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Ethical Consumption in Vietnam: An Analysis of Generational Cohorts and Gender*

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Abstract

Purpose: There has been an increasing focus on consumer ethics by researchers and practitioners alike with the former seeking to examine the general discrepancy between ethical attitude, intention and actual behaviour by proposing behavioural measures to understand ethical consumption. Research into the effects of generational cohorts and gender, two fundamental demographic factors that shape the consumer habituated repertoire, on consumer ethics has reported mixed findings. The present study investigates if there are differences in ethical consumer behavior by generational cohorts and by gender in the context of an emerging market – Vietnam. **Research design, data and methodology:** Data was collected using a quantitative survey (a link to the questionnaire was posted on relevant social media platforms). A total of 539 usable responses was used for ANOVAs and independent t-tests to test the hypotheses. **Results:** a) There are significant differences in terms of ethical consumer behavior between Gen Z and Gens Y/X, but no difference between Gen X and Gen Y; b) There is no gender difference in ethically minded consumer behavior. **Conclusion:** For consumer ethics, generational effects may be moderated by macroeconomic conditions, while gender alone as a biological variable may not be a reliable predictor.

Keywords : Consumer ethics, Ethically minded consumer behavior, Generational cohorts, Gender, Emerging markets

JEL Classification Code : M31, M14, N35

1. Introduction

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Ethics consideration of social and environmental issues has become a trendy attention in business strategies (Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, Murphy, & Gruber, 2014). Firms are increasingly applying sustainable marketing principles to promote themselves as the socially responsible corporates (Ramasamy, Yeung, & Au, 2010). However, corporate social responsibility cannot be achieved without consumers' ethical perceptions or behaviours (Lee, 2016; Vitell, 2015). Although some researchers started to work on consumer ethics almost three decades ago (e.g. Muncy & Vitell, 1992), research on consumer ethics remains an emerging topic. Past research has evolved from a focus on the dark side – consumers' judgements of unethical practices (Vitell, 2003) to the bright side –adding

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judgements of ethical practices (doing-good dimension) (Vitell & Muncy, 2005) and examining different ethics-related behaviours such as sustainability (ecological) behaviours (Schutte & Bhullar, 2017) or green buying (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2015) or fair trade consumption (Ladhari & Tchegna, 2017).

Nonetheless, a general gap within consumer ethics literature has been identified as the limitation of most prior research to address the attitude-intention-behaviour gap of ethically minded consumers failing to walk their talk, i.e. not translating their thoughts into actual purchase ethically (Carrington, Zwick, & Neville, 2014). One approach to bridge the ethical consumption gap has been the attempt to measure ethical consumption consisting of ecological and social dimensions from a behaviour perspective (Hosta & Zabkar, 2020; Quoquab, Mohammad, & Sukari Nurain, 2019). There emerges another approach, in which researchers argued for consumer ethics research to move beyond the focus on fringe customers or customer responsabilisation by looking at how to break ingrained unethical purchasing and consumption habits (Carrington, Zwick, & Neville, 2016; Davies & Gutsche, 2016; Kieu & Le, 2020). In this respect, researchers have criticised prevalent assumption in the literature that ethical values concerning ideology or morality can drive consumers ethical choices (Davies & Gutsche, 2016). Provided that ethical consumers exist out of their sacrifices and ethical marketing practices in the marketplace, as well as the all but impossibility to enact changes through religious or ideological system (Carrington et al., 2016; Kieu & Le, 2020), it could be argued that too much reliance of consumer responsabilisation may be problematic and that marketers may indeed need to focus research on marketing construction that drive the ethical habits for the mainstream customers.

In order to bridge the general gap concerning ethical consumption in the literature and seek for ways of marketing construction to drive consumers' ethical habits, this study aims to explore whether generational cohorts and gender matter in shaping ethical purchasing and consumption behaviours. This is because age and gender are often considered as the most fundamental factors determining consumer values and behaviour (Perryer & Jordan, 2002), as well as generational cohorts deems to be a more appropriate aspect of age than life stage in explaining consumer behaviour (Higgins, 1998).

