

The Trend of Vietnamese Consumers Switching from Plastic Bags to Eco-Friendly Bags

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Abstract: *The study used two methods, including desk research and a sociological survey, to study the trend of switching from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags among Vietnamese consumers. The results showed that the number of people who know about eco-friendly bag products accounts for a large proportion of the survey participants, however, the number of people who are still using plastic bags accounts for a high proportion. The reason many people choose to switch from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags is because they can be reused many times, thereby reducing the impact on the environment. The preferred type of bag is the eco-friendly canvas bag and the simple, compact design bag. The factor that is considered to have a great influence on the trend of switching to using eco-friendly bags is the self-awareness of the importance of eco-friendly bags in protecting the environment. The main difficulty in converting from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags is that the initial cost of these bags is much higher than that of plastic bags, and eco-friendly bags can only hold certain goods and items (it is difficult to hold fresh food, etc.). From the research results, the group of authors had some exchanges and discussions with the desire to promote the trend of switching from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags among Vietnamese consumers.*

Keywords: *Trend, conversion, plastic bags, eco-friendly bags, consumers, Vietnam*

I. Introduction

First introduced in the early 1970s, plastic bags have become a popular product globally over the time, produced at a rate of 1,000 billion bags per year. Plastic bags are even present in the deepest part of the ocean to the highest point of Mount Everest, creating a huge environmental challenge. According to statistics from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, each year, Vietnamese people use more than 30 billion plastic bags, and an average household will use 5-7 plastic bags per day. Most plastic bags are used only once and then thrown into the environment as waste. Notably, the plastic consumption index per capita in Vietnam has increased fivefold since 1990. Vietnam's population ranks 15th in the world but ranks 4th among the countries with the most plastic waste discharged into the ocean. The habit of consuming disposable plastic products is the main cause of the above situation. (dangcongsan.vn, 2024)

With the advantages of being durable, sturdy, convenient and low-cost, plastic bags are widely used and are present almost everywhere, from small retail stores to supermarkets and large shopping centers. "White pollution" is the phrase that scientists use to refer to a type of pollution caused by plastic bags to the environment. White pollution occurs when people discharge used plastic bags improperly, with a series of unpredictable consequences ... (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2017). Notably, during the process of collecting and burning garbage, a large amount of smoke, which contains toxic substances such as Dioxin and Furan, is released into the atmosphere, causing poisoning, and breathing difficulty. Some severe cases can include vomiting blood and cause cancer, reduced immunity, and dysfunction. Pregnant women who inhale this gas can cause birth defects in young children. (Thanh Huong, 2023)

Therefore, switching from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags will contribute to solving environmental pollution problems, minimizing the harmful effects of using plastic bags on the health of Vietnamese people in particular, and the world in general. In this study, the authors reviewed general issues about plastic bags and eco-friendly bags and considered the level of conversion from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags. Combining the desk research method and the sociological survey method to understand the trend of switching from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags for Vietnamese consumers.

II. Overview of plastic bags, eco-friendly bags

2.1. Overview of plastic bags

Concept of plastic bags

Plastic bags are a type of plastic packaging that is very thin, light, flexible, and very convenient for the family. In some places, it is also known as plastic bags or plastic bags... Initially, plastic bags were only used for the purpose of holding goods when shopping or for household use. Today, they cover almost all activities in modern society. (baobimynhu.com, 2019)

Plastic bag composition

The raw materials for producing plastic bags are mainly made from synthetic plastic beads from petroleum and a few different additives with different sizes depending on the specific purpose of use. (baobimynhu.com, 2019)

The raw materials for producing plastic bags are mainly made from virgin plastic beads (virgin plastic beads are a by-product of the process of exploiting and processing petroleum) or recycled plastic beads mixed with a few different raw materials and additives to create products. Plastic is light, thin, durable, waterproof, can be easily processed and is extremely cheap, so it is present everywhere in life. Plastic bag products also have 4 popular types with consumers. (baobiminhsang.com, 2020)

Harmful effects of plastic bags on the environment

The existence of plastic bags in the environment will seriously affect the soil and water because plastic bags mixed with the soil will change the physical properties of the soil, causing soil erosion, making the soil unable to retain water and nutrients, preventing oxygen from passing through the soil, affecting the growth of crops. (baobithanhluan.com, n.d)

Due to the nature of being difficult to decompose even when collected and buried, plastic bags still exist for hundreds of years, changing the physical properties of the soil, making the soil unable to retain water, leading to landslides, erosion, lack of nutrients and oxygen, directly affecting the growth of crops. If plastic waste is burned, it will create a greenhouse effect, pollute the air environment, and negatively affect human life and living organisms. (newstarpaper.vn, 2021)

Plastic bags that are dumped into the ocean are the main cause of poisoning marine life. Sea turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, while seagulls mistake these harmful plastic bags for squid. Plastic bags, once in the body of an organism, will clog or damage the intestinal wall, leading to a reduction in the organism's absorption capacity and even death. The harmful effects of plastic bags in particular and plastic waste in general cause the death of tens of thousands of marine species, leading to a decrease in biodiversity and changing the composition of the marine ecosystem. (newstarpaper.vn, 2021)

Plastic bags are extremely dangerous to human health. When burned, plastic bags produce dioxin and furan gases, two toxic gases that can cause poisoning, immunodeficiency, birth defects in children, and even cancer. If you use plastic packaging to store hot food, heavy metals in the bag such as lead and cadmium will seep into the food, causing liver failure, lung cancer and liver cancer... (newstarpaper.vn, 2021)

