TAM Model: Studying the Influence of Sustainability Labels on Consumer Willingness to Pay Premium Prices for Apparel Using PLS-SEM

Enrico C. Mendoza*, Ivan Escarda, Elnathan Lim, Jean Andrei Mallillin, Mark Joshua Sta. Ana

Asia Pacific College, De La Salle University, Philippines. *Email: enrico.mendoza@dlsu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of sustainability labels on the willingness of generation Z consumers in Greater Metro Manila to pay premium prices for apparel, utilizing the technology acceptance model (TAM) as its theoretical framework. Through quantitative research design, data were collected from 400 respondents aged 18-28 via a structured online survey. The relationships between perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), attitude (ATT) toward sustainability labels, and purchase intention (PI) were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that perceived usefulness and attitude are the most significant direct predictors of purchase intention. Specifically, attitude demonstrates the strongest effect (coefficient value = 0.460), followed by a direct, significant influence from perceived usefulness (coefficient value = 0.259). Furthermore, perceived ease of use significantly enhances perceived usefulness (coefficient value = 0.476) and influences attitude indirectly through this pathway. However, the direct effect of perceived ease of use on attitude was found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that while label clarity is important for utility, it does not directly shape consumer attitudes in this context. The study concludes that sustainability labels can encourage premium purchases among Filipino Gen Z consumers when they are viewed as useful and credible. Brands and policymakers should emphasize the labels' informational value over simplicity to strengthen sustainability communication and marketing in the Philippine fashion industry.

Keywords: Technology Acceptance Model, Sustainability Labels, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Attitude, Purchase Intention
JEL Classification: M1, M51

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has been a significant contributor to environmental degradation; it is responsible for an alarming 2-8% of global emissions of greenhouse gas, consuming approximately 215 trillion liters of water annually and contributing 9% of yearly microplastic pollution in oceans (UN Environment Programme, 2023). As global clothing sales continue to rise, the utilization rates of clothing, the frequency with which garments are worn before being discarded, have sharply declined over the past decade (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019). This troubling trend highlights the urgent need to adopt sustainable practices in the fashion industry, particularly in the Philippines, where consumer awareness is on the rise. Recent studies indicate that 75% of Filipinos consciously search for brands featuring green options (Lezoraine, 2021).

However, despite this growing awareness, consumer behavior in the Philippines often contradicts the principles of responsible consumption. According to (Abrea, 2025), approximately 30% of Filipinos reported throwing away their clothing after a single use, contributing significantly to environmental pollution. Additionally, some brands in the Philippines offer discounts for collecting old clothes of their consumers, which only hides behind the veil of sustainability, as it drives more consumption. This behavior starkly contrasts with the ideals of responsible consumption, which advocate for reusing, donating, or recycling items to maximize

their lifecycle and minimize waste (Widayat et al., 2021). The substantial waste generated by single-use clothing underscores the clothing sector's responsibility to adopt and promote more environmentally viable techniques.

In the context of fashion, sustainability refers to a complete approach that covers the entire process that begins with raw material sourcing, manufacturing, delivery, and ending with waste management. This comprehensive framework emphasizes ethical labor practices, resource efficiency, and a commitment to reducing environmental harm (Kirpalani, 2022). What makes fashion truly sustainable lies in using organic materials, ethical production methods, and a commitment to waste reduction. However, many customers are unaware that a significant portion of their wardrobes, approximately 60%, is composed of synthetic materials like polyester, acrylic, and nylon, which contribute to microplastic pollution when washed (UN Environment Programme, 2019). In response, brands such as Patagonia, Uniqlo, and Reformation increasingly opt for recycled fabrics and natural fibers to mitigate these impacts (Patagonia, 2024; Reformation, n.d.). However, these sustainable practices often come with higher costs. While specific surveys on the cost of sustainable clothing in the Philippines are lacking, a related survey indicates that 41% of Filipinos cite high costs as a barrier to adopting sustainable practices in general (Statista, 2024). This perception of sustainability as an expensive endeavor ultimately influences consumer behavioral intention towards sustainable clothing in the Philippine market.