Generational cohorts has been argued to be an important variable explaining consumer behaviour and to be included in marketing planning, encapsulated in the term 'generational marketing' (Higgins, 1998, p. 6). The implications of generational cohorts for marketing ranges from the cohort segmentation (Fukuda, 2010) to the development of marketing programs and appeals to take

into consideration unique characteristics and attract specific age cohorts (Norum, 2003) to the marketing strategy to the young people to establisher their adult purchase habits (Williams, Page, Petrosky, & Hernandez, 2010). It was argued that each generation exhibits certain behavioural patterns that serve as habituated repertoire for members' behaviours (Boyd, 2010). In addition, research on generational differences in consumers' ethical judgements has produced mixed evidence. For example some have reported no generational effect (e.g. Jackson, Stoel, & Brantley, 2011), whereas others have found significant differences in consumer ethical attitudes between age/generational cohorts (Pekerti & Arli, 2017; Swaidan, Vitell, & Rawwas, 2003).

Beyond generational cohorts, the investigation of gender effects on consumer ethics may be necessary because this is one of mostly-investigated variable and widely-used basis for segmentation and recent research has also provided mixed evidence (Bossuyt & Van Kenhove, 2018; Dalton & Ortegren, 2011). Several studies have found no gender differences in some markets and significant differences in other markets (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004; Tjiptono, Arli, & Winit, 2017). Also, the findings concerning whether males or females are more ethical have been also inconsistent, just as several studies found support for the socialisation approach argument that females are more likely to be ethical (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004) and vice versa in other cultures like Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia (Phau & Kea, 2007).

Besides, most studies into consumer ethics have been conducted in Western, developed contexts, maybe because of the existing larger share of ethical consumption market (Le & Kieu, 2019). The potential and increasing trend towards ethical consumption in Asia has attracted more research on consumer ethics in the region, e.g. Lee (2016) studied consumer ethics in South Korea and China, Lu et al. (2015) in Taiwan,. However, researchers have warned that Asia as a region includes multiple cultural traditions that are vastly diverse and complicated (Cayla & Eckhardt Giana, 2007; Seo & Fam, 2015). As such, the present study conducted in Vietnam, provided the meaningfulness of this country as a research context: a sizeable, fast-growing Asian economy thanks to its over 95 million population and a growing middle class. In addition, the country experienced different historical and macroeconomic conditions, as compared with many other Asian countries, including wars, the economic transition to free market economic system, the fact that many people practise religious worship while self-describing 'no religion' (Shultz II, 2012), greater gender equality and dissolving gender-based roles that come along with economic development and integration (Penz & Kirchler, 2012). These differences therefore warrant the examination of generational and

gender differences in terms of ethical consumption in Vietnam. Particularly, the current study aims to: (1) investigate the difference by generational cohorts with regard to their ethically minded consumer behaviour; and (2) examine the gender-based difference as regards consumer ethical consumption.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Ethical Consumption

It has been known for decades that there exist ethically minded consumers (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005). They are consumers who consider environmental and social issues, as well as boycott products from the companies lacking corporate social responsibility (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). Of studies in this area, the concept of consumer ethics has been widely investigated as the judgement and belief of consumers towards ethical issues (Kieu & Le, 2020). In this respect, Muncy and Vitell (1992) proposed Consumer Ethics Scale (widely known as the Muncy-Vitell scale) that captures four types of consumer beliefs about (un)ethical behaviours: proactively benefiting acts; passively benefiting acts; deceptive practices; and acts causing no direct harm to others. The Muncy-Vitell scale was later updated to include an additional dimension that is beliefs about ethically right behaviours (Vitell & Muncy, 2005). The Muncy-Vitell scale has been applied in a wide range of studies to measure the ethical judgement of consumers in various contexts (e.g. Chowdhury & Fernando, 2014; Flurry & Swimberghe, 2016).

However, much academic and applied research have revealed that consumers' ethical concerns do not fully translate into their buying habits (Atkinson & Kim, 2015). Some researchers noted a main limitation of existing research literature is that researchers have not generally recognised beliefs or intentions do not reliably predict actual purchase of ethical products (Auger & Devinney, 2007). General consumer behaviour literature indeed well documented either attitude-behaviour gap or intention-actual behaviour gap (Le & Kieu, 2019). The inconsistencies are significant to practices, yet under-researched (Belk, Devinney, & Eckhardt, 2005; Carrington et al., 2016), provided that ethical products have accounted only a small share of the total market over the years (Ryoo, Sung, & Chechelnytska, 2020).

