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## Promoting Green Life for Viet Nam University Students

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*MA, Vu Thi Le Giang*

Dai Nam University

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### Abstract:

This article focuses on the green lifestyle among university students, aiming to protect the environment and develop sustainable habits. International studies demonstrate that sustainable education, combined with practical community projects, is an effective way to change student behavior. In Vietnam, although awareness of green living has improved, limited infrastructure and financial difficulties remain significant barriers. To promote a green lifestyle, the article proposes solutions such as enhancing environmental education, investing in infrastructure, applying technology, and fostering international cooperation. Implementing these solutions can create a generation of environmentally conscious students, contributing to the sustainable development of society.

**Keywords:** Green lifestyle, Sustainable education, University students, Green skills, Environmental protection.

### I. Introduction:

In recent decades, environmental issues such as climate change, air pollution, plastic waste, and the depletion of natural resources have become significant threats to global sustainable development. These problems not only negatively impact the environment but also directly affect the quality of life and economic stability.

In Vietnam, rapid urbanization and population growth are placing immense pressure on ecosystems (according to Nam Tran & Janice Tran, 2024). Household waste, particularly plastic, is increasing and not being effectively managed, leading to soil, water, and air pollution. Additionally, unsustainable consumption habits and inefficient use of resources are exacerbating environmental problems.

University students, as young, creative, and dynamic individuals, can be pioneers in changing behaviors and raising environmental awareness. They are the future generation who will not only be affected by environmental issues but also have the potential to lead society with sustainable actions. However, according to Abo-Khalil (2024), the green lifestyle is still not widely adopted among students.

Although students have a good awareness of environmental issues, translating this awareness into action remains limited. This may be due to a lack of practical knowledge, motivation, or supportive infrastructure and resources. Therefore, the question arises: How can we effectively promote a green lifestyle among students?

This study will explore the factors influencing students' adoption of a green lifestyle and propose specific solutions to enhance environmental awareness and actions. This is not only an urgent task in the current context but also an opportunity for students to become leaders in building a sustainable future.

## II. Theoretical Framework:

### 1. Definition and Significance of a Green Lifestyle

A green lifestyle is understood as a way of living aimed at minimizing human impact on the environment through specific actions such as energy conservation, resource reuse, using eco-friendly products, and reducing waste (according to Willbold, 2024). According to Verhoeven, Bolderdijk & Steg (2020) and Rose (2024), this lifestyle not only helps protect natural resources but also enhances the quality of life and improves individual and community health. For university students, adopting a green lifestyle is not only a way to show responsibility towards the environment but also helps them develop essential skills such as resource management, sustainable thinking, and social cooperation (according to Zsóka, Szerényi, Széchy, & Kocsis, 2013). Green habits formed at a young age will be the foundation for students to become responsible citizens in the future.

### 2. Behavioral Theories in Green Lifestyle Research

Green living behaviors are shaped and influenced by various psychological, social, and environmental factors. Two prominent theories often applied to analyze environmental protection behaviors are:

#### 2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior

According to Etheridge, Sinyard, and Brindle (2023), human behavior is determined by three main factors:

*Attitude:* The positive or negative evaluation of the behavior by an individual. If students perceive that a green lifestyle benefits themselves and society, they are more likely to adopt it.

*Subjective Norms:* The social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior. Encouragement or approval from friends, family, or teachers can motivate students to adopt a green lifestyle.

*Perceived Behavioral Control:* The ease or difficulty an individual feels in performing the behavior. If the university provides supportive infrastructure, such as recycling areas or green activities, students will find it easier to participate.

#### 2.2. Social Learning Theory

According to Bandura (1977), human behavior is formed not only through direct experience but also by observing and learning from others. In a university environment, students can learn green living from friends, and teachers, or through media campaigns and extracurricular activities. This creates role models for green practices, encouraging students to follow suit.

