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Influence of Green Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility on Purchase Intention: Evidence on the Mediating Role of Brand Image

(Pengaruh Pemasaran Hijau dan Tanggungjawab Sosial Korporat terhadap Niat Pembelian: Bukti Peranan Pengantaraan Imej Jenama)

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ABSTRACT

Environmental awareness continues to rise, prompting firms to utilise green marketing (GM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) to influence consumers' purchase intention (PI). Grounded in the stimulus–organism–response framework, this study explains how sustainability-related cues (GM and CSR) shape brand image (BI) and subsequently PI within Vietnam's coffee market. Based on survey data from 300 consumers in the Mekong Delta and SEM analysis, results demonstrate that GM alone is a relatively weak direct driver of PI. Its influence becomes more persuasive when it strengthens perceived CSR and translates into a favourable BI. BI emerges as a key mediating mechanism, including a sequential pathway in which GM enhances CSR perceptions, which then builds BI and supports PI. These findings suggest that firms should prioritise credible, visible CSR actions and consistent brand meaning rather than relying on green messages alone. The study is limited by its regional scope and focus on a restricted set of constructs.

Keywords: Green marketing; corporate social responsibility; brand image; purchase intention; coffee industry

ABSTRAK

Kesedaran terhadap alam sekitar terus meningkat, mendorong firma untuk menggunakan pemasaran hijau (GM) dan tanggungjawab sosial korporat (CSR) bagi mempengaruhi niat pembelian pengguna (P1). Berasaskan kerangka Stimulus–Organisme–Respons (S–O–R), kajian ini menerangkan bagaimana petunjuk berkaitan kelestarian (GM dan CSR) membentuk imej jenama (BI) dan seterusnya PI dalam pasaran kopi Vietnam. Dengan menggunakan data tinjauan daripada 300 pengguna di Delta Mekong serta analisis SEM, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa GM sahaja merupakan pemacu langsung PI yang relatif lemah. Pengaruhnya menjadi lebih meyakinkan apabila ia mengukuhkan persepsi CSR dan diterjemahkan kepada BI yang lebih positif. BI muncul sebagai mekanisme perantara utama, termasuk laluan berurutan di mana GM meningkatkan persepsi CSR, yang kemudian membina BI dan menyokong PI. Dapatan ini mencadangkan bahawa firma perlu mengutamakan tindakan CSR yang boleh dipercayai dan jelas kelihatan serta makna jenama yang konsisten, berbanding hanya bergantung pada mesej hijau semata-mata. Kajian ini terhad oleh skop wilayahnya dan tumpuan kepada set konstruk yang terhad.

Kata kunci: Pemasaran hijau; tanggungjawab sosial korporat; imej jenama; niat pembelian; industri kopi

INTRODUCTION

Human industrial activities produce excessive carbon emissions, including CO_2 and methane. These emissions cause alterations in the chemical and physical properties of soil, the atmosphere and oceans, while increasing the frequency of erratic climatic events, such as food shortages, intense storms and elevated temperatures. Consequently, many businesses view environmental protection as a core component of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), as climate change and environmental risks have emerged as significant global challenges (Majeed et al. 2022). Environmental concerns increasingly influence consumer choices, prompting firms to implement eco-friendly marketing practices to engage and appeal to customers (Maduwinarti 2025). Consumer purchase intention (PI) constitutes the preliminary phase of decision-making and forms the foundation for actual buying behaviour (Costa et al. 2021). Furthermore, when choosing environmentally friendly products, consumers evaluate several aspects, including marketing activities, CSR and the brand image (BI) of the product (Chuyen et al. 2025).

The Mekong Delta, which is vital for national food security, is highly vulnerable to climate change. Drought, salinity intrusion, groundwater decline and upstream hydropower drive land subsidence, soil erosion and water shortages for production and daily use (Huynh et al. 2025). As environmental concern rises, firms need effective sustainable marketing to meet environmentally conscious demand (Fadhilah & Lukitaningsih 2025). The coffee industry faces significant

sustainability pressures requiring adaptive transformation (Katter 2021). Meanwhile, the growing beverage sector intensifies plastic waste through single-use packaging, while management capacity remains limited (Sumarmo et al. 2023; Suryono et al. 2023). Hence, promoting green PI and responsible actions is urgent (Su & Li 2024).

Although previous studies have examined green marketing (GM), CSR and BI, they typically address these factors separately or within specific industries, such as fashion, cosmetics or tourism. Research exploring the integrated effects of GM and CSR on PI, particularly through the mediating role of BI, remains limited. This gap is especially relevant in emerging economies where consumer attitudes towards green products evolve rapidly (Su & Li 2024). Regarding the Mekong Delta, existing studies have primarily described green consumption behaviour and consumers' propensity to invest in eco-friendly products (Ho et al. 2022; Hoa & Anh 2023; Nhat & Dut 2023); however, these studies do not provide deeper insights into the combined influence of GM, CSR and BI on shaping PI. Addressing this gap is essential to enhance conceptual insights and real-world applications in sustainable consumption research. Therefore, a theory-driven framework is necessary to explain how sustainability-related firm cues translate into consumers' PI through internal brand evaluations. From a theoretical standpoint, this study is anchored in the stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) framework, which explains how external cues conveyed through marketing activities and corporate conduct shape internal appraisals and subsequently influence behavioural intentions. In this research setting, GM and CSR are conceptualised as external stimuli that signal a firm's sustainability orientation; BI reflects consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations as the organism component; and PI represents the behavioural response. This perspective provides a theory-based justification for the direct effects of GM and CSR on PI and the indirect effects operating through BI.

This study investigates how GM and CSR influence PI directly and indirectly, with BI acting as a mediating variable. Specifically, the research seeks to (1) analyse the effect of GM and CSR on PI; (2) assess the mediating role of BI in the relationship between GM, CSR and PI; and (3) offer actionable insights for firms and policymakers to advance sustainable consumption practices. The study advances the conceptual understanding of the interplay amongst GM, CSR, BI and PI within Vietnam's coffee sector. Simultaneously, it highlights the mediating role of BI in linking GM and CSR to influence PI. The findings are anticipated to offer significant empirical insights, assisting businesses in improving sustainable marketing strategies and guiding policymakers in developing initiatives that promote environmentally responsible consumer behaviour.

