchase Behavior of Green Food	0.491	0.492	0.032	15.163	0

Source: Survey, 2024.

The results of this study offer valuable insights into the key factors influencing green food purchase intentions and behavior in Hanoi (**Figure 2**). The statistical significance of all hypothesized relationships, as indicated by the bootstrap testing results (p = 0 for all paths in **Table 7**), underscores the multifaceted nature of consumer decisions regarding environmentally conscious food choices.

Consistent with prior research on the influence of WOM on consumer behavior, this study confirms the significant positive impact of the trustworthiness of eWOM on green food buying intention. This aligns with the findings of [42, 45] who also demonstrated that source trustworthiness positively affects behavioral intention, particularly in online contexts. When consumers perceive online reviews about green food to be reliable, truthful, and objective, their inclination to purchase increases.

Furthermore, the study highlights a significant positive correlation between eWOM frequency and the intention to purchase green food. This finding reinforces the increasing acknowledgement of online reviews as a vital source of information for online consumers, as highlighted by Bickart and Schindler [9], Chatterjee [12], and Huang et al. [26]. Frequent exposure to online opinions and discussions about green food likely reinforces awareness and builds positive perceptions, ultimately leading to a stronger purchase intention.

The study also shows that belief in the benefits of green food has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. This is consistent with the TPB, which posits that attitudes and beliefs influence intentions. Moreover, it resonates with previous studies in green marketing that suggest consumer trust in green products favorably influences their purchasing behavior, as noted by Karatu and Mat [29] and Schlosser et al. [58]. The conviction that green food contributes to personal health, environmental protection, and long-term economic well-being is a significant motivator for purchase intention.

In line with the TPB, subjective norms are found to have a positive and significant influence on green food purchase intention. This suggests that perceived social pressure from important referents, such as family and friends, plays a role in shaping consumers' intentions to adopt green food. While some studies in developing countries suggest subjective norms might be less critical than attitudes, this research in the Vietnamese context indicates a notable influence, aligning with findings from Saleki et al. [56] and Yogananda and Nair[55].

The study further establishes that attitudes towards green food have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. This finding is strongly supported by the TPB and numerous prior studies in the domain of green consumption. As highlighted by Ahmad and Juhdi [1], Yadav and Pathak [68, 69], and Yogananda and Nair[55], a positive overall evaluation of green food and the belief that its purchase is a good and responsible decision significantly drive purchase intentions.

Finally, the research confirms that the purchase intention of green food positively and significantly influences the actual purchase behavior. This is a central tenet of the TPB, suggesting that a consumer's willingness to engage in a particular behavior is strongly influ-

enced by their intention to do so, as also noted by Yadav and Pathak [59, 65].

Interestingly, the frequency of eWOM exhibits the strongest influence on purchase intention among the investigated factors. While the trustworthiness of eWOM is crucial for initial credibility, the consistent exposure to online discussions and reviews appears to have a more substantial impact in shaping consumers' inclination to purchase green food in the context of Hanoi. This highlights the dynamic interplay between the quality and quantity of online information in influencing consumer decisions, building upon the general understanding of eWOM's significance discussed by Mishra and Satish [16].