There are noteworthy studies attempted to address the attitude - intention - behaviour discrepancies by developing and validating scales to measure consumer ethics from behavioural perspective (Hosta & Zabkar, 2020; Lee, 2019; Rodrigues & Borges Ana, 2015; Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). Those studies have drawn on the socially responsible consumer behaviour (SRCB)

developed by Roberts (1995), updated item content and modified scale structure to propose behaviour measures of consumer ethics, though not by observing directly. Researchers argued that SRCB is more superior than over scales because it measures consumers' past and current behaviours that could better predict future behaviours comprehensively, including both socially responsible behaviours and ecologically responsible behaviours (Hosta & Zabkar, 2020). Meanwhile, some other studies claimed to measure consumer ethical behaviours, either being based on SRCB scale or not, they indeed tapped into consciousness for ethical consumption (Park, Kwon, Zaman, & Song, 2020) or incorporated measures of concerns for quality of life or future generations (Quoquab et al., 2019). The present study believes that such concerns, though they can be certainly potential indicators, would be best viewed as an outcome that can be expected from ethical consumption. This is because attitudinal concerns are not reliable predictors of actual behaviours (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016).

Among consumer ethics scales that capture consumer actual behaviours, the ethically minded consumer behaviour (EMCB) scale, which was developed by Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2016), appears to be superior, because it includes both types of behaviours as in the SRCB scale and adds also recycling, boycotting and willingness to pay higher prices for ethical products (Hosta & Zabkar, 2020). There are five dimensions of EMCB: the purchase of environment-friendly products (Eco-Purchase); the boycotting of environmentally harmful products (Eco-Boycott); the purchase of products having recycled content (Recycle); the boycotting of products from socially irresponsible companies (SR-Boycott); and the acceptance of premium prices of ethical products (Pay-More) (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). Indeed, price is often identified as a factor that contributes significantly to the attitude - behaviour gap (Davies & Gutsche, 2016; Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). Also by asking consumers' past and present ethical behaviours rather than intentions (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016), the scale appears to avoid overinflating the issue of ethics in habituated consumption of the mainstream market (Kieu & Le, 2020). Prior research considered sociocultural characteristics as important determinants of consumers' ethical beliefs or judgements (Vitell, 2003). As such, the novelty of the EMCB scale warrants research to examine the antecedent effects sociocultural factors such as age and gender.

2.2. Generational Cohorts and Ethical Consumption

Research into the differences across age groups typically employed US demographers' typology of generational cohorts that distinguishes age strata, of which

members share common and distinctive life experiences (Elder, 1975; Vieregge & Quick, 2011). Despite slight differences in the exact years encompassing generations, the generational cohorts, in general, can be described as Baby Boomers (who were born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (between 1965 and 1979; hereafter referred as Gen X), Generation Y (also called / Millennials, between 1980 and 1995; hereafter Gen Y), and Generation Z (also called iGen or Centennials, between 1996 and 2010; hereafter Gen Z) (Freestone & Mitchell, 2004). While warning that there may be variety in a generational cohort, demographers and marketers asserted that certain life patterns can characterise a group of individuals (Littrell, Ma, & Halepete, 2005; Martin & Gentry, 2011). Among generations, Gen Z is widely considered as the next consumer powerhouse, thereby needing research attention. By 2020, the oldest members of Gen Z have begun to join the workforce, with income being on the rise and growing financial independence from their parents. A study by McKinsey & Company in Brazil indicated that the majority of Gen Z consumers are more likely anchor their consumption on ethical concern than their older generations X and Y (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Existing literature on generational differences and human behaviours is modest and shows inconsistent evidence. For example, a research found both generational differences and similarities with regard to work ethics among Baby Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y (van der Walt, 2016). Meanwhile, another study on ethics by Boyd (2010) suggested Gen X is more likely to hold unethical judgements of questionable situations than their younger Gen Y. With regard to consumer ethics, Using Muncy-Vitell scale, Pekerti and Arli (2017) reported that Gen X and combined Gen YZ differ in terms of beliefs about active unethical behaviours (active benefiting, deceptive/questionable practices) and doing-good behaviours; but not in terms of passive benefiting or no harm behaviours. Freestone and Mitchell (2004) revealed Gen Y consumers are more permissive towards no direct harm behaviours. Researchers have long attributed the generational differences in consumer behaviours to macroenvironmental conditions; for example, Gen X was raised by workaholic parents who overcompensate them with material things, Gen Y grew up in relatively affluent conditions with unprecedented purchase power, and Gen Z is seen as the first digital natives as they grew up with and accessed internet and social media from their very earlier years (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Herbig, Koehler, & Day, 1993). In addition, age has been suggested as an important driver of consumer ethical beliefs (Cox, Cox, & Moschis, 1990; Vitell, Paolillo, & Singh, 2006). Young generation is argued to be less likely to deter unethical or questionable behaviours due to the lack of moral

development (Cox et al., 1990; Freestone & Mitchell, 2004), or in order words, the younger cohort appears to be less ethical than the older ones.