This study focuses specifically on the Vietnamese coffee market. A mixed methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches, is utilized to meet the research objectives. SEM is employed to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. The paper is organised as follows: an examination of pertinent literature and hypothesis formulation, followed by methodology, results, discussion and managerial implications. Finally, conclusions, limitations and suggestions for subsequent research are presented.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Building on the S–O–R framework introduced earlier, this section develops hypotheses by positioning GM and CSR as external stimuli, BI as the organismic evaluation and PI as the response. This theoretical structure guides the proposed direct and mediated relationships tested in the model. Prior research often affirms that GM and CSR improve brand outcomes, yet findings remain inconsistent. Effects differ by product type, consumer involvement and trust conditions. Furthermore, these effects may weaken or even reverse when sustainability claims appear symbolic or overstated. This variation implies that examining only direct links can oversimplify the phenomenon. Therefore, this study integrates competing views and tests BI as a key mechanism translating sustainability cues into PI within an emerging market.

GREEN MARKETING AND ITS ROLE

In recent years, growing corporate concern for environmental protection has popularised terms such as 'green', 'eco-friendly', 'sustainable' and 'Earth-friendly' (Tarabieh 2021). From a marketing perspective, GM refers to the strategic use of marketing tools to meet consumer needs and business goals while aligning with environmental values, whether pursued as ethical imperatives or as market-driven opportunities (Chuyen et al. 2025). Nevertheless, GM is often misunderstood as merely promoting products with ecological attributes (Duy 2024), as consumers frequently associate it with notions like recycling, reusing or ozone-friendly practices.

In practice, GM extends beyond consumer goods to industrial products and services; it encompasses activities such as product design, production line modifications, packaging and communication strategies, which makes its implementation complex (Tien et al. 2020). The process involves pricing, planning, processes, promotion and human resources tailored for diverse consumer groups (Kamalanon et al. 2022). Conceptually, GM integrates consumer perspectives, firm profitability through purchasing behaviour and environmental accountability (Sedky & AbdelRaheem 2022). Globally, GM has emerged as a critical strategy in promoting products, services and ideas linked to environmental protection (Majeed et al. 2022). Its objectives include enhancing consumer awareness, fostering sustainable practices (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas 2020) and strengthening long-term relationships with stakeholders across ecological, sociocultural and consumer domains (Tan et al. 2022; Hengboriboon et al. 2022).

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

Amidst rising concerns over global warming and environmental pollution, many firms have adopted socially responsible practices through the development of green products (Tai et al. 2020). Green or eco-friendly products are defined as goods and services that minimise harm to the environment, conserve resources or are recyclable (Hengboriboon et al. 2022). Scholars provide varying definitions; for example, Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020) describe them as products manufactured without generating adverse environmental effects. Despite the safety of these items, consumer adoption remains limited due to low awareness (Alamsyah et al. 2020). Increasingly, industries have incorporated green products into portfolios or positioned them as alternatives to nongreen goods (Gelderman et al. 2021).

Possessing a green image (GI) offers firms competitive advantages, as it symbolically represents brand differentiation (Tan et al. 2022). GI is viewed as an essential dimension of BI (Majeed et al. 2022), shaped by consumer evaluations (Alamsyah et al. 2020) and linked to environmental knowledge, green brand knowledge and consumer attitudes (Tan et al. 2022). According to Bashir et al. (2020), green BI reflects consumer perceptions of a brand linked to environmental responsibility and sustainable practices. A green BI fosters green purchasing behaviour through product innovation, added value and strategic pricing, as consumers increasingly accept premium costs for environmentally friendly alternatives (Majeed et al. 2022). Properly developed BI strengthens loyalty, enhances PI and drives business success (Kataria et al. 2021).

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CSR is regarded as a strategic instrument allowing firms to achieve differentiation and competitive advantage by integrating social aims with organisational objectives (Shafique et al. 2021). Within the framework of sustainable development, profit is no longer the sole focus, as corporate environmental responsibility prioritises routine operational and managerial practices aimed at preserving natural resources. Such practices enhance corporate value through legal compliance, social responsibility, low-carbon technology and green governance (Li et al. 2020). Moreover, adopting social standards fosters sustainable development within communities and strengthens corporate reputation (Islam et al. 2021). Although numerous studies have examined CSR outcomes, few have explored the joint effect of CSR and brand reputation on consumers' purchase of organic food, particularly in developing economies (Hengboriboon et al. 2022).

GM has attracted global attention across industries (Jamal et al. 2021). Starbucks advances sustainability via energy-saving initiatives, greenhouse gas reduction and 'green stores' as low-emission retail experiments (Zhang 2024). In Vietnam, major coffee chains such as Highlands, The Coffee House, Trung Nguyên, Phúc Long and Starbucks integrate CSR. Highlands partnered with UNEP on pangolin protection and later launched 'Green Circle' to reduce plastic use, while Phúc Long introduced 'Green Life'; however, plastic-cup dependence and doubts about CSR authenticity persist (Mai et al. 2022). Prior findings on GM and CSR are mixed. Although many studies have found positive effects on brand outcomes and PI (Odoom et al. 2025; Zuhdi et al. 2024; Hengboriboon et al. 2022), others have reported weak or even negative effects when green claims seem exaggerated, symbolic or inauthentic (Szabo & Webster 2021; Teichmann et al. 2024; Koch & Denner 2025). Greenwashing concerns, perceived risk and scepticism about CSR motives can undermine these benefits. Effects also vary by product category and market context, especially in emerging economies with lower environmental awareness, uneven trust and high price sensitivity. Hence, mechanisms matter; this study examines BI as a mediator linking GM and CSR cues to PI in Vietnam's coffee market.

