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**THE INFLUENCE OF ECOLABELS ON THE  
PURCHASING INTENTION OF ECOLABELLED LOCAL  
FOOD PRODUCTS IN MOROCCO**

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**THE INFLUENCE OF ECOLABELS ON THE PURCHASING INTENTION OF ECOLABELLED LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS IN MOROCCO**

Dissertation for the award of a doctoral (PhD) degree  
in the field of Management and Business

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## **PREFACE**

Environmental degradation in Morocco is a growing concern, prompting the implementation of various policy frameworks and initiatives, including the Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan (SCP-NAP). In addition to such policies, Morocco has endorsed local products, also known as terroir products, as a means of promoting sustainable consumption and strengthening the country's agri-food sector. This strategy was supported by the Green Morocco Plan (GMP), established in 2008, which aimed to promote the development of local products, alleviate poverty, and ensure the sustainable management of resources. Ecolabelling was introduced as part of this strategy to enhance consumer confidence, reduce information asymmetry, and enhance product credibility.

Given this background, the dissertation aims to study the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV). The integration of such theories enables a comprehensive evaluation of consumers' rational and emotional decision-making processes. To enhance explanatory power, the research model was extended by adding ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions to understand the factors shaping Moroccan consumers' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products. The research was conducted in Morocco, targeting the country's population, and data were collected via an online self-administered questionnaire. Structural equation modelling was used for analysis.

The findings of the research revealed that the quality of products, contextual factors, ecolabel knowledge, attitude towards ecolabelled local products, and subjective norms are the main drivers of the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled local products. Income, gender, and region of residence moderated the relationships between perceived behavioral control, price functional value, emotional value, and epistemic value, and purchasing intention toward ecolabelled local products. The research emphasizes the need for improved ecolabelling, tailored pricing, and more transparent communication.

## 1. TOPIC AND OBJECTIVE

The world has been experiencing accelerating economic growth, which has led to the proliferation of overconsumption and the overutilization of natural resources (Tan & Lau, 2010). Consequently, preserving natural resources and halting environmental degradation are becoming conditions for survival (Hojnik et al., 2020). Furthermore, environmental protection has long been an essential theme in marketing, and extensive corporate promotional campaigns have intensified public concern, significantly influencing market trends in this area (Kautish & Dash, 2017).

In Morocco, environmental conditions are alarming. A World Bank study estimated that environmental degradation accounted for 3.7% of GDP (Baguare, 2008). This degradation manifests in multiple ways, affecting natural resources such as water, soil, and ecosystems, leading to environmental pollution, including air pollution and waste. The primary causes of this situation are rooted in established economic and social structures and deficiencies in public administration. The growing recognition of the urgency of environmental problems led to the creation and implementation of various initiatives to address these issues, including institutional frameworks, regulations, action plans, and incentives (Baguare, 2008). Nevertheless, various ministries initiated programs to improve environmental governance. For instance, The Moroccan Sustainable Consumption and Production National Action Plan (SCP-NAP) was developed by the Moroccan Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, with the support of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), that focuses on the agri-food sector, in addition to the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely SDG 12.1, focusing on making sure that sustainable consumption and production are ensured (Switchmed, 2025).

Alongside policy-driven approaches to sustainability and environmental protection, Morocco has been paying increasing attention to and recognition of its local products, also known as terroir products, to advance sustainable consumption and achieve sustainable growth in the country's agri-food industry (Toumi, 2008). The concept of "terroir," first introduced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was initially defined as a geographically delimited area inhabited by a distinct community. Subsequently, studies in geography, sociology, economics, and agronomy refined its definition to emphasize its closer connection to cultural heritage and ecological specificity (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024). With the acceleration of globalization and the rise of standardized mass production, a

countertrend has also emerged: consumer preferences have shifted towards locally sourced and environmentally sustainable products (Turgeon, 2010).

To further advance and develop terroir (local) products, Morocco inaugurated the Green Morocco Plan (GMP) in 2008, to enhance these products and improve their promotion among Moroccan consumers primarily and international consumers secondarily. The GMP had broader aims, primarily to bolster economic growth, reduce poverty, and manage resources sustainably (Montanari & Bergh, 2019).

Nevertheless, the GMP introduced ecolabelling of local products as a means to bolster consumer confidence and enhance their competitiveness in the Moroccan market. Ecolabelling functions as a distinct, visual, and legally protected marker that helps consumers identify products that meet defined environmental standards, as opposed to conventional products. Additionally, ecolabels help reduce information asymmetry between producers and consumers and enhance product credibility, thereby increasing consumer trust and incentivizing producers to continually improve their standards (Larceneux, 2003; Stein, 2009; Taufique et al., 2014).

Consequently, the Distinctive Signs of Origin and Quality (SDOQ), established by the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, and Water and Forests (MAPMDREF), and overseen by the National Office for Food Safety (ONSSA), encompass the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), and Agricultural Labels, which establish comprehensive frameworks for quality assurance, environmental sustainability, and product authenticity (MAPMDREF, 2015; ONSSA, 2025). In addition to these labels, further labels were established, namely “Terroir du Maroc” and “Bio Maroc”, to consolidate the marketing efforts and improve the visibility of certified local products in both domestic and international markets (ADA, 2015; Benazizi, 2022).

Research on ecolabels has been conducted predominantly in developed countries, with comparatively less focus on developing countries (Prieto-Sandoval et al., 2016). Consequently, investigating Moroccan consumers’ intentions to purchase ecolabelled local products is essential, as cultural differences significantly shape their understanding of such products and are key determinants of consumer behavior (Mufidah et al., 2018; Mkik & Mkik, 2020). Furthermore,

knowledge and awareness of ecolabels differ between developed and developing countries. Developing countries tend to have lower levels of knowledge, which in turn affects consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions (Mustafa et al., 2022). From a policy framework perspective, developing countries often have ecolabelling programs. However, such programs are not fully integrated into broader policy frameworks and tend to rely on voluntary participation and international certification (Notohamijoyo et al., 2020).

The main aim of the dissertation is to assess the purchasing intention of Moroccan consumers vis-à-vis ecolabelled local products by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV). The TPB was included to elucidate the relationship among attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms in the context of consumption of ecolabelled local products (Kayani et al., 2023). The TCV argues that consumer decisions are shaped by a range of value dimensions that are also essential for understanding why consumers might favor one product over another. While the TPB is primarily used to predict various intentional behaviors, the TCV has been used to identify the factors that shape consumers' product choices (Duong et al., 2024). According to TCV, consumption values shape consumer preferences and strongly influence purchasing decisions through both rational product assessment and subjective contextual values. Moreover, the TPB further explores this perspective by underlining the mediating role of cognitive processes in linking beliefs to behavior. Therefore, combining TCV and TPB will deepen understanding of the fundamental motivations shaping consumption decisions by focusing on personal and intrinsic motivations, thereby clarifying the drivers of consumption behavior (H.-D. Nguyen et al., 2025). The integration of both theories would enable the assessment of the rational and emotional aspects of Moroccan consumers' decision-making regarding the purchase intention for ecolabelled local products (Neiba & Singh, 2024; Wang et al., 2022).

To enhance the predictive power of the research model, three additional variables were incorporated: ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions, which reflect and account for the influence of information, credibility, and trust on consumer intentions. Ecolabel knowledge provides consumers with helpful information for decision-making, and as awareness grows, so does their preference for buying ecolabelled local products (Daugbjerg et al., 2014; Waris & Hameed, 2020). Furthermore, the credibility of ecolabels helps establish consumer

trust, thereby strengthening consumer confidence in labeled products and increasing the likelihood of purchase (Daugbjerg et al., 2014). Finally, consumer behavior is significantly influenced by trust in certifying institutions. The authenticity of ecolabels and the claims associated with products are more likely to be accepted by consumers when they trust these institutions (Daugbjerg et al., 2014). The dissertation examines the following questions and addresses the following objectives:

### **Research Questions**

- What is the influence of the various consumption values (quality functional value, price functional value, emotional value, conditional value, social value, and epistemic value) on the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled local products?
- How does knowledge of ecolabels affect the purchasing intentions of ecolabelled local products in Morocco, both directly and indirectly via attitudes toward these products?
- How does ecolabel credibility impact the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and via the attitude towards ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context?
- What is the impact of trust in certifying institutions on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled products independently and through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan case?
- Does the attitude towards ecolabelled local products have any influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products without the intervention of the ecolabel (ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions) in the context of Morocco?
- What is the influence of subjective norms related to buying ecolabelled local products on their purchasing intention in the case of Morocco?
- How does perceived behavioral control over buying ecolabelled local products influence the consumers' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context?
- Do demographic variables, namely gender, age, education, income, and place of residence, moderate the relationship between consumption values (quality functional value, price

functional value, emotional value, conditional value, social value, and epistemic value) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in Morocco?

- Do demographic variables (gender, age, education, income, and place of residence) moderate the relationship between the attitude toward ecolabelled local products, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled local products in Morocco?

### **Research Objectives**

- To assess the influence of the different consumption values, namely quality functional value, price functional value, emotional value, epistemic value, conditional value, and social value, on the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled local products.
- To investigate the impact of ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and the trust in certifying institutions on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in Morocco.
- To study the effect of attitudes towards ecolabelled local products, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms related to the choice of ecolabelled local products on their purchasing intention in Morocco.
- To investigate the moderating role of demographic variables, including gender, age, education, income, and place of residence, on the relationship between consumption values, attitude towards ecolabelled local products, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context.

### **Structure of Processing the Research Topic**

The dissertation comprises six chapters in addition to the Preface and the Summary. The first chapter, titled “Topic and Objective,” aims to describe the significance of the topic, the main elements of the dissertation, while also presenting the research questions and the objectives the dissertation aims to answer and achieve.

The second chapter is titled “Literature Review,” and it has as an objective to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations that support the dissertation, in addition to presenting the theories that the dissertation is based on, as well as the development of the hypotheses and the proposed research model.

The third chapter, “Material and Method,” underlines the research approach, specifying the population of the research, the sampling technique, and the statistical method used for analyzing the collected data. Additionally, it presents the pilot study and its results, providing a structured framework for understanding the total research procedures.

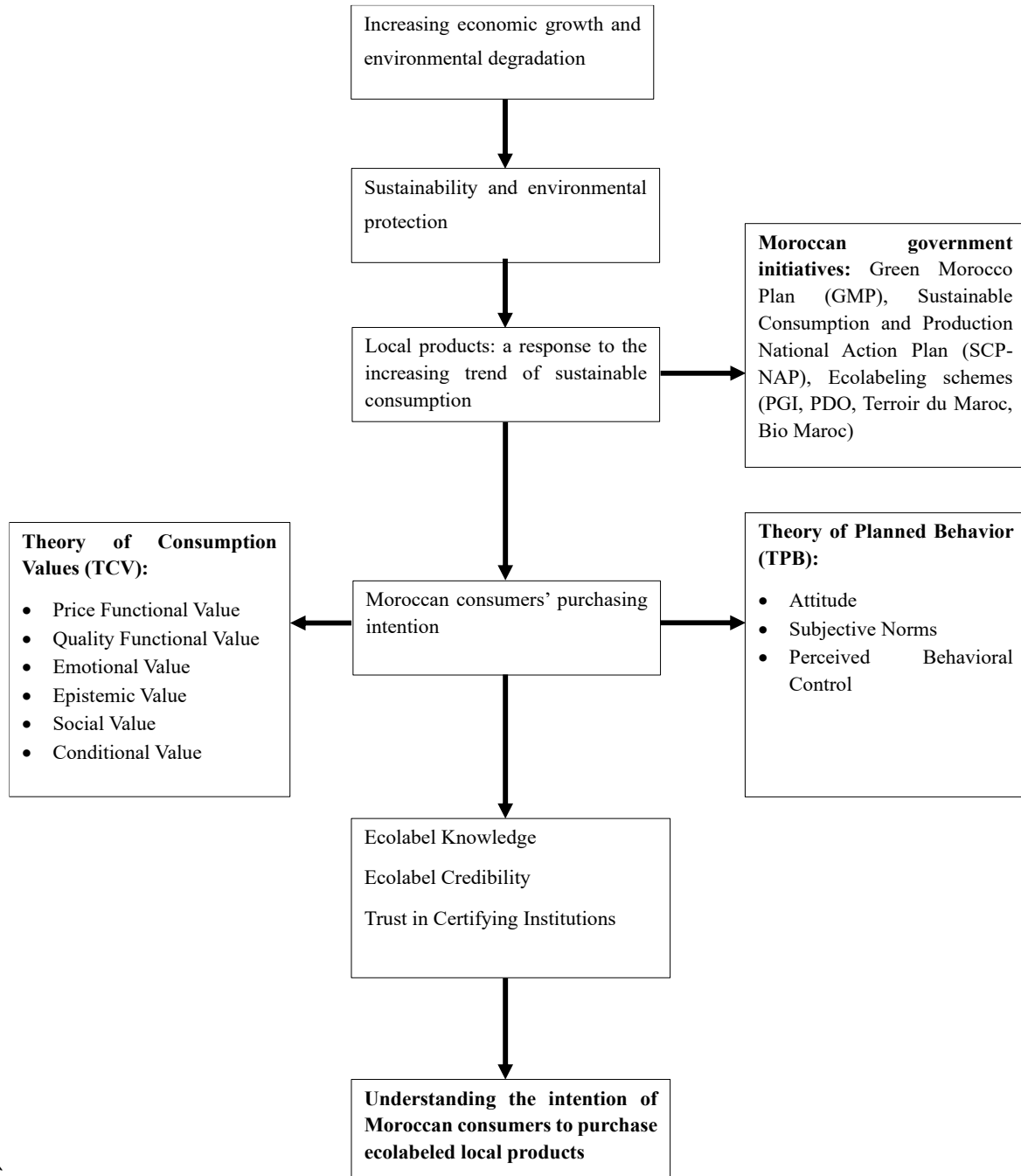
The fourth chapter is titled “Study Results and Their Evaluation,” and it directly answers the questions of the dissertation and fulfills its objectives through the statistical analyses to assess the hypotheses.

The fifth chapter, titled “Conclusions, Proposals,” provides an explanation and review of the research hypotheses, and it underlines the main recommendations in addition to detailing the research limitations and proposing further directions for future research.

Finally, the last chapter, chapter six, titled “Main Findings, New and Novel Results of the Dissertation,” presents the new conclusions drawn from the dissertation.

Figure 1 shows a graphic representation of the research topic.

**Figure 1: Conception of the Research Topic**



Source: Author's own compilation, 2025

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Ecolabelling: Definition, Classification, and Function**

#### ***2.1.1. Definition and Role of Ecolabels***

Ecolabelling is a distinct form of environmental labelling that relies on a third-party verification process to confirm that products and services meet specific environmental criteria or standards (Roheim, 2008). It is considered a visual and legally protected symbol that indicates products, services, and companies that base their activities on environmentally friendly standards and criteria (Taufique et al., 2014). Ecolabels are granted either based on the environmental friendliness of products or on the environmental friendliness of production and processing methods (Stein, 2009). In addition to certifying compliance, ecolabels function as symbols or emblems used alongside products or services to highlight their compliance with specific environmental standards, thereby signaling reduced ecological harm and improved sustainability (Belson, 2024). From a communication perspective, they are also considered a credible signal that informs consumers about unobservable quality dimensions of a product or service, provided by a certified body that is independent of producers (Larceneux, 2003). As part of their signaling function, information intended for both producers and consumers can be presented qualitatively, quantitatively, or graphically. Ecolabels may be voluntary or mandatory and can be classified as one-dimensional or multi-dimensional (Rubik & Frankl, 2017).

Similarly, ecolabelling programs aim to provide consumers with accurate and comprehensive information, enhancing their understanding of environmental performance, encouraging better decision-making, and promoting the use of eco-friendly products. From the producer's perspective, these initiatives also promote ongoing environmental enhancement by providing businesses with third-party accreditation attesting to their sustainable operations (Iraldo et al., 2020). Ecolabels help consumers distinguish between conventional and eco-friendly products and serve as tools used by companies and governments to raise awareness of the superior quality of ecolabelled products relative to unlabeled counterparts (Brécard et al., 2009).

The ecolabelling process enables producers to differentiate their offerings in competitive markets or reach niche segments, such as those for organic products (Higgins et al., 2020). From the

consumer's perspective, ecolabels reduce uncertainty about the environmental impact of products, enabling more informed, sustainable decisions. From the producer's perspective, ecolabels are used as marketing tools that not only underscore the product's credibility but also confer a competitive advantage by appealing to environmentally conscious consumers (Wojnarowska et al., 2021). This underscores the role of information in communicating the impact of a product's life cycle, from production and consumption to disposal (Fan et al., 2019). Correspondingly, ecolabels are employed in marketing as part of a broader signaling strategy to reduce information asymmetry and guide consumers' purchasing decisions (Burton, 2018; Kirmani & Rao, 2000).

### ***2.1.2. Classification of Ecolabelling Programs***

#### *2.1.2.1. Mandatory Ecolabelling Schemes*

Ecolabelling schemes can be either mandatory or voluntary (Rubik & Frankl, 2017). Mandatory schemes are prescribed by law. In this sense, every product introduced to the market must comply with requirements for providing product information. Mandatory information is related to the health and safety aspects of products, including details of chemical substances contained within the product or information on the accurate usage and disposal of products. Four types of mandatory schemes can be distinguished (Stein, 2009): first, declarations of content aim to inform consumers of the composition of products. This information can be used to influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Secondly, the usage and disposal information aims to inform consumers of the health and environmental risks associated with the product's use and disposal. Chemical substances are primarily known for the mandatory information required for their use and disposal. Product labelling is the third type of mandatory labelling scheme and refers to the use of simple symbols that inform consumers of specific product characteristics. Danger symbols are the most well-known product labels used in Europe. Finally, certification of conformity indicates that a product complies with specific regulatory requirements upon market introduction. The CE mark, for instance, is the most significant certification of conformity in the European Union, indicating that labeled products comply with all applicable requirements. The CE sign is mandatory for toys, construction products, machines, safety equipment, and telecommunication installations. In this sense, it is not the company's decision whether to apply the label. In the case of a mandatory ecolabel, each product in the product group must meet the environmental criteria required for the ecolabel award.

Consequently, market access is denied to products or producers that are unwilling to ensure that their products meet those criteria (Stein, 2009).

#### *2.1.2.2. Voluntary Ecolabelling Schemes*

Voluntary ecolabelling schemes delegate to market actors the decision-making power whether to sign or label products with environmental information. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has made tremendous efforts to organize and structure environmental labeling (Rubik & Frankl, 2017). Although ecolabels provide information regarding the environmental benefits of products and services capable of shifting the attention of consumers towards more environmentally friendly products, the multiplication of such labels has created concerns for greenwashing (by which a company or organization creates the false impression that it is more environmentally responsible than it actually is), in addition to unrealistic marketing claims. Therefore, the ISO organized criteria and methods for labeling (ISO, 2019). ISO 14020 outlines the typology of environmental labels, which can be classified into three types: Type I, Type II, and Type III (Gruère, 2013).

Type I labels of ISO 14024 are the standard for ecolabels (Gruère, 2013). They are based on multi-criteria, third-party labels awarded to products that satisfy specific environmental criteria, relying on life-cycle considerations (Minkov et al., 2020). These labels are intended to encourage environmental improvements (Gruère, 2013). Type I ecolabels grant a license authorizing the use of the ecolabel on products in a product category. Such an ecolabel indicates that the product is environmentally friendly based on its life-cycle considerations, and this type of ecolabel is the most monitored (Frunteş, 2014). The selection of criteria follows the rules established in ISO 14024, which is part of the ISO 14020 series (Spengler et al., 2020). ISO 14024 stipulates that the environmental burdens of products must be identified and quantified based on life-cycle considerations. The program also identifies the environmental criteria crucial to protecting the environment for each product category. Additionally, Type I programs use a pass-fail system, meaning only products that meet the specific values specified by the Type I criteria are awarded the label (Lee & Stensel, 1999). Type I labelling schemes include the following examples:

- *Blue Angel*: The Blue Angel is an independent Type I ecolabel that certifies the top products in various product groups based on a set of criteria, rather than only one criterion. This ecolabel has been awarded to environmentally friendly products and services since 1978. The primary purpose of this ecolabel is to provide consumers with reliable guidance on environmentally friendly purchasing. The Blue Angel covers a wide range of non-food product groups, notably household and drugstore products, textiles, household appliances, construction products, energy, paper, vehicles, and services (Blue Angel, 2025).
- *Nordic Swan*: The Nordic Swan ecolabel is an ecolabelling program that covers Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, and Denmark. The program was established in 1989 and provides standards for more than 60 product groups. Over 5,000 products have been eco-labeled with the Nordic Swan (Brouhle & Khanna, 2012). The Nordic Swan ecolabelling scheme aims to steer demand for green products in the Nordic market by informing consumers about the environmental performance and effects of such products. The criteria for awarding the ecolabel are constantly revised and strengthened (Suikkanen et al., 2019).
- *EU Ecolabel*: The EU ecolabel was established in 1992, and it is accepted across Europe and worldwide. The ecolabel is awarded to products and services that meet the environmental standards covered by the ecolabel throughout their life cycle. The EU Ecolabel covers a wide range of products, including cleaning products, electrical appliances, textiles, lubricants, paints, but it does not include foods, beverages, pharmaceuticals, or medical devices (EU Ecolabel, 2025).

According to the ISO 14021 criteria, type II ecolabels are self-declaration labels. They consider only one environmental characteristic and align with the environmental claims made by producers and distributors (Struwig & Adendorff, 2018). ISO standard 14021 defines type II ecolabels as environmental declarations made without certification by an independent third party on behalf of manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, or any other entity capable of benefiting from this declaration (Lavallée & Plouffe, 2004). The primary purpose of this type of ecolabelling is to make environmental claims more precise, to promote environmental improvements, to reduce confusion, and to enable consumers to make more informed purchasing decisions. Entities using this type of ecolabelling must not mislead consumers and must consider the entire life cycle, not only the

finished product, to identify the impacts that must be reduced. Type II ecolabels must also comply with national standards that specify label accuracy. The most commonly used terms in this category of declarations are degradable, recovery energy, recyclable, recycled content, compostable, designed for assembly, and extended-life product (Lavallée & Plouffe, 2004).