H1: There are significant differences across Vietnamese generational cohorts in ethical consumption: (a) Eco-Purchase; (b) Eco-Boycott; (c) Recycle; (d) SR-Boycott; and (e) Pay-More

2.3. Gender and Ethical Consumption

Marketing ethics literature suggests gender links to an individual's ethical behaviours (Ameen, Guffey, & McMillan, 1996; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005); indeed this is the most widely investigated demographic variable in research on ethics (Robin & Babin, 1997). Nonetheless, research into the effects of gender on business ethics produced inconclusive results (Bossuyt & Van Kenhove, 2018; Dalton & Ortegren, 2011; McCabe, Ingram, & Datoon, 2006). Neuroscience researchers explained the gender distinctions in ethical judgements and behaviours are attributed to the markedly differences between males' and females' brain structure and chemistry (Ryan, 2017); whereas researchers, who are based the gender socialisation approach, rationalised the differences due to different moral orientations (Betz, O'Connell, & Shepard, 1989). Meanwhile, some studies reported indifference in ethical judgements between professional males and females, providing support to the structural approach that theorises any gender differences resulted from socialisation in early years of age are overcome common-gender values once individuals enter the new business world's structure such as the workforce (Robin & Babin, 1997; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004). Some argued the differences in ethics prior research are spurious because of females' higher social desirability response bias (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011) or their lower assertiveness bias (Bossuyt & Van Kenhove, 2018), therefore, it was recommended that it is better to examine actual behaviours rather than beliefs or intentions (Bossuyt & Van Kenhove, 2018; Sheeran & Abraham, 2003). Only this type of behavioural measurement can help addressing the significant intentional-actual behaviour gap that many studies in the ethics domain have faced (Le & Kieu, 2019; Vitell, 2003).

Much research found that women are more likely to act ethically than men (Beu, Buckley, & Harvey, 2003; Franke, Crown, & Spake, 1997; O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005). This was explained as men are more concerned with assertive and competitive success; while women are selfless, morally sensitive, altruistic and more inclined towards harmony (Betz et al., 1989; Meyers-Levy & Loken, 2015; Vermeir & Van Kenhove, 2008). Interestingly, in their study in eight countries, Roxas and Stoneback (2004) found that

statistically significant gender differences in ethical decision-making exist only in China and Ukraine, with males in most countries having the tendency to be more unethical except for Chinese females who are less likely than male counterparts to behave ethically. As such, researchers argued the transition to new economic conditions may be behind the gender differences in ethics (Roxas & Stoneback, 2004). Few studies revealed that males exhibit higher ethical attitudes or behave more ethically than females, particularly in passively unethical practices (Bossuyt & Van Kenhove, 2018; Phau & Kea, 2007).

The conflicting empirical evidences warrant more research into the ethical behaviour differences as regards gender. In addition, research into gender and consumer ethics remains limited in non-Western market contexts and also produced mixed findings. Research showed that there are no differences between males and females with regarding to (un)ethical judgements among Thai youths; whereas Indonesian young women and their male counterparts hold significantly different beliefs about unethical practices but they are similar with regard to ethical practices (Tjiptono et al., 2017). Similarly, a study also reported there is no differences in ethical consumption between Vietnamese men and women (Le & Kieu, 2019). Some researchers suggested the disparities of empirical findings are due to that the gender effects may be moderated by ethical contexts or vignettes (Bateman & Valentine, 2010) or by social variable (egalitarian or traditional gender-role attitudes) or individual psychological variable (expressive or instrumental traits) (McCabe et al., 2006). Phau and Kea (2007) also suggested that the gender differences maybe dependent on other variables such as age. McCabe et al. (2006) indeed provided evidence suggesting that there is no difference based on gender alone regarding ethical judgements. Based on the above arguments, the current study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: There is no significant difference between Vietnamese males and Vietnamese females in ethical consumption: (a) Eco-Purchase; (b) Eco-Boycott; (c) Recycle; (d) SR-Boycott; and (e) Pay-More.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection