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

GREEN MARKETING AND CORPORATE BRAND IMAGE

Environmental awareness, green knowledge and GM activities significantly shape consumer perception and trust in firms (Tan et al. 2022). GM functions as a strategic tool to satisfy environmentally conscious consumers, enhance BI and differentiate products within marketing frameworks (Wu & Liu 2022). BI contributes to brand value and customer appeal (Zuhdi et al. 2024), reflecting consumers' overall perception shaped by brand presentation, labelling and memory associations (Genoveva & Samukti 2020). Green brands emphasise environmental protection and integrate sustainable practices into their objectives. Consumer selection of such brands demonstrates environmental sensitivity and personal commitment to sustainability (Sheykhan et al. 2024), whereas promoting green brands reinforces awareness that environmental concerns should take precedence (Chen et al. 2020).

Firms adopting environmental responsibility can strengthen BI, enhance recognition and cultivate loyalty, which makes consumers less price-sensitive. Even when green products carry higher costs, trust in their environmental and health benefits motivates premium purchases (Minh et al. 2021). Thus, GM effectively enhances corporate image while addressing societal needs (Hengboriboon et al. 2022). However, the influence of GM on BI is not always straightforward. Some consumers may interpret green appeals as tactical promotion rather than substantive commitment, which can dilute perceived credibility and weaken the image-building effect. This inconsistency is often attributed to greenwashing suspicion, limited green knowledge

or low trust in corporate claims, especially in markets where sustainability information is uneven and consumers are highly price-sensitive. Hence, the relationship between GM and BI should be reexamined in an emerging-economy context and in a category where branding and authenticity cues are salient, such as coffee. Consequently, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_1 Green Marketing (GM) has a direct effect on corporate Brand Image (BI).

GREEN MARKETING AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Consumers' attitudes towards GM reflect their environmental awareness and inclination to buy from ethically responsible companies to improve their well-being. GM supports environmentally oriented businesses in achieving sustainable growth, either by providing consumers with green knowledge or aligning CSR with sustainability goals (Hengboriboon et al. 2022). CSR, which is inherently linked to sustainable development, denotes a firm's responsibility towards the environment and stakeholders, encompassing environmental and social welfare responsibilities beyond profit considerations (Huang et al. 2021).

GM integrates social and marketing objectives while promoting environmental protection. Environment-oriented initiatives embody CSR, aligning marketing strategies with stakeholder expectations (Huy et al. 2024). GM decisions establish long-term organisational activities for environmental sustainability by integrating environmental goals with strategic concerns to gain competitive advantage (Mukonza et al. 2021). Additionally, GM functions as a production strategy fostering environmentally responsible behaviour and contributing to societal sustainable development (Rajadurai et al. 2021; Tulsi & Ji 2020). The relationship between GM and CSR can be fragile when consumers view green communication as impression management rather than genuine responsibility. If sustainability claims appear exaggerated, consumers may discount wider CSR efforts and infer opportunistic motives, which weakens CSR perceptions or triggers backlash. Thus, GM does not inherently enhance perceived CSR; its influence depends on perceived authenticity and consistency between claims and actions. Accordingly, the subsequent hypothesis is formulated:

H_2 Green marketing (GM) has a direct effect on corporate social responsibility (CSR).

GREEN MARKETING AND PURCHASE INTENTION

GM seeks to mitigate environmental contamination and encourage eco-friendly products, limit excessive use of packaging materials and enhance public consciousness of waste recovery practices (Kinasih et al. 2023). Adequate environmental knowledge increases consumer responsibility, enabling predictions of behavioural intentions (Chaihanchanchai & Anantachart 2023). Brands adopting sustainability-oriented strategies attract green PI and foster engagement (Alzahrani & Zia 2025). While overlapping with conventional marketing, GM is distinguished by its intrinsic values and humanistic principles, allowing firms to design segmented strategies that effectively influence consumer PI (Minh et al. 2021; Hassan et al. 2022; Kilajian & Chareonsudjai 2021; Nasir et al. 2021).

Green and sustainable marketing activities not only contribute to building a positive and environmentally friendly BI while meeting customers' personal needs but also increase consumers' intention to purchase and use green products (Odoom et al. 2025; Zuhdi et al. 2024; Majeed et al. 2022). Therefore, firms are encouraged to develop sustainable initiatives by employing creative marketing approaches to build a resilient corporate image and simultaneously foster consumer behaviour and engagement (Altassan 2024). Although GM practices can enhance perceived value and encourage purchase decisions, some consumers may interpret green claims as promotional tactics rather than genuine environmental commitments, which erodes trust and weakens PI. Evidence indicates that consumers often exhibit scepticism towards environmental assertions and limited confidence in firms' credibility, particularly in markets where sustainability information is fragmented and unevenly accessible. Accordingly, the relationship between GM and PI warrants renewed examination in emerging economy settings and across product categories in which authenticity cues exert a strong influence on consumer choice. Based on this, the subsequent hypothesis is advanced:

H_3 Green Marketing (GM) has a direct effect on Purchase Intention (PI).

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BRAND IMAGE

Alongside GM, CSR is vital in shaping BI. Firms invest in brand identifiers such as trademarks, visual icons, stylistic layouts, taglines and product presentation with the aim of securing lasting consumer impressions (Rahmadhani et al. 2024). Engaging in public activities and fulfilling CSR obligations positively influences consumer perceptions, enhances corporate image and differentiates firms from competitors (Tsai et al. 2020). The adoption of CSR signals the commitment of a company to community and environmental welfare (Jabeen et al. 2023). Environmental CSR further strengthens green corporate image, reputation and competitive advantage (Javed et al. 2020; Liu et al. 2021; Alam & Islam 2021).