Finally, Type III ecolabels focus on environmental declarations by providing quantified environmental information derived from life-cycle assessments. These types of declarations are intended for business-to-business communication but are also used by consumers and must be audited by a third-party institution (Gruère, 2013). They are based on ISO 14025 and are identified by their evaluation methodology. Additionally, this ecolabel employs life-cycle assessment to quantitatively represent the environmental performance of products across their life-cycle stages, from resource extraction through manufacturing, assembly, distribution, use, and disposal/recycling (EcoLeaf, 2025).

### ***2.1.3. Approaches to Ecolabelling Local Food Products***

Different ecolabelling schemes have been developed for food products, and the number is constantly increasing. Such ecolabels may be used independently or compete with each other in some cases. Three main ecolabelling approaches can be distinguished: organic farming, integrated agriculture, and regional products (Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010).

#### ***2.1.3.1. Organic Farming***

Organic farming is considered the basic historical alternative to conventional farming practices. This movement began in the 1930s and proliferated in the 1940s in response to the widespread use of industrial and synthetic fertilizers (Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010). Organic farming is a holistic agricultural system that highlights sustainability, ecological balance, and the use of natural processes. It is characterized by avoiding synthetic chemicals, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and by preferring organic inputs such as compost, manure, and biological pest control to maintain soil health and biodiversity (Akhuli, 2025). Organic farming also aims to promote the use of renewable resources and minimize the use of non-renewable ones, optimize water use, and reduce all forms of pollution that may result from agricultural activities (Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010). The basic standards for organic farming are presented by the International

Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), which is a global organization that focuses on promoting and supporting organic farming and the organic food industry worldwide and that cooperates with governments and international organizations to underline organic standards and regulations, while increasing the awareness of consumers through education and outreach agendas (Johar & Kotiyal, 2023). Organic farming guidelines are also developed by other organizations, including Codex Alimentarius, an international forum founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and that encompasses 176 countries with a common goal of developing standards and guidelines related to food products (Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission et al., 2007; Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010).

#### *2.1.3.2. Integrated Agriculture*

Integrated agriculture is a sustainable, technologically advanced form of agriculture characterized by low consumption of energy and non-renewable resources, while maintaining a minimal environmental footprint and conserving biodiversity (Manhoudt et al., 2002). In addition, this form of agriculture aims to balance economic and environmental objectives and is considered less stringent than organic farming. This can be seen through allowing the use of synthetic pesticides and industrial fertilizers, but in reduced amounts. However, compared with organic farming, no organization defines guidelines for integrated farming, whose primary purpose is industrial, emphasizing continuous research, whereas organic farming addresses farmer and consumer concerns. Nevertheless, this practice has evolved through the establishment of environmentally sustainable production methodologies, each with its own label. For instance, integrated pest management (IPM) has as an objective to reduce synthetic pesticides usage, integrated crop management (ICM) encompasses mitigating risks by using resistant races and the implementation of biological pest control, greenhouse systems that aim to achieve a performance based on carbon neutrality, and conservation agriculture, which highlights the application of limited soil disturbance practices (Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010).

#### *2.1.3.3. Regional Products*

Regional products are characterized by originating from a specific and well-defined region. Additionally, the region of origin is associated with differences in the quality attributes of such

products. Additionally, regional products are linked to biodiversity preservation in the relevant region; for instance, the European Union (EU) has supported this through the ENVIREG program (Udo De Haes & De Snoo, 2010). Regional products are also known as local products, terroir products, food of local origin, and regional heritage (Amilien, 2005). Local products are prevalent across many sectors, particularly agri-food, including baked goods and cheese (Bérard & Marchenay, 2006). In this sense, consumers of local products can benefit from two main advantages: benefiting from their natural aspect, and participating in the protection of the environment and its development (Prévost et al., 2014), since local products are associated with traditional production techniques that have less environmental impact, and such products tend to support sustainable land utilization in addition to the conservation of biodiversity in their area of origin (Haid et al., 2024).

To label such products, geographical indications (GIs) can be used to identify them by their geographical origin. GI labels serve different functions, including ensuring the quality and reputation of local products, legally protecting the names of such products to prevent their unauthorized use by other producers, and maintaining local biodiversity and genetic resources (Bérard & Marchenay, 2006). GIs can be separated into two types: the protected designation of origin (PDO) and the protected geographical indication (PGI). Both types ensure the protection of local products by virtue of their association with specific places. However, they are distinct. First, PDO requires that all stages of production be carried out in the same area, ensuring that the local environment is the primary determinant of the product's qualities. Secondly, PGI is more flexible than PDO because it highlights the link between geographical origin and reputation without requiring all production steps to be conducted in the same geographical area (Paiva & Garcia, 2017).

## **2.2. Ecolabelling in the Moroccan Context**

### ***2.2.1. Overview of Local Products in Morocco***

The notion of “terroir” was first introduced in 19th-century France, coinciding with the development of pedology. Initially, a terroir was considered a simple geographic space that sheltered a specific population. Nevertheless, studies across fields such as geography, sociology,

economics, and agronomy have helped refine the existing definition (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024). Globalization led to the standardization of production to meet increasing consumer demand, resulting in an abundance of output but lower quality. Consumers began choosing terroir products, especially following food crises like H1N1 and mad cow disease. These products are environmentally friendly and support sustainable development (Turgeon, 2010).

In Morocco, local products have received increasing attention in recent years due to their contributions to the country's social and economic development. Such products are also receiving increasing attention from consumers, who are increasingly choosing them over conventional ones (Raif & Ait Heda, 2021). Morocco has a wide range of terroir products that vary by region. Each region has its own expertise, and products are marketed nationally and internationally. Additionally, the country has been paying increased attention to this sector to support its growth (Sguenfle & Sadki, 2018).

In the Moroccan context, local products can be classified into three main types:

- **Animal products:** Products from sheep breeds (meat and milk, for example), which include different categories coming from different regions of Morocco, including the Kelaat Sraghna region in the Middle Atlas part of the country (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024).
- **Plant products:** Dates (Medjool from the Tafilalet region, for instance), clementines (concentrated in the Souss, Berkane, and Gharb regions), and other fruits and vegetables belonging to the remaining regions of Morocco (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024).
- **Processed products:** Argan oil from the southwestern regions of Morocco, olive oil mainly produced in the Ouazzane, Meknes, Beni Mellal, Sais, and Taounate regions, among others, prickly pear oil, Amlou from the argan forests, and the goat cheese from Chefchaouen (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024).

Morocco has diverse terroir products; a prominent example is Saffron, which is cultivated in the Taliouine region. Regarding this local product, Morocco is the fourth-largest producer, with an output of 6.8 tons in 2018 from an area of approximately 1800 ha. Since the 1980s, the country has experienced a decline in rainfall, making drought a defining feature of Morocco's climate.

However, Saffron, by its nature, is cultivated in arid regions, which makes it a more suitable replacement, especially in areas that once experienced higher rainfall. Thus, sustainable farming that focused on low-input and crop diversification became a go-to option (Vakhlu et al., 2022).

Another important terroir product in the Moroccan case is Argan. In fact, the cultivation of the argan tree has been known as one means to avoid the negative effects of climate change, most importantly desertification, since it can stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. Additionally, this plant enables sustainable land utilization in the arid and semiarid environments in Morocco. Moreover, the tree's resilience to drought helps minimize the utilization of resource-intensive irrigation methods. Also, the tree's large canopy and dense foliage provide shade and enhance moisture retention, which creates a microclimate that fosters the growth of additional plant species (United Nations, 2023).

Consequently, the commercialization and marketing of local products are capable of generating two types of impacts for the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity (Hammou & El Fadi, 2024):

- The sustainable use of natural resources: Promote awareness among local communities about the sustainable use of resources, highlighting how traditional production methods are often more environmentally friendly than modern techniques.
- Preservation of biodiversity: Local products are associated most of the time with varieties, breeds, or microorganisms that are traditional, endemic, or adapted to the local environment. Maintaining such products helps decrease the impact of economic specialization and rationalization, and prevents the loss of habitats, landscapes, and unique genetic resources.

### ***2.2.2. Policy Framework of Ecolabelling in the Moroccan Context***

In the Moroccan context, the agricultural sector has been facing various challenges, embodied in governance issues, such as neglecting the rural environment and delays in rural development, and the lack of a sustainable development strategy, and environmental issues, namely the unmanaged water resources, which the country has been lacking. To face such challenges, the Moroccan

government presented a new agricultural strategy to meet the increasing demand for innovation and reforms and to achieve sustainable growth in the sector (Toumi, 2008).

The Green Morocco Plan (GMP) was the primary agricultural strategy of Morocco, established in 2008, and covered the period between 2008 and 2020. The main purpose of the GMP was the development of the agricultural sector and supporting its position as a driving force for economic growth, in addition to overcoming poverty, unsustainable natural resources management, the exclusion of women, and the mitigation of climate change's negative effects. The Green Morocco Plan has two pillars: the first pillar focuses on stimulating the growth of export-oriented agriculture, based on private investment. The second pillar focuses on strengthening small farmers through the development of sustainable natural resources, in addition to fostering gender equality through the encouragement of women's employment in the most isolated parts of the country (Montanari & Bergh, 2019).

Pillar II of the GMP touches the labeling of agricultural and fish products, and it is considered one of the principal axes of agricultural products' development, especially local ones (MAPMDREF, 2015). Additionally, Part II of the GMP elaborated origin labeling, in order to promote locally produced products, since it is considered a tool for the sustainable development of the domestic agricultural sector (Lambarraa-Lehnhardt et al., 2021). Most importantly, this pillar emphasized the establishment of cooperatives as a way to encourage farmers to be more structured, and the products they generate are meant to be labelled to be promoted to both the local population and tourists, while placing more importance on tourists (Oiry Varacca, 2019). However, to reinforce the commercialization and promotion of local products, the Moroccan government referred to the Agency for Agricultural Development (Agence pour le Développement Agricole, ADA), a public agency belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture and responsible for the implementation of agricultural development policies, which established and executed a strategy containing five main levels. The first and second levels focus on fostering the establishment of fair aggregation partnerships between the upstream production sector and the downstream commercial and industrial phases, and the establishment of regional commercial logistic platforms with the main aim of valorizing and commercializing products. The third level aspires to enhance the development of the national and international markets. Conversely, levels four and five underline

the support for the labelling strategy, through promotion and commercialization campaigns for the labelled products and assisting in establishing quality labels of origin that attain significant visibility among Moroccan consumers (Lambarraa & Elyoubi, 2018).

Thus, the labelling process was launched as part of the GMP policy through the establishment of Law No. 25-06 relative to the Distinctive Signs of Origin and Quality (SDOQ) relating to food, agricultural, and fishery products (Lambarraa & Elyoubi, 2018). This legislation is a component of this national policy that aims to promote agricultural and food products, safeguard consumers' interests, and save the natural agricultural heritage. Law number 25-06 was formulated to detail the rules guaranteeing that local products have a label or tag denoting their origin and the quality criteria they adhere to. Additionally, this law promotes consumer trust in the authenticity and the quality of locally made products, while easing their marketing through the provision of an official identity (Lambarraa-Lehnhardt et al., 2021). Law number 25-06 has as objectives:

- To safeguard the diversity of agricultural and fisheries products while preserving their cultural legacy by acknowledging and enhancing their origin, features, and production methods (ONSSA, 2008).
- To advance the growth of the agricultural and fisheries sector by improving attributes associated with the local environment (ONSSA, 2008).
- To enhance the quality of agricultural and fisheries products and provide an increase in income derived from their improvement, benefiting local producers engaged in the production of these items (ONSSA, 2008).
- To maximize consumer information (ONSSA, 2008).
- To lay the foundation for the Moroccan labeling strategy and regulate the labeling system (Lambarraa-Lehnhardt et al, 2021).
- To strengthen connections between rural communities and their environment to promote sustainable agricultural growth, especially in regions with challenging natural conditions (MAPMDREF, 2015).

All the following ecolabels defined in law number 25-06 fall under the Distinctive Signs of Origin and Quality (SDOQ) (ONSSA, 2008):

- *Protected Geographic Indication (PGI) (Indication Géographique Protégée)*: it refers to the designation used to denote a product as sourced from a particular terroir, region, or locality, when its quality, reputation, or other characteristics can be essentially linked to that geographic origin, and when its production, processing, or preparation occurs within the specified geographical area. Various local products benefited of this label, for instance the Majhoul dates planted in the Tafilalet region, located in the southeastern part of Morocco, and characterized by its dry and hot climate and scarce rainfall and its oases that enhance the cultivation of this type of dates (Dattes Majhoul de Tafilalet), clementines cultivated in the Berkane region, based in the northeast of Morocco, and marked by fertile lands (Clementine de Berkane), and the goat cheese of Chefchaouen, located in the northern part of Morocco and belonging to the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima region, and marked by a rich biodiversity (Fromage de chèvre de Chefchaouen) (MAPMDREF, 2015). Currently, 65 local products have obtained the PGI (ONSSA, 2025).
- *Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) (Appellation d'Origine Protégée)*: it refers to a geographic designation for a region, specific location, or, in rare instances, a country. Used to identify a product that originates from that area and whose quality, reputation, or attributes are fundamentally related to the geographic environment, encompassing both human and natural influences, with all production, processing, and preparation occurring within the specified geographical area. For instance, olive oil cultivated in the Chiadma region, located in the Marrakech-Safi region and characterized by mild winters and hot, dry summers, is suitable for cultivating olive trees (Huile d'Olive Tyout Chiadma), and saffron planted in the Taliouine region, located in the Souss-Massa region in southwestern Morocco, and marked by cold winters and hot, dry summers, in addition to well-drained, rocky, and sandy soils capable of producing high-quality saffron (Safran de Taliouine) (MAPMDREF, 2015). Presently, there are only four local products with the PDO in Morocco (ONSSA, 2025).

- *Agricultural Label (Label Agricole)*: It refers to the acknowledgement that a product has distinct attributes and characteristics, thus demonstrating a degree of quality that surpasses that of comparable items. It is distinguished mainly by its production circumstances, manufacturing processes, and, where relevant, its geographical origin (MAPMDREF, 2015). At present, only seven local products obtained the Agricultural Label, namely free-range eggs, black olives, camel cheese, olive oil, dates, and brass lamb (ONSSA, 2025).

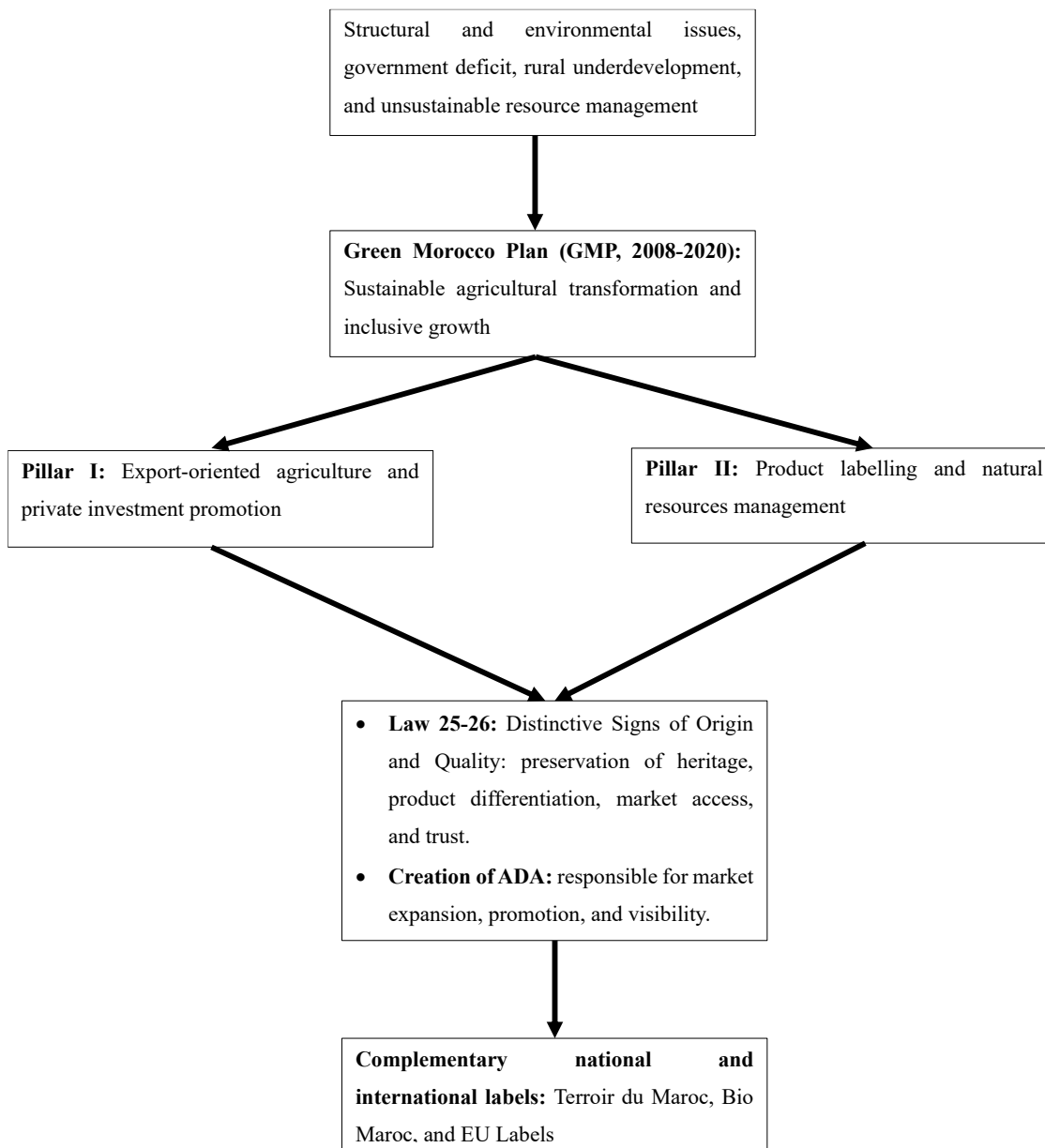
However, in 2016, the Agency for Agricultural Development (ADA) established the Terroir du Maroc label, which was created as a collective label to assemble all terroir products under the same recognized brand and to support the law 25-06 (ADA, 2015). Additionally, it aimed to differentiate local products from mass-produced ones, underlining the heritage and geographical specificity of such products. The Terroir du Maroc label also focused on connecting producers and consumers by making sure that consumers are aware of the standards maintained for production and quality, which, in theory, should enhance consumer confidence while appreciating these products. Such a label had positive effects on both producers and consumers: from the producer side, obtaining this certification signifies that their products are recognized for their strong linkage with the environment. From the consumer perspective, this certification increases trust in producers (Benhsain, 2021; Housni & Machrafi, 2024). Moreover, the Terroir du Maroc label was used as a promotional tool for the national and international levels, since local products have been attracting more interest in both markets (ADA, 2015). The products benefitting from this label are marketed online, in solidarity markets, and established sections in the most well-known hypermarkets in Morocco, in order to improve their visibility among Moroccan and international consumers (Housni & Machrafi, 2024).

In addition to the aforementioned labeling schemes, Morocco introduced, within the framework of GMP, the label “Bio Maroc,” established by the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture. It involves products that respect the natural life cycles of species, the environment, and biodiversity, and preserve soil and natural resources (MAPMDREF, 2025). The initial developments in organic agriculture in Morocco began in 1986, with a focus on olive cultivation in the Marrakech region and citrus production in the Ben Slimane region. These early initiatives were primarily aimed at exporting to the European market (Agrimaroc, 2001). Nowadays, organic product cultivation is

concentrated in eight regions, including the capital, Rabat. To ensure the proper functioning and to establish a legal framework for organic farming, the Moroccan government introduced Law No. 39-12, thereby establishing the “Bio Maroc” label, making Morocco the second country in Africa to adopt its own legislation concerning organic production (AgriMaroc, 2021). Additionally, Morocco received the certificate of admission to the “Bio Maroc” label, indicating its conformity with IFOAM standards (Aya Benazizi, 2022).

In addition to national labels, international ecolabels have been awarded to Moroccan local products to facilitate their export to the rest of the world, primarily Europe. Agriculture Biologique France is a voluntary certification scheme, valid for all operators whose production, preparation, distribution, and import activities are compliant with European and French organic regulations. The product categories eligible for certification are: unprocessed plant products; live animals or unprocessed animal products; processed agricultural products for use as food; processed agricultural products for use as feed; and vegetative propagating materials and seeds for cultivation (MAPMDREF, 2025). Furthermore, Organic Agriculture Europe is another ecolabel that Moroccan local products can benefit from, thereby making them eligible for export. The purpose of this label is to enable the commercialization of organic products within the European Union. Additionally, it guarantees environmental protection, the conservation of soil fertility, the preservation of biodiversity, respect for natural cycles and animal welfare, the absence of chemical and synthetic products, and transparent labeling for consumers. The label is acquired through an accredited certification body, such as Ecocert, to attest to the products’ compliance with European Union regulations (Group Ecocert, 2018).

Figure 2 summarizes the framework concerning GMP and its ecolabels.



**Figure 2:** The Green Morocco Plan and the Conception of Ecolabels in the Moroccan Context

Source: Author’s own compilation, 2025

To contextualize the ecolabelling framework in Morocco, comparison with countries at a similar stage of development and culture is necessary. For instance, according to Benromdhane (2015), ecolabelling in Tunisia is conducted through the International Center of Environmental Technologies of Tunisia (CITET) to incentivize producers and service providers to supply

consumers with more environmentally friendly products and to enhance sustainable production and consumption. In terms of regulation, Tunisia established a national agency for renewable energy in 1985. Furthermore, the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Energy jointly enforced ecolabelling of equipment and electric appliances. Similarly, in 1991, the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests established the ecomark scheme, which focuses on the voluntary ecolabelling of environmentally friendly products across various categories, including household and other consumer products that meet specific environmental and quality criteria (Singh et al., 2012). Furthermore, the scheme has as objectives the provision of various incentives dedicated to manufacturers and importers to decrease adverse environmental effects of products, rewarding corporate initiatives to decrease the adverse environmental effects of their outputs, informing consumers to improve their environmental responsibility by providing more information about the environmental elements they can pay attention to while making their purchasing decisions, encouraging consumers to acquire more environmentally friendly products, and enhancing the quality of the environment and encouraging the sustainable management of resources (Singh et al., 2012). The Bureau of Indian Standards oversees the certification process and determines which products may bear the Ecomark label for a specific period of time (Singh et al., 2012).