### 3. Factors Influencing Students' Green Lifestyle

The green lifestyle in the student community is influenced by several factors:

*Awareness and Knowledge:* Correct awareness of environmental issues is fundamental to promoting green behaviors. If students are well-informed about climate change, waste recycling, and energy conservation, they will be more motivated to adopt eco-friendly behaviors (according to Fayaz, Lashari, Nandwani, & Chang, 2023).

*Culture and Social Habits:* According to Babu (2024) and co-authors, cultural environment and social norms strongly impact students' habits. In environments where green living is a common trend, students will easily integrate and practice it.

*Infrastructure and University Support:* Facilities such as sorting bins, recycling areas, or policies supporting renewable energy use at schools play a crucial role in encouraging students to practice a green lifestyle (Nnonyelu & Niu, 2024).

*Personal Finances:* Some green behaviors, such as using organic products or energy-saving devices, require higher initial costs (according to Wen, 2024). This can be a barrier for students with limited budgets.

#### 4. The Role of Universities in Promoting a Green Lifestyle

Universities are not only places of knowledge but also environments where students' character and behavior are shaped. Extracurricular activities, curricula integrating environmental protection content, and green media campaigns can positively influence students' awareness and actions.

*Integrating Sustainable Education into the Curriculum:* Courses on the environment and sustainable development can equip students with basic knowledge and raise awareness of environmental issues.

*Organizing Green Events:* Activities such as "Zero Waste Day," "Trash for Trees," or recycling workshops not only increase interaction but also help students see the practical benefits of a green lifestyle.

*Building a Green Culture:* Schools can become role models by adopting green policies such as energy conservation, using renewable energy, or encouraging public transportation.

**5. Benefits of Promoting Green Living in the Student Community** According to Roy (2023), promoting a green lifestyle in the student community brings many practical benefits:

Reducing negative environmental impacts and conserving natural resources.

Enhancing community awareness and social responsibility among students.

Building sustainable habits, contributing to the creation of global citizens responsible for the environment.

*In summary*, the theoretical framework shows that promoting green living depends not only on individual awareness but also requires support and influence from social, educational, and infrastructural environments. This is a crucial foundation for implementing effective solutions to change university students' behavior.

### III. Research methods:

#### 1. Research Design

The study employs a secondary research method, focusing on the collection, analysis, and synthesis of existing materials from reputable domestic and international sources. This method is suitable for constructing a comprehensive picture of green lifestyles and solutions to encourage students to adopt this lifestyle. Secondary research saves time and resources while providing a solid theoretical foundation from previous studies.

#### 2. Data Sources

The data sources used in the study include:

**International materials:** Scientific articles, reports from non-governmental organizations, and studies from reputable international journals such as the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, and *Sustainability*.

**Domestic materials:** Reports from government agencies, academic studies from major universities in Vietnam, and notable environmental campaigns conducted locally.

**Statistical data:** References from organizations such as the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, National Environmental Status Reports, and international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank

### 3. Research process

The research process includes the following steps:

Step	Describe
<p><b>Step 1</b> Collect documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Search for documents related to green living, successful application models in other countries, and factors affecting green living behavior.</li> <li>- Use keywords such as "green living for students", "environmentally friendly practices in universities", "sustainable behavior" and "green living in Vietnam" on academic databases algorithms such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and ScienceDirect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 2</b> Screening and classification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choose documents that are highly reliable, have clear research methods and are suitable for the university student research context.</li> <li>- Classify documents into main content groups: awareness of green lifestyle, factors affecting green lifestyle behavior and green lifestyle models.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 3</b> Document analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Apply content analysis (content analysis) to identify common themes in documents.</li> <li>- Focus on understanding successful green living models and strategies at universities around the world, and compare with the context and conditions of Vietnam.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 4</b> Evaluation and synthesis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Synthesize results from the literature into a coherent theoretical framework to serve as a foundation for proposed solutions.</li> <li>- Compare data between domestic and international studies to identify similarities and special points, thereby drawing lessons relevant to Vietnamese students.</li> </ul>

### 4. Standard assessment documents

To ensure data quality, documents were selected based on the following criteria:

*Updating:* Documents are prioritized from 2020 onwards to ensure they reflect modern green living trends.