Effectively leveraging CSR builds corporate reputation and re-establishes BI and customer trust (Shaheer et al. 2024; Bahta et al. 2021; Fandos-Roig et al. 2021). BI reflects positive consumer perceptions of a brand (Mohit et al. 2025), which

improve when firms adopt social standards to promote sustainability within target communities (Islam et al. 2021). By enhancing BI and protecting reputation, CSR enables differentiation and customer attraction (Shaheer et al. 2024). Additionally, BI is positioned as a mediating factor because consumers often cannot verify the actual environmental and social performance of firms at the point of purchase. Instead, they rely on observable cues from GM activities and CSR practices to form an overall assessment of the brand. This assessment is reflected in BI, which consolidates the associations of consumers regarding credibility, integrity and value congruence. When cues related to GM and CSR are perceived as authentic, they enhance BI; conversely, a favourable BI reduces uncertainty, increases perceived quality and trust, and makes consumers more willing to purchase. Furthermore, when those cues elicit scepticism, the image-based mechanism weakens and the PI response becomes less positive. Therefore, BI provides a theoretically plausible mechanism through which GM and CSR translate into PI, supporting the mediating pathways proposed in this study. Nevertheless, CSR does not always translate into a stronger BI. When CSR initiatives are perceived as symbolic, poorly aligned with the core business of the brand or communicated without tangible outcomes, consumers may question the sincerity of the firm. Under such conditions, CSR can produce neutral effects on BI or even erode credibility, indicating that perceived fit and authenticity are critical boundary conditions. Based on this, the subsequent hypothesis is advanced:

H_4 Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a direct effect on Brand Image (BI).

BRAND IMAGE AND PURCHASE INTENTION

BI encompasses beliefs, ideas, impressions and perceptions held by individuals or communities regarding a brand. Consumers view BI as a critical product component that reflects the product itself (Kinasih et al. 2023). Consumer trust strongly influences PI across industries (Hengboriboon et al. 2022). Firms must position themselves as socially responsible and cultivate a GI through GM to enhance consumers' green PI (Jabeen et al. 2023). A favourable BI provides customer benefits, whereas a negative BI can deter purchases (Dash et al. 2021), making BI a key determinant of PI (Alzahrani & Zia 2025).

When companies pursue environmental goals and establish a positive green BI, consumers perceive them as trustworthy, safe and high-quality, which shapes behaviour and PI (Cheng et al. 2022). Increased environmental awareness amplifies consumer response to eco-friendly practices, enhancing public perception and customer attraction (Shaheer et al. 2024). Green branding and advertising foster trust, positively influencing green PI and supporting its sustainability (Nguyen-Viet et al. 2024; Gong et al. 2023). However, a favourable BI may not always convert into PI when situational constraints dominate, such as habitual buying, limited availability or high price sensitivity. Especially in frequently purchased categories like coffee, consumers may maintain positive brand impressions yet still choose alternatives due to convenience or budget considerations. This suggests that the BI → PI effect may vary by category involvement and consumption routines.

H_5 Brand Image (BI) has a direct impact on the company's Purchase Intention (PI).

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PURCHASE INTENTION

Companies that prioritise CSR enhance their reputation and integrity by demonstrating their ability to meet various stakeholder expectations. Once a firm undertakes socially responsible practices, consumers tend to evaluate its products more positively (Gong et al. 2023). Consumers are progressively attentive to ecological and environmental issues (Rhein & Schmid 2020). As a result, sustainable PI has also emerged as an important consideration for customers (Huo et al. 2022). Within this framework, implementing social responsibility efforts can encourage customers to adopt sustainable PI (Gong et al. 2023).

How customers perceive a firm's social responsibility practices likely influences their PI towards the brand (Wang et al. 2021; Tao & Ji 2024). With the rapid growth of market economies, consumers increasingly regard CSR as one of the key determinants of their purchasing decisions (Dai & Guo 2024). Prior research indicates that engaging in CSR enables firms to highlight philanthropic efforts, strengths and community orientation while fostering stronger consumer ties, resulting in more favourable responses and competitive advantages. Ultimately, this strengthens PI and customer loyalty (Nguyen-Viet et al. 2024). At the same time, CSR may not directly increase PI when consumers attribute CSR to self-serving motives or question its effectiveness. In such cases, CSR tends to work indirectly by strengthening trust-related evaluations, such as credibility and perceived quality, rather than triggering immediate buying intention. This implies that the CSR → PI relationship is likely context-dependent and may rely on brand-level interpretations captured by BI.

H_6 Corporate social responsibility (CSR) directly influences the company's Purchase Intention (PI).

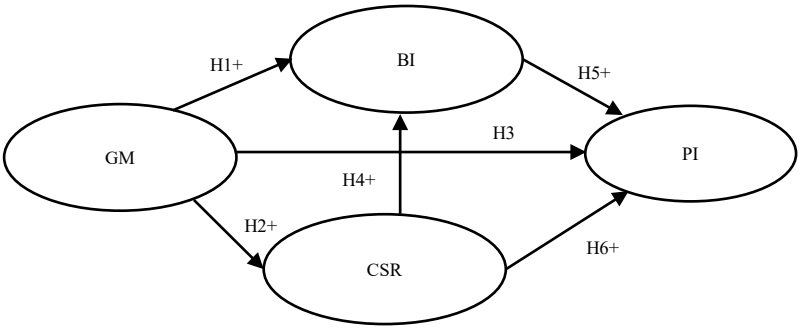

FIGURE 1. Proposed research model

METHODOLOGY

STUDY DESIGN

This study investigated the relationships amongst GM, CSR, BI and PI in the coffee sector using a mixed methods approach to provide a multidimensional perspective and enhance reliability. During the qualitative stage, two semi-structured expert interviews were conducted to refine the questionnaire and assess the conceptual clarity of the proposed model. Experts were purposively selected based on (i) formal training in marketing or sustainability, (ii) at least five years of relevant experience in research or practice and (iii) familiarity with the Vietnamese consumer market and the coffee sector. Each session lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face. The qualitative stage served an instrument-development purpose by identifying ambiguous wording and missing aspects of GM and CSR perceptions in the coffee context, which were subsequently incorporated into the final measurement items. Industry reports were also analysed to contextualise the coffee sector, identify sustainable consumption trends and highlight challenges in implementing GM. The qualitative stage did not aim to produce standalone findings; it was designed to improve measurement quality and ensure the model fit the coffee context (Pandey & Chawla 2016). This stage yielded two outcomes: the refinement of item wording to reduce confusion regarding GM and CSR activities, and the confirmation of construct boundaries to ensure that GM, CSR and BI remained distinct for respondents. Following expert feedback, items were reworded and redundant items were removed (Hardesty & Bearden 2003).