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework for Predicting Purchasing Intention**

The dissertation aims to assess Moroccan consumers' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products. To do so, two main theories were employed, namely the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Consumption Values (TCB). Three additional variables were added to extend these theories: Ecolabel Knowledge, Ecolabel Credibility, and Trust in Certifying Institutions. The following sections discuss the TPB, TCV, and the extension variables in greater detail.

#### ***2.3.1. Theory of Planned Behavior***

Behavioral theories have been used across disciplines and are considered innovative and alternative approaches for studying psychology, health science, cognitive neuroscience, sociology, and behavioral economics (Kwon & Silva, 2020). The understanding and application of behavioral theories can be advantageous across many disciplines, as they account for factors that influence

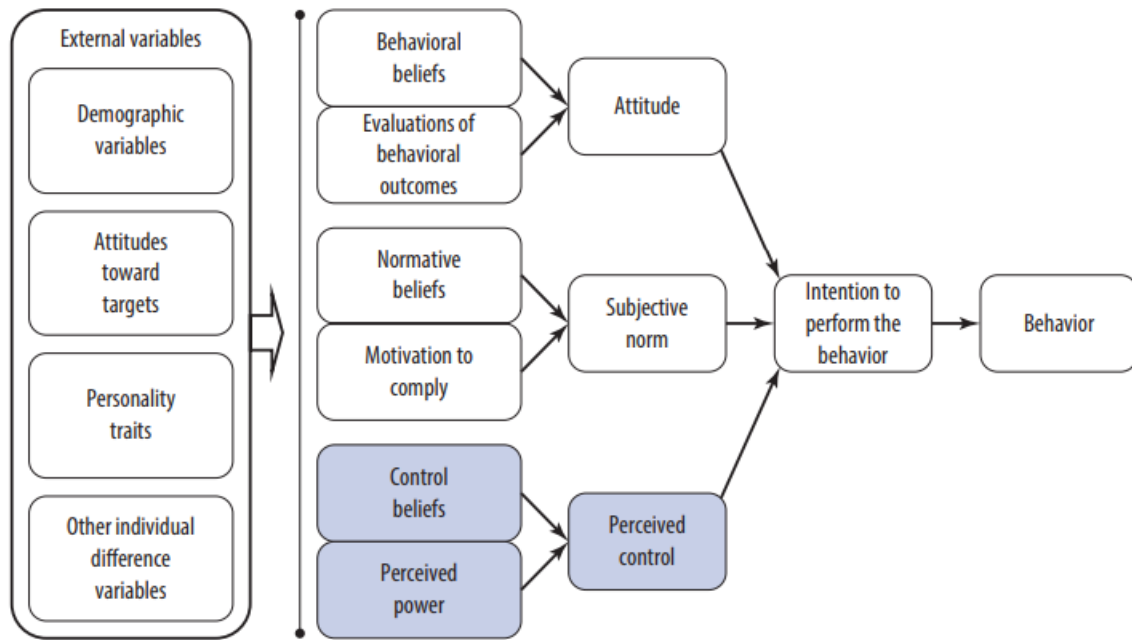
decision-making (Morris, 2012). Social and behavioral scientists have developed several theories to explain and predict individual and group behavior. The primary purpose of such models is to provide a framework that enables professionals to understand behavior and initiate behavioral change (Salazar, 1991).

One of the most used frameworks is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Bosnjak et al., 2020). This theory was initially developed to enhance the predictive power of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by focusing on how attitudes, social norms, and perceptions shape individuals' behavioral intentions and actual behavior (Ramos, 2024; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). TRA is based on the idea that any studied behavior is under volitional control (Madden et al., 1992). Moreover, it considers individual motivational factors as determinants of the likelihood of engaging in specific behaviors. In addition, it assumes that intentions are the best determinants of behavior (Montaño, 1992).

This theory was developed to elucidate the relationships among attitudes, intentions, and behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1969). Numerous previous studies assessing the interactions among attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, however, identified a very weak correlation between attitudes and behavior, leading some researchers to suggest omitting attitude as a predictor of behavior. Nevertheless, in the research conducted by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975), which contributed to the formulation of the TRA, they differentiated between the attitude toward an item and the attitude toward a behavior associated with that object. Various attitude theorists assessed attitudes toward an item to predict action. Fishbein (1975) established that an attitude toward the conduct itself is a much superior predictor of that behavior compared to an attitude toward the object to which the behavior pertains. This is referred to as the concept of compatibility (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015).

The TRA also assumes that behavioral intention is another predictor of behavior; in turn, behavioral intention is determined by attitude toward performing the behavior and the subjective norms associated with the behavior (Montaño, 1992). Specifically, attitude is determined by the behavioral beliefs, in other words, beliefs of an individual about outcomes or attributes of performing the behavior, weighted by the evaluations of outcomes and beliefs. An individual who believes that the outcomes are positive will yield a positive attitude toward the behavior, and vice versa. Additionally, an individual's subjective norms are determined by normative beliefs, in other

words, whether important referent individuals approve or disapprove of the behavior and whether they opt to follow or not the behavior, and by the degree to which a person is motivated to adhere to those referents. Normative beliefs are weighted by the motivation to comply with the referent (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). Figure 3 shows the interactions between attitude, subjective norms, behavioral intention, and behavior.



**Figure 3:** *The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*

Source: Montano and Kasprzyk (2015)

Note: The entire figure refers to the whole TPB, while the unshaded boxes showcase the TRA

The success of this theory in clarifying behavior rests on the extent to which a behavior is under volitional control, in the sense that individuals can exercise greater control over it. Consequently, Ajzen (1991) added perceived behavioral control to the TRA in order to comprise factors that are under the individuals' control, and that can exhibit an impact on intentions and behaviors, which led to the formation of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control is defined as the perceived ease or difficulty of executing a behavior. It is determined by beliefs of access to essential resources and chances for successful behavior execution, moderated by the perceived power of each influence. Moreover, controlling beliefs are views about elements that may help or hinder the performance of an activity. These elements include both internal

(knowledge, personal deficiencies, skills, emotions) and external (opportunity, reliance on others, physical limitations) factors. Individuals who believe they possess the required resources and recognize opportunities to engage in the behavior are more likely to experience a heightened sense of perceived behavioral control (Conner, 2020). This variable is impacted by various factors, including access to resources, knowledge, and the presence of facilitating or inhibiting conditions (Conner, 2020). The TPB posits that perceived behavioral control may exert a more direct influence on behavior. In prior TPB research, perceived behavioral control has been a direct predictor of behavior alongside intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2010). Nevertheless, the significance of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in predicting intention varies across actions, individuals, and contexts (Conner, 2020).

TPB has been subject to different criticisms over the years. For instance, the theory was considered to have a narrow scope and limited explanatory power, as it seeks to account for different forms of voluntary action through a limited set of concepts, including intention, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Additionally, this framework was considered limiting because it oversimplifies human behavior and fails to account for unconscious influences and emotions that rational thinking cannot capture. Additionally, the theory's focus on rational thinking overlooks other crucial factors, such as habits, self-regulation, and independent biological and social influences, which can significantly shape behavior (Sniehotta et al., 2014). Another criticism of the theory concerns methodological considerations: the TPB is a conceptual framework that analytically defined relationships among its constructs, while empirical testing is needed to determine whether these relationships are supported. This reasoning applies to behavioral metrics, since they are frequently based on self-reporting (Conner, 2020).

Despite ongoing criticism, the TPB is among the most widely used models for assessing consumer intentions across multiple fields. It has been extensively used to predict different behaviors, including food behavior (Boobalan et al., 2021; Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005; Yadav & Pathak, 2016), drug usage (McMillan & Conner, 2003; Mekawie & Hany, 2019; Rashidian & Russell, 2012), and adoption of new technologies (Lynne et al., 1995; Teo et al., 2016; Yousafzai et al., 2010). Its predictive capability has been substantiated by studies on organic consumption (Yadav

& Pathak, 2016) and environmentally responsible behaviors, including the purchase of ecolabelled food products (Alam et al., 2023; Vlaeminck et al., 2014).

Consumers tend to exhibit a positive attitude towards organic products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Various studies have established a positive relationship between attitude and the purchase intention toward ecolabelled products (Ahmed et al., 2020; Chen, 2007; Grankvist & Biel, 2007). Furthermore, prior research has shown that perceived behavioral control directly predicts intentions and behavior, and that greater perceived control is associated with greater willingness to expend additional effort to make a given behavior successful (Johe & Bhullar, 2016). Aitken et al. (2020) found that perceived behavioral control in New Zealand positively influences the intention to consume organic food. The research also found that labeling exercises a positive influence on perceived behavioral control, thereby increasing perceived behavioral control and intention to purchase organic food. In their study covering the metropolitan Minnesota grocery stores, Robinson & Smith (2002) found that perceived behavioral control is an independent predictor of the intention to purchase sustainably produced foods. Joshi & Rahman (2015) suggested that individuals with higher perceived behavioral control have a stronger intention to purchase green products. Al Mamun et al. (2018) found that perceived behavioral control positively influences the consumption of green products among low-income households. Chen & Tung (2014) indicated that perceived behavioral control positively influences the intention to visit green hotels in Taiwan. Research has found that subjective norms play an important role in determining consumers' sustainable choices. For instance, word-of-mouth was preferred for both green and non-green restaurants (Dewald et al., 2014). Subjective norms also positively influence the consumption of food and beverages (Ajzen & Sheikh, 2013). Pomsanam et al. (2014) found that subjective norms significantly influenced the purchase of organic products in Thailand. Subjective norms have also been shown to be an important determinant of the purchase decision for organic food in India (Basha & Lal, 2019). Consequently, subjective norms are considered the primary catalyst of purchasing intention for organic products.

Although TPB has been increasingly used to assess consumers' intentions to purchase ecolabelled products, and various studies have confirmed its effectiveness, some research has highlighted its limitations. For instance, Müller et al. (2021) identified which TPB variables influence green

purchasing intention in Mexico. In addition to the core TPB constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control), the study included extension variables, namely ecological conscience, moral obligation, and willingness to pay. The findings revealed that for Mexican consumers, perceived behavioral control, moral obligation, and ecological conscience were the only variables that predicted the purchasing intention. Similarly, Xu et al. (2020) extended the TPB framework in a different context by examining the determinants of Chinese consumers' intention to purchase green furniture using the TPB, while extending the theory by including physical health concern, environmental consciousness, and experience. The results demonstrated that only perceived behavioral control, physical health concern, and experience had a positive impact on consumers' purchasing intention. In contrast, attitude, subjective norms, and environmental consciousness were not significant predictors. In addition, Shen et al. (2022) concluded that in the context of sustainable food consumption, the effects of perceived behavioral control and subjective norms on purchasing intention vary between developed and developing countries. Specifically, perceived behavioral control exerts a more substantial influence on purchase intention in developing countries, whereas subjective norms are important in both developing and developed countries. Moreover, Paul et al. (2016) attempted to predict the purchasing intention of green products in India. The research used the extended TPB by integrating environmental concern. The research concluded that only attitude and perceived behavioral control were significant predictors of Indian consumers' purchasing intention. Overall, while the TPB has proven to provide important insights into the purchase intention for ecolabelled local products, its predictive power varies across contexts and across the variables employed in different research models.

### ***2.3.2. Theory of Consumption Values***

The notion of perceived value emerged as a primary business issue in the 1990s and continues to attract extensive research interest (Sánchez-Fernández & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Perceived value is the overall assessment of consumers regarding the utility of products and services, based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). It can be explained as the outcome of “give and take,” where “give” details what the consumers had to compromise to obtain the product and its advantages, and “take” describes the privileges the consumers receive (Desai et al., 2024). Perceived value can also be defined as the tradeoff between quality and price

(Chen & Chang, 2012). In fact, some consumers perceive value when prices are low, whereas others perceive value when there is a balance between quality and price. Hence, each component of perceived value is weighted differently by consumers (Zeithaml, 1988). Perceived value is also defined as the process by which consumers evaluate the differences between the benefits and costs of a marketing offer compared to competing offers (Kotler et al., 2020).

Research on perceived value has two directions: the first treats perceived value as a single dimension, with roots in economic theory and utility. According to this approach, utility maximization guides choice behavior, and perceived value is the trade-off between the sacrifices consumers make and the benefits they expect to receive. Nevertheless, this approach has been criticized for its simplicity and its inability to account for the complexity of perceived value (Hallem & Barth, 2011). The second research direction treats perceived value as a multidimensional approach (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Various dimensions have been proposed to investigate perceived value, including price, quality, utility, and sacrifice (Sinha & DeSarbo, 1998). Sweeney and Soutar (2001) suggested that emotional, social, quality, and price are dimensions of consumption values within the PERVAL scale, which is based on utilitarian and hedonic constructs.

Subsequent research is based on the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV), which was used to investigate perceived value (Sheth et al., 1991). This theory examines the value of consumption from a behavioral perspective and offers typologies of perceived value. Three essential propositions underlie the theory: consumer choice is based on different consumption values, the consumption values make varying contributions in each specific decision-making context, and the consumption values are autonomous. Additionally, this theory distinguished five types of perceived value: functional value, conditional value, emotional value, social value, and epistemic value (Sheth et al., 1991). The multidimensional approach to studying perceived value enables the explanation of any concept while taking into account consumers' cognitive and affective systems, which aligns with the overall vision of consumer behavior (Sánchez et al., 2006). The TCV explains consumer choice behavior through three dimensions: consumers can select a product or abstain, they prefer one type of product or service over another, and they can choose among different brands. According to these three views, consumers make rational choices when selecting a product or a service (Majeed et al., 2022). Furthermore, the established five dimensions are directly related to the

perceived utility of a choice, whether at the decision-to-purchase phase (to buy or not to buy), at the product level (different product types), or at the brand level (different brands). Nevertheless, the importance of consumption values depends on the decision level and the type of product or service under consideration by consumers (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Figure 4 later shows the different consumption values discussed in the next subsections.

#### *2.3.2.1. Functional Value*

Functional value refers to the perceived utility obtained from the capacity of an alternative to provide functional, utilitarian, or physical performance (Sheth et al., 1991); thus, it is associated with the ability of the product to achieve its functional, utilitarian, or physical objectives (Watanabe et al., 2020). This value reflects the economic and rational evaluations made by consumers, thereby including the quality and price of products and services as core components of this dimension (Sánchez et al., 2006). This value is the first one consumers seek from a product (Lin & Huang, 2012). Moreover, price and quality are argued to be distinct functional subfactors that independently contribute to perceived value and should be studied individually. In general terms, quality functional value is defined as the utility derived from perceived quality and anticipated product performance (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). In the context of green and organic products, quality functional value can be defined as the perceived utility derived from the quality, performance, availability, and environmental and health benefits of such products compared to alternatives (Danish et al., 2019; Watanabe et al., 2020). Price functional value refers to the benefits obtained from products, resulting from decreases in their perceived short- and long-term costs (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Moreover, it reflects consumers' perceptions of products' physical performance with respect to the six factors of price satisfaction: price reliability, price confidence, price transparency, price-quality ratio, relative price, and price fairness (Majeed et al., 2022). The factors of price satisfaction can be defined as follows: price reliability refers to the fulfillment of elevated pricing expectations and prevention of adverse price surprises; price confidence is the consumers' assurance that the pricing is advantageous; price transparency refers to the straightforward, current, complete, and clear overview of a company's quoted prices; price-quality ratio is defined as the ratio or trade-off between the quality of the products and services and the monetary costs that consumers bear;

relative price refers to the price of the offer in comparison to that of competitors; and price fairness can be defined as the consumers' assessment of whether the disparity between the socially accepted price and another comparative price is reasonable, acceptable, or justifiable (Matzler et al., 2006). However, price is a silent feature of the product that consumers are inclined to pay, especially when eco-friendly products exhibit a higher quality compared with the conventional ones (Danish et al., 2019).

#### *2.3.2.2. Conditional Value*

Conditional value refers to the perceived utility acquired as a result of circumstances that the choice maker faces. An alternative choice gains conditional value from existing circumstances and contexts, both physical and social that enhance its functional and social values. Thus, the evaluation of a conditional value depends on different situational elements that have an influence on a choice. Consequently, the way a consumer evaluates a choice depends on certain circumstances and possible results. In other words, this value is associated with the buyer's selection of products based on the circumstances and situations encountered (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of green consumption (a broad term that encompasses consumers' behaviors associated with consuming ecolabelled and sustainable products), it is defined as consumers' perception of consuming environmentally friendly or green products under certain circumstances, such as poor environmental conditions (environmental pollution, environmental degradation, global warming, and rapid climate change), when there are subsidies, discounts or promotions available on green products (Majeed et al., 2022). Conditional value is especially significant in the context of green purchases where consumers frequently evaluate their choices based on a variety of criteria, including economic factors, environmental impact, and product availability (Chwialkowska et al., 2024). Furthermore, consumers' behavior is impacted by any change in place, time, and individual situations, making these factors an important component of the conditional value (Desai et al., 2024). For instance, within the conditional value, the increasing health concerns and the escalating pollution and the obligation to reduce carbon footprints were considered as main enablers for purchasing organic food (Desai et al., 2024). Also, this value can be enhanced through communicating personal benefits and social values and when monetary drivers, for instance discounts, are employed (Chwialkowska et al., 2024).

### *2.3.2.3. Emotional Value*

Emotional value refers to the perceived utility gained from the capacity of an alternative to stimulate feelings. It is also defined as consumers' emotions, feelings, and affective states (Sheth et al., 1991). This value has the capability to influence decisions due to the potential for a product to evoke emotions that may be associated with its use (Kifaya & Rama, 2023). Furthermore, the consumption experience as a whole can be considered as a system that encompasses consciousness, emotions, and values. This is because consumer emotional values vary among consumers based on their typical personal and emotional experiences, whether positive, negative, or mixed, which subsequently affect purchasing decisions. In other words, consumers possessing positive emotional values engage in pleasurable and open-minded purchasing decisions, since these enhance their convictions (Rahnama, 2017).

In relation to sustainable consumption, emotional value quantifies the impact of consumer sentiments on their environmental concerns and their purchasing behavior with respect to green products (Majeed et al., 2022). In this regard, consumers experience a sense of moral righteousness and personal improvement when they opt for environmentally friendly products over conventional ones. Consumers' emotional responses and rational thought processes are both essential factors that impact the decision to purchase a product (Kushwah et al., 2019). Furthermore, previous research has identified the three most significant predictors of emotional value in the field of sustainable consumption, namely healthy food, availability or variety, and feeling comfortable (Finch, 2006; Qasim et al., 2019). Emotional value influences the decisions of consumers through the provision of emotional comfort and satisfaction (Sharma & Kushwah, 2025).

### *2.3.2.4. Epistemic Value*

Epistemic value refers to the perceived utility gained from the capability of an alternative to cause curiosity, or fulfill the desire for knowledge, in addition to providing novelty (Sheth et al., 1991). In other words, when a product may simulate curiosity, present novelty, or fulfill demand for knowledge, it is said to possess epistemic value (Kifaya & Rama, 2023). Nevertheless, consumers may rationally opt to seek information that is not useful at that moment but may become significant in the future (Lin & Huang, 2012). Additionally, when consumers purchase products just out of

interest, they actually seek to acquire beneficial knowledge or abilities that enhance diverse circumstances. Consequently, consumers' inclination to better differentiate product qualities may affect their purchasing behavior (Kifaya & Rama, 2023).

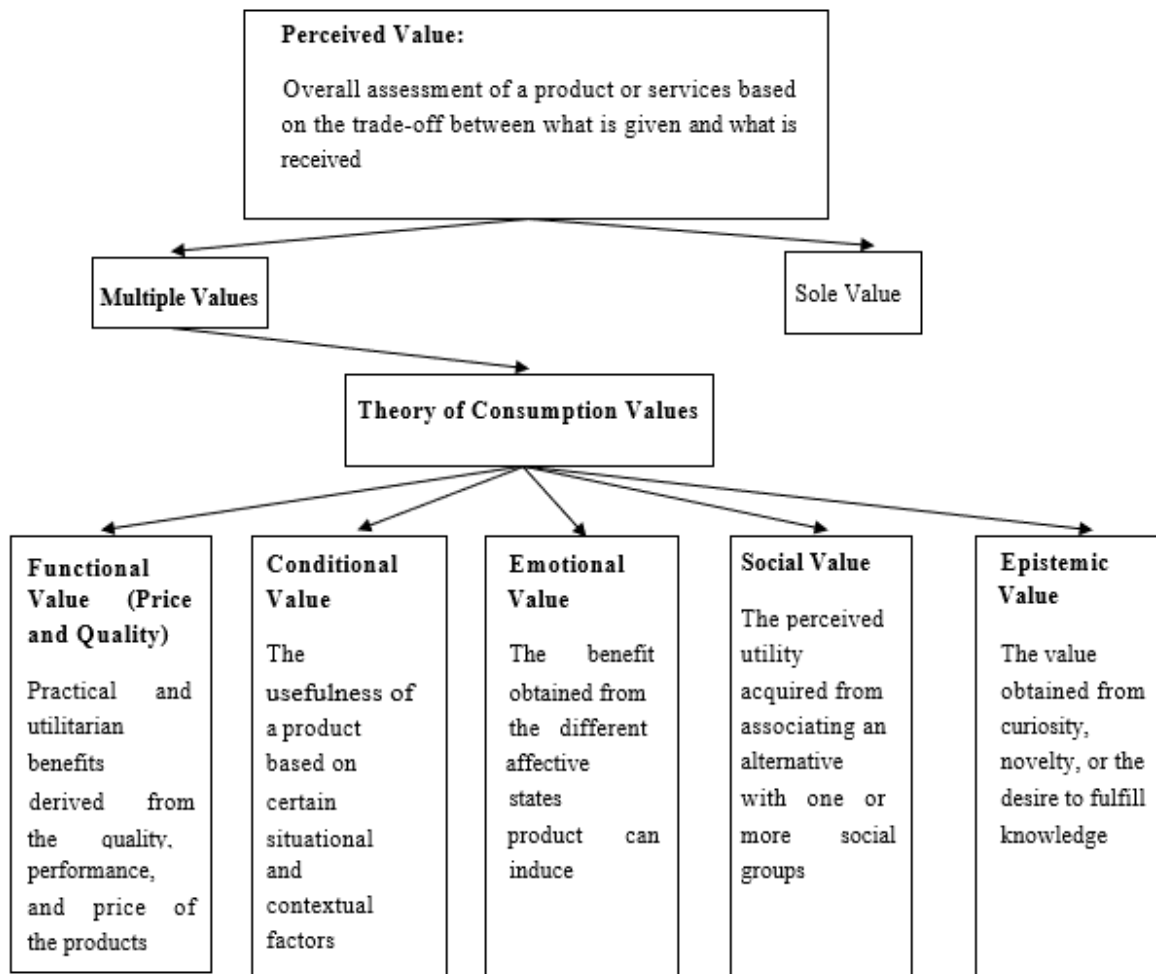
In the context of sustainable consumption, when a consumer intends to purchase a novel product, they will amass comprehensive information to do a product evaluation and thereafter decide whether to purchase environmentally friendly products or not (Mohd Suki et al., 2022). Furthermore, it was found that epistemic value has an impact on the consumers' environmental concern, and the more knowledge they amass about a product, the more concerned they become with the appearance, design, and style of the green product (Mohd Suki & Mohd Suki, 2015). Furthermore, the behavioral intentions of consumers to pay a green price premium have been shown to be positively influenced by their inclination to fulfill their knowledge-seeking needs in relation to product attributes, compatibility, and novelty (Essiz & Senyuz, 2024).