Data was collected using Google Forms-based, self-completed questionnaire. Invitations for survey participation were posted publicly on social media including Facebook and LinkedIn. Particularly, the

researchers posted on their social media and their university fan pages, as well as they asked their friends, colleagues and members of social media communities (university fan pages) to help share the invitation for participation. Within three weeks, 550 responses were collected. After screening for quality, 539 responses were usable for data analysis. There are slightly higher number of female than male in the sample (43.6% male and 54.4% female). The respondents are mostly in under-thirty age groups, and the majority has been studying or completed university (73.3%) or a postgraduate degree (23.4%). Based on the age of respondents in sample in 2020, the present study is able to classify respondents into three generational cohorts. Gen Z who are born approximately between 1996 and 2010 (50.6%), Gen Y approximately between 1980 and 1995 (39.7%); and Gen X approximately between 1965 and 1979 (9.6%) (Freestone & Mitchell, 2004). Table 1 presents a summary of the demographic profile.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	235	43.6
Female	293	54.4
Not specified	11	2.0
Age		
Under 18	2	0.4
18-24	271	0.3
25-30	113	21.0
31-35	60	11.1
36-40	41	7.6
41-45	27	5.0
46-50	18	3.3
Above 50	7	1.3
Generation		
Gen Z	273	50.6
Gen Y	214	39.7
Gen X	52	9.6
Education		
High School	18	3.3
University	395	73.3
Postgraduate	126	23.4

3.2. Measures

The EMCB scale of Sudbury-Riley and Kohlbacher (2016) was adopted to measure consumers' behavioural choices in ethical consumption. This scale consists of ten indicators over five dimensions. The five dimensions are:

Eco-Purchase (e.g. ‘When there is a choice, I always choose the product that contributes to the least amount of environmental damage.’); Eco-Boycott (e.g. ‘I do not buy household products that harm the environment.’); Recycle (e.g. ‘I make every effort to buy paper products made from recycled paper.’); SR-Boycott (e.g. ‘I do not buy products from companies that I know use sweatshop labour, child labour, or other poor working conditions’); and Pay-More (e.g. ‘I have paid more for environmentally responsible products when there is a cheaper alternative’) (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016, p. 2703). Respondents rated the items on a five-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The EMCB scale items was translated and back-translated to ensure meaning equivalence. The Cronbach’s alpha test using SPSS software revealed reliabilities of EMCB dimensions: Eco-Purchase $\alpha = 0.73$ (two items); Eco-Boycott $\alpha = 0.73$ (two items); Recycle $\alpha = 0.62$ (two items); SR-Boycott $\alpha = 0.83$ (two items); and

Pay-More $\alpha = 0.82$ (two items). While Cronbach’s alpha value for Recycle is less than recommended level 0.5, it is still well over the minimum threshold 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) and prior research on ethics also accepted scale with low reliability results (Le & Kieu, 2019). Composite scores for EMCB dimensions were calculated as the means of relevant items for each dimension for each response.

4. Results and Discussion

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and post hoc analyses (where ANOVA test is significant) were employed to examine differences in terms of EMCB dimensions between generational cohorts. Table 2 presents the findings of ANOVA analyses conducted in SPSS 23.0 software.