In the quantitative phase, consumer data from Vietnam's Mekong Delta were analysed using partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for examining complex latent relationships (Hair et al. 2021). The analysis involved two steps: (1) evaluating the measurement framework in terms of internal consistency, convergent validity and discriminant validity; and (2) evaluating the structural model to test hypotheses and examine the mediating effects of variables.

POPULATION

The survey respondents consisted of coffee consumers in the Mekong Delta, a key economic region in southern Vietnam. The minimum sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) calculation method applicable to extensive populations, considering these parameters: confidence level $Z = 1.96$ (corresponding to 95%), estimated proportion $p = 0.5$ and margin of error $e = 0.06$. The calculation indicated a required minimum sample size of 267. To enhance reliability and reduce potential bias from invalid responses, the research team distributed 320 questionnaires. After removing partial or unusable responses, the researchers retained 300 valid questionnaires for analysis, which exceeds the required minimum sample size.

Regarding sample characteristics, the results demonstrate that most of the respondents consume coffee several times a week, with male consumers accounting for the majority. Notably, most of the participants reported income and monthly expenditure at a low-to-average level, reflecting that the current coffee market primarily targets mass consumers with stable consumption habits but high price sensitivity. This segment represents strong potential for businesses to implement GM strategies combined with social responsibility messages, thereby reinforcing sustainable brand value while remaining aligned with consumers' purchasing power and expectations.

SAMPLE

Data were collected using online and face-to-face surveys to ensure objectivity, reliability and representativeness. The online survey, distributed via Google Forms through email, Facebook and Zalo, included follow-up reminders after two weeks. Concurrently, printed questionnaires and interviews were conducted at coffee shops, public areas and university campuses. Using convenience sampling, the study targeted coffee consumers in Can Tho, An Giang and Vinh Long Provinces. Multiple collection channels were used to broaden coverage and avoid reliance on a single respondent pool. Online surveys reached working consumers and social media users, whereas face-to-face administration improved participation amongst low online

users and enhanced response quality. The same questionnaire wording and item order were applied across all channels. Convenience sampling was employed because a comprehensive sampling frame of coffee consumers in the Mekong Delta is unavailable, and data collection required access to consumers across multiple consumption settings. This approach is commonly used in consumer behaviour studies where the target population is large and geographically dispersed. To mitigate potential bias, the researchers collected data from diverse locations and brands, applied consistent screening criteria (coffee consumption experience) and removed incomplete or careless responses. In addition, the achieved sample size exceeded the minimum requirement, supporting the robustness of the PLS-SEM estimation. A total of 320 questionnaires were collected, with 300 deemed valid, yielding a 93.75% response rate and ensuring an adequate sample size for analysis.

The respondents were consumers of brands including Trung Nguyên, Vinacafe, Wake-Up, Mê Trang, Nescafé and Highlands Coffee, representing diverse consumption patterns from instant coffee to branded chains. This selection enabled the assessment of consumer awareness and responses to GM and CSR initiatives, reflecting the Vietnam coffee industry's shift towards sustainable development.

MEASUREMENT ITEM

The variables included in the conceptual framework were assessed through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To establish content validity, the two experts reviewed the initial item pool during the qualitative phase. They evaluated each item in terms of relevance, clarity and representativeness of the construct definition. Items judged as redundant or potentially confusing were revised or removed. All items are adapted from prior studies (refer to Table 2). To verify the consistency and accuracy of the instrument, a preliminary survey was administered to 30 participants in Can Tho City. Insights from this pretest were employed to adjust phrasing, improve clarity and remove potential ambiguities, thereby enhancing the robustness and appropriateness of the survey instrument for the main data collection.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, analytical procedures were performed using a combination of SPSS version 26.0, and SmartPLS 3.0. SPSS was utilised to carry out basic summary statistics, whereas SmartPLS 3.0 was applied to examine the proposed structural framework using the PLS-SEM technique. For assessing the measurement framework, indicators of reliability and validity were examined, including Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), following the guidelines of Hair et al. (2021).

The structural model was assessed by analysing path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2) and model fit indices such as the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR < 0.08) and the normed fit index (NFI > 0.8). In addition, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was performed to assess whether the proposed hypotheses were statistically supported ($p < 0.05$), thereby ensuring the reliability and robustness of the study's conclusions.

RESULTS

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

The demographic analysis of 300 respondents, as detailed in Table 1, reveals a diverse distribution that reflects coffee consumption patterns within the Mekong Delta. Male respondents slightly outnumber females (56.3% vs. 43.7%), which indicates that men constitute the core customer group; however, female participation highlights significant market diversification. The 16–24 age group predominates (53.3%), followed by those aged 25–35 years (28.3%), demonstrating high coffee consumption amongst the youth, particularly students and office workers. Older groups account for 12% (36–45 years) and 6.3% (over 45 years) of the sample. Regarding occupation, students comprise 46%, specialists or employees account for 30%, entrepreneurs represent 6% and freelancers or others combine for 18%. These figures indicate a sample dominated by young, educated consumers who remain receptive to green communication and BI. The sensitivity of these consumers to trends and their capacity to share information position them as a key target for sustainable marketing strategies.

Most of the respondents reported monthly spending below 2 million VND (34%) or 2–4 million VND (32%), whereas only 11.7% exceed 6 million VND. Income levels are similarly modest, with 42% earning under 5 million VND and 8% earning above 15 million VND. Consumption patterns indicate frequent coffee use; specifically, 42% of participants drink coffee several times weekly and 27.7% consume it daily, reflecting the integration of the beverage into daily routines.