*Relevance:* Materials must be directly related to aspects such as green living behavior, sustainable education, or environmental programs for students.

*Reliability:* Only use materials from reputable sources such as scientific journals, major NGOs, and government agencies.

### 5. Advantages and limitations of research methods

Secondary research research methods based on domestic and international documents help build a solid theoretical foundation on green living effects and influencing factors. At the same time, analyzing and synthesizing information from reliable sources is also a reasonable basis for producing appropriate solutions, targeting green living among the university student community in Vietnam. However, secondary research methods still have some advantages and limitations that need to be noted (according to Teesside University).

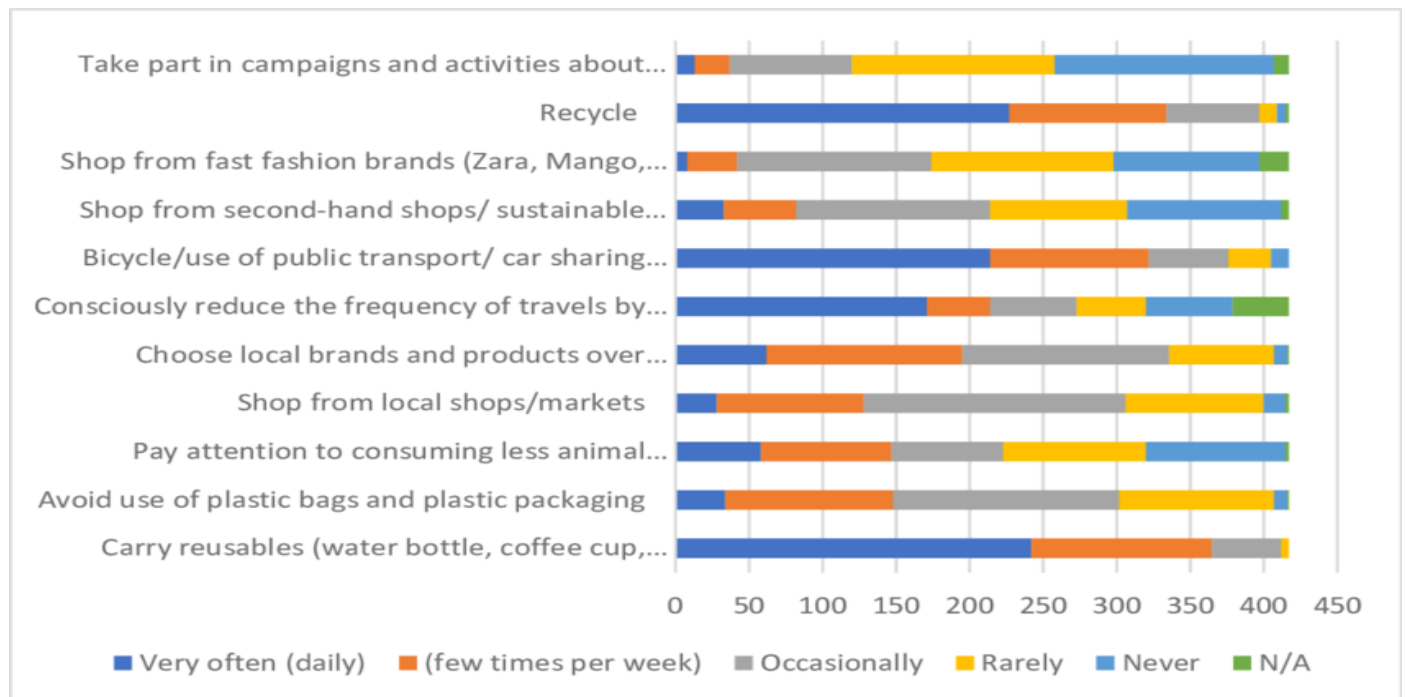
Prioritize	Mode limit
<b>Save time and resources:</b> Secondary research methods allow the use of existing data instead of having to collect primary data such as surveys or interviews.	<b>Lack of specificity:</b> Secondary data may not be completely relevant to the specific context of Vietnamese students.
<b>Diversity of information:</b> Documents from many different countries help provide a comprehensive perspective and comparison of green living strategies.	<b>Lack of specificity:</b> Secondary data may not be completely relevant to the specific context of Vietnamese students.
<b>Globality:</b> Research can access successful models in the world to find suitable lessons for Vietnam.	<b>Difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the models:</b> There is no experimental opportunity to verify the effectiveness of the proposed solutions.