#### *2.3.2.5. Social Value*

Social value is the perceived utility acquired from associating an alternative with one or more social groups (Sheth et al., 1991). It is associated with the preservation of a positive social image, and the extent to which a product improves social image has a substantial impact on sustainable consumer behavior (Essiz & Senyuz, 2024). In marketing literature, social value is defined as the advantages that individuals derive from group affiliations and associations with certain reference groups, and it also includes the emotional rewards that result from such associations (Rana & Solaiman, 2023). This concept also emphasizes the symbolic importance of products and services in the formation of personal identity and social interactions (Chwialkowska et al., 2024). Also, social value can be either positive or negative, and may be impacted by various factors, including the group's image, the personal beliefs of consumers, and the different social norms (Hoyos-Vallejo et al., 2025). It also encompasses self-esteem, social image, identification, manifestation of personality, and the aspiration to belong to a particular social class (Rütelionė & Bhutto, 2024). Schwartz (1992) established the Schwartz Value Inventory that classifies the different social values. The classification included 56 values falling under 10 value types, which were further concentrated into four main categories (Costa et al., 2014):

- Conservatism: Includes tradition, conformity, and security, and it is defined as the propensity to act in a manner that promotes the stability of society and relationships. Individuals who see this category as important prioritize the preservation of social norms and traditions.
- Self-enhancement: Encompasses for instance power and achievement, and it pertains to an individual's control or dominance over other people and resources, as well as social status and prestige.
- Self-transcendence: Includes universalism and benevolence, and it supposes the desire to protect the well-being of all individuals and the environment (universalism) or of those with whom one has a personal relationship (benevolence).
- Openness to change: Includes hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction, and it refers to the need to have independent thoughts and actions, as well as the desire for excitement, pleasure, novelty, and challenge in life.

Figure 4 summarizes the TCV and its main components.



**Figure 4:** The Theory of Consumption Values (TCV)

Source: Author’s own compilation, 2025

Note: The text in bold letters showcases the chosen approach for the dissertation.

As shown in Figure 4, and as was previously discussed, the TCV includes five main types, namely functional, conditional, emotional, social, and epistemic values. For this dissertation all values were chosen as a theoretical basis and were explored for analytical clarity.

Several studies examined perceived value through the lens of the theory of consumer values, particularly in the context of green marketing. For instance, Biswas (2017) and Biswas & Roy (2015) examined sustainable consumption among consumers and found that when consumers have a behavioral intention to purchase green products, they exhibit a positive intention to pay a price

premium for them. The theory was also used to assess consumers' green purchasing behavior. Gonçalves et al. (2016) found that consumption values contribute differently to the green product purchase, with the functional value as the main cause of the behavior, especially when combined with the emotional, conditional, or social values. Awuni and Du (2016) found that consumption values have a positive influence on the purchasing intention of green products in the case of young consumers, with social value and emotional value having a positive relationship with the purchasing intention of green products. Nevertheless, functional value and epistemic value did not yield a significant relationship with the purchasing intention of green products in the case of young Chinese consumers (Awuni & Du, 2016). Khan and Mohsin (2017) found that functional value (price component) and social value had a significant impact on the behavior of consumers towards purchasing green products, whereas conditional value and epistemic value had a negative influence. Qasim et al. (2019) conducted a study to assess the intention of consumers to consume organic food, and he found that conditional value, epistemic value, and functional value had a positive influence on the behavioral intention. The same results were emphasized by Kushwah et al. (2019), who concluded that the intention to consume ethical products is impacted by social values, epistemic values, and emotional values.

TCV has also been increasingly employed to identify the reasons consumers choose ecolabelled products. Nevertheless, research has proven that TCV is not always capable of predicting the purchasing intention of consumers. For instance, Rana and Solaiman (2023) investigated the determinants of purchasing behavior for environmentally friendly and energy-efficient products in Bangladesh by using the TCV and incorporating consumers' moral identity as a moderating variable. The study concluded that functional, social, conditional, and epistemic values effectively predicted consumer behavior, whereas emotional value was not a significant predictor. This outcome may be attributed to cultural differences and individual inclinations that impact purchasing decisions. In addition, Lin and Huang (2012) investigated the factors that influence consumers' choice behavior regarding green products, using the TCV as their framework. The findings revealed that among the consumption values examined, social value, quality functional value, and price functional value did not significantly affect consumers' choices. The study showed that the environmental benefits of green products played a more prominent role in driving consumer

decisions than price-related considerations. Furthermore, social value was found to be unimportant in influencing choice behavior, as consumers did not perceive it as a means of enhancing social approval or personal impression.

### ***2.3.3. Extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Consumption Values***

#### *2.3.3.1. Ecolabel Knowledge*

An ecolabel is a promotional or communication tool that provides consumers with product-specific, environmentally relevant information from a marketing perspective (Taufique et al., 2017). In other words, ecolabels function as informative instruments that enable consumers to distinguish among ecologically sustainable products and alternatives, thereby enhancing informed choices (Recio-Román et al., 2024). The various established ecolabel standards aim to ensure that they provide consumers with precise and meaningful information to support product evaluation. For ecolabels to be effective, consumers must understand their significance and trust the information provided to them (Taufique et al., 2017). In this sense, ecolabel knowledge is defined as consumers' awareness and understanding of ecolabels, which helps them identify the benefits of the products, in addition to their capability to decrease uncertainty and improve the decision-making process by enabling more informed decision-making regarding the product they are interested in (Elangovan & Babu, 2025). Furthermore, research indicates that general environmental knowledge is not always a necessary condition for predicting ecologically conscious consumer behavior, suggesting that product-specific environmental knowledge, including thorough ecolabelling, is essential for enabling consumers to make informed, ecologically conscious decisions. Additionally, they must be aware of the presence of ecolabels, understand their significance, and have complete confidence in the information they provide (Taufique et al., 2016a).

In the field of sustainable consumption, studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between ecolabel knowledge and the formation of positive environmental attitudes. Additionally, when consumers are well informed about the different ecolabel standards and their consequences, they are likely to develop more favorable attitudes toward environmentally responsible products. Such positive attitudes are required to adopt the different sustainable consumption practices (Recio-Román et al., 2024). In fact, a comprehensive understanding of ecolabels serves as an educational

accelerator; when consumers recognize that ecolabels indicate lower environmental impact, they perceive green products as more environmentally favorable. Moreover, greater knowledge of ecolabels is associated with improved environmental attitudes, thereby promoting sustainable purchasing behavior (Recio-Román et al., 2024).

Evaluating the various aspects of ecolabels helps consumers choose among eco-labeled products on the market and reduces information asymmetry in green product purchases (Waris & Hameed, 2020). Knowledge of ecolabels is also related to consumers' familiarity with ecolabelling and specific ecolabels (Czarnecki et al., 2015). Taufique et al. (2016b) concluded that knowledge of ecolabels is important in shaping consumers' ecological behavior. Additionally, information presented on ecolabels influences purchasing decisions for green products (D'Souza et al., 2006). Yadav & Pathak (2016) also demonstrated that knowledge components are important for fostering the purchase of green products. The same results were reported by Polonsky et al. (2012), who found that carbon-related environmental knowledge helps consumers adopt environmentally friendly behaviors.

#### *2.3.3.2. Ecolabel Credibility*

Credibility is the extent to which a receiver considers the source of information, in other words, the speaker, and the communicated information (the message), to be believable. In fact, a source is considered credible by the information receiver when the communicator is deemed to have appropriate expertise and competence and to be trustworthy. On the other hand, a message is deemed credible when information receivers are confident that the message is accurate, factual, comprehensive, and well organized (Park & Millar, 2014). In the context of ecolabels, ecolabel credibility refers to the extent to which consumers have confidence in the information conveyed by the label and in their belief that the product meets the standards it claims to meet. Moreover, credibility is often associated with transparency, consistency, and independent verification of the labelling process. For instance, labels certified by a third-party organization are typically considered more credible than self-declared labels, as they include an objective assessment of the product's claims (Lanero et al., 2021; Vázquez & Lanero, 2021). Ecolabel credibility is also known as the extent to which an ecolabel is regarded as genuine, proficient, and trustworthy (Sharma et

al., 2024). Additionally, credible ecolabels demonstrate the superiority of products compared with conventional ones (Riskos et al., 2021b).

The credibility of ecolabels is influenced by various factors, including the strictness of the certification methodology, the reputation of the certifying authority, and the transparency of the label's communication. In this sense, consumers place greater trust in labels endorsed by well-known and reputable organizations, as such endorsements are perceived as more reliable (Daugbjerg et al., 2014; Riskos et al., 2021a). Nevertheless, the credibility of labels differs across different markets (Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2011). For instance, researchers in the United States found that consumers of wood products viewed ecolabels provided by non-governmental organizations as more trustworthy than those from private certification entities and governmental bodies (Cai et al., 2017). On the other hand, consumers in Singapore and China considered government-issued ecolabels more credible than those issued by private certification entities (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014). However, the credibility of ecolabels can also be influenced by the retailer through which the product is ultimately sold (Singh et al., 2023). From the consumer perspective, the credibility of ecolabels can be affected by the level of knowledge about the label, the perceived trustworthiness of the certifying body, and the presence of conflicting or misleading information. For instance, consumers with greater knowledge of ecolabels hold more favorable views of their credibility, whereas those with lower knowledge may be more uncertain about the labels' significance and reliability (Guntzburger et al., 2022; Hay et al., 2024).

The perceived credibility of ecolabels among consumers was found to influence the purchase of green products. Chen and Chang (2012) found that Taiwanese consumers' preferences for electronic goods were influenced by their trust in ecolabels. Rahbar and Wahid (2011) also concluded that the credibility of ecolabels significantly influences the purchase intention for green products. Smed et al. (2013) found that in Denmark, there is a significant relationship between the credibility of ecolabels and the purchasing intention of eco-labeled organic foods. The same results were described by Janssen and Hamm (2012).

#### *2.3.3.3. Trust in Certifying Institutions*

Consumers generate cognitive and affective responses in response to trust. Trust in an information source is a key precursor of individuals' attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and social norms, which in turn influence their information-seeking and purchasing behavior. Trust also influences normative beliefs (the antecedents of social norms), as individuals are inclined to behave in ways that please those they trust. Attitudinal beliefs (antecedents of attitude) are also influenced by trust, as individuals are more likely to accept information about outcomes from trusted sources. Also, trust is a factor in the formation of control beliefs, which are the antecedents of perceived behavioral control. This may be because trust reduces social uncertainty and enables individuals to feel more in control (Darnall et al., 2018). In the presence of trust, individuals are inclined to preserve cognitive energy in their decision-making processes by passively evaluating information. Thus, individuals do not conduct a thorough evaluation of third-party certifications, sponsorships, and ecolabels. They instead use cognitive shortcuts to ascertain whether an entity is legitimate by adhering to a socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions, which can in turn lead to an automatic purchase of a new product, since when individuals start trusting a source of information, they consider the entity issuing it to be legitimate and they tend to be more inclined to embrace its message without the need for an extensive assessment (Darnall et al., 2018; Doherty et al., 2013; Finch et al., 2015; Tost, 2011).

In the context of certifying institutions, governments are the primary entities responsible for protecting the global environment, implementing environmental laws, and ensuring the provision of credible environmental information. Governments are also responsible for safeguarding consumers from fraudulent information, establishing guidelines for product labeling and acceptable marketing claims, and taking legal action against entities that fail to comply with established laws. In this sense, consumers are more likely to view governments as credible sources because their organizational mission is to safeguard the natural environment. Furthermore, certifying authorities serve as a mechanism for validating and verifying producers' claims, which consumers often lack the capacity to evaluate independently, either due to limited knowledge or resources. In this sense, certifying institutions serve as a means of connecting consumers who require authentic products with producers who demand validation of their claims. Through independent verification of producers' practices, certifying institutions provide credible and objective evaluations (Näslund &

Tamm Hallström, 2017). Consequently, consumers become more inclined to trust the environmental information they provide. The trust consumers display towards certifying institutions extends to the ecolabels they sponsor (Darnall et al., 2012).

Increasing consumer trust in ecolabels is essential to the successful implementation of ecolabelling (Lozano et al., 2010). Thus, such trust and credibility exhibit a positive attitude towards green products (Testa et al., 2015). Additionally, distinguishing between green and non-green products requires complete and credible information (Drexler et al., 2017); consequently, greater consumer access to information about green products positively influences consumers' attitudes toward them (Taufique et al., 2016b). Furthermore, developing positive attitudes towards green products and exhibiting ecologically responsible behavior requires credible environmental product information (Testa et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, when the environmental claims are unclear to consumers, it reduces their trust in ecolabels, which is considered a cornerstone of trust. Furthermore, such mistrust leads consumers to lose their interests and their willingness to pay a higher price for ecolabelled products (Kovač et al., 2025). According to Harbaugh et al. (2011), consumer mistrust in ecolabels mainly arises when a product of questionable quality bears it, thereby decreasing the credibility of ecolabels and their ability to contest product quality. Furthermore, mistrust is also caused by the increasing number of ecolabels in the market, which leads to greater uncertainty for consumers and reduces the informativeness of ecolabels. Such increase is due to the increasing demand of consumers, in addition to the willingness of companies to comply and meet such demand and prove their efforts in contributing to sustainability (Nygaard, 2023).

Moreover, greenwashing is another issue that threatens the trust of consumers in the green attributes of products, and it refers to misleading consumers by portraying a product, service, or corporation as environmentally friendly when it is not in reality (Nascimento et al., 2025). When a product with good or questionable quality bears an ecolabel, it can either enhance its credibility or undermine it. Thus, companies in some cases can strategically use an ecolabel to influence the reputation of their products, leading to proliferating the mistrust consumers have in ecolabels (Harbaugh et al., 2011).

#### ***2.3.4. Moderating Role of Demographics***

Demographic factors influence consumers' purchasing intentions with respect to product attributes (Ming Wong & Tzeng, 2019). For instance, consumers' lifestyles are shaped by their income, which is reflected in their purchasing choices (Kotler et al., 2020). In their study assessing purchasing behavior related to recycled products in China, Wong & Hao (2019) examined the effects of age, gender, income, and a reference group on consumers' intentions and behaviors. The study concluded that income influenced the purchasing intention of Chinese consumers, which, in turn, transformed into purchasing behavior. In their attempt to assess the impact of demographics on environmentally friendly purchase behaviors, Fisher et al. (2012) studied gender, age, education, marital status, children, income, and race to evaluate daily behaviors in the US. Such behaviors included buying green products, using recyclable products, recycling, and switching a non-green product with a green one. The study found that income significantly influences the buying behavior of green products. Gender was also found to significantly influence the buying behavior of green products and the switching behavior from non-green to green products.

When it comes to the influence of age on the green purchasing behavior, (Witek & Kuźniar, 2020) assessed the role of sociodemographic variables in explaining the green purchase behavior in emerging markets, and concluded that young consumers are more likely to perceived the positive aspects of green products and see their impact on the environment as a whole. Additionally, Zeynalova & Namazova (2022) studied the relationship between attitudes and behaviors of administrative of four universities located in Baku, Azerbaijan, toward the consumption of environmentally friendly products and found that age had an impact on the ecological consumer behavior of respondents, with younger respondents placing more importance on preserving the environment compared with older respondents. Furthermore, Patel et al. (2017) examined the impact of demographic variables on the sustainable consumer behavior in emerging markets, and concluded that mature demographic groups showcase a higher level of sustainable purchasing behavior compared with younger age groups.

Regarding the impact of gender on green purchasing behavior, Bulut et al. (2017) investigated the link between the sustainable consumer behavior and individual differences related to gender and generation in Türkiye and found that females demonstrated an increased level in sustainable

consumption, both in overall behavior and in their tendency to reemploy the product. In addition, Szulc-Obłóza & Żurek (2024) investigated the moderating effects of gender on the effects of attitudes toward sustainable consumption and sustainable behaviors and concluded that the strength and nature of the relationship between income and sustainable attitudes and behaviors differ between men and women.

When it comes to education, Nguyen et al. (2019) aimed to evaluate the effect of demographics on the energy efficient appliance consumption in Vietnam and found among the different demographic variables considered, education plays a main role in impacting sustainable consumption behaviors, with tertiary education having the greatest impact, with consumers completing higher educational level demonstrating more positive attitudes vis-à-vis sustainability and exhibiting an increased likelihood in engaging in such behavior. Furthermore, Chirilli et al (2022) investigated the impact of gender, age, and education on consumers' awareness, behavior, and expectation when it comes to behavior related to the environmental sustainability, and concluded that the higher the educational level the greater environmental awareness and the more sustainable the behavior. Also, Wang et al (2020) studied the relationship between age, gender, income, and education and the green attitudes and intention of consumers to opt for green hotels in China, and concluded that education only had a significant impact on the green purchasing intention, while it yielded no influence on the green attitude of consumers, and higher education level was linked with an increased possibility to have positive intention toward green hotels.

Regarding income, Witek & Kuźniar (2020) concluded that in the context of developing countries, consumers with high income level have positive green purchasing intentions, in other words, consumers with better personal financial circumstances are more leaned toward green products, while consumers with lower income are more price sensitive. Additionally, Szulc-Obłóza & Żurek (2024) concluded that income positively influences the intention to acquire sustainable products, with consumers with higher incomes exhibiting more willingness to accept higher costs for sustainable goods. When it comes to region of residence, Wang et al (2019) examined the determinants of green purchasing intention in China, and found that attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and purchasing intention recorded a significant difference between residents of downtown

and non-downtown areas, with residents of downtown areas having more positive attitudes and stronger perceived behavioral control.

Thus, the hypotheses of the dissertation can be detailed as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between consumption values and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H.1.1: Quality functional value and price functional value have a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H.1.2: Emotional value has a positive impact on the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products.

H.1.3: Epistemic value has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H.1.4: Conditional value has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H.1.5: Social value has a positive influence on the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products.

H2: Ecolabel-related factors significantly influence the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H2.1: Ecolabel knowledge positively influences the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and through attitude towards ecolabelled local products.

H2.2: Ecolabel credibility positively impacts the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products.

H2.3: Trust in certifying institutions positively influences the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products.

H3: Attitude towards ecolabelled local products has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

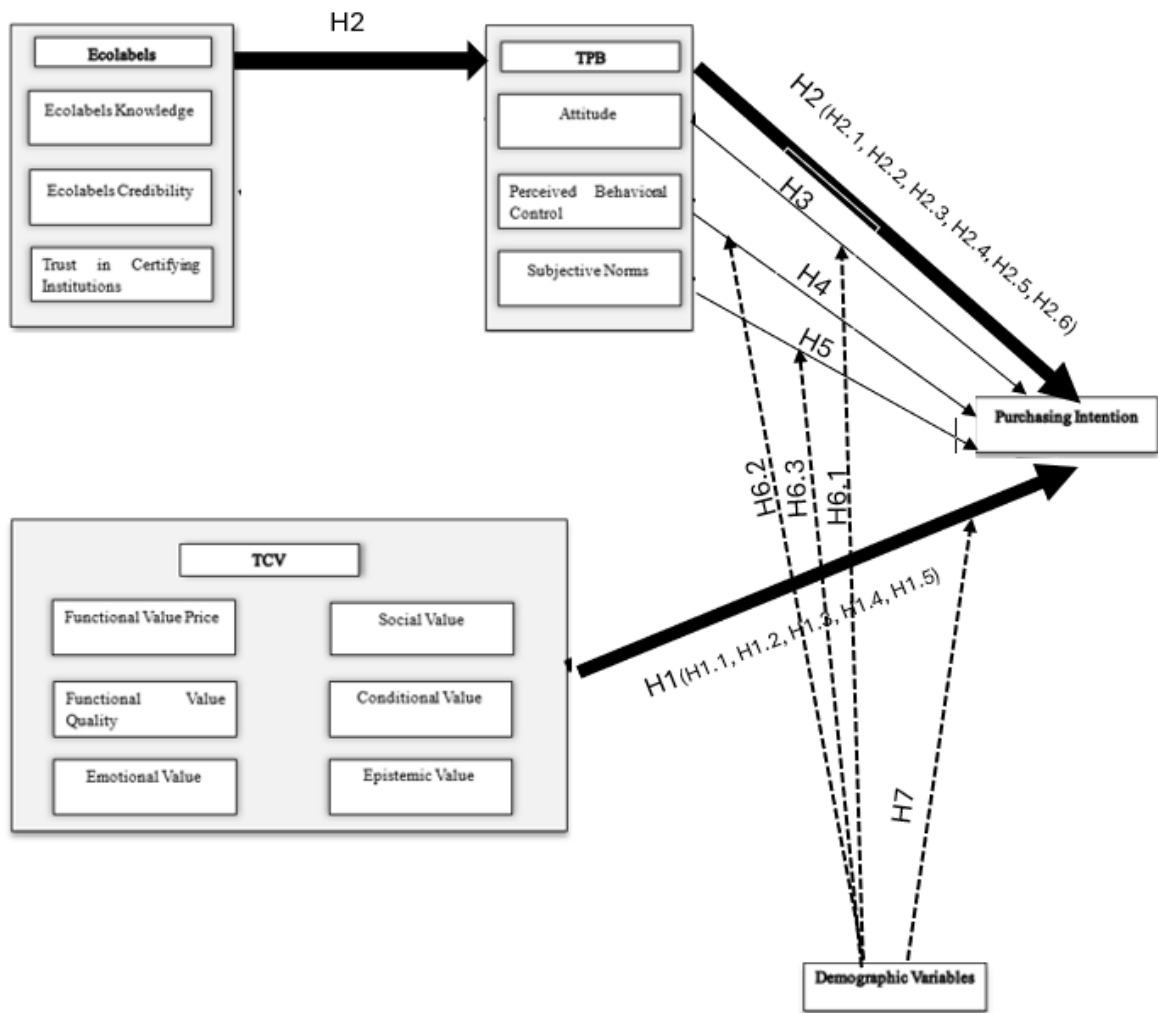
H4: Perceived behavioral control exhibits a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H5: Subjective norms significantly impact the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H6: Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the relationship between attitude towards ecolabelled local products (H6.1), perceived behavioral control (H6.2), and subjective norms (H6.3) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

H7: Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the relationship between quality functional value (H7.1), price functional value (H7.2), epistemic value (H7.3), emotional value (H7.4), conditional value (H7.5), and social value (H7.6) and the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products.