In terms of brand preference, Trung Nguyên (26.0%) and Nescafé (24.0%) are the most frequently consumed brands, followed by Vinacafe/Wake-Up (20.3%) and Highlands Coffee (15.7%). The coexistence of traditional and modern brands reflects diverse consumption behaviour, which creates opportunities for flexible GM strategies. These strategies can preserve long-standing brand values while simultaneously responding to emerging sustainable consumption trends.

TABLE 1. Descriptive statistics of survey participants (N = 300)

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	169	56.3
	Female	131	43.7
Age	16–24 years old	160	53.3
	25–35 years old	85	28.3
	36–45 years old	36	12.0
	Over 45 years old	19	6.3
Occupation	Student	138	46.0
	Specialist/Employee	90	30.0
	Entrepreneur	18	6.0
	Freelancer	25	8.3
	Other occupations	29	9.7
Average monthly expenditure	Under 2 million VND	102	34.0
	From 2 to under 4 million VND	96	32.0
	From 4 to 6 million VND	67	22.3
	Over 6 million VND	35	11.7
Average monthly income	Under 5 million VND	126	42.0
	From 5 to under 10 million VND	96	32.0
	From 10 to 15 million VND	54	18.0
	Over 15 million VND	24	8.0
Coffee consumption frequency	Daily	83	27.7
	A few times a week	126	42.0
	A few times a month	55	18.3
	Very rarely	23	12.0
Most frequently used coffee brand	Trung Nguyên	78	26.0
	Vinacafe/Wake-Up	61	20.3
	Mê Trang	18	6.0
	Nescafé	72	24.0
	Highlands Coffee	47	15.7
	Other	24	8.0

MEASUREMENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Table 2 presents the results of assessing the consistency and reliability of the measurement scales through key indicators such as factor loadings, AVE, CR and CA. According to Hair et al. (2021), a model is considered acceptable when the following thresholds are met: minimum factor loadings of 0.7, AVE greater than 0.5 and CR and CA exceeding 0.7.

Most indicators exhibited factor loadings above 0.7 (0.704–0.853), whereas GM1 and GM2 were removed for failing to meet requirements; this confirms the retained items' strong association with their latent constructs. CA (0.828–0.925) and CR (0.879–0.938) exceeded 0.70, demonstrating internal consistency. AVE values (0.593–0.627) indicated good convergent validity. VIF values were below 5, and although SR7 and SR8 were slightly higher, they remained acceptable, confirming that no serious multicollinearity exists. Overall, the measurement model meets the standards of reliability and validity required for structural analysis.

Table 3 presents the results of the model fit assessment. The SRMR values for the saturated and estimated models are 0.088. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), SRMR should be less than 0.08 to indicate a good fit, although values up to 0.10 are acceptable in certain cases. Conversely, Kline (2016) suggested that SRMR values above 0.10 may indicate poor model fit. Therefore, the value of 0.088 lies within the acceptable range, indicating the model satisfies the criteria necessary for subsequent structural evaluation. The d_ULS (2.689) and d_G (1.926) indices reflect discrepancies when comparing the actual and estimated inter-variable covariance structures. Although no absolute threshold exists, these values should be interpreted in conjunction with bootstrap results to determine statistical significance.

The chi-square statistic assesses model fit by comparing the sample covariance matrix with the model-estimated covariance matrix (Hu & Bentler 1999). Because it is highly sensitive to sample size, it often rejects models with large samples (Bentler & Bonnet 1980; Jöreskog & Sörbom 1993). Thus, the large chi-square value (2,695.255) does not imply model inadequacy. The NFI value of 0.614 is below recommended thresholds (Bentler & Bonnet 1980; Hu & Bentler 1999) but is also sample-size sensitive (Hooper et al. 2008). Model fit should be evaluated using multiple indices for a comprehensive assessment (Kline 2005).

TABLE 2. Measurement model evaluation

Variables/Source	Indicators	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE	VIF
GM (Zuhdi et al. 2024; Minh et al. 2021; Hengboriboon et al. 2022)	GM3	0.704	0.890	0.914	0.603	1.721
	GM4	0.791				2.315
	GM5	0.782				2.330
	GM6	0.781				2.101
	GM7	0.767				1.910
	GM8	0.773				1.964
	GM9	0.834				2.544
BI (Zuhdi et al. 2024; Minh et al. 2021; Alzahrani & Zia 2025; Nguyen-Viet et al. 2024)	BI1	0.717	0.828	0.879	0.593	1.519
	BI2	0.802				2.083
	BI3	0.724				1.490
	BI4	0.790				1.762
	BI5	0.813				2.100
CSR (Minh et al. 2021; Nguyen-Viet et al. 2024; Shaheer et al. 2024)	SR1	0.790	0.925	0.938	0.627	2.432
	SR2	0.726				2.155
	SR3	0.799				2.996
	SR4	0.803				2.799

	SR5	0.817				2.562
	SR6	0.723				2.001
	SR7	0.849				3.457
	SR8	0.832				3.493
	SR9	0.781				2.851
PI (Zuhdi et al. 2024; Minh et al. 2021; Alzahrani & Zia 2025; Nguyen-Viet et al. 2024)	PI1	0.720	0.846	0.891	0.621	1.455
	PI2	0.761				1.685
	PI3	0.777				1.776
	PI4	0.853				2.579
	PI5	0.823				2.260

TABLE 3. Model fit analysis

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.088	0.088
d_ULS	2.689	2.689
d_G	1.926	1.926
Chi-Square	2,695.255	2,695.255
NFI	0.614	0.614

HTMT analysis (Table 4) shows most variable pairs below the 0.90 threshold, except BI–PI (0.929), indicating a minor discriminant validity concern (Henseler et al. 2015). This is theoretically reasonable, as BI and PI are inherently linked. Other pairs, including GM–PI (0.734), GM–CSR (0.731) and PI–CSR (0.821), fall within acceptable ranges, confirming overall discriminant validity. Supplementary checks using the Fornell–Larcker criterion further ensured measurement rigour.