In this landscape, sustainability labels have emerged as vital indicators of a product's environmental and ethical credentials. These symbols make consumers aware of the items they are purchasing, yet the more expensive nature of sustainable components can hinder many from paying an added expense for environmentally conscious offerings (Cook et al., 2023). Much of the existing literature focuses on nations with advanced economies, where consumer knowledge and access to sustainable products are substantially higher. There is a notable shortage of research into how Filipino shoppers recognize and react to environmental sustainability labels in Greater Metro Manila, which is characterized by rapid urbanization and economic inequality (Doshi, 2024).

The Philippine private sector has increasingly embraced sustainability initiatives, such as implementing eco-friendly production processes and launching sustainable product lines. The Department of Trade and Industry in the Philippines released a report stating that the country is the highest in the Asia-Pacific region in maintaining the commitment to achieving sustainable development (DTI Philippines, 2023). DTI has continuously pushed for the implementation of programs and initiatives assisting consumers in the adoption of sustainable practices.

The topic of sustainability labels is important as there is a notable gap in the standardization of these labels that has led companies to utilize them for greenwashing methods, especially in the Philippines (Estrada, 2024). This gap suggests the need for a national policy framework that formalizes sustainability labeling standards, particularly one that is government-led and uniformly implemented across the apparel sector. Due to the vague nature of sustainability labels that have been used, there has been limited research on the impact of these labels on the actual conversion of consumer purchases towards sustainable products. In addition to this, there are only a few research studies that have utilized a strong framework to back their study.

The research conducted by Ma et al. (2017) has produced results that show there is a strong positive correlation between the perceived usefulness of sustainability labels and consumers' purchase intention. Additionally, the results also show that both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are positive predictors of favorable attitudes towards using sustainability labels. This shows that sustainability labels have an important role in influencing the adoption of sustainability, as the current situation of sustainability labels, including complex symbols and technical jargon, is becoming a deterrent for consumers to put effort into including these labels in their decision-making.

Moreover, the unique economic environment of the Philippines faces unique challenges and constraints that existing literature cannot generally conclude the same results for. The deep cultural values that have been passed on to generations of Filipinos may have a significant impact on the relationship between sustainability labels and purchase intentions.

The study will focus on these key variables, namely: Perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards using sustainability labels, and purchase intentions. The study uses the definition of perceived ease of use as the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would be free of effort. In addition, perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance. Moreover, attitude towards using sustainability labels is the interaction of the consumers' awareness, trust, and value perception given to sustainable products. Finally, the definition that this paper utilizes for purchase intention is the consumer's conscious decision to buy products.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Sustainability Labels
Sustainability labels are essentially symbols or certifications found on products that help inform buyers about certain ethical or environmental aspects, such as how eco-friendly the product is, whether fair labor was involved, or if it meets sustainable sourcing standards (Majer et al., 2022). These qualities aren't something people can see right away or even notice after using the product, which is why these labels matter. They serve as trusted indicators, giving consumers some assurance about what's behind the product they're choosing, especially when the sustainable qualities aren't obvious on the surface. According to (Navas et al., 2021), sustainability labels are also known as ecolabels, symbols, or marks that are found on products that give consumers an idea of their environmental or ethical qualities, such as being eco-friendly, fairly made, or responsibly sourced. Since people can't usually check these things themselves, the labels help bridge that gap by offering trusted information in a quick, visual way. Their

main goal is to guide buyers toward more sustainable choices and promote transparency in the market.

2.2. Sustainability Labels in the Context of Fashion
In the fashion industry, sustainability labels are voluntary symbols or certifications placed on clothing and textile products to show that they meet certain environmental or social standards (Diekel et al., 2021). These labels help communicate an important message to consumers, such as lowering environmental impact or having safer production practices that people wouldn't easily see or even care about on their own. With this information, sustainability labels on fashion are reliable and verified, which aim to guide consumers toward more eco-friendly choices and support better industry practices.

2.3. Perceived Usefulness of Sustainability Labels
Perceived usefulness is a construct from the technology acceptance model (TAM), originally developed by Davis (1989), which explains user behavior in the adoption of new technologies. Davis defines perceived usefulness as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance." The premise is grounded in the cost-benefit paradigm (Davis, 1989), wherein individuals are more inclined to adopt a system or tool when they believe it will offer tangible advantages. In other words, perceived usefulness captures the belief that engaging with a specific system, label, or information set will improve the outcomes of a task or decision.