Figure 5 details the proposed model of the dissertation.



**Figure 5:** The Dissertation’s Proposed Model

Source: Author’s own compilation, 2025

### **3. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The main aim of this chapter is to clarify the research methodology employed. This includes the methods employed, the sampling technique used, the dissertation's primary constructs and variables, the pilot study, the period and place of research, the sample composition, and the statistical methods employed.

#### **3.1. Sampling Strategy**

The research is conducted in Morocco. Thus, it targeted the population residing within Morocco's geographic boundaries. To select participants, the research relied on the non-probability sampling method. It refers to a sampling technique where the sample is not subject to random selection, and it might use different techniques such as convenience sampling, voluntary response sampling, quota sampling, or snowball sampling (Di Franco, 2024; Kim, 2022; Lehdonvirta et al., 2021). Given constraints related to access and resources, convenience sampling was considered to be appropriate. It relies on the selection of participants who are ready and available to participate in the research. This method is primarily used when obtaining a representative sample from the target population is challenging due to constraints such as time, resources, or other limitations. (Wang, 2024; Winton & Sabol, 2022). Nonetheless, this sampling method has several limitations, primarily reduced generalizability resulting from sampling bias. In this sense, using a large sample enables slightly greater generalization of the results, although the lack of random selection of respondents limits the generalizability of the conclusions (Emerson, 2021). In other words, the results can be generalized only to the accessible sample, not to the entire population (Andrade, 2021). Thus, while the use of this method is advantageous in some instances, representativeness issues arise, particularly when the sample does not accurately represent the larger population and its capacity to produce trustworthy and replicable results (Wang, 2024). Nonetheless, studies employing this sampling technique have demonstrated reliability, with findings from randomly selected samples replicating the original results (Krupnikov et al., 2021).

Regarding the sample size, guidelines published by Roscoe (1975) were used. He advised that, for behavioral studies, a suitable sample size ranges from 31 to 500. Additionally, he suggested that any sample size greater than 500 would result in a Type II error (i.e., failing to reject the null

hypothesis when it is false). In the context of the current research, the final sample size is 400 respondents.

### **3.2. Instruments and Data Collection Procedures**

The data was collected using an online self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed and administered via Google Forms and distributed online via social media platforms, including Facebook and WhatsApp. Data was collected from January 2024 to June 2024. The questionnaire was distributed in English to maintain conceptual consistency with the primary measurement instruments and theoretical framework of the research.

Although online data collection enables faster and broader access to participants, it also presents challenges, including sampling concerns, because the participating population on online platforms is biased toward particular demographic groups, which makes it challenging to ensure representativeness. Selection bias is another challenge arising from participants' personal preferences for specific topics that influence their decision to participate in certain studies. Another bias is in-group bias, in which participants from the same online platform may know one another and form mutual bonds. The excessive use of online subject pools, in which participants on online platforms complete numerous studies and occasionally related ones, may introduce bias (Newman et al., 2021). Quality concerns are also a challenge in online data collection, including the risk of inattention and dishonest responses (Newman et al., 2021).

The questionnaire comprised 13 sections, each corresponding to a research variable. Each section included up to four items, for a total of 44 items. Specifically, Ecolabel Knowledge (EK) and Ecolabel Credibility (EC) each had four items, Trust in Certifying Institutions (CIT) and Purchasing Intention (PI) each included three items, Quality Functional Value and Price Functional Value (FVQ and FVP) contained four items each, and Social Value (SV) had four items. In contrast, Emotional Value (EV), Conditional Value (CV), Epistemic Value (EPV), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Attitude towards Ecolabelled Products (ATT) each had three items. Table 1 details the number of items per construct and their sources in the literature. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 signified a strong disagreement with the statement. In contrast, a rating of 5 indicated strong agreement with the

statement, chosen for its simplicity, respondent familiarity, and wide acceptance in survey-based research (Leung, 2011; Taherdoost, 2019). The questionnaire also included demographic questions, namely gender, age, education, income, and region of residence. Appendix 1 details the content of the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Name, abbreviation, number of items, and source of constructs**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Sources</b>
<b>Ecolabel Knowledge</b>	EK	4	D’Souza et al. (2022)
<b>Ecolabel Credibility</b>	EC	4	Riskos et al. (2021)
<b>Trust in Certifying Institutions</b>	CIT	3	Pedersen et al. (2023)
<b>Purchasing Intention</b>	PI	4	D’Souza et al. (2022)
<b>Quality Functional Value</b>	FVQ	4	Lin & Huang (2012)
<b>Price Functional Value</b>	FVP	4	Lin & Huang (2012)
<b>Social Value</b>	SV	4	Amin & Tarun (2021)
<b>Emotional Value</b>	EV	3	Mohd Suki et al. (2022)
<b>Conditional Value</b>	CV	3	Khan & Mohsin (2017)
<b>Epistemic Value</b>	EPV	3	Lin & Huang (2012)
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	SN	3	Mufidah et al. (2018)
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	PBC	3	Aitken et al. (2020)
<b>Attitude towards Ecolabelled Products</b>	ATT	3	Aitken et al. (2020)

Source: Author’s own compilation, 2025

### 3.3. Pilot Study

The pilot study of the current research used a sample of 50 Moroccan respondents who completed the questionnaire between the 5th of January 2024, and the 21st of January 2024, to confirm its reliability and validity. The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook in English. The data collected was analyzed using Smart-PLS version 4, and the internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity measurements have been monitored to ensure the reliability and validity of the research.

The internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability. These measures aim to quantify the extent to which a set of indicators is tightly interrelated as a group, and they are grounded in the intercorrelations among the indicator variables. For both Cronbach’s

Alpha and Composite Reliability, values above 0.70 indicate reliability. Moreover, a value between 0.60 and 0.70 in the early stages of research is accepted (Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 displays the values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. It can be noted that all values except PI are superior to 0.70, but the PI value is higher than 0.6. However, since the pilot study was conducted in the early stages of the research, we conclude that the constructs are highly reliable.

### 3.3.1. Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which a measurement conforms with other measures that study the same construct. Convergent validity is assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is considered acceptable when it is equal to or greater than 0.50. An Average Variance Extracted greater than 0.50 signifies that the construct accounts for more than half of the variance of its indicators (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table 2, all constructs had valid AVEs exceeding 0.50.

**Table 2: Values for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted, Pilot Study (N=50)**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ATT	0.769	0.865	0.682
CIT	0.849	0.907	0.764
CV	0.853	0.910	0.771
EC	0.819	0.880	0.648
EV	0.712	0.834	0.626
EPV	0.710	0.827	0.618
FVP	0.839	0.892	0.673
FVQ	0.830	0.885	0.657
EK	0.776	0.854	0.603
PBC	0.900	0.928	0.810
PI	0.642	0.807	0.583
SN	0.754	0.859	0.670
SV	0.862	0.905	0.706

Source: Author's own compilation, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabel Credibility, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, EK: Ecolabel Knowledge, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is different from the remaining constructs within a particular model. It ensures that the construct captures phenomena not captured by the remaining constructs. In the context of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), discriminant validity is measured using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). This ratio is defined as the average correlation among indicators measuring different constructs. If the HTMT value is close to 1, it means that there is no discriminant validity, in the sense that constructs may not be different from each other (Hair et al., 2017). Table 3 presents the HTMT values obtained in the pilot study; all were below the 0.90 cutoff, indicating acceptable discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022).

**Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio, Pilot Study (N=50)**

	ATT	CIT	CV	EC	EV	EPV	FVP	FVQ	LK	PBC	PI	SN	SV
<b>ATT</b>													
<b>CIT</b>	0.416												
<b>CV</b>	0.587	0.384											
<b>EC</b>	0.629	0.530	0.488										
<b>EV</b>	0.526	0.243	0.608	0.332									
<b>EPV</b>	0.575	0.261	0.427	0.268	0.353								
<b>FVP</b>	0.542	0.482	0.485	0.343	0.595	0.214							
<b>FVQ</b>	0.614	0.774	0.450	0.525	0.630	0.319	0.564						
<b>LK</b>	0.772	0.407	0.574	0.516	0.396	0.67	0.466	0.470					
<b>PBC</b>	0.202	0.524	0.080	0.122	0.257	0.145	0.419	0.507	0.192				
<b>PI</b>	0.734	0.414	0.807	0.596	0.785	0.481	0.435	0.668	0.552	0.229			
<b>SN</b>	0.450	0.594	0.442	0.538	0.281	0.400	0.345	0.417	0.324	0.378	0.648		
<b>SV</b>	0.446	0.346	0.436	0.407	0.668	0.116	0.678	0.548	0.196	0.594	0.627	0.379	

Source: Author's own compilation, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabel Credibility, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, EK: Ecolabel Knowledge, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

Thus, based on the results of internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity analyses, we concluded that we could continue conducting the research at a larger scale.

### 3.4. Data Screening

The first step in handling the collected data was to check for missing responses and outliers. Such responses are meant to be removed to maintain the validity of the dataset. Manual and statistical tests were conducted to check the data.

The total number of responses collected was equal to 400. Google Forms is configured to accept only fully completed responses; therefore, no incomplete responses were submitted. Subsequently, all collected responses were tested for two types of outliers: univariate and multivariate. Firstly, univariate outliers were detected using the Z score, which should range between -3 and 3 (Mowbray et al., 2019). Consequently, 52 responses were omitted from the final dataset. Secondly, the data was tested for multivariate outliers using Mahalanobis Distance ( $D^2$ ) with a critical value equal to 0.001 (Ghorbani, 2019). Subsequently, 22 responses were omitted from the final dataset. After the verification process, the final dataset used to evaluate the model comprised 326 responses (82%).

### 3.5. Respondents' Profile

The main background variables assessed include gender, age, educational level, income, and region of residence. Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents across these variables. The gender distribution was relatively even, with 53% female responses and 47% male respondents. The majority of participants were in the 25–34 age group (40%), followed by the 35–44 (26%) and 18–24 (22%) age groups. Among participants, 39% held graduate degrees, and 29% held undergraduate degrees. The major income bracket was 7000–10000 MAD, including 34% of respondents, while the average monthly income of the participants was equal to 8147 MAD. Additionally, the most significant concentration of responses was from the Casablanca-Settat region (30%), followed by the Rabat-Kenitra region (21%), and the Marrakesh-Safi region (18%).

**Table 4: Sample Distribution by Gender, Age, Educational Level, Region of Residence, and Income**

Demographic Factors		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	180	55

	Male	146	45
<b>Age</b>	18–24 years	105	32
	30–39 years	55	17
	40–49 years	43	13
	50–59 years	29	9
	60 years or above	17	5
<b>Educational Level</b>	Baccalaureate (High School)	38	12
	Bac+2 (Short-Cycle Higher Education)	64	20
	Bac+3 (Undergraduate Education)	95	29
	Bac+5 (Graduate Education)	129	39
<b>Region of Residence</b>	Casablanca-Settat	98	30
	Rabat-Kenitra	70	21
	Marrakesh-Safi	57	18
	Fes-Meknes	51	16
	Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima	34	10
	Other	16	5
<b>Income</b>	Less than 4000 MAD	44	13
	4001–7000 MAD	79	24
	7001–10000 MAD	112	34
	More than 10001 MAD	91	28

Source: Author’s own compilation, 2025

Note: 1 MAD  $\approx$  0.09 EUR.

### 3.6. Statistical Analysis Techniques

The dissertation employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the collected data. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) has been used across various research fields (Berki-Kiss & Menrad, 2022) and is a statistical technique that facilitates the simultaneous estimation of multiple regression equations. This method is beneficial for exploring direct and indirect relationships among variables, thereby helping researchers interpret these connections. It is also useful for analyzing data that includes observed and latent variables, providing an extensive framework for assessing model hypotheses (Recio-Román et al., 2024).

The application of this method is done through two primary methods: either through a covariance-based approach (CB-SEM) or a variance-based approach (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2014). The current research adopted a variance-based approach (PLS-SEM) for several reasons. Unlike CB-SEM, which is primarily used to test and confirm theory, it requires a large sample size and adheres to rigorous assumptions (Dash & Paul, 2021; Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM is capable of handling non-normal data that are often encountered in social science research, and it helps avoid issues such as underestimating standard errors and overestimating goodness-of-fit. Additionally, this statistical method has proven advantageous, particularly when the sample size is insufficient. Moreover, it helps explain complex constructs through formative indicators. Also, this method helps conduct exploratory research, primarily when the development of theories is conducted with scarce existing theoretical frameworks (Hair et al., 2014).

In order to fulfill the dissertation's objectives, the research model was assessed using SmartPLS version 4.1.1.1, while the basic descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS version 30. Details of the statistical methods will be discussed in the following sections.

### ***3.6.1. Reliability and Validity Assessment***

The assessment of the reliability and validity of the research model depends on its type. Measurement models can be classified into two types: reflective and formative. In reflective measurement models, independent variables cause dependent variables. In this case, changes in independent variables lead to changes in dependent variables. Additionally, the dependent variables in this context are expected to be highly correlated because the same independent variables influence them. However, in formative measurement models, each independent variable measures a different aspect of the dependent variable, in the sense that the combination of independent variables is what actually forms the dependent variables (Hair et al., 2017).

The measurement model adopted in this research is reflective, as all independent variables are tied to a single dependent variable. In this case, the assessment of reliability and validity will be conducted by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio, and multicollinearity (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020).

### *3.6.1.1. Outer Model Assessment*

The outer model is defined as the measurement model that determines the relationships between latent variables and their indicators and shows how every latent variable is measured by its corresponding items. It determines whether the measurement is reflective or normative. In the context of the current research, which is reflective in nature, the latent variables are believed to cause the indicators, and any change in the latent variables will bring about changes in the indicators. The outer model assessment is performed by calculating the outer loading for each item. For the items to be usable and the structural model to be accurate, the outer loadings should ideally be 0.70. Moreover, in the case when the loadings are between 0.40 and 0.70, the indicators should be evaluated, and they should be either retained or removed. This decision is made by assessing the impact of removing and retaining weak items on composite reliability. Nevertheless, indicators with loadings lower than 0.40 should be totally removed from the model (Hair et al., 2017).

### *3.6.1.2. Internal Consistency Assessment*

Internal consistency is measured through two main scores, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Aburumman et al., 2023). The main purpose is to ensure that all construct measures are reliable and that the indicators consistently measure the same fundamental concept. The values should exceed the threshold of 0.70 to establish that the indicators are reliably assessing the construct they are supposed to represent (Hair et al., 2017).

### *3.6.1.3. Convergent and Discriminant Validity Assessment*

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which an item correlates with other items measuring the same construct. It evaluates whether a construct's items are interrelated and whether the construct is capturing what it is intended to measure. Convergent validity is assessed using the Average Value Extracted (AVE). The AVE value must exceed 0.50 to be considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2017).

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is different from the remaining constructs empirically. When discriminant validity is established, we can conclude that the construct gauges phenomena that are not being assessed by the remaining constructs in the model. Discriminant validity is measured through the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which emphasizes that the square root of the AVE of each construct should be superior to the highest correlation with any remaining

construct in the model. Additionally, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is also used as a measure of discriminant validity, and it enables the assessment of the items' distinctiveness. For the HTMT ratio to be valid, a lower value than the threshold of 0.9 is required (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, Cross Loadings indicate that a specific item must have higher loadings on its respective parent construct compared with the remaining constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

### **3.6.2. Structural Model Assessment**

After the evaluation of the measurement model, including internal consistency, reliability, and validity of the constructs, bootstrapping is conducted in order to study the significance of the structural model path coefficients. Bootstrapping is a resampling method that repeatedly draws with replacement from the observed dataset to generate simulated samples, thereby aiding the estimation of standard errors and enabling the construction of confidence intervals for the estimates. Bootstrapping facilitates the assessment of path coefficients to determine the strength and significance of relationships among constructs. Additionally, it helps determine whether the constructs align with the researcher's theoretical expectations. In the context of Smart-PLS, researchers can determine the number of bootstrap samples that they want to generate, with values ranging between 1000 and 5000 (Hair et al., 2017). However, the current dissertation used 5000 as several bootstraps to ensure the stability and accuracy of the standard errors and confidence intervals, in addition to maintaining computational efficiency (Hair et al., 2022).

### **3.6.3. Predictive Power of the Research Model**

The predictive power of the research model is evaluated through the following steps:

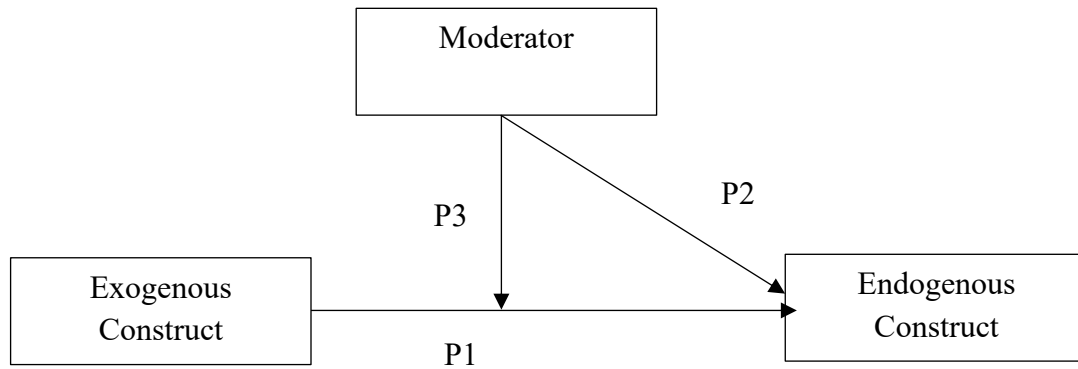
- *Assessment of the Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ ):* The values of R square specify the amount of variance in the dependent variables explained by independent variables. The higher the R square, the stronger the prediction capability of the model. When the value of R square is superior to 0.75, it means that it is strong; when it is between 0.5 and 0.75, R square is average; and when it is between 0.2 and 0.5, R square is passable (Hair et al., 2017)

- *Assessment of the Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ ):* The Predictive Relevance is represented by  $Q^2$ , and it quantifies how well the model forecasts the data. For  $Q^2$  to be acceptable, its value should ideally be superior to zero (Hair et al., 2017).
- *Assessment of Effect Sizes ( $f^2$  and  $q^2$ ):*  $f^2$  highlights the influence of certain predictor variables on the dependent variable. The general guidelines for assessing  $f^2$  state that values superior or equal to 0.02 signify a small effect size, values superior or equal to 0.15 suggest a medium effect size, and values superior or equal to 0.35 suggest a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). Additionally,  $q^2$  helps compare the relative influence of predictive relevance, and values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 signify that an independent variable has a small, medium, or large predictive relevance, respectively (Hair et al., 2022).
- *Assessment of the significance and relevance of the path coefficients:* Assessing the significance of the path coefficients enables testing the dissertation's hypotheses. The significance of the path coefficient is assessed through the t-value. The t-value is the ratio of the path coefficient to its standard error. Once the t-value is determined, p-values for each path coefficient must be computed. When a two-tailed test is used, which is the case of the current dissertation, an acceptable t-value is equal to 1.96, and the p-value must be smaller than 0.05 for a path coefficient to be considered significant (Hair et al., 2017).

#### **3.6.4. Assessment of the Moderating Effect**

Moderation occurs when the relationship between constructs is not stable but instead depends on the values of a third variable, known as a moderator variable.

As illustrated in Figure 6, the moderator variable influences the strength and/or the direction of a relationship between two constructs in a defined model (Hair et al., 2021b). For this effect to be fairly measured, there should be a direct relation between the moderator and the endogenous variable, so that the effect will not be inflated. In this case, it is crucial to pay more attention to the  $f^2$  effect size of the interaction effect.  $f^2$  details the extent to which the moderator contributes to the explanation of the endogenous latent construct. Although moderation and mediation are somewhat similar (since in both types a third variable influences the strength of a relationship between two latent variables), the moderator variable has no dependence on the endogenous variable (Hair et al., 2021).



**Figure 6: Moderation Effects**

Source: Based on Hair et al. (2021)

Notes: P1, P2, and P3 demonstrate the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous construct, the relationship between the moderator and the endogenous construct, and the moderation effect, respectively.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of moderation is complex; therefore, graphical illustrations help disseminate it and facilitate the drawing of conclusions. In this sense, the results of moderation analysis can be illustrated using slope plots obtained either from SmartPLS or from webpages, such as those by Jeremy Dawson and Kristopher Preacher (Hair et al., 2022). In the context of the current research, slope plots were generated using the Jeremy Dawson website, as it facilitates testing simple slopes (Dawson, 2014; Jeremy Dawson, 2025). In a simple slope plot, the x-axis denotes the exogenous variable, and the y-axis represents the endogenous construct. When the level of moderator is low, its standard deviation is below the mean, and when the level of moderator is high, its standard deviation is above the mean. Thus, when the effect is positive, the slope of the high-moderator line is steeper, indicating that the relationship between the variables is stronger when the moderator is high. Conversely, when the moderator is low, the slope is flatter, and the relationship between the variables under study is weaker (Hair et al., 2022).

## 4. STUDY RESULTS AND THEIR EVALUATION

### 4.1. Assessment of the Measurement Model

The effectiveness of the measurement model has a direct impact on the quality of constructs (Iqbal et al., 2021). The assessment of the quality begins with the examination of factor loadings, followed by the establishment of the construct reliability and validity.

#### 4.1.1. Factor Loadings

As discussed in the Material and Method section, factor loadings superior to 0.40 were retained. While two-factor loadings were within the acceptable range (EC\_1, EK\_4), the remaining items had factor loadings above 0.70, considered to be strong (Hair et al., 2022). Consequently, no items were removed from the dissertation. Table 5 and Figure 7 detail the dissertation's factor loadings.