The results of the Fornell–Larcker criterion test (Table 5) show that the root value of the AVE for every latent construct exceeds its correlation coefficients with the other variables (e.g. BI = 0.770, which is greater than 0.689, 0.782 and 0.767). This indicates that the study constructs are clearly differentiated and do not conceptually overlap. Although the HTMT value between BI and PI exceeded the recommended threshold, the discriminant validity of the model remains acceptable when both evaluation methods are considered together.

TABLE 4. HTMT

	BI	GM	PI	CSR
BI				
GM	0.797			
PI	0.929	0.734		
CSR	0.873	0.731	0.821	

TABLE 5. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

	BI	GM	PI	CSR
BI	0.770			
GM	0.689	0.777		
PI	0.782	0.644	0.788	
CSR	0.767	0.673	0.733	0.792

The analysis results show that the coefficients of determination for the dependent constructs (Table 6) are relatively high, reflecting the strong predictive capability of the framework. Specifically, BI has $R^2 = 0.643$, PI has $R^2 = 0.662$ and CSR has $R^2 = 0.453$. According to Hair et al. (2021), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 are considered strong, moderate and low, respectively. Accordingly, BI and PI fall into the strong category, whereas CSR is moderate, indicating that the framework accounts for a notable share of variability in the outcome constructs. This confirms the model's suitability and relevance for analysing the proposed relationships amongst the constructs.

TABLE 6. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BI	0.643	0.641
PI	0.662	0.658
CSR	0.453	0.451

Table 7 shows the f^2 analysis, revealing varying effect sizes. Based on Cohen's (2013) thresholds, GM strongly affects CSR ($f^2 = 0.829$), highlighting GM's role in promoting CSR. CSR significantly influences BI ($f^2 = 0.473$), whereas BI moderately affects PI ($f^2 = 0.246$). CSR has a small effect on PI ($f^2 = 0.086$), and GM's effect on PI is negligible ($f^2 = 0.021$), although GM moderately affects BI ($f^2 = 0.152$). These results indicate that CSR mediates GM–BI, with BI bridging CSR's influence on PI.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships amongst GM, BI, CSR and PI in the structural model estimated using the PLS-SEM approach. The results reveal that GM exerts the strongest influence on CSR (path coefficient = 0.673) while also having a direct effect on BI (0.315) and PI (0.123). CSR plays a critical role, significantly influencing BI (0.555) and PI (0.280). Notably, BI also has a substantial effect on PI (0.483). Thus, the influences of BI and CSR shape PI, in addition to the direct effect of GM.

TABLE 7. f Square

	BI	GM	PI	CSR
BI			0.246	
GM	0.152		0.021	0.829
PI				
CSR	0.473		0.086	

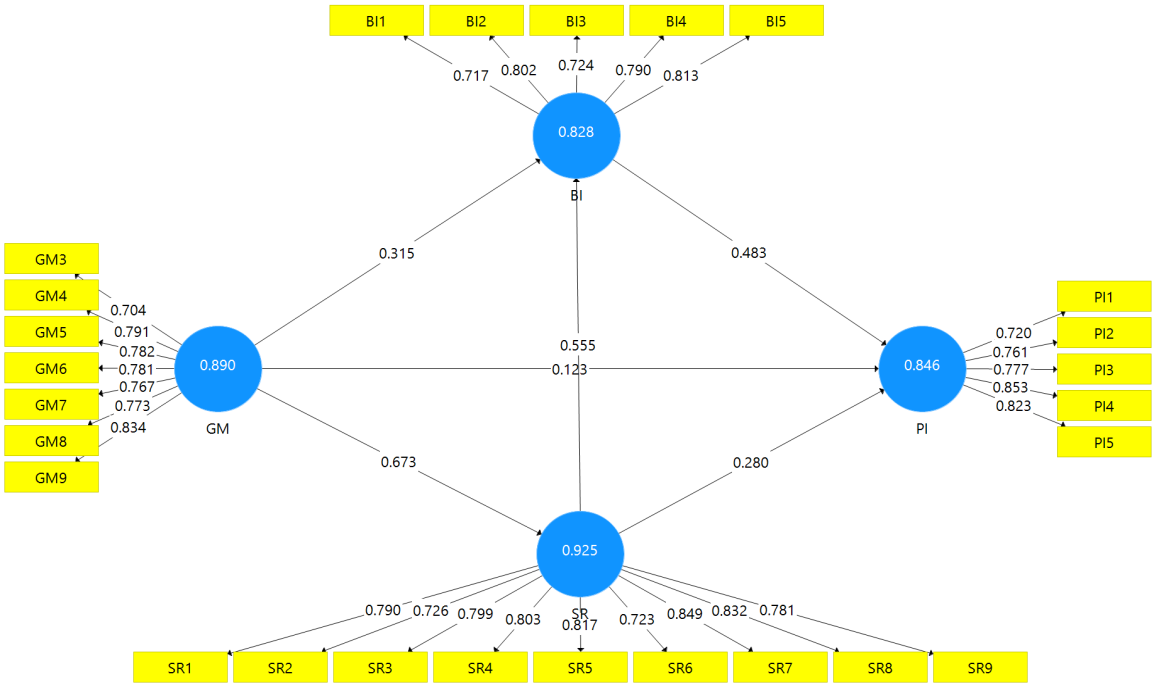

FIGURE 2. PLS-SEM

Table 8 shows that GM has a positive effect on BI (path coefficient = 0.315, T-value = 4.640 [> 1.96] and P-value = 0.000 [< 0.05]). Therefore, H_1 is supported. Particularly, GM has an extremely strong effect on CSR (path coefficient = 0.673, T-value = 20.138, P-value = 0.000), leading to the acceptance of H_2. GM has only a minor but significant effect on PI (path coefficient = 0.123, T-value = 2.118, P-value = 0.035); hence, H_3 is supported. CSR significantly affects BI (path coefficient = 0.555, T-value = 6.696, P-value = 0.000), thereby supporting H_4. Simultaneously, BI has a positive effect on PI (path coefficient = 0.483, T-value = 3.504, P-value = 0.000); thus, H_5 is supported. Finally, CSR also influences PI (path coefficient = 0.280, T-value = 1.980, P-value = 0.048), leading to the acceptance of H_6.