Although the technology acceptance model (TAM) was originally developed to explain user acceptance of information technology, recent research has expanded its application to include various non-technological contexts, such as consumer behavior and environmental decision-making (Nguyen et al., 2015). The adaptability of TAM lies in its theoretical roots in the theory of reasoned action (TRA), which explores how beliefs shape attitudes and behavioral intentions, making it applicable to contexts such as sustainability label adoption (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980; Ma et al., 2017).

2.4. Perceived Ease of Use in the Context of Sustainability Labels
In the context of sustainability labels, it is easy for consumers to learn and apply sustainability labels in a purchasing decision. Consumers balance the effort involved in deciphering these labels against the utility they derive, for example, making an environmentally friendly choice. If sustainability labels are easy and simple to use, consumers will be more likely to include them in their purchasing decisions. Confusing or hard-to-use labels raise the perceived cost of effort, and consumers will be less likely to apply sustainability information (Ma et al., 2017).

A study conducted by Tusholihah and Nora (2025) on sustainable labeling on packaging confirms that perceived ease of use, along with perceived usefulness and attitudes, plays a crucial role in consumers' purchase behavior toward sustainability-labeled products. This research supports the idea that simplifying label information increases consumers' confidence and likelihood to purchase sustainable products.

2.5. Purchase Intention
Purchase intention in the context of sustainable fashion reflects a consumer's conscious decision to buy products that align with their environmental and ethical values (Ilagan et al., 2024). Additionally, the study conducted by Tusholihah and Nora (2025) depicted that consumers' purchasing intention for sustainable apparel is influenced by the degree of belief that the actions made by consumers contribute to the betterment of solving environmental problems. This means that there is a strong positive relationship between purchase intention and consumers' perceived usefulness of sustainability labels on sustainable apparel. The results of the study imply that businesses should make it easy for consumers to educate themselves and obtain the information that sustainability labels are trying to portray to stimulate actual purchases towards sustainability.

2.6. Consumer Attitude to Sustainability
The attitudes of consumers toward sustainability are considerably regulated by their awareness and concern about environmental issues as well as their trust in the legitimacy of the sustainability claims presented by brands. When customers think that a sustainable product genuinely does good for the environment and social life, they develop a favorable attitude toward the purchase of such a product. The attitudes are also induced by perceived advantages for consumers, such as health benefits or ethical considerations for personal satisfaction and social responsibility extension, which motivates them toward supporting sustainable choices (Chen et al., 2019).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Framework
The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the technology acceptance model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), which was designed to explain how individuals accept and use technology. The model identifies two central beliefs—perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU)—that influence users' attitudes and, subsequently, their behavioral intentions. Derived from the theory of reasoned action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), TAM addresses TRA's limitation in accounting for system-specific factors by integrating cognitive evaluations of the technology itself. These two beliefs—how easy the technology is to use and how beneficial it is—jointly determine a person's attitude toward its use, which then shapes the intention to act.

Although TAM has been extended into more complex models, the original TAM remains widely used in consumer behavior research, particularly in contexts that do not involve organizational structures or workplace-specific constructs. In this study, the focus is on individual consumers' evaluation of sustainability labels on clothing. The original TAM offers a focused, psychologically grounded framework that is appropriate for capturing the underlying attitudes and behaviors of consumers responding to sustainability information on apparel.

3.2. Conceptual Framework
Building on the theoretical foundation provided by the technology acceptance model (TAM), this study applies the model as a