Table 2: Generational Cohorts and Ethical Consumption

	Eco-Purchase	Eco-Boycott	Recycle	SR-Boycott	Pay-More
Descriptive: Mean (SD)					
Gen Z (n=273)	3.90 (0.74)	3.76 (0.80)	3.83 (0.89)	4.30 (0.91)	3.84 (0.81)
Gen Y (n=214)	4.32 (0.85)	3.91 (0.94)	3.90 (0.96)	4.45 (0.95)	4.03 (0.87)
Gen X (n=52)	4.46 (0.66)	4.19 (0.81)	4.01 (0.79)	4.62 (0.62)	4.24 (0.78)
Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
Levene Statistic	3.53	2.62	2.51	2.71	1.33
Sig.	0.03	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.27
ANOVA					
F-value	24.90 ⁽¹⁾	6.00	0.92	3.41	6.70
df1	2 ⁽¹⁾	2	2	2	2
df2	150.71 ⁽¹⁾	536	536	536	536
Sig.	0.000 ⁽¹⁾	0.003	0.398	0.034	0.001
Multiple comparisons					
Post-hoc test	Games-Howell ⁽²⁾	Tukey		Tukey	Tukey
Gen Z - Gen Y	Mean Diff.	-0.42*	-0.14	-0.15	-0.19*
	SE	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.08
	Sig.	0.000	0.155	0.172	0.030
Gen Z - Gen X	Mean Diff.	-0.56*	-0.43*	-0.32	-0.40*
	SE	0.10	0.13	0.14	0.13
	Sig.	0.000	0.003	0.056	0.004
Gen Y - Gen X	Mean Diff.	-.14378	-.28577	-.16679	-.21001
	SE	0.11	0.13	0.14	0.13
	Sig.	0.380	0.080	0.458	0.232

Note: SD: Standard Deviation; df: Degree of Freedom; Sig. Significance; Mean Diff.: Mean Difference; ⁽¹⁾ Asymptotically F distributed using Welch’s ANOVA; ⁽²⁾ Games-Howell post-hoc test used due to violation of assumption of homogeneity of variance; * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Initial examination of the mean and standard deviation values showed that Gen Z was rated lower than Gen Y, and similarly Gen Y was rated lower than Gen X regarding performing all EMCB dimensions. Levene test for homogeneity of variances showed that for EMCB dimensions except Eco-Purchase, the assumption of homogeneity of variances required for ANOVA was satisfied; therefore, multiple one-way ANOVAs and Tukey post-hoc tests were conducted with generational cohorts as factor and four EMCB dimensions Eco-Boycott, Recycle, SR-Boycott and Pay-More as response variables. Since the assumption of homogeneity of variances for Eco-Purchase was violated ($p = 0.03$, significant at 0.05 level), Welch's ANOVA was performed and Games-Howell post-hoc test was used instead.

The findings of ANOVAs revealed that generational cohorts have statistically significant effects on: Eco-Purchase [$F(2, 150.71) = 24.90$; $p < 0.001$]; Eco-Boycott [$F(2, 536) = 6.00$; $p = 0.003$]; SR-Boycott [$F(2, 536) = 3.41$; $p = 0.034$]; and Pay-More [$F(2, 536) = 6.70$; $p = 0.001$]. There were no statistically significant differences between generational cohorts' means in terms of Recycle [$F(2, 536) = 0.92$, $p = 0.398$], thereby H1c was not supported. This means in terms of the intentional selection of products with recycle content was not statistically significant across generations Z (3.83 ± 0.89), Y (3.90 ± 0.96) and X (4.01 ± 0.79).

Games-Howell post hoc test revealed that the likability

to buy ecologically friendly products by Gen Z (3.90 ± 0.74) was statistically significantly lower than that of Gen Y (4.32 ± 0.85 , $p < 0.001$) and Gen X (4.46 ± 0.66 , $p < 0.001$). There was no statistically significant difference between the Gen Y and Gen X ($p = 0.380$). Thus, H1a is partially supported.

Tukey post hoc test revealed that there was only statistically significant difference between Gen Z (3.76 ± 0.80) and Gen X (4.19 ± 0.81 , $p = 0.003$) in terms of the likability to boycott ecologically harmful products. There was no statistically significant difference between the Gen Z and Gen Y (3.91 ± 0.94 , $p = 0.155$) and between Gen Y and Gen X ($p = 0.080$). Thus, H1b is partially supported.

While the ANOVA's F test is statistically significant, Tukey post hoc test revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in terms of boycotting socially irresponsible products between the Gen Z (4.30 ± 0.91) and Gen Y (4.45 ± 0.95 , $p = 0.172$), Gen Z and Gen X (4.62 ± 0.62 , $p = 0.056$), and between Gen Y and Gen X ($p = 0.458$). Thus, H1d is not supported.

Tukey post hoc test revealed that the willingness to pay premium prices for ethical products by Gen Z (3.84 ± 0.81) was statistically significantly lower than that of Gen Y (4.03 ± 0.87 , $p = 0.030$) and Gen X (4.24 ± 0.78 , $p = 0.004$). There was no statistically significant difference between the Gen Y and Gen X ($p = 0.232$). Thus, H1e is partially supported.