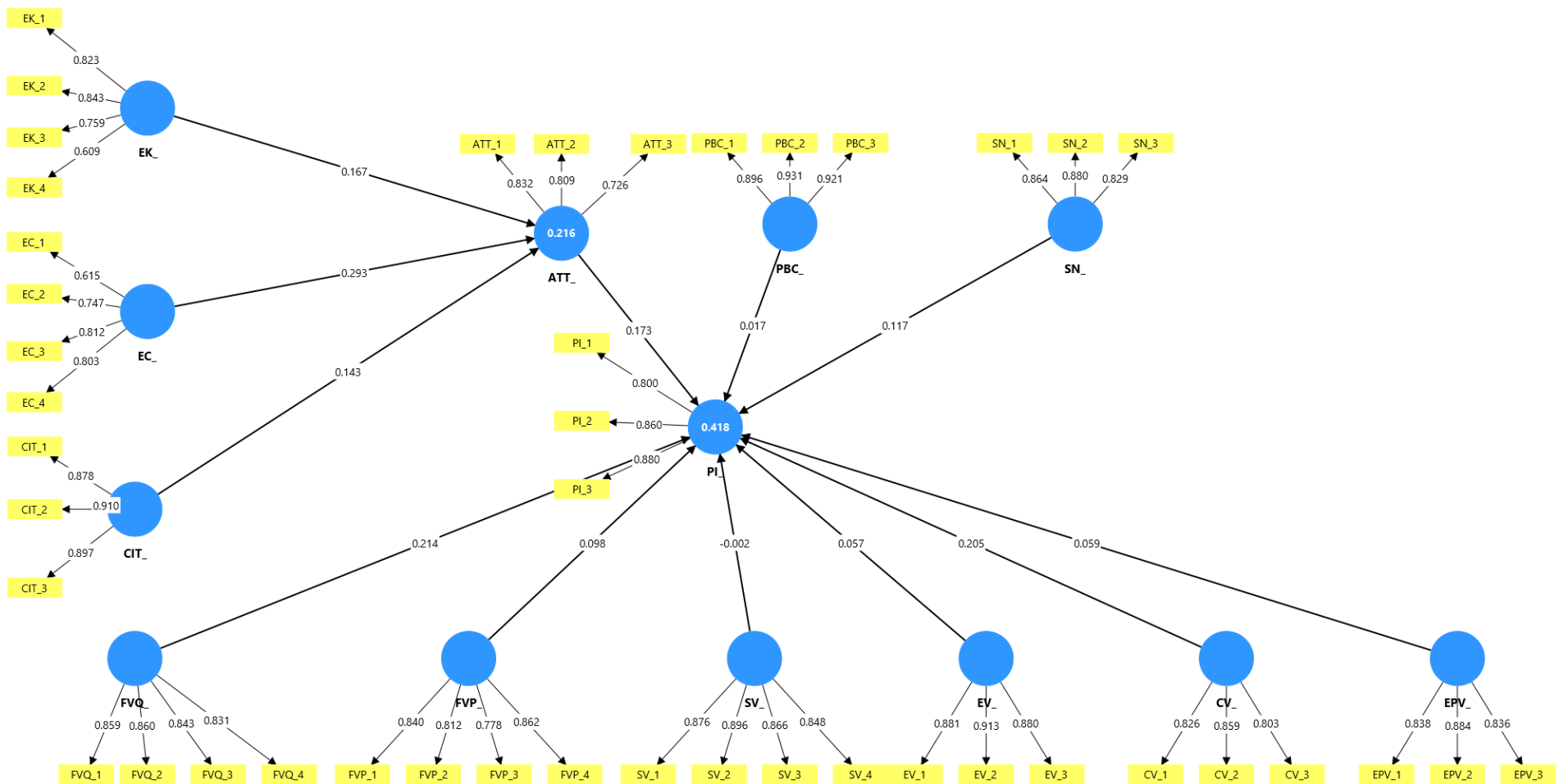
**Table 5: Model's Factor Loadings (N=326)**

Items	Loadings	Items	Loadings
ATT_1	0.832	EPV_2	0.885
ATT_2	0.809	EPV_3	0.836
ATT_3	0.725	EV_1	0.881
CIT_1	0.885	EV_2	0.913
CIT_2	0.913	EV_3	0.880
CIT_3	0.888	FVP_1	0.840
CV_1	0.826	FVP_2	0.812
CV_2	0.859	FVP_3	0.778
CV_3	0.803	FVP_4	0.862
EC_1	0.615	FVQ_1	0.859
EC_2	0.747	FVQ_2	0.860
EC_3	0.812	FVQ_3	0.843
EC_4	0.803	FVQ_4	0.831
EK_1	0.824	PBC_1	0.896
EK_2	0.843	PBC_2	0.931
EK_3	0.759	PBC_3	0.921
EK_4	0.609	PI_1	0.803
EPV_1	0.838	PI_2	0.858

<b>PI_3</b>	0.879	<b>SV_1</b>	0.876
<b>SN_1</b>	0.864	<b>SV_2</b>	0.896
<b>SN_2</b>	0.880	<b>SV_3</b>	0.866
<b>SN_3</b>	0.829	<b>SV_4</b>	0.848

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.



**Figure 7: Structural Model Outer Loadings (N=326)**

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

#### 4.1.2. *Multicollinearity Indicator*

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic is used to assess multicollinearity among the indicators (Cengiz & Akdemir Cengiz, 2023). Table 6 displays the indicators' VIF and shows that the values of VIF are below the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2022), with 2.131 as the highest value.

**Table 6: Multicollinearity Assessment (N=326)**

Items	ATT	PI
ATT		2.061
CIT	1.274	
CV		1.402
EC	1.446	
EK	1.162	
EPV		1.238
EV		2.052
FV		1.671
FVQ		1.513
PBC		1.377
PI		
SN		1.644
SV		2.131

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

#### 4.1.3. *Reliability Analysis*

A measure is considered reliable when it produces stable, consistent results under constant conditions (Hair et al., 2022). Two methods are used to assess reliability: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, as shown in Table 7. All Composite Reliability values exceeded the threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2022). Moreover, the scores for Cronbach's Alpha were all above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022), except for the Attitude (ATT), where it was equal to 0.698. However, the Cronbach's Alpha

for Attitude (ATT) was acceptable, as values as low as 0.60 have been reported in exploratory studies (Hair et al., 2019). Consequently, reliability is accepted.

**Table 7: Reliability Assessment (N=326)**

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
ATT	0.698	0.832
CIT	0.876	0.924
CV	0.774	0.869
EC	0.737	0.834
EK	0.756	0.847
EPV	0.815	0.889
EV	0.871	0.921
FVP	0.843	0.894
FVQ	0.870	0.911
PBC	0.905	0.940
PI	0.804	0.884
SN	0.821	0.893
SV	0.895	0.927

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

#### **4.1.4. Validity Analysis**

##### *4.1.4.1. Convergent Validity Analysis*

Another step in assessing the measurement model is to examine convergent validity, assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Table 8 displays the AVE value for each of the dissertation's constructs. All values exceed 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2017), hence convergent validity is established.

**Table 8: Convergent Validity Assessment (N=326)**

Items	Average variance extracted (AVE)
ATT	0.624
CIT	0.801
CV	0.689
EC	0.560
EK	0.584
EPV	0.728
EV	0.795
FVP	0.678
FVQ	0.719
PBC	0.840
PI	0.718
SN	0.736
SV	0.759

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

#### *4.1.4.2. Discriminant Validity Analysis*

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which two measures that are designed to evaluate related but conceptually different constructs showcase a low to moderate correlation, implying that they capture different aspects of a larger theoretical framework (Roemer et al., 2021). In the context of the current research, three elements were examined, namely the Fornell–Larcker Criterion, cross loadings, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Table 9 presents the Fornell and Larcker Criterion values for the current dissertation. Based on the results, all constructs have a square root of AVE that is superior to their correlations with the remaining constructs, both in rows and columns. Hence, based on the evaluation of the Fornell and Larcker Criterion, discriminant validity is established.

**Table 9: Fornell and Larcker Criterion (N=326)**

	ATT	CIT	CV	EC	EK	EPV	EV	FVP	FVQ	PBC	PI	SN	SV
<b>ATT</b>	<b>0.790</b>												
<b>CIT</b>	0.303	<b>0.895</b>											
<b>CV</b>	0.423	0.181	<b>0.830</b>										
<b>EC</b>	0.421	0.463	0.350	<b>0.748</b>									
<b>EK</b>	0.297	0.148	0.308	0.372	<b>0.764</b>								
<b>EPV</b>	0.372	0.249	0.274	0.203	0.206	<b>0.853</b>							
<b>EV</b>	0.601	0.248	0.468	0.398	0.267	0.285	<b>0.892</b>						
<b>FVP</b>	0.357	0.398	0.282	0.350	0.180	0.224	0.389	<b>0.823</b>					
<b>FV</b>	0.398	0.499	0.346	0.522	0.261	0.302	0.448	0.449	<b>0.848</b>				
<b>PBC</b>	0.169	0.298	0.088	0.186	0.065	0.122	0.184	0.446	0.290	<b>0.916</b>			
<b>PI</b>	0.500	0.315	0.459	0.385	0.317	0.314	0.461	0.398	0.479	0.228	<b>0.848</b>		
<b>SN</b>	0.532	0.273	0.298	0.288	0.185	0.257	0.442	0.360	0.290	0.349	0.413	<b>0.858</b>	
<b>SV</b>	0.561	0.295	0.296	0.381	0.111	0.347	0.585	0.519	0.435	0.345	0.419	0.504	<b>0.871</b>

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

Cross-loadings refer to the extent to which an item correlates with its parent construct relative to other constructs in the model. In this sense, each item should load higher on its parent construct than the remaining constructs (Hair et al., 2022). The results presented in Table 10 demonstrate that the factor loadings of all items are higher in the underlying construct to which they belong. Consequently, discriminant validity is also established.

**Table 10: Cross Loadings (N=326)**

	ATT	CIT	CV	EC	EK	EPV	EV	FVP	FVQ	PBC	PI	SN	SV
<b>ATT_1</b>	<b>0.832</b>	0.198	0.420	0.280	0.215	0.349	0.600	0.319	0.371	0.139	0.503	0.489	0.508
<b>ATT_2</b>	<b>0.809</b>	0.227	0.401	0.434	0.335	0.270	0.459	0.217	0.317	0.034	0.333	0.373	0.318
<b>ATT_3</b>	<b>0.726</b>	0.308	0.153	0.281	0.141	0.257	0.343	0.318	0.246	0.245	0.340	0.395	0.518
<b>CIT_1</b>	0.267	<b>0.878</b>	0.183	0.413	0.131	0.225	0.253	0.350	0.455	0.243	0.304	0.240	0.252
<b>CIT_2</b>	0.247	<b>0.910</b>	0.172	0.437	0.121	0.211	0.214	0.341	0.449	0.261	0.275	0.257	0.265
<b>CIT_3</b>	0.294	<b>0.897</b>	0.135	0.396	0.143	0.230	0.200	0.374	0.436	0.294	0.266	0.238	0.275
<b>CV_1</b>	0.348	0.198	<b>0.826</b>	0.297	0.229	0.243	0.437	0.244	0.348	0.084	0.350	0.227	0.238

CV_2	0.373	0.167	<b>0.859</b>	0.300	0.258	0.219	0.364	0.240	0.269	0.139	0.392	0.288	0.233
CV_3	0.332	0.092	<b>0.803</b>	0.275	0.277	0.222	0.368	0.220	0.251	0.002	0.397	0.226	0.264
EC_1	0.246	0.333	0.232	<b>0.615</b>	0.298	0.162	0.272	0.207	0.407	0.250	0.348	0.226	0.301
EC_2	0.279	0.300	0.260	<b>0.747</b>	0.266	0.131	0.282	0.183	0.382	0.103	0.275	0.146	0.268
EC_3	0.337	0.426	0.254	<b>0.812</b>	0.258	0.097	0.312	0.371	0.422	0.131	0.278	0.263	0.330
EC_4	0.376	0.329	0.299	<b>0.803</b>	0.302	0.216	0.324	0.266	0.371	0.104	0.277	0.226	0.256
EK_1	0.209	0.133	0.293	0.334	<b>0.823</b>	0.148	0.198	0.109	0.230	0.020	0.227	0.149	0.066
EK_2	0.268	0.071	0.272	0.327	<b>0.843</b>	0.168	0.288	0.230	0.265	0.137	0.294	0.203	0.136
EK_3	0.228	0.195	0.175	0.330	<b>0.759</b>	0.164	0.151	0.116	0.245	0.053	0.215	0.070	0.078
EK_4	0.192	0.054	0.199	0.121	<b>0.609</b>	0.149	0.160	0.066	0.024	0.044	0.224	0.134	0.043
EPV_1	0.282	0.236	0.187	0.152	0.170	<b>0.838</b>	0.213	0.189	0.239	0.138	0.243	0.197	0.306
EPV_2	0.351	0.185	0.300	0.206	0.204	<b>0.884</b>	0.275	0.179	0.247	0.052	0.317	0.228	0.291
EPV_3	0.311	0.227	0.195	0.152	0.147	<b>0.836</b>	0.234	0.214	0.295	0.141	0.230	0.233	0.298
EV_1	0.487	0.238	0.458	0.385	0.263	0.271	<b>0.881</b>	0.353	0.415	0.208	0.409	0.345	0.458
EV_2	0.542	0.212	0.411	0.363	0.231	0.261	<b>0.913</b>	0.341	0.397	0.150	0.425	0.395	0.514
EV_3	0.579	0.213	0.382	0.317	0.220	0.230	<b>0.880</b>	0.349	0.386	0.134	0.399	0.443	0.597
FVP_1	0.294	0.318	0.193	0.245	0.135	0.183	0.300	<b>0.840</b>	0.352	0.396	0.326	0.329	0.450
FVP_2	0.300	0.325	0.188	0.287	0.140	0.137	0.316	<b>0.812</b>	0.396	0.330	0.311	0.270	0.389
FVP_3	0.208	0.321	0.132	0.257	0.069	0.176	0.267	<b>0.778</b>	0.324	0.397	0.253	0.196	0.455
FVP_4	0.350	0.348	0.368	0.349	0.218	0.233	0.381	<b>0.862</b>	0.399	0.361	0.395	0.359	0.430
FVQ_1	0.351	0.434	0.287	0.438	0.188	0.264	0.346	0.388	<b>0.859</b>	0.268	0.422	0.265	0.391
FVQ_2	0.325	0.428	0.327	0.483	0.263	0.268	0.400	0.399	<b>0.860</b>	0.256	0.427	0.279	0.393
FVQ_3	0.367	0.413	0.336	0.461	0.256	0.278	0.408	0.373	<b>0.843</b>	0.207	0.400	0.220	0.329
FVQ_4	0.307	0.417	0.217	0.384	0.175	0.209	0.367	0.360	<b>0.831</b>	0.254	0.374	0.215	0.360
PBC_1	0.191	0.278	0.087	0.193	0.066	0.098	0.197	0.403	0.308	<b>0.896</b>	0.203	0.319	0.337
PBC_2	0.124	0.271	0.053	0.152	0.052	0.122	0.149	0.394	0.235	<b>0.931</b>	0.223	0.314	0.282
PBC_3	0.151	0.272	0.105	0.168	0.060	0.116	0.162	0.432	0.259	<b>0.921</b>	0.198	0.329	0.333
PI_1	0.471	0.318	0.490	0.411	0.297	0.294	0.445	0.320	0.421	0.145	<b>0.800</b>	0.354	0.338
PI_2	0.400	0.201	0.291	0.290	0.272	0.206	0.360	0.304	0.383	0.232	<b>0.860</b>	0.352	0.339
PI_3	0.388	0.266	0.360	0.261	0.232	0.287	0.355	0.383	0.407	0.209	<b>0.880</b>	0.339	0.384
SN_1	0.449	0.218	0.321	0.292	0.164	0.236	0.403	0.314	0.269	0.295	0.338	<b>0.864</b>	0.460
SN_2	0.468	0.234	0.313	0.248	0.211	0.211	0.387	0.335	0.245	0.273	0.382	<b>0.880</b>	0.359
SN_3	0.451	0.252	0.128	0.203	0.095	0.217	0.347	0.275	0.233	0.335	0.339	<b>0.829</b>	0.489
SV_1	0.509	0.277	0.317	0.331	0.094	0.340	0.525	0.470	0.384	0.286	0.384	0.447	<b>0.876</b>
SV_2	0.484	0.298	0.241	0.312	0.069	0.314	0.497	0.473	0.375	0.325	0.333	0.438	<b>0.896</b>
SV_3	0.452	0.209	0.223	0.317	0.066	0.244	0.465	0.444	0.333	0.343	0.331	0.448	<b>0.866</b>
SV_4	0.502	0.244	0.244	0.360	0.147	0.305	0.542	0.423	0.415	0.258	0.399	0.423	<b>0.848</b>

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

In order for discriminant validity to be fully established, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) also needs to be examined. Table 11 shows the HTMT ratio obtained in the research. All values are below the threshold of 0.90 (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, discriminant validity can be established.

**Table 11: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Assessment (N=326)**

	ATT	CIT	CV	EC	EK	EPV	EV	FVP	FVQ	PBC	PI	SN	SV
<b>ATT</b>													
<b>CIT</b>	0.393												
<b>CV</b>	0.559	0.224											
<b>EC</b>	0.576	0.579	0.463										
<b>EK</b>	0.399	0.182	0.402	0.496									
<b>EPV</b>	0.485	0.298	0.336	0.256	0.259								
<b>EV</b>	0.759	0.284	0.572	0.497	0.323	0.334							
<b>FVP</b>	0.460	0.461	0.331	0.430	0.205	0.270	0.448						
<b>FVQ</b>	0.505	0.571	0.423	0.659	0.314	0.360	0.515	0.520					
<b>PBC</b>	0.227	0.334	0.121	0.242	0.102	0.150	0.208	0.516	0.328				
<b>PI</b>	0.656	0.368	0.567	0.503	0.402	0.375	0.545	0.472	0.568	0.270			
<b>SN</b>	0.701	0.323	0.370	0.371	0.229	0.315	0.523	0.420	0.342	0.408	0.505		
<b>SV</b>	0.714	0.332	0.352	0.473	0.128	0.406	0.661	0.602	0.489	0.388	0.488	0.593	

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

## 4.2. Relationships and Effectiveness of the Structural Model

### 4.2.1. Assessing the Predictive Power of the Research Model

Table 12 presents the variance explained for each of the model's endogenous constructs (R-square), namely the attitude toward ecolabelled local products (ATT) and the purchasing intention for ecolabelled local products (PI), as well as their predictive relevance (Q-square).

**Table 12: Predictive Power and Predictive Relevance of the Research Model (N=326)**

Constructs	R-square	R-square Interpretation	Q-square	Q-square Interpretation
ATT	0.216	Passable	0.189	Moderate
PI	0.418	Passable	0.359	Strong

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, PI: Purchasing Intention.

The results of the predictive power assessment revealed that the attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT) has an explanatory power of 0.216, which is considered passable, and a predictive relevance of 0.189, which is considered moderate. Based on these results, we conclude that 21.6% of the change in attitude towards ecolabelled local products is explained by ecolabel knowledge (EK), ecolabel credibility (EC), and trust in certifying institutions (CIT).

Similarly, the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI) showed an explanatory power of 0.418 (passable) and a predictive relevance of 0.359 (strong). According to these findings, it can be implied that 41.8% of the variance in PI is explained by the attitude (ATT) and its determinants (EK, EC, and CIT), in addition to the different consumption values, namely price and quality functional value (FVP and FVQ), emotional value (EV), conditional value (CV), social value (SV), and epistemic value (EPV).

Hence, based on the R-square and Q-square results presented in Table 12, it can be concluded that the model exhibits predictive capability for the attitudes and intentions of sampled Moroccan consumers toward purchasing ecolabelled local products, while underscoring the importance of ecolabel-related characteristics and the various dimensions of perceived value.

#### **4.2.2. Assessing Constructs' Effect Size**

Table 13 presents the effect sizes for the outcome constructs. When it comes to the relation to the attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT), ecolabel credibility (EC) highlighted the most substantial effect (0.076), whereas in relationship with the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), conditional value (CV) and quality functional value (FVQ) had the most significant impact (0.052). However, these all suggest small effect sizes. The remaining constructs had a limited impact on both attitude and purchasing intention in the context of the current model.

**Table 13: Constructs' Effect Size Assessment (N=326)**

	ATT	f-square Interpretation	PI	f-square Interpretation
ATT			0.025	Small
CIT	0.020	Small		
CV			0.052	Small
EC	0.076	Small		
EK	0.031	Small		
EPV			0.005	Negligible
EV			0.003	Negligible
FVP			0.010	Negligible
FVQ			0.052	Small
PBC			0.000	Negligible
PI				
SN			0.014	Negligible
SV			0.000	Negligible

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value.

#### **4.2.3. Path Coefficients of Proposed Relationships**

Table 14 analyses the path coefficients of the research constructs. It includes the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. In total, fifteen relationships were examined, with nine hypotheses accepted and six rejected.

In relation to the relationship between consumption values and the purchasing intention for eco-labelled local products, H1.1 hypothesizes that price functional value (FVP) and quality functional value (FVQ) positively influence the purchasing intention (PI) for these products. The findings indicated that price functional value (FVP) did not have a positive impact on the purchasing intention (PI). In contrast, quality functional value (FVQ) had a significant positive effect on purchasing intention (PI). More specifically, when quality functional value increases by 1 unit, the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products increases by 0.214 units. Additionally, H1.2 and H1.3 ex-

amine whether emotional value (EV) and epistemic value (EPV) positively affect purchasing intention (PI). The dissertation confirmed that neither emotional value nor epistemic value exhibits a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. H1.4 attempted to assess the relationship between conditional value (CV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), and the results demonstrated that these constructs are positively related. In this sense, when the conditional value increases by 1 unit, the purchasing intention increases by 0.205 units. Finally, H1.5 examined whether social value (SV) positively affects the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), and the results demonstrated that social value did not have a significant impact on the purchasing intention; thus, H1.5 was rejected.

Taken together, not all consumption values had a significant positive influence on the purchasing intention for ecolabelled local products (PI); only the quality functional value (FVQ) and conditional value (CV) showed a positive effect, with effect sizes of 0.214 and 0.205, respectively. Thus, hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed, with two of the five sub-hypotheses supported.