**IV. Results and discussion:**

**1. Research results from international documents**

Research from international literature indicates that green lifestyle among university student communities has been successfully implemented in many countries through specific strategies:

*Awareness and behavior:* A survey of 417 students showed that 90.6% are aware of the importance of a green lifestyle and want to change, but only 25% regularly perform green-friendly behaviors. environment (Dimitrova, Antonin, & Stastna, 2021)



*Illustration: Results of a green lifestyle survey among students (Dimitrova, Antonin, & Stastna 2021)*

*Barriers:* According to Dimitrova, Antonin, & Stastna, factors such as lack of time, finance, specific information and insufficient conditions prevent students from practicing a green lifestyle.

*Common behaviors:* Recycling, using public transportation or limiting the use of disposable products are the behaviors most commonly performed by students. However, only 25% of students do them regularly.

Successful models:

Numerical order	Programme	Content
1	Sustainable education program	<p>- Universities in Europe, such as in Sweden and Finland, have integrated sustainability education into their official curriculum (according to Argento and co-authors 2020). Students learn how to reduce their environmental impact through courses related to resource management, circular economy, and clean technology.</p> <p>- The Green Impact program, developed by the National Union of Students (NUS) in the UK in 2006, has been successful and spread to many countries. This program was implemented in the UK by SOS-UK, and later expanded to Australia, New Zealand (implemented by ACTS) and countries such as Belgium, Netherlands, France (implemented by SOS International). . In 2016, Green Impact was awarded the UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development (Maters, Tassinari Alves &amp; Van Enis, 2022).</p>
2	The program provides realistic models	<p>- Universities in the US, such as the University of California, Berkeley, have developed practical projects such as "Sustainability's curriculum initiative" (Kurland and co-authors 2010), where students participate in energy, water, and waste management on campus.</p> <p>- In Japan, Tokyo University encourages students to participate in tree planting and renewable energy development projects, contributing to reducing carbon emissions on campus (United Nations University 2024).</p>
3	Technology application and social media program	<p>- Research at Jyväskylä University of Applied Science, Finland found that using applications that track consumer behavior (such as measuring carbon in shopping) helped students become more aware of the environmental impact of them (Dubost 2023).</p> <p>- Social media campaigns, such as the Green Campus Program at the University of Michigan (Levy &amp; Marans 2012), where students can sign up and follow environmental activities, from participating in recycling groups to energy saving programs.</p>

**2. Research results from domestic documents:**

Green lifestyle in the student community in Vietnam is gradually forming, but there are still many limitations that need to be improved:

*Awareness of Green Living:* At the Dormitory Center of Vietnam National University, Ho Chi

Minh City, the initiative to build a "green, happy living environment" has been implemented in three phases: raising awareness about environmental protection, carrying out green actions such as recycling and tree planting, and building a green culture (Đình Khải, 2024). Although green living requires time and costs, Vietnam National

University has achieved many impressive accomplishments, such as planting over 5,000 trees and organizing 18 "Exchange Trash for Trees" programs, attracting the participation of more than 13,000 students, contributing to raising environmental awareness and encouraging community responsibility.

*Role of Universities:* Universities play a crucial role in educating and promoting green living, as they gather young, dynamic students with great potential to change the community. Universities can integrate environmental education into their curricula, organize awareness campaigns, and create opportunities for students to participate in practical projects. These efforts not only help students become more aware of environmental issues but also motivate them to become responsible citizens, contributing to the protection and sustainable development of society.