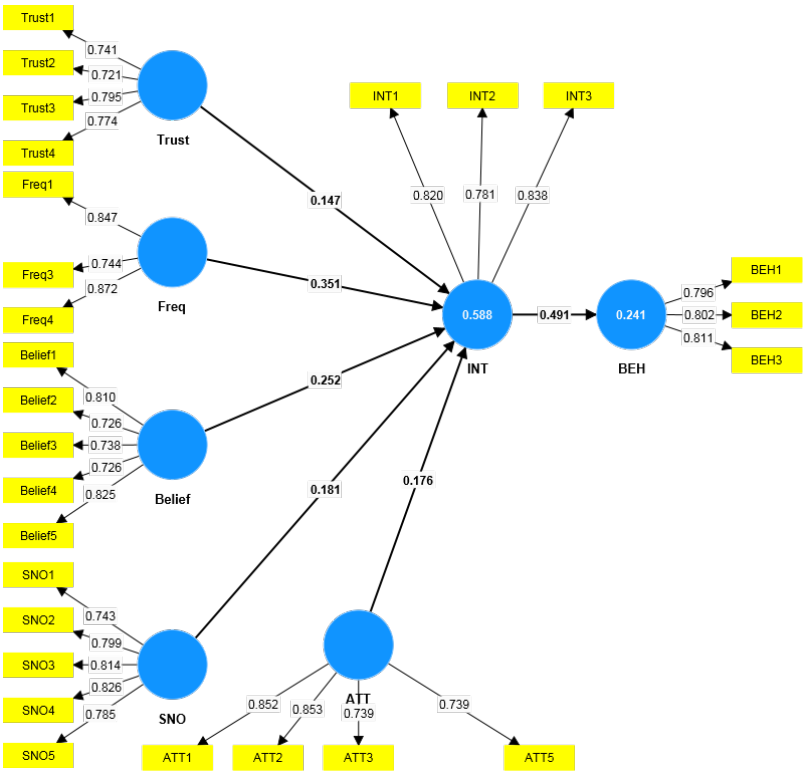

Figure 2. Structural model.

Source: Survey, 2024.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for purchase intention was 0.588, indicating that trustworthiness and frequency of eWOM, belief in benefits, subjective norms, and attitudes collectively explain 58.8% of the variance in green food purchase intention. The R^2 for actual purchase behavior was 0.241, suggesting that purchase intention accounts for 24.1% of the variance in behavior.

Among the antecedents of purchase intention, frequency of eWOM had the most decisive influence (β = 0.351), followed by belief in benefits (β = 0.252), subjective norms (β = 0.181), attitudes (β = 0.176), and trustworthiness of eWOM (β = 0.147). This finding emphasizes the significant role of consistent online exposure to product reviews in shaping green food purchase intention in Hanoi.

5. Conclusion

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of green food consumption behavior by investigating the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and key psychosocial factors on purchase intention and actual purchasing behavior among consumers in Hanoi, Vietnam. Drawing on the TPB and Social Influence Theory, the research provides empirical evidence that trustworthiness and frequency of eWOM, belief in benefits, subjective norms, and attitudes toward green food.

The study reveals that the frequency of eWOM exerts the strongest effect on purchase intention, suggesting that repeated exposure to online reviews and social media discussions significantly shapes consumer perceptions and intentions. This underscores the dynamic nature of digital influence in emerging markets like Vietnam. Furthermore, the confirmed positive relationship between purchase intention and actual behavior aligns with the core tenets of TPB, reinforcing the central role of intention in predicting purchase intention.

The findings carry meaningful implications for both academics and practitioners. For scholars, the study bridges a critical gap in the literature by contextualizing the role of eWOM within green food purchasing behavior in a developing country setting. It also highlights the value of integrating TPB and Social Influence Theory in consumer behavior research. For practitioners and policymakers, the results suggest that fostering online engagement and ensuring the credibility of green product reviews can encourage sustainable consumer choices.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. First, the data were collected exclusively in Hanoi, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions of Vietnam or different cultural contexts. Second, only two dimensions of eWOM—trustworthiness and frequency—were examined, omitting potentially influential aspects such as valence, volume, and reviewer expertise. Third, the cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretation of the relationships. Finally, while the study employed a quantitative approach, incorporating qualitative methods could offer a more comprehensive understanding of consumer motivations and decision-making processes regarding green food consumption and eWOM interactions

Future research should consider longitudinal designs to capture behavioral shifts over time and explore additional dimensions of eWOM. Comparative studies across regions or countries could shed light on cultural differences in the impact of eWOM. Furthermore, integrating qualitative approaches may provide richer insights into the motivations and attitudes underlying green food consumption.

In conclusion, this study offers robust evidence for the significant roles of digital and psychosocial factors in shaping green food consumption behavior in Hanoi. By highlighting the frequency of eWOM as the most potent driver of purchase intention, the findings emphasize the power of consistent digital engagement in influencing sustainable consumer behavior. These insights can inform more targeted interventions and strategies to foster green consumption in emerging economies.

Author Contributions

Developing the idea, N.V.P; Conceptualization, T.K.H, L.T.B.N; Methodology, N.V.P; data collection and processing, N.V.P and P.M.H.; writing—original draft preparation, N.V.P, N.T.K.H, and L.T.B.N; writing—review, editing, and proofread the manuscript, N.V.P and P.M.H.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the final manuscript..

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and the protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of VNU University of Economics and Business (Ref. No. 2428/QD-DHKT, approved 30/7/2024).

Informed Consent Statement

The researchers confirm that all questionnaire respondents were aware of this study and that this research was conducted in accordance with standard research protocols.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets used in this study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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