Figure 1: Ma et al. (2017)
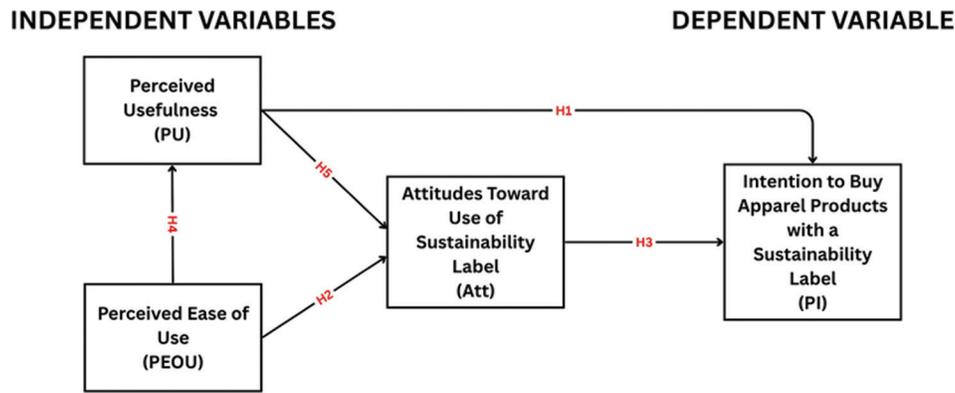
conceptual framework to examine how Filipino consumers respond to sustainability labels on clothing (see Figure 1). TAM, originally developed by Davis (1989) and validated in the context of sustainability and apparel by Ma et al. (2017), offers a structured approach to understanding how consumers evaluate and act on external information.

3.2.1. Hypotheses of the study

H_1: Perceived usefulness has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

Davis (1989) originally identified perceived usefulness as a direct predictor of behavioral intention. In the context of sustainability labeling, Ma et al. (2017) confirmed that when consumers believe labels help make informed choices, their intention to purchase sustainable apparel increases significantly (Ma et al., 2017).

H_2: Perceived ease of use has a significant positive influence on attitude.

According to Davis (1989), ease of use contributes not only to usefulness but also to users' emotional responses, including attitudes. Ma et al. (2017) found that consumers who found sustainability labels easy to interpret were more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward their use (Ma et al., 2017).

H_3: Attitude toward sustainability labels has a significant positive influence on purchase intention.

A positive consumer attitude toward a system or product has long been established as a direct antecedent of behavioral intention (Davis, 1989). Ma et al. (2017) demonstrated that in the apparel market, positive attitudes toward sustainability labels significantly increase consumers' willingness to purchase labeled products.

H_4: Perceived ease of use has a significant positive influence on perceived usefulness.

This relationship is foundational to the TAM. Davis (1989) asserts that when users find a system easy to use, they are more likely to perceive it as useful. Ma et al. (2017) echoed this finding in the domain of sustainability labels, showing that user-friendly labeling enhances perceptions of usefulness.

H_5: Perceived usefulness has a significant positive influence on attitude toward sustainability labels.

Perceived usefulness plays a critical role in shaping attitudes. Davis (1989) identified it as a core determinant of user attitude. Ma et al. (2017) found that when consumers saw value in sustainability labels, they formed more favorable attitudes toward using them.

3.3. Research Design

The study was conducted in the Greater Metro Manila Area, which includes Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, and Rizal (Gonzales, 2021). This region is the Philippines' foremost commercial and urban center, characterized by a vibrant mix of socio-economic backgrounds and diverse consumer segments.

To minimize social desirability bias, the survey was administered through Google Forms, allowing respondents to answer independently and without interviewer influence. Respondent anonymity was ensured by collecting only names to confirm response uniqueness, while personal identifiers such as email addresses, contact numbers, and social media profiles were optional and not required. These measures helped reduce pressure to provide socially favorable responses and supported the accuracy of the data collected.

The study utilized a quota sampling strategy to have systematic and balanced representation from a number of key groups in the Greater Metro Manila region. In particular, the research got a sample of 100 respondents from each of the four municipalities of Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, and Rizal.

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was the primary analytical tool utilized because it aligned closely with the complexity of the research conceptual framework, offering both analytical robustness and practical flexibility to the study. The research focused on understanding how Generation Z consumers in Greater Metro Manila perceive sustainability labels on clothing and how these perceptions, specifically regarding perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes that influence their purchase intentions. PLS-SEM is well-equipped to model these complexes including the direct and indirect effects among them, which is crucial for addressing the core research questions about the relationships between perception, attitude, and purchase intention.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondents' Demographics

This section presents the demographic profile of the 400 respondents who participated in the study. Understanding these characteristics is important because they provide context to the data and help explain how individual differences may influence perceptions toward sustainability labels. The demographic information also supports the reliability of the results by ensuring that responses came from a diverse range of participants, allowing for more accurate and meaningful interpretations in the succeeding analyses.