Regarding the relationship between ecolabel characteristics and purchasing intention, four relationships were examined. Regarding the relationship between ecolabel knowledge (EK) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), the dissertation found that when ecolabel knowledge increases with 1 unit, the purchasing intention increases by 0.093 units. The dissertation also found that for every 1 unit increase in ecolabel knowledge, the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products increases by 0.029 units through the impact it has on the attitude towards ecolabelled local products. Thus, it can be concluded that ecolabel knowledge positively influences the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products, both directly and indirectly through attitude toward ecolabelled local products, supporting H2.1. Furthermore, H2.2 attempted to assess the influence of ecolabel credibility (EC) on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The findings of the dissertation confirmed that ecolabel credibility does not have a positive influence on purchasing intention; however, it has an indirect effect through attitude. In other words, when ecolabel credibility increases by 1 unit, the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products increases by 0.051 through the effect it has on attitude. Consequently, H2.2 is partially accepted. H2.3 attempted to study the relationship between the trust in certifying institutions (CIT) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The dissertation confirmed that trust in

certifying institutions does not have a direct effect on purchasing intention. However, when trust in certifying institutions increases by 1 unit, purchasing intention increases by 0.05 units via the indirect effect of trust on attitude. Consequently, H2.3 is partially accepted.

Considered jointly, all ecolabel dimensions exhibit a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), with ecolabel knowledge (EK) fully impacting the purchasing intention, firstly through a direct effect, and secondly through an indirect effect through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT) (effect size equals to 0.093 and 0.029, respectively), and ecolabel credibility (EC) and trust in certifying institutions (CIT) partially impacting the purchasing intention (PI) through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT), with effect sizes equal to 0.051 and 0,025, respectively. Hence, hypothesis 2 is partially accepted, with one sub-hypothesis entirely and two sub-hypotheses partially accepted.

Regarding the relationship between attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), the research found that a 1-unit increase in ATT is associated with a 0.153-unit increase in PI. The result confirms that attitude positively influences purchasing intention, supporting H3.

H4 examined the impact of perceived behavioral control (PBC) on the purchasing intention for ecolabelled local products (PI). The dissertation concluded that the relationship between the two variables is not significant. Thus, H4 is rejected.

Furthermore, H5 tried to assess the impact of subjective norms (SN) on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The findings of the dissertation confirmed a positive relationship between the two variables, with a 1-unit increase in subjective norms associated with a 0.112-unit increase in purchasing intention. Hence, H5 is accepted. Table 14 details the path coefficients of the research constructs.

**Table 14: Assessment of the Constructs' Path Coefficients (N=326)**

Relationships	Corresponding Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	t statistics	p-value
FVP->PI	H1.1	0.098	1.623	0.052
FVQ->PI	H1.1	0.214	3.564	<0.001
EV->PI	H1.2	0.057	0.847	0.199

<b>EPV-&gt;PI</b>	<b>H1.3</b>	<b>0.059</b>	<b>1.170</b>	<b>0.121</b>
<b>CV-&gt;PI</b>	H1.4	0.205	3.909	<0.001
<b>SV-&gt;PI</b>	<b>H1.5</b>	<b>-0.002</b>	<b>0.027</b>	<b>0.489</b>
<b>EK-&gt;PI</b>	H2.1	0.093	2.013	0.022
<b>EK-&gt;ATT-&gt;PI</b>	H2.1	0.029	1.751	0.040
<b>EC-&gt;PI</b>	<b>H2.2</b>	<b>0.017</b>	<b>0.265</b>	<b>0.395</b>
<b>EC-&gt;ATT-&gt;PI</b>	H2.2	0.051	1.967	0.025
<b>CIT-&gt;PI</b>	<b>H2.3</b>	<b>0.019</b>	<b>0.325</b>	<b>0.373</b>
<b>CIT-&gt;ATT-&gt;PI</b>	H2.3	0.025	1.321	0.093
<b>ATT-&gt;PI</b>	H3	0.153	2.015	0.022
<b>PBC-&gt;PI</b>	<b>H4</b>	<b>0.016</b>	<b>0.306</b>	<b>0.380</b>
<b>SN-&gt;PI</b>	H5	0.112	1.685	0.046

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value. Values in red refer to the rejected hypotheses.

#### 4.2.4. Moderating Effects

In order to investigate whether the relationships between consumption values (FVP, FVQ, EV, EPV, CV, SV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), and the relationship between attitude towards ecolabelled local products (ATT), perceived behavioral control (PBC), subjective norms (SN), and the purchasing intention (PI) were influenced by demographic variables, namely gender, age, education, income, and region of residence, a moderation analysis was conducted, to evaluate the change in the strength of the relationships.

##### 4.2.4.1. Moderation Results and Interpretation

Interaction terms were created in SmartPLS 4, and their influence was evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. The results in Table 15 revealed that only four interactions were significant. Specifically, income positively moderates the relationship between perceived behavioral control (PBC) and the purchasing intention for ecolabelled local products (PI), with an unmoderated effect of -0.018 that increased to 0.140 after moderation. Additionally, gender weakens the relationship between epistemic value (EPV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local

products (PI), with an unmoderated effect equal to 0.186, which decreased to -0.208 after moderation. Moreover, gender impacted the relationship between emotional value (EV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI) with an unmoderated effect of -0.078 which increased to 0.249 after moderation. Furthermore, the region of residence significantly influenced the relationship between the price functional value (FVP) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), with an unmoderated effect of 0.031 that decreased to -0.133 after moderation.

The remaining interaction terms were not statistically significant, indicating that education and age had no moderation effect. Thus, it can be concluded that both H6 and H7 are partially accepted.

**Table 15: Moderation Analysis Results for the Research Constructs (N=326)**

Interaction Terms	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t statistics	p-value
Age x ATT -> PI	H6	-0.107	1.118	0.132
Age x PBC -> PI	H6	-0.103	1.323	0.093
Age x SN -> PI	H6	0.065	0.648	0.259
Education x ATT -> PI	H6	0.090	0.838	0.201
Education x PBC -> PI	H6	0.048	0.591	0.277
Education x SN -> PI	H6	-0.021	0.229	0.410
Gender x ATT -> PI	H6	-0.128	0.784	0.217
Gender x PBC -> PI	H6	0.036	0.305	0.380
Gender x SN -> PI	H6	0.114	0.695	0.244
Income x ATT -> PI	H6	-0.102	0.888	0.187
Income x PBC -> PI	H6	0.140	1.786	0.037
Income x SN -> PI	H6	-0.042	0.381	0.351
Region x ATT -> PI	H6	0.060	0.659	0.255
Region x PBC -> PI	H6	0.076	1.210	0.113
Region x SN -> PI	H6	0.051	0.634	0.263
Age x FVQ -> PI_	H7	-0.080	0.888	0.187
Age x CV -> PI	H7	0.028	0.391	0.348
Age x EPV -> PI	H7	-0.012	0.171	0.432
Age x EV -> PI	H7	-0.052	0.552	0.290
Age x FVP -> PI	H7	0.042	0.427	0.335
Age x SV -> PI	H7	-0.002	0.018	0.493
Education x CV -> PI	H7	0.099	1.126	0.130

<b>Education x EPV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.034	0.459	0.323
<b>Education x EV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.081	0.694	0.244
<b>Education x FVP -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.017	0.185	0.427
<b>Education x FVQ -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.049	0.527	0.299
<b>Education x SV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.004	0.038	0.485
<b>Gender x CV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.052	0.416	0.339
<b>Gender x EPV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.208	1.779	0.038
<b>Gender x EV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.249	1.649	0.050
<b>Gender x FVP -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.099	0.749	0.227
<b>Gender x FVQ -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.112	0.882	0.189
<b>Gender x SN -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.114	0.695	0.244
<b>Income x CV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.002	0.018	0.493
<b>Income x EPV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.016	0.190	0.425
<b>Income x EV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.059	0.466	0.321
<b>Income x FVP -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.018	0.196	0.422
<b>Income x FVQ -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.082	1.102	0.135
<b>Income x SN -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.042	0.381	0.351
<b>Region x CV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.063	1.082	0.140
<b>Region x EPV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.020	0.376	0.354
<b>Region x EV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.037	0.471	0.319
<b>Region x FVP -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.133	2.010	0.022
<b>Region x FVQ -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	0.080	1.192	0.117
<b>Region x SV -&gt; PI</b>	<b>H7</b>	-0.086	1.007	0.157

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: ATT: Attitude, CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions, CV: Conditional Value, EC: Ecolabels Credibility, EK: Ecolabels Knowledge, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value, FVQ: Quality Functional Value, FVP: Price Functional Value, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention, SN: Subjective Norms, SV: Social Value. Values in green refer to the confirmed moderation effects. Gender was coded as follows: 0 for males and 1 for females; the region of residence was coded as follows: 0 for the Casablanca-Settat region, also chosen as the reference group, and 1 for the remaining regions of Morocco.

#### 4.2.4.2. Main Effects Versus Moderation Effects

Table 16 details the influence of the price functional value (FVP), perceived behavioral control (PBC), emotional value (EV), and epistemic value (EPV) on the purchasing intention of eco-

labelled local products (PI) before and after the introduction of the significant moderating variables, namely gender, income, and region. In other words, the primary purpose is to assess the effect size of the moderators.

Table 16 includes only significant relationships. First, in the interaction between the region and price functional value (FVP) on purchasing intention (PI), the effect size is 0.018, indicating that the interaction had a negligible effect on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. Moreover, the findings show that without the interaction term, R-square was 0.159, whereas it increased to 0.173 with the interaction term. This indicates a modest improvement of 0.014 after accounting for the region.

Additionally, the interaction between gender and epistemic value (EPV) displays a negligible effect of 0.014 on the purchasing intention (PI). Before the addition of the moderator R square was equal to 0.215, while it improved to 0.221 with the interaction term included. The results shows a slight improvement of 0.006 in R square after the addition of gender.

Furthermore, the interaction between income and perceived behavioral control (PBC) had a negligible effect of 0.013 on the purchasing intention for ecolabelled local products (PI). The analysis also found that without the interaction term, R square was equal to 0.055, while it increased to 0.060 with the addition of the moderator. The result shows that R square subtly improved with 0.005 with the addition of income as a moderator.

Finally, subsequent results revealed that the interaction between gender and emotional value (EV) had a negligible effect of 0.013 on the purchasing intention (PI). Without moderation, R square value was equal to 0.101, and it improved to 0.118 after the inclusion of moderation. The results show that there was a slight improvement of 0.017 after the inclusion of gender as a moderator.

Thus, it can be concluded that although income, gender, and region play a moderating role in the relationship between price functional value (FVP), emotional value (EV), perceived behavioral control (PBC), and epistemic value (EPV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI), their influence on the strength of the model relationships is considered to be limited.

**Table 16: Moderation Analysis Results (N=326)**

<b>Interaction Terms</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>	<b>t statistics</b>	<b>p-value</b>	<b>F square</b>	<b>R Square Before Moderation</b>	<b>R Square After Moderation</b>	<b>Change in R square</b>
<b>Region x FVP -&gt; PI</b>	-0.133	2.010	0.022	0.018	0.159	0.173	0.014
<b>Gender x EPV -&gt; PI</b>	-0.208	1.779	0.038	0.014	0.215	0.221	0.006
<b>Income x PBC -&gt; PI</b>	0.140	1.786	0.037	0.013	0.055	0.060	0.005
<b>Gender x EV -&gt; PI</b>	0.249	1.649	0.050	0.013	0.101	0.118	0.017

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

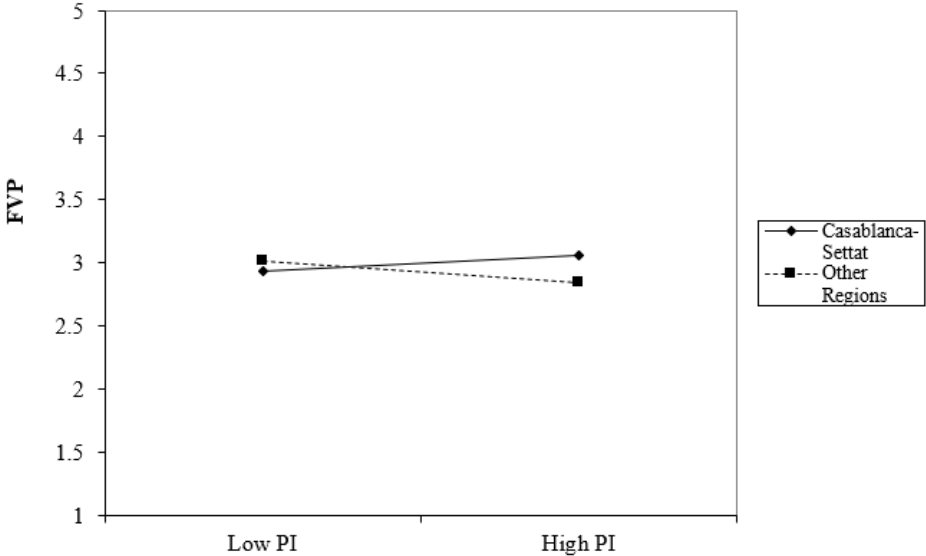
Note: FVP: Price Functional Value, PI: Purchasing Intention of Ecolabelled Local Products, PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, EV: Emotional Value, EPV: Epistemic Value.

#### 4.2.4.3. Simple Slope Analysis

In addition to the significance of interaction effects, slope analysis was conducted to understand better the influence of moderating variables (income, gender, and region) on the relationships between price functional value (FVP), perceived behavioral control (PBC), emotional value (EV), and epistemic value (EPV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI).

Figure 8 displays the slope analysis of the interaction between regions of residence and price functional value (FVP) with the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The graph reveals that there is a significant moderating effect that the region exercises on the interaction between price functional value and the purchasing intention. Specifically, respondents residing in regions with standard deviations lower than -1, namely the Casablanca-Settat region, display an increased intention to purchase ecolabelled local products when the price functional value is also increasing. However, in the case of respondents residing in regions with standard deviations higher

than 1, notably the remaining regions (Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, Rabat-Sale-Kenitra, Fes-Meknes, Marrakesh-Safi region, and the other regions of Morocco), whenever their price functional value increases, their intention to purchase ecolabelled local products decreases.

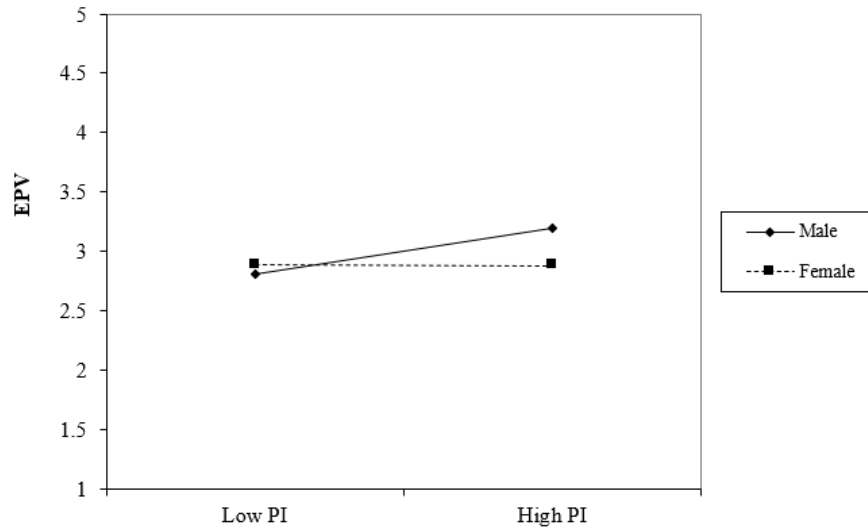


**Figure 8:** Slope Analysis of the Interaction between Region of Residence and Price Functional Value (FVP) and Purchasing Intention (PI) (N=326)

Source: Based on Author’s calculations, 2025

Note: FVP: Price Functional Value, PI: Purchasing Intention.

Figure 9 highlights the slope analysis of the interaction of gender and epistemic value (EPV) with the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The interaction reveals that gender significantly moderates the relationship between epistemic value and purchasing intention. Specifically, when the epistemic value of male respondents increases, their purchasing intention also increases. However, in the case of female respondents, there is a negative relationship between epistemic value and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. Thus, it can be concluded that epistemic value displays an important impact in the case of male respondents.

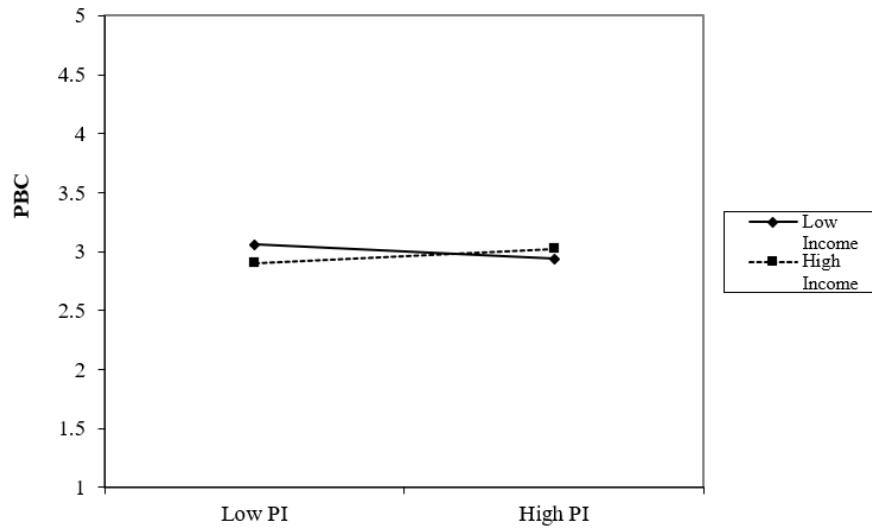


**Figure 9:** Slope Analysis of the Interaction between Gender and Epistemic Value (EPV) and Purchasing Intention (PI) (N=326)

Source: Based on Author’s calculations, 2025

Note: EPV: Epistemic Value, PI: Purchasing Intention.

Figure 10 represents the slope analysis of the moderating effect of income on the relationship between perceived behavioral control (PBC) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The results reveal that income moderates the relationship between purchasing intention and perceived behavioral control. To be more specific, in the case of individuals with high income, there is a positive relationship between purchasing intention and perceived behavioral control. However, in the case of individuals with low income, an increase in perceived behavioral control leads to a decrease in the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.

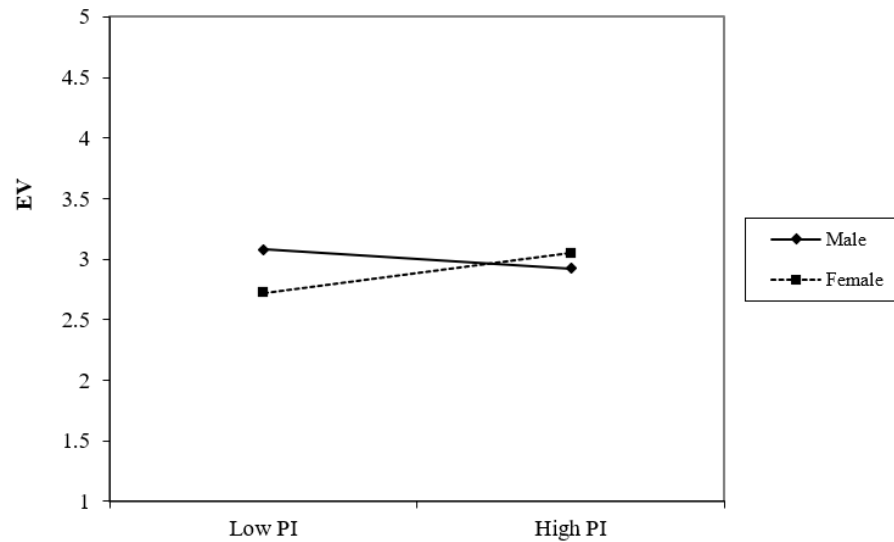


**Figure 10:** Slope Analysis of the Interaction between Income and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) and Purchasing Intention (PI) (N=326)

Source: Based on Author's calculations, 2025

Note: PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control, PI: Purchasing Intention.

Figure 11 represents the interaction effect between gender and emotional value (EV) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products (PI). The result demonstrates that gender exhibits a significant moderation effect on the relationship between emotional value and purchasing intention. Particularly, in the case of female respondents, there is a positive relationship between emotional value and purchasing intention. In other words, whenever there is an increase in emotional value, there is a rise in the purchasing intention of women. On the other hand, for male respondents, an increase in emotional value leads to a decrease in their purchasing intention.



**Figure 11:** Slope Analysis of the Interaction between Gender and Emotional Value (EV) and Purchasing Intention (PI) (N=326)

Source: Based on Author’s calculations, 2025

Note: EV: Emotional Value, PI: Purchasing Intention.

In order to improve the transparency of the results, a summary of the hypotheses and their results is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17: Summary of Hypotheses and their Results**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Supported/Not Supported</b>
<b>H1</b>	Quality and price functional value, emotional value, epistemic value, conditional value, and social value have a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Partially Accepted
<b>H2</b>	Ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions positively influence the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products.	Partially Accepted

<b>H3</b>	Attitude towards ecolabelled products has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	Perceived behavioral control exhibits a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Rejected
<b>H5</b>	Subjective norms significantly impact the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Accepted
<b>H6</b>	Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the relationship between attitude towards ecolabelled products, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Partially Accepted
<b>H7</b>	Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the relationship between quality functional value, price functional value, epistemic value, emotional value, conditional value, and social value, and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.	Partially Accepted

## 5. CONCLUSIONS, PROPOSALS

### 5.1. Research Findings

#### 5.1.1. Findings of Hypothesis 1

*H1: Quality and price functional value (H1.1), emotional value (H1.2), epistemic value (H1.3), conditional value (H1.4), and social value (H1.5) have a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.*

The dissertation determined that, among the different consumption values, only quality functional value and conditional value had a significant impact on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. As shown in Tables 13 and 14, quality functional value and conditional value had the largest effect sizes, with path coefficients of 0.214 and 0.205, respectively. Thus, H1 was partially accepted, with H1.1 being partially validated (only quality functional value had a significant influence), and H1.4 (conditional value) entirely accepted. On the other hand, H1.1 (price functional value) was partially rejected, H1.2 (emotional value), H1.3 (epistemic value), and H1.5 (social value) were rejected.