Table 3: Gender and Ethical Consumption

	Eco-Purchase	Eco-Boycott	Recycle	SR-Boycott	Pay-More
Mean (SD)					
Male (n=235)	4.18 (0.79)	3.94 (0.91)	3.90 (0.90)	4.37 (0.94)	3.96 (0.88)
Female (n=293)	4.08 (0.82)	3.81 (0.83)	3.84 (0.92)	4.41 (0.88)	3.95 (0.81)
F-value	1.28	0.56	0.14	0.44	0.02
Sig. (2-tailed)	.258 ^(ns)	.455 ^(ns)	.708 ^(ns)	.507 ^(ns)	.900 ^(ns)

Note: SD: Standard Deviation; Sig. Significance; ^{ns}: Not Significant at 0.05 level

To sum up the findings concerning generational cohorts, the present study revealed Gen Z was significant different to their older generations Y and X in buying ecologically friendly products and in willingness to pay higher prices and to only Gen X in boycotting ecologically harmful products. There were no significant difference between Gen Y and Gen X as well as no differences across cohorts; this deviates from the research of Pekerti and Arli (2017), who argued that Gen Y and Gen Z experience similar macroeconomic environment in their formative years. Pekerti and Arli (2017) reported Gen X and the combined Gens Y-Z differ significantly in engaging ethical behaviours. The indifference between Gen X and Gen Y and the difference between Gens Y/X versus Gen Z could be due to

the macroeconomic conditions of Vietnam. Vietnam had only opened and transitioned its economy from the centrally planned mechanism early 1990s and Gen X and the majority of Gen Y shared similar hardship macroeconomic conditions from end 1970s through 1980s. Meanwhile, Gen Z was born into a time Vietnam's economy started to pick up and became fast-growing.

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the means of EMCB dimensions between males and females in the sample. The findings in Table 3 suggested that there was no statistically significant difference between males and female regarding EMCB dimensions ($p > 0.05$). Thus, H2a,b,c,d,e were supported.

The findings were consistent with evidence of some previous studies that have found no gender differences in several markets (Phau & Kea, 2007; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004), while deviating from other studies such as Tjiptono et al. (2017) and Meyers-Levy and Loken (2015). Provided that the present study was conducted with respondents having entered the workforce, the structural approach would appear to offer plausible rationale for the statistically insignificant difference between males and females in terms of ethical consumption (Robin & Babin, 1997). Particularly, provided that Vietnam is also a transitional market, the findings contradicted the argument of Roxas and Stoneback (2004) who argued that the for gender differences in ethics found in two contexts (China and Ukraine) in their research were due to economic transition. Although the gender differences were not statistically significant across EMCB dimensions, the aggregate of males and females showed males were rated higher than females in ethical consumption, a tendency similar to the findings of Phau and

Kea (2007).

Additional analyses using factorial ANOVAs with both generational cohorts and gender as factors and EMCB dimensions as response variables revealed no statistically significant interaction between generation cohorts and gender in shaping EMCB dimensions as follows (Table 4): Eco-Purchase [$F_{\text{cohort}*\text{gen}}(3,531) = 0.12, p = 0.949$]; Eco-Boycott [$F_{\text{cohort}*\text{gen}}(3,531) = 0.54, p = 0.652$]; Recycle [$F_{\text{cohort}*\text{gen}}(3,531) = 0.97, p = 0.406$]; SR-Boycott [$F_{\text{cohort}*\text{gen}}(3,531) = 0.47, p = 0.706$]; and Pay-More [$F_{\text{cohort}*\text{gen}}(3,531) = 0.63, p = 0.598$]. This finding contradicted the suggestion by Phau and Kea (2007) that age and gender may interact to influence consumer ethics. Again, despite the statistical insignificance of gender differences, the group mean scores by gender and by generations (as in Table 4) also indicated more male groups were more likely rated higher than females in terms of ethical consumption.