The respondents ranged from 18 to 28 years old (as shown in Table 1), capturing the study's target group of Generation Z consumers. The largest portion of respondents were 22-25 years old, representing 52% of the total sample, followed by those aged 26-28 (31%), and 18-21 (17%). This distribution shows that the sample was largely composed of individuals in their early to mid-twenties. The age profile suggests that most participants are at a stage of emerging adulthood where purchasing decisions are shaped by developing values, growing financial independence, and exposure to social and environmental issues. Having a wide range within this generation also ensures diversity in lifestyle and income backgrounds, allowing the data to reflect both students and young professionals who may differ in awareness and purchasing priorities.

Out of the 400 respondents, 201 identified as male and 199 as female, showing a nearly equal distribution between genders (see Table 2). This balance is valuable for analysis since it reduces the possibility of gender-related bias influencing the findings. With both male and female perspectives represented almost equally, the results provide a fair overview of consumer behavior without leaning toward one group's preferences. The close ratio also allows for a more even interpretation of how individuals, regardless of gender, respond to sustainability labels and evaluate fashion products. Maintaining this equilibrium strengthens the generalizability of the study's results and ensures that any emerging patterns are reflective of the overall population rather than a gender-skewed subset.

4.2. Measurement Model

As reflected in Table 3, Cronbach alpha for perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) measured 0.766 and 0.786, respectively, and both were higher than the cutoff value of 0.70 indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency. These results indicate that the instruments that the researchers utilized to measure PEOU and PU accurately represent their respective constructs. This result is particularly crucial since sustainability labels may be relatively unfamiliar to many Philippine consumers (Amonoy et al., 2021), thus making it significant to have a consistent measure of these perceptual constructs. Moreover, the attitude (ATT) and purchase intention (PI) constructs had Cronbach's alpha values of 0.661 and 0.651, which are just below the accepted value of 0.70. As determined by Cheung et al. (2023), AVE values must be greater than 0.50 to demonstrate satisfactory convergent validity. In this case (see Table 3), both PEOU (AVE = 0.516) and PU (AVE = 0.539) have met this condition showing that both constructs adequately capture variance in their respective

indicators. This finding is consistent with Ma et al.'s (2017) TAM application to sustainability labels, in which PEOU and PU exhibited similarly strong measurement attributes.

However, both ATT and PI generated AVE values of 0.426, which fall lower than the recommended value of 0.50. This finding implies that the designed items to measure attitude and purchase intention inadequately represent the two constructs. In the context of sustainable fashion consumption among Metro Manila consumers, this finding may represent the complexity and multidimensionality of consumer attitudes toward sustainability labels. As noted by Mandarić et al. (2022) and Cook et al. (2023), consumer attitudes toward sustainability are often subject to influences from competing variables like skepticism toward greenwashing, price sensitivity, and inconsistent label formats—factors that could influence participants to interpret and react differently to attitude items.

4.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was thoroughly assessed in the measurement model using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations. According to accepted guidelines, HTMT values below 0.90 are considered indicative of sufficient discriminant validity, demonstrating that the constructs included in the model are empirically distinct from one another (Ringle et al., 2025). In this study, all HTMT values were found to be well below this threshold (see Table 4). Specifically, the value between attitude (ATT) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) was 0.285, while ATT and perceived usefulness (PU) was 0.492, and ATT and purchase intention (PI) was 0.829, with the latter being the highest but still under the recommended cutoff. For PEOU and PI, the HTMT value was 0.368, for PEOU and PU it was 0.608, and lastly, PI and PU yielded a value of 0.595. These results indicate that none of the constructs exhibit problematic overlap, and each one measures a concept distinct from the others in the model. All HTMT values provide solid evidence that the measurement model satisfies the requirement for discriminant validity, reinforcing confidence in the structural model's subsequent analyses and interpretations.

4.4. Validated Conceptual Framework with Standardized Path Coefficients and Significance Levels

Figure 2 shows the confirmed conceptual framework that illustrates empirical relationships between constructs based on hypothesis test results. The framework shows differential patterns of influence, offering insights into how perceived ease of use (PEOU) and perceived usefulness (PU) impact consumer attitudes (ATT) and buying intentions (PI) toward sustainably branded clothing in Greater Metro Manila.