The partial acceptance of H1.1 demonstrates that Moroccan consumers place more importance on the quality of the products they want to purchase, rather than the price they need to pay. Thus, quality appears to be a determining factor that shapes the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled local products. The findings of the dissertation align with previous research that confirms that, in the context of developing countries, quality functional value has a consistent positive impact on the consumers' intention to acquire green and ecolabelled products (Mohd Suki, 2016; Suphasomboon & Vassanadumrongdee, 2022). In contrast, the partial rejection of H1.1 (price functional value) indicates that, in the context of the current research, Moroccan consumers showcase a certain level of awareness of the difference in quality and environmental aspects between ecolabelled local products and conventional products, which makes them prioritize the quality component over the price they are going to pay. The results are compatible with the research conducted by Lambarraa-Lehnhardt et al. (2021), who found that in the Moroccan context, consumers who opt for terroir products include a subgroup that puts more weight on the organic, environmentally friendly, and sustainable characteristics of food products.

In addition to that, the full rejection of H1.2 (emotional value) implies that Moroccan consumers did not form deep emotional attachments, since they do not exhibit concern towards the environment (Tarfaoui & Zkim, 2015), and they lack confidence in the different sources that provide environmental information (Aomari, 2016).

Additionally, the rejection of H1.3 (epistemic value) in the current context suggests a lack of awareness or a lack of ecolabel distinction to promote curiosity and knowledge-seeking. It also suggests the inability of consumers in Morocco to determine which source of information to go to when seeking more knowledge about ecolabelled local products, which reduces the clarity of the concept and leads to confusion vis-à-vis ecolabelled local products. In addition, Hamelin et al. (2013) found that Moroccan consumers regarded consumer authorities, trademarks, and labels as the most performing sources of information, while stores, in-store staff, magazines, literature, the Internet, and television were ranked as the worst sources of information.

When it comes to conditional value, the findings of the dissertation are consistent with previous research conducted in developing countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia, which highlighted that conditional value has a significant and favorable impact on the intention to purchase ecolabelled products (H1.4 is accepted), and highlighted that individuals are more likely to purchase such products when certain conditions are met, for instance cash rebates and government subsidies, are provided to support the purchase (Hudayah et al., 2023; Mohd Suki et al., 2022; Woo & Kim, 2019). In the current research, Moroccan consumers' decision to purchase ecolabelled local products is context-dependent and driven by external factors like promotions, special occasions, and improved accessibility (Bouhid et al., 2023; Oukerrou, 2022).

Furthermore, the rejection of H1.5 (social value) signifies that Moroccan consumers' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products is not impacted the slightest by the pressure society exerts, their image, or status, and such intention is not influenced by how ecolabelled local products make them feel. The Moroccan culture is fundamentally collectivist, which is evident in the strong sense of commitment among group members. This group orientation manifests in various social circles, including immediate family, circles of friends, and extended relationships. Additionally, loyalty serves as a cornerstone, anchoring both social norms and laws that guide interpersonal behavior within the society (Boussaadi & Belhcen, 2021). Therefore, in the context of the current research,

the notion of recognizing ecolabelled local products and the environment as a whole is not yet integrated into the group values and what it considers to be meaningful (Tarfaoui & Zkim, 2015). In other words, when the act of consuming ecolabelled local products becomes crucial for the group, social value will yield an impact on the intention of consumers to purchase such products in Morocco.

The findings of the dissertation contradicted those studies that found that price functional value, emotional value, and epistemic value exhibit a significant influence in driving the purchasing intention of green and natural products (Chakraborty & Dash, 2023; Wang et al., 2019).

### ***5.1.2. Findings of Hypothesis 2***

*H2: Ecolabel knowledge (H2.1), ecolabel credibility (H2.2), and trust in certifying institutions (H2.3) positively influence the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products directly and through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products.*

The dissertation found that only ecolabel knowledge had both a direct positive impact and an indirect significant influence, through attitude, on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. On the other hand, ecolabel credibility and trust in certifying institutions only had a positive indirect effect, through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products, on the purchasing intention.

The results showcase that the better the knowledge consumers have about ecolabelled local products, the higher their intention to purchase them will be. Similarly, the more advanced the knowledge, the more positive their attitude towards ecolabelled products will be, leading to a positive intention to acquire such products. Such findings are similar to studies that concluded that, in the context of developing countries, ecolabel knowledge is responsible for explaining a large percentage of the intention to use ecolabelled products (Hossain et al., 2022; Mohd Suki, 2013; Taufique et al., 2016b).

Moreover, the findings suggest that both ecolabel credibility and the trust in certifying institutions only shape how consumers feel about ecolabelled local products, rather than exercising a direct persuasion effect. In other words, stronger ecolabel credibility enhances a more positive attitude, which fosters the likelihood of purchasing ecolabelled local products. Similarly, a high trust in

certifying institutions improves the attitude to purchase ecolabelled local products, eventually increasing the possibility of acquiring such products.

Thus, attitude towards ecolabelled local products appears to play a central role in shaping the decision of Moroccan consumers to opt for such products. The findings of the current dissertation are similar to research that confirmed the impact of ecolabels' credibility and trust in certifying institutions on attitude, which in turn enhances the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products (Recio-Román et al., 2024; Riskos et al., 2021).

### **5.1.3. Findings of Hypothesis 3**

*H3: Attitude towards ecolabelled local products has a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.*

The attitude towards ecolabelled local products was found to have a direct influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. Thus, attitude towards ecolabelled local products appears to play a central role in shaping the decision of Moroccan consumers to opt for such products. The findings of the current dissertation are similar to research that confirmed the impact of ecolabels' credibility and trust in certifying institutions on attitude, which in turn enhances the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products (Recio-Román et al., 2024; Riskos et al., 2021).

### **5.1.4. Findings of Hypothesis 4**

*H4: Perceived behavioral control exhibits a positive influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.*

The dissertation results proved that in the Moroccan context, perceived behavioral control has no impact on the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products. This implies that Moroccan consumers' purchasing intention is impacted by elements other than their beliefs about being able to purchase, including their limited availability, difficulty in accessing such products, and the fact that ecolabelled local products are not generally available in conventional stores. Instead, these products are typically found only in supermarkets, hypermarkets, or specialized stores, which are mainly located in metropolitan areas such as Casablanca and Rabat (Labiad & Marso, 2025).

The findings of the current dissertation contradict various investigations that found perceived behavioral control as a significant determinant of the purchasing intention of organic and green products in Morocco and developing countries in general (Chetioui et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2019).

#### **5.1.5. Findings of Hypothesis 5**

*H5: Subjective norms significantly impact the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.*

The outcome of the research revealed that subjective norms exhibit a positive influence on the consumers' intention to acquire ecolabelled local products. The dissertation further revealed that when Moroccan consumers believe that significant actors in their social circle, including peers, family, friends, or larger societal groups, favor or expect buying ecolabelled local products, they are more likely to consider such behavior. The reason behind that could be that the Moroccan socio-cultural context is marked by close-knit social structures and strong collectivist principles (Phalet & Schönplflug, 2001; Schouten, 2008) that influence the individual decision-making process. Findings of previous research conducted in the Moroccan context also found that subjective norms significantly influence the intention to purchase organic food (Chetioui et al., 2023).

#### **5.1.6. Findings of Hypothesis 6**

*H6: Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the relationship between attitude towards ecolabelled local products (H6.1), perceived behavioral control (H6.2), and subjective norms (H6.3) and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products.*

The findings of Hypothesis 6 testify that, among the various demographic variables tested, income exhibited a significant moderation effect over the relationship between perceived behavioral control and the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products. The results of the research signify that consumers with higher income are more likely to act on their perceived capacity to purchase ecolabelled local products, possibly because they do not have similar financial constraints compared with consumer groups who have a low income. On the other hand, the dissertation displayed that lower income groups will not display the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products, due to affordability concerns. In addition, age, gender, education, and region had no influence on the relationship between subjective norms, attitude towards ecolabelled local products, perceived behavioral control, and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. In other words, individuals

of both genders, all age categories, educational levels, and residing in the different regions of Morocco show similar impact of subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attitude towards ecolabelled local products on purchase intention. Thus, it can be suggested that for the surveyed Moroccan consumers, economic accessibility significantly influences their inclination to consume ecolabelled local products, but other demographics do not.

#### **5.1.7. Findings of Hypotheses 7**

*H7: Demographics (gender, age, education, income, and region) moderate the between quality functional value (H7.1), price functional value (H7.2), epistemic value (H7.3), emotional value (H7.4), conditional value (H7.5), and social value (H7.6), and the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products.*

The main objective of the moderation analysis was to assess whether gender, age, education, income, and region impact the strength of relationships between price functional value, quality functional value, emotional value, social value, epistemic value, and conditional value and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. The identified moderating effects, although significant, are negligible (f square lower than 0.02), as presented in Table 16.

The dissertation confirmed that regions of residence have a moderating effect on the relationship between price functional value and the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products. Notably, the results displayed that respondents who live in Tanger-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, Rabat-Kenitra, Fes-Meknes, Marrakesh-Safi, and the other regions of Morocco were characterized by higher price sensitivity, and the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products reduced when the price functional value increased. The opposite was recorded in the Casablanca-Settat region, where a rise in price functional value led to an increase in the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products. The findings of the dissertation are similar to the research conducted by Zhu et al. (2025), who found that Chinese consumers' willingness to pay for eco-products differs based on the region, with residents of rural areas showcasing more willingness.

Additionally, the research found that gender had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between both emotional and epistemic values and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. Emotional value had a positive impact on female respondents, while it had a negative

influence on male respondents' purchasing intention, indicating that women are more responsive to ecolabel messaging or the green branding of local products. On the other hand, epistemic value had a positive influence on male respondents' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products, reflecting their increased curiosity and desire to learn novel information, while its impact on female respondents was negative. The findings of the dissertation are similar to those found by the research conducted by Rütelioné and Bhutto (2024), who concluded that gender does have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional and epistemic values and the intention to purchase organic food, with females showcasing stronger responses to such values compared to males. The contrast in results can be attributed to the difference in geographies in which the research was conducted.

In addition, the findings of the research indicate that education and age did not exert any moderating effect on consumption values. Furthermore, demographic variables showed no moderation effects on the relationship between quality functional value, conditional value, and social value, and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. This outcome signifies that Moroccan consumers' perceptions regarding product quality, social approval, and situational advantages remain consistent across the different demographic groups. In other words, the way these elements are evaluated does not differ according to demographic differences, resulting in a uniform perspective among consumers in the present context.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

According to the dissertation's findings, various recommendations can be proposed regarding the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. The Moroccan government, responsible for the ecolabelling process, should simplify the ecolabelling process and make it accessible for the different producers in the Moroccan context, especially those who conduct their activities far from the economic hub of the country, namely the Casablanca-Setta region and the Rabat-Kenitra region. Moreover, to improve the emotional engagement of consumers with ecolabelled local products, both the Moroccan government and cooperatives should refer to the usage of visual representations to enhance positive feelings in consumers, in addition to expanding the events where consumers can try ecolabelled local products, in areas that are easily accessible by consumers. In addition, in order to improve the epistemic value of consumers, their awareness

can be increased by improving the online print of the available labels and the local products that obtained these labels, through the provision of information on social media in a way that is simple and easy to understand. Nevertheless, both epistemic value and emotional value were impacted differently by the gender of respondents, where females were positively impacted, mainly in the case of epistemic value.

The price of labeled local products is still an important component, and it should be affordable, especially for consumers who reside outside of the Casablanca-Settat region. Furthermore, since the capability to pay for ecolabelled local products differs based on the region where consumers reside, it would be important to establish different pricing strategies for the different regions, to cater to the income disparities that exist and to encourage consumers to pay for ecolabelled local products; however, only within the limit that deters arbitrage between regions. Furthermore, more emphasis can be placed on regions where consumers are price sensitive.

Also, consumers' knowledge of ecolabels can be enhanced through the provision of information about the labels of the product's packaging, in addition to designing a unified logo that can be displayed on the local products to avoid confusion. It would be important to improve the availability and accessibility of ecolabelled local products, in addition to improving the awareness of consumers in the different regions of Morocco of such products and the benefits they bring. Furthermore, local producers can opt for the establishment of educational campaign that can increase the awareness and exposure of Moroccan consumers to such products.

With respect to ecolabels' credibility and trust in certifying institutions, both these elements can be strengthened through the establishment of clear ecolabelling guidelines and transparent procedures that should be communicated to consumers, while putting more emphasis on the publication of frequent reports that inform the Moroccan consumers about the state of the ecolabelling process and the modifications that are made. Furthermore, the dissertation confirmed the positive influence of subjective norms on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products. This influence can be enhanced by leveraging the social circles and engaging the community in the marketing programs established for these products.

### **5.3. Limitations and Future Research**

The current dissertation has several limitations that could serve for future research, namely:

- In the first place, the dissertation used non-probability sampling as the primary sampling method, thus the results cannot be generalized on the entire Moroccan population; it can be seen as exploratory in nature with initial insights into the examined topic. Consequently, future research can opt for probability sampling to get more accurate results that can be generalized to the entire Moroccan population.
- In the second place, while the current research only assessed the intention of consumers to opt for ecolabelled local products in general, future studies can take examples of the different available local products and assess the purchasing intention of consumers in the Moroccan context.
- Also, the current dissertation assessed only the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products, and future research can examine the actual behavior through observing Moroccan consumers, or tracking their purchases, in addition to conducting diary studies.
- Furthermore, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to evaluate changes in consumer attitudes and intentions over time. Thus, future research can opt for longitudinal designs to better capture and understand how the intention and behavior of consumers evolve over time.
- Additionally, while the current dissertation considered consumers only, future research can assess the producer-side of local products to examine the marketing strategies they use, in addition to including the government-side in the research to examine the ecolabelling process, its facilitators, and inhibitors.
- Furthermore, the current dissertation included ecolabels' dimensions in addition to the TPB and TCV dimensions, namely the knowledge, credibility, and trust in certifying institutions, future research can study the influence of other variables, namely health concern and environmental concern and their influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context.
- Future research can also rely on qualitative approaches, including interviews and case studies, in addition to the quantitative results already available.

- Finally, researchers can attempt a comparative study between Morocco and the different developing and developed countries to add valuable contributions to the topic.

## **THE MAIN FINDINGS, NEW AND NOVEL RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION**

The main purpose of the dissertation was to assess the influence of ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions on the intention to purchase ecolabelled local products in Morocco through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV) and assess the moderating role of demographics on the relationship between consumption values, attitude towards ecolabelled local products, subjective norms related to, perceived behavioral control over the purchase, and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in Morocco. The main novelty of the research is that it is the first study to assess the intention of Moroccan consumers to purchase ecolabelled products using the TPB and TCV, while extending the theories by including ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions. Other novelties can be summarized as follows:

- The research model merged the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Theory of Consumption Values, while adding variables to extend the model, namely ecolabel knowledge, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions.
- The established model has proven to be valid and reliable, which made it capable of measuring the interrelations between its constructs.
- Among the different consumption values, only quality functional value and conditional value yielded a significant influence on Moroccan consumers' intention to purchase ecolabelled local products, while the remaining values, namely, emotional value, epistemic value, price functional value, and social value had no impact on their intention.
- Among the additional variables used in the model, only ecolabel knowledge had a direct impact on the purchasing intention and an indirect influence through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. The remaining variables, namely ecolabel credibility and trust in certifying institutions, had a positive impact on the purchasing intention only through the attitude.
- The study concluded that while perceived behavioral control had no influence on the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products, subjective norms and attitude yielded a positive impact.

- The proposed model also assessed the moderating role of demographics, namely gender, age, education, income, and place of residence on the relationships between attitude towards ecolabelled local products, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, consumption values and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products, where only income moderated the relationship between perceived behavioral control and purchasing intention (consumers with higher income were found to be more likely to act on their perceived capacity to acquire labeled local products), region of residence moderated the relationship between price functional value and the purchasing intention (consumers living in the Casablanca-Settat region were less price sensitive compared with respondents living in the remaining regions of Morocco). Gender had a significant moderation effect on the relationship between emotional value, epistemic value and the purchasing intention. Specifically, female respondents were positively impacted by emotional value and negatively influenced by epistemic value, while the opposite was recorded for male respondents.

## **SUMMARY**

This dissertation aimed to assess Moroccan consumers' intentions to purchase ecolabelled local products by integrating the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Consumption Values (TCV). TPB examines the impact of attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms on ecolabelled product purchase intention, while TCV highlights various value dimensions influencing consumer preferences (functional value, emotional value, epistemic value, conditional value, and social value). To enhance the research model's predictive power, the study included three additional variables: knowledge of ecolabels, ecolabel credibility, and trust in certifying institutions.

Moroccan population was the main target population of the dissertation, and non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling) was employed (N=326). A self-administered questionnaire was distributed online to collect the needed data, and a pilot study was conducted to make sure the questionnaire was valid and reliable for further use during the research. For data analysis, to reveal the relationships between the research constructs, PLS-SEM was used.

The findings assessed the relationship between the different consumption values and the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products in the Moroccan context. The dissertation underlined the positive influence of quality functional value and conditional value on the purchasing intention, while the remaining values were found to be insignificant. Moreover, the findings underlined that ecolabel knowledge directly and indirectly (through the attitude towards ecolabelled local products) boosted the intention to acquire ecolabelled local products, while ecolabel credibility and trust in certifying institutions were found to yield only a positive indirect effect through attitude on the purchasing intention. Also, only attitude and subjective norms from TPB influenced the purchasing intention of ecolabelled local products, while perceived behavioral control was proven to be insignificant. Finally, among the demographic variables included in the moderation analysis, only income impacted the perceived behavioral control of consumers, gender influenced the emotional and epistemic values, and region of residence yielded a significant moderating impact on quality functional value of surveyed Moroccan consumers.

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2. **Echchad, M.:** The influence of social media usage and health consciousness on the purchasing intention of organic products: the mediating role of attitude = La influencia del uso de las redes sociales y la conciencia de la salud en la intención de compra de productos orgánicos: el papel mediador de la actitud.  
*IROCAMM-International Review Of Communication And Marketing Mix.* 8 (1), 88-103, 2023.  
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4. **Echchad, M., Ghaith, A. S. M.:** Purchasing Intention of Green Cosmetics Using the Theory of Planned Behavior: The Role of Perceived Quality and Environmental Consciousness.  
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. The Questionnaire Items

Item No.	Items
<b>EK: Ecolabel Knowledge</b>	
1	EK1: I know the meaning of the term recycled
2	EK2: I know the meaning of the term eco-friendly
3	EK3: I know the meaning of the term organic
4	EK4: I know the meaning of the term biodegradable
<b>EC: Ecolabel Credibility</b>	
5	EC1: Certified local products comply with trustworthy environmental quality norms
6	EC2: The presence of a label increases the credibility of the local product
7	EC3: An ecolabel is a reliable source of information about the environmental performance of the local product
8	EC4: The ecolabel displayed on the local product is a good way of informing consumers about environmental safety
<b>CIT: Trust in Certifying Institutions</b>	
9	CIT1: I can count on both public and private institutions as certifiers for local products
10	CIT2: I trust both public and private institutions as certifiers of local products
11	CIT3: I can always rely on both public and private institutions as certifiers of local products
<b>PI: Purchasing Intention</b>	
12	PI1: I am willing to try purchasing certified local products
13	PI2: I want to purchase certified local products in the next two weeks
14	PI3: I intend to purchase certified local products in the coming next weeks
<b>FVQ: Quality Functional Value</b>	
15	FVQ1: The ecolabelled local product has consistent quality
16	FVQ2: The ecolabelled local product is well made
17	FVQ3: The ecolabelled local product has an acceptable standard of quality
18	FVQ4: The ecolabelled local product would perform consistently
<b>FVP: Price Functional Value</b>	
19	FVP1: The ecolabelled local product is reasonably priced
20	FVP2: The ecolabelled local product offers value for money
21	FVP3: The ecolabelled local product would be economical
22	FVP4: The ecolabelled local product is a good product for the price
<b>SV: Social Value</b>	
23	SV1: Buying the ecolabelled local product would help me feel acceptable
24	SV2: Buying the ecolabelled local product would improve the way I am perceived
25	SV3: Buying the ecolabelled local product would make a good impression on other people

26	SV4: Buying ecolabelled local products would give its owners social approval
<b>EV: Emotional Value</b>	
27	EV1: Buying the ecolabelled local product instead of conventional products would feel like making a good personal contribution to something better
28	EV2: Purchasing the ecolabelled local product would feel like the morally right thing
29	EV3: Purchasing ecolabelled local products instead of conventional products would make me feel like a better human being
<b>EPV: Epistemic Value</b>	
30	EPV1: Before buying the product, I would obtain substantial information about its different makes and models
31	EPV2: I am willing to seek out new information
32	EPV3: I like to search for what is new and different
<b>CV: Conditional Value</b>	
33	CV1: I would purchase ecolabelled local products over conventional substitutes if offered a discount or with other promotional incentives
34	CV2: I would purchase ecolabelled local products over conventional substitutes if offered at subsidized rates
35	CV3: I would purchase ecolabelled local products over conventional substitutes if they are easy to acquire, in the sense that they are accessible nearby
<b>PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	
36	PBC1: Most ecolabelled local products are widely available
37	PBC2: Most ecolabelled local products are convenient to buy
38	PBC3: Most ecolabelled local products are convenient to find
<b>ATT: Attitude Towards Ecolabelled Local Products</b>	
39	ATT1: Buying ecolabelled local products makes me feel good
40	ATT2: Ecolabelled local products are good for the environment
41	ATT3: For me, the consumption of ecolabelled local products is wanted by everyone
<b>SN: Subjective Norms</b>	
42	SN1: People who influence my decisions would approve of me consuming ecolabelled local products
43	SN2: People who are important in my life would support me consuming ecolabelled local products
44	SN3: Most of the people important to me think that I should consume ecolabelled local products

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, Manal Echchad (born: 01/08/1994 in Saudi Arabia) , being aware of my criminal and disciplinary responsibility, declare and certify by my signature that the dissertation submitted for the award of the doctoral degree (PhD) is solely my own independent work.

I further declare that:

- I am familiar with the regulations of the Doctoral School of Management and Business at the University of Debrecen, and I acknowledge that I am bound by the regulations;
- I have handled the literature used in a correct manner, and I have complied with the laws and regulations applicable to the dissertation;
- the original source of ideas and data from other sources in the dissertation, whether published or not, is fully acknowledged in the references, bibliography and sources used, taking into account the copyright protection;
- I have not submitted any other dissertation with the same or partly the same content as the submitted dissertation to another university or doctoral school for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

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