Table 4: Mean Comparisons across Gender and Generational Cohorts

		Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Total
	n _{Male}	98	101	36	235
	n _{Female}	168	109	16	293
Eco-Purchase	Male	3.94 (0.72)	4.31 (0.83)	4.47 (0.69)	4.18 (0.79)
	Female	3.88 (0.76)	4.33 (0.87)	4.44 (0.60)	4.08 (0.82)
Eco-Boycott	Male	3.82 (0.80)	3.92 (1.03)	4.31 (0.71)	3.94 (0.91)
	Female	3.74 (0.79)	3.91 (0.87)	3.94 (0.96)	3.81 (0.83)
Recycle	Male	3.79 (0.92)	3.95 (0.94)	4.08 (0.71)	3.90 (0.90)
	Female	3.83 (0.86)	3.86 (1.00)	3.84 (0.94)	3.84 (0.92)
SR-Boycott	Male	4.22 (0.98)	4.42 (0.96)	4.68 (0.61)	4.37 (0.94)
	Female	4.35 (0.87)	4.49 (0.94)	4.47 (0.64)	4.41 (0.88)
Pay-More	Male	3.76 (0.87)	4.06 (0.90)	4.25 (0.77)	3.96 (0.88)
	Female	3.88 (0.78)	4.01 (0.85)	4.22 (0.84)	3.95 (0.81)

5. Conclusions

The present study's contribution to theory is multifold. First, the study examines ethically minded consumer behaviours with Vietnamese respondents including Gen Z. Much research has been done in the context of Western countries (Tjiptono et al., 2017) and predominantly focused on analysing ethical attitudes (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016). Also, this is one among very few studies examining Gen Z as this generation is just coming to age. Therefore, this research makes significant contribution to the literature regarding ethical consumer behaviours in an Asian,

emerging market context and Gen Z consumers. This study also provides further validation to the scale that captures ethical consumption from the behavioural perspective and includes ecological, social dimensions and economic considerations. The findings with behavioural measure of ethical consumption could be more likely to reliably reflect the real-world reality, as compared with previous studies having focused on attitudinal measures such as ethical judgements thus being subjected to the issue of attitude-intention-behaviour gap.

Moreover, the paper offers theoretical implications of generational cohorts and gender on ethical consumption. In general, the findings are similar to previous studies for there are generational differences in ethical consumption.

However, the current research contributed insights in ethical consumer behaviour of Gen Z, which has been under-researched, provided Gen X is just coming to age. The differences between Gen Z and Gens X-Y in this study, as compared to the indifferences between Gen X and Gen YZ in such research as Pekerti and Arli (2017), suggests that the generational effects may be moderated by variables such as macroeconomic conditions. The findings concerning gender-based differences add further to the mixed evidence concerning the relationship between gender and consumer ethics. Despite the statistical insignificance, the higher ratings by males than females across five EMCB dimensions in the current study are noteworthy, as similar findings of males being more ethical than females has been seen in Australia, China and Hongkong (Phau & Kea, 2007) or Indonesia (Tjiptono et al., 2017). This also suggests that gender alone as a biological variable cannot reliably predict consumer ethics, thereby providing support for multi-dimensional view of gender (McCabe et al., 2006).

The findings could be beneficial to practitioners and policymakers. Generational marketing may be warranted, but biological gender-based marketing. Knowledge of distinctive consumer groups are necessary for the effective segmentation and development of marketing communications strategies. The findings support the need to consider the values and preferences of generational cohorts in driving their ethically minded consumer behaviours. Given the generational gap particularly in the purchasing behaviours of environmentally friendly products and the willingness to pay more, marketers and policymakers need to focus on measures to facilitating generational

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socialisation across generations, e.g. socialisation within multi-generational Vietnamese families, concerning environment. The findings of no gender-based difference also suggest marketers need to avoid gender stereotype in marketing ethical products to avoid alienating specific gender segment. The findings also may also bring to the attention of marketers that consumers behave differently in terms of purchase and boycotting on the environmental ground, as well as consumers' reactions and corporate sustainably/ socially responsible practices. Moreover, it offers marketers with an instrument measuring Vietnamese consumers' ethical purchasing and consuming behaviours, thereby garnering insights for market segment and profiling.

However, like any study, this research has some limitations that are indeed venues for further research. The convenience sample attained through social media platforms may have some inherent bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, further research may focus on different cultures or methods. In addition, future research may consider and investigate multidimensional construct of gender, as suggested by McCabe et al. (2006), rather than just biological gender. Finally, studies the future may also include other antecedents of consumer ethics such as individual values (Le & Kieu, 2019) or experience values that may affect the repeat purchasing and consuming behaviours (Kang, Wan, & Hwang, 2019).

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