The attitude (ATT) to purchase intention (PI) path coefficient is 0.460 (P < 0.001), the model's strongest link and indicative of a moderately strong positive effect. This significant result shows that the one standard deviation rise in positive attitude toward sustainability labels is associated with a 0.460 standard deviation rise in purchase intention, establishing that positive attitudes meaningfully influence purchase intentions for sustainable apparel.

Perceived ease of use (PEOU) has a very strong positive

impact on perceived usefulness (PU) with a coefficient of 0.476 (P < 0.001), the second strongest relation in the model. The very strong significant path shows that consumers who find it easy to comprehend and interpret sustainability labels are significantly more likely to view these labels as useful to enable informed buying decisions.

Perceived usefulness significantly impacts attitude with a coefficient of 0.373 (P < 0.001), demonstrating that as consumers' perceptions of label usefulness increase, their attitudes toward using sustainability labels become more favorable. Additionally, PU directly affects purchase intention with a coefficient of 0.259 (P < 0.001), showing a modest yet statistically significant direct influence beyond its indirect effect through attitude. This two-way explanation indicates that perceived usefulness works through cognitive-informational processes (direct effect on PI) as well as affective-evaluative processes (mediated effect through ATT).

The relationship from perceived ease of use (PEOU) to attitude (ATT) had a coefficient of 0.017 (P = 0.792), which is not statistically significant. This results in discovering that in the Greater Metro Manila setting, understanding sustainability labels ease does not have a direct effect on consumer attitudes towards utilizing them. But PEOU affects attitude indirectly because it has a strong effect on perceived usefulness.

The model accounts for different levels of variance in the endogenous constructs: 22.7% of variance in perceived usefulness ($R^2 = 0.227$), 14.5% of variance in attitude ($R^2 = 0.145$), and 37.0% of variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.370$). The comparatively greater R^2 for purchase intention suggests that the predictors of the model—attitude and perceived usefulness—combined offer considerable explanatory power for explaining consumers' purchasing intentions toward sustainably labeled clothing.

In general, the confirmed model vindicates that perceived ease of use directly impacts purchase intention through a mediating path: PEOU boosts perceived usefulness, which in turn reinforces both attitude and purchase intention. The direct path of PEOU to ATT is not confirmed, which implies that convenience of use needs to be translated into perceptions of utility first before influencing evaluative judgments. Attitude is the strongest direct purchase intention predictor, highlighting the acute need for developing positive consumer attitudes toward sustainability labels through credible, transparent, and substantial information provision.

4.5. Structural Model
Figure 3 shows that four of the five hypothesized paths also exhibited strongly significant relations with p-values of 0.000. In particular, the attitude (ATT) to purchase intention (PI), perceived ease of use (PEOU) to perceived usefulness (PU),
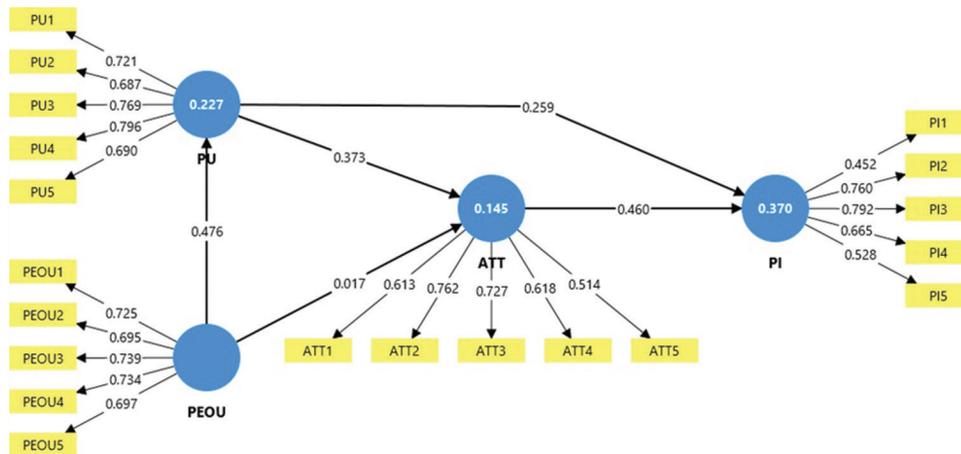