*Limitations in Facilities and Support Policies:* The implementation of "green" environmental studies in higher education has been carried out for a long time, and more and more universities are focusing on building sustainable learning environments. Universities not only renovate facilities but also promote the development of green skills for students and faculty through campus greening activities and sustainable initiatives (Luong Minh Phuong et al., 2024). However, training green skills still faces many challenges. Specifically, the lack of specialized lecturers, limited facilities, and financial constraints have affected the quality of teaching and the maintenance of green living habits among students. Only about 40% of students are able to apply knowledge about green technology and environmental protection.

### 3. Discussion:

*International Lessons:* International studies indicate that integrating sustainable education and implementing community projects are effective methods to promote green living. Vietnamese universities can learn from these models, particularly by incorporating sustainable education into curricula and creating opportunities for students to participate in practical projects.

*Challenges and Opportunities in Vietnam:* Although student awareness of green living has improved, translating awareness into action remains challenging. Issues such as limited infrastructure, high living costs, and a lack of long-term support policies need to be addressed. However, this also presents an opportunity for universities to pioneer sustainable programs and develop a green living culture.

*The Crucial Role of Technology:* The application of technology, especially online platforms and social media, can play a significant role in spreading the message of green living. Vietnamese universities can implement applications to track students' environmental impacts or organize online campaigns to raise awareness and encourage collective action.

*Conclusion:* Findings from both international and domestic studies show that promoting green living among university students requires a comprehensive approach, including education, support policies, and active community participation. Vietnamese universities can learn from successful global models to create initiatives suited to the local context, while leveraging technology and social media to expand their impact.

### V. Conclude:

Green Living is not just a trend, but an urgent requirement for the university student community, who represent the future of society. Based on theoretical analysis, research methods, and results from domestic and international literature, several important conclusions can be drawn as follows:

#### 1. The Importance of Green Living in the Student Community

Green living brings many benefits, not only limited to environmental protection but also helping students develop a sense of responsibility, enhance resource management skills, and build sustainable habits. This is a crucial foundation for forming a generation that is responsible for society and the environment. In the context of globalization and increasing climate change, university students need

to realize that small actions such as saving water, recycling waste, or using public transportation can contribute to significant changes.

## 2. Research Results and Practical Lessons:

International studies have shown that sustainable education and the practical implementation of green living through community projects are effective methods to change student behavior. Models such as integrating environmental education into curricula, implementing practical projects, and using technology to measure green living behaviors can be valuable lessons for Vietnam. However, domestic research indicates that although Vietnamese students' awareness of green living has improved, the lack of infrastructure, support policies, and financial pressures remain significant barriers. This requires long-term investment and strategic planning from universities and the government.

**3. Proposed Solutions** To promote green living in the Vietnamese student community, the following comprehensive solutions should be implemented:

**3.1 Enhancing Sustainable Education:** Integrate environmental protection education into the core curriculum, and organize workshops and extracurricular activities to raise awareness and practical skills.

**3.2 Building Supportive Infrastructure:** Invest in facilities such as sorting bins, recycling systems, and energy-saving measures to create favorable conditions for students to practice green living.

**3.3 Applying Technology and Media:** Utilize mobile applications and social media campaigns to track and spread green living behaviors within the student community.

**3.4 Promoting International Cooperation:** Learn from successful global models and build collaborative programs to share experiences, resources, and technology.

## 4. Future Expectations

Promoting green living in the student community is not only the responsibility of universities but also requires the joint effort of the entire society, including organizations, businesses, and

governments. In the future, if solutions are effectively implemented, Vietnam can build a generation deeply aware of environmental issues, contributing to mitigating climate change impacts and conserving natural resources for future generations. In summary, green living is not just a lifestyle but an essential path to building a sustainable society. With commitment and effort from all stakeholders, promoting green living in the university student community will bring positive impacts not only to the environment but also to the comprehensive development of people and society.

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