TABLE 8. Direct relationships between variables in the model

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Hypothesis Results
GM → BI	0.315	0.313	0.068	4.640	0.000	H1 (Accepted)
GM → CSR	0.673	0.676	0.033	20.138	0.000	H2 (Accepted)
GM → PI	0.123	0.132	0.058	2.118	0.035	H3 (Accepted)
CSR → BI	0.555	0.558	0.083	6.696	0.000	H4 (Accepted)
BI → PI	0.483	0.476	0.138	3.504	0.000	H5 (Accepted)
CSR → PI	0.280	0.280	0.141	1.980	0.048	H6 (Accepted)

Note: Green Marketing (GM); Brand Image (BI); Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Purchase Intention (PI).

DISCUSSION

This study explains how GM and CSR influence PI in Vietnam's coffee market. The central insight is that GM alone does not act as the most decisive driver of PI; it becomes more convincing when it strengthens perceived CSR and translates into a favourable BI. Consumers do not simply react to green messages; instead, they evaluate whether those messages signal responsible conduct and enhance brand credibility. The relatively weak direct GM–PI link suggests that consumers may treat green appeals as secondary information unless supported by tangible responsibility cues. In the coffee category, buying decisions are often habitual and price-sensitive; consequently, sustainability messages rarely override convenience, taste or budget considerations. Therefore, GM tends to work indirectly by shaping CSR perceptions and building a credible BI that ultimately supports PI.

From a signalling perspective, GM offers an initial sustainability cue, but consumers still require credible evidence to judge whether it reflects genuine responsibility. CSR perceptions therefore act as a credibility filter: when visible responsible actions support green messages, the signal becomes stronger and more likely to enhance BI. Attribution logic further suggests

that consumers assess the motives behind green communication; if messages appear purely promotional, the direct persuasive effect on PI weakens. This helps explain why the model favours an indirect mechanism through CSR and BI rather than a simple GM-to-intention path. This finding is especially relevant in Vietnam's coffee market, where many consumers are price-sensitive and purchase decisions are habitual, making sustainability messages less able to trigger immediate buying. In such settings, BI becomes the key conversion mechanism that reduces uncertainty and builds trust. Overall, the study extends prior evidence by emphasising CSR as a strong upstream driver and by highlighting that the CSR–PI link may vary across categories and trust environments (Dai & Guo 2024; Gong et al. 2023; Hengboriboon et al. 2022; Huo et al. 2022).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION

The managerial implications indicate that coffee enterprises in the Mekong Delta must align their priorities strategically. GM exerts a substantial influence on perceptions of CSR ($\beta = 0.673$), whereas its direct effect on PI is minimal ($\beta = 0.123$); consequently, green communication should not be viewed as an isolated driver of PI. Instead, GM requires an evidence-based design to ensure that CSR activities are observable, verifiable and aligned with consumer needs. The findings also reveal that BI has the strongest direct effect on PI ($\beta = 0.483$), which suggests that the primary value of GM lies in reinforcing CSR and BI. Regarding implementation, firms should prioritise CSR initiatives with high observability within the coffee consumption context, translate CSR into consistent BI signals across all touchpoints and monitor performance through metrics such as brand trust, perceived authenticity and repurchase intention. Simultaneously, firms must manage scepticism risks through low-cost yet tangible changes supported by simple evidence and consistent messaging; for price-sensitive segments, price increases should be avoided when perceived value remains insufficient.

Regarding theoretical contributions, this study extends the literature by shifting the focus from the direct effects of GM to a mechanism-based explanation. The results indicate that the primary pathway operates through CSR and BI, featuring a significant sequential mediation (GM → CSR → BI → PI); this clarifies how sustainability cues translate into PI. Furthermore, the direct effect of GM on PI is weak and of limited practical significance, implying that GM is better conceptualised as a trigger that builds credibility and brand meaning rather than an independent driver of intention. By validating this mechanism in Vietnam's coffee market and achieving strong explanatory power for PI ($R^2 = 0.662$), the study helps delineate the boundary conditions of green consumer behaviour in an emerging economy context.

CONCLUSIONS

The study has demonstrated the positive effects of GM and CSR on PI, while emphasising the critical mediating role of BI in transforming GM activities into purchasing intentions. All hypotheses were supported at the 0.05 significance level, including direct and indirect effects. Notably, the findings reveal that GM has a strong influence on CSR, and CSR plays a key role in shaping BI, which subsequently enhances PI. The research model achieved high explanatory power (R^2: BI = 0.643, PI = 0.662 and CSR = 0.453), reflecting the robustness of the relationships within the model.

These findings carry important practical implications for coffee enterprises in Vietnam, especially given the rising competition and growing demand for sustainable consumption. Integrating GM strategies with BI communication not only fosters stronger customer trust but also enhances long-term competitive advantage. Specifically, the results highlight that BI serves as a crucial factor in transforming GM and CSR initiatives into consumer motivation, offering a new pathway for firms to position their brands in alignment with sustainable development.

However, the study still has some limitations. Firstly, the survey scope was limited to the Mekong Delta region, which is not sufficient to generalise green consumer behaviour across other areas. Secondly, the research model focused only on three factors—GM, CSR and BI—while omitting other significant variables; consequently, the findings may not fully reflect all determinants of consumers' green buying intention. Therefore, future studies could expand the survey scope, include additional variables and conduct comparisons across regions to enhance the generalisability and academic value of the model. Furthermore, the HTMT value between BI and PI slightly exceeded the recommended threshold, suggesting that these factors may partially overlap in respondents' perceptions. Therefore, future studies should refine the measurement items or adopt alternative operationalisation approaches to strengthen discriminant validity.

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