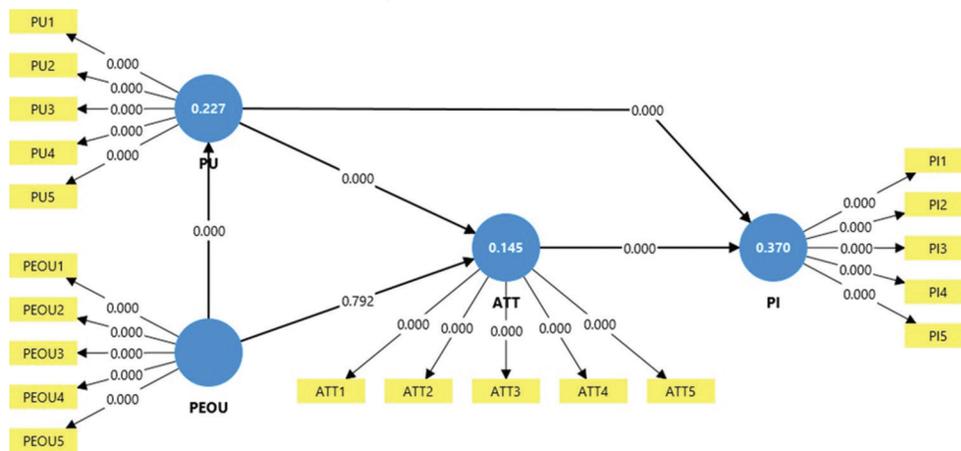**Figure 2:** Validated conceptual framework

Figure 3: Structural model

Table 1: Age of respondents (n=400)

Age Range	Count	Percentage
18-21	68	17
22-25	207	52
26-28	125	31

Table 2: Gender of respondents (n=400)

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	201	50.25
Female	199	49.75

Table 3: Construct reliability and validity (n=400)

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	rho_a	rho_c	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ATT	0.661	0.680	0.784	0.426
PEOU	0.766	0.769	0.842	0.516
PI	0.651	0.698	0.781	0.426
PU	0.786	0.793	0.853	0.539

Table 4: Discriminant validity (n=400)

Structural Path	HTMT
PEOU<>ATT	0.285
PI<>ATT	0.829
PI<>PEOU	0.368
PU<>ATT	0.492
PU<>PEOU	0.608
PU<>PI	0.595

perceived usefulness (PU) to attitude (ATT), and PU to PI paths all had $P = 0.000$; however, these values generated by PLS-SEM is limited by its own computational model and could mean that the value has more zeroes on it. These very low P-values provide very strong evidence against the null hypothesis of no effect, that these relations are extremely unlikely to be explained by random chance. The replication of such significant results along more than one path enhances confidence in the overall structural model and lends strong empirical evidence behind the use of the technology acceptance model to sustainability label settings (Davis, 1989; Ma et al., 2017).

The real-world implication of such strong relationships is immense. The extremely strong influence of ATT on PI ($P = 0.000$) reinforces that attitudes of Filipino consumers toward sustainability labels are indeed strong predictors of their intention to buy sustainably labeled apparel. This confirms theoretical predictions based on both TAM and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Alamsyah et al., 2024) and indicates that those interventions seeking to enhance attitudes toward sustainability labeling might well prove to be effective in terms of corresponding behavioral intentions. The highly significant PEOU to PU relationship ($P = 0.000$) strongly supports that making label designs simpler and easier to understand can increase the perceived usefulness to consumers, supporting evidence from Majer et al. (2022) and Tusholihah and Nora (2025).

On the other hand, the PEOU to ATT path resulted in a $P = 0.792$, well above the 0.05 significance level, and it is not statistically significant. The high P-value suggests there is not enough evidence to ascertain if perceived ease of use directly affects attitude towards sustainability labels among the Greater Metro Manila population. From a statistical point of view, the weak effect coefficient value of 0.017 that was found could also reasonably have resulted from chance, and hence no valid inference can be drawn regarding this effect in the general consumer population. This insignificant result is at odds with certain TAM uses (Davis, 1989; Ajina et al., 2024) but could represent the distinct nature of the Philippine sustainability label environment in which consumer unfamiliarity, credibility issues for the label, and greenwashing distrust might take precedence over usability's impact on attitude building (Amonoy et al., 2021; Cook et al., 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

The study set out to examine how sustainability labels influence consumers' willingness to pay premium prices for apparel in Metro Manila, guided by the technology acceptance model (TAM) framework. Results revealed that perceived usefulness had a significant and positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. The respondents who believed that sustainability labels provided relevant and trustworthy information were more likely to consider purchasing sustainably labeled apparel, even at higher prices. This indicates that when consumers view labels as informative tools that enhance decision-making, their willingness to support environmentally responsible products increases. In other words, usefulness drives value perception, which in turn strengthens the likelihood of engaging in sustainable consumption behaviors.

Additional findings showed that perceived ease of use significantly influenced consumers' attitudes toward sustainability labels, while a positive attitude strongly affected their purchase intention. This means that the simpler and clearer the sustainability labels appeared, the more favorable consumers' attitudes became. However, ease of use did not directly affect purchase intention, but rather worked indirectly through improved perception and trust. This pattern suggests that consumers in Metro Manila, particularly younger generations, respond better to sustainability cues that are both comprehensible and emotionally resonant. The findings affirm that positive attitudes, rooted in clarity and credibility, play a pivotal role in bridging awareness and actual buying behavior.

Lastly, this study further confirmed that perceived ease of use enhances perceived usefulness, and that perceived usefulness positively shapes attitude toward sustainability labels. These relationships highlight the interdependence of comprehension, trust, and value formation. When labels are user-friendly and easy to interpret, consumers tend to see them as more meaningful and reliable, which strengthens their confidence in sustainable products. Altogether, the study concludes that clear, accessible, and credible sustainability labels are crucial in cultivating favorable consumer attitudes and encouraging a willingness to pay premium prices for sustainable apparel. This research not only validates the applicability of the TAM framework in the sustainability context but also emphasizes that achieving long-term behavioral change in fashion consumption begins with effective communication making sustainability understandable, trustworthy, and relevant to

everyday choices. In this regard, adopting standardized and third-party verified labeling frameworks such as those guided by ISO 14024 can help ensure that sustainability claims are consistent, transparent, and credible, further strengthening consumer trust and reducing skepticism toward greenwashing (Ziyeh and Cinelli, 2023).

5.1. Management Implications

The findings of this study carry several important implications for management, particularly for apparel brands, retail companies, and policymakers striving to integrate sustainability into their business strategies. First, results showed that perceived usefulness and consumer attitude toward sustainability labels significantly influence purchase intentions, while perceived ease of use indirectly affects both. This means that management teams should prioritize enhancing the informational value and clarity of their sustainability labels. By communicating specific and verifiable claims such as ethical sourcing, reduced water usage, or carbon-neutral production, brands can help consumers perceive these labels as genuinely useful tools in decision-making. Furthermore, simplifying the label content and design to make sustainability information more intuitive can further strengthen consumer trust and engagement, especially among younger markets such as Generation Z, who are both environmentally conscious and digitally literate.

From a strategic standpoint, these results suggest that sustainability should not be treated merely as a compliance measure but as a value proposition that can differentiate a brand in a competitive market. The managers can capitalize on this by embedding sustainability into their branding, product development, and communication strategies. This includes investing in credible third-party certifications, transparent supply chain disclosures, and consistent labeling standards across product lines. Moreover, marketing teams can design awareness campaigns that educate consumers about the meaning and benefits of sustainability labels, bridging the current knowledge gap identified in the study. When consumers understand how their purchases contribute to environmental preservation or ethical practices, their willingness to pay a premium increase, translating sustainability efforts into tangible financial outcomes.

Lastly, for the policymakers and industry associations, the study's results emphasize the need for standardized guidelines for sustainability labeling within the Philippine context. The lack of consistency in current label practices not only confuses consumers but also creates room for greenwashing, which undermines trust. These collaborative efforts between the private sector and government agencies, such as the department of trade and industry (DTI), can establish frameworks that regulate label authenticity and promote fair competition. By aligning sustainability initiatives with clear communication and educational programs, both businesses and policymakers can cultivate a more informed consumer base, one that supports sustainable fashion not just as a trend but as a long-term cultural shift in purchasing behavior.

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