2.2. Overview of eco-friendly bags

2.2.1. Concept

Eco-friendly bags are the name used for all types of bags that help reduce the impact on the environment when discarded. These bags are designed to be reused or recycled, instead of being thrown away after each use like regular plastic bags. (thuanducjsc.vn, 2023)

Eco-friendly bags are understood to be bags that are produced from materials that can biodegrade in a short time. These types of bags are often made from cotton, fabric, paper, or jute. At the same time, the bags can be recycled and used many times, limiting daily waste. Because of this feature, eco-friendly bags are becoming more and more popular and common in life. In addition to minimizing the impact on the environment, using this type of bag also helps save a lot of costs. (metagent.vn, 2023)

2.2.2. Classification

Currently, there are many types of eco-friendly bags developed to serve the needs of users. According to metagent.vn (2023), popular types of eco-friendly bags that contribute to environmental protection include:

- **Reusable paper bags:**

Paper bags are made from natural materials. They are easy to recycle, safe for health, and very eco-friendly. Normally, paper bags will be completely decomposed after 1 - 3 months, much shorter than plastic bags. Paper bags are often used to store food processed food and are used by many restaurants. The cost of printing paper bags is quite cheap, helping businesses save costs. Therefore, paper bags are a useful choice to replace plastic bags.

- **Non-woven fabric bags**

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This type of bag is made from non-woven fabrics. The outstanding features of the bag are high durability, good load-bearing capacity, easy to use, and safe for human health. With these features, non-woven fabric bags can be reused many times, can be washed and folded after each use. Using non-woven fabric bags will limit the discharge of waste and plastic bags into the environment. At the same time, the bag has a short decomposition time of 3 - 4 years. Non-woven fabric bags are very diverse in design with many colors and images that are highly aesthetic and help businesses promote their brands.

- Plant-based biodegradable plastic bags

This type of bag is being widely used in many different fields. The bags are produced from plant sources such as coffee powder, corn bran, potatoes, etc. They do not use any chemicals. The ink printing process also uses organic materials. Thanks to that, the decomposition time is short, from 2 to 3 months. Like other eco-friendly bags, this type of bag has a certain durability and flexibility. In addition, the production cost is not high. This is a great solution to quickly eliminate plastic bags in daily life. Not only that, in many places around the world, after use, this type of bag will be composted with some other types of waste to create fertilizer. Under the influence of microorganisms, the bag is decomposed and converted into water, CO₂ and organic humus.

- eco-friendly canvas bags

This type of bag is made from canvas fabric derived from jute. During the production process, the bag does not use any colorants or bleaching agents. Therefore, when decomposing naturally, the bag does not pollute the environment. The durability of canvas bags is highly appreciated with a lifespan of up to 5 years. Therefore, they are reused many times. A big advantage of canvas bags is the variety of designs and models. The printing process is easy, saving a lot of costs for businesses. Not only that, this type of bag is also widely used by people because of its high aesthetics.

- Plastic bags are used to protect the environment

Plastic shopping bags are also widely used and are often seen in supermarkets and shopping centers. The bags have strong handles, various sizes and are very eco-friendly. The bags are made of plastic, plastic film and the seams are used by heat, stitching or adhesive. Therefore, the bags are also highly durable and can be recycled many times.

2.2.3. The role of eco-friendly bags

- For the environment

Given the current serious environmental pollution, using eco-friendly paper bags is a smart solution that brings high efficiency to the surrounding environment. It can be seen that it is not by chance that most developed countries have policies to use eco-friendly paper bags to replace printed plastic bags, plastic bags, and cloth bags, but for practical reasons:

- Because it is made from recycled paper, it is easy to decompose in the environment; combined with the ability to be reused many times, it can limit the amount of emissions into the environment, which is important to help protect the green and clean environment. (inrongoi.com, 2024)
- Using environmental paper bags and recycling many times helps reduce the need for paper, so it preserves natural forests well and does not cause widespread deforestation, causing many unpredictable consequences for nature and humans. (inrongoi.com, 2024)
- In contrast to plastic bags and nylon bags, using cheap recycled paper bag printing samples in HCMC helps reduce CO₂ emissions, reduce solid waste, reduce wastewater, and improve water quality, helping to protect the natural environment and avoid environmental pollution. (inrongoi.com, 2024)

- For business

According to inrongoi.com (2024), eco-friendly bags are not only meaningful in protecting the natural environment but also play a very important role for businesses and users such as:

- Having many good properties such as flexibility and strength, helping to ensure the preservation of goods.
- Being a highly effective communication and marketing tool, making a strong impression on customers. Beautiful printed environmental paper bags are designed to suit many needs, forms, and creative and luxurious designs that will leave an impression on customers, helping to increase the ability to promote good product brands.
- Because this is a type of recycled paper and can be used many times, it helps businesses save on investment costs for packaging printing.

2.3. The level of conversion from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags

Currently, many countries in the world apply policies on using eco-friendly bags. The habit of using plastic bags is gradually changing. Each of us needs to act immediately to protect the environment and living space.

2.3.1. Achievements

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The level of conversion from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags varies depending on the geographical area, national policies, and people's awareness. The ban on single-use plastics has been and is in effect in many countries around the world. The plastic ban focuses on items commonly found in the environment such as plastic bags, plastic straws, plastic knives, plastic spoons, plastic boxes ... products that are difficult to recycle. The current situation of plastic waste is no longer a problem of any country, but it has become global. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone in the region and territory around the world to join hands to eliminate plastic products from the environment and life. (tokyolife.vn, 2022b)

Many countries have banned plastic bags. Bans are particularly common in African countries. In Kenya, anyone caught selling, manufacturing, or using plastic bags can be fined up to \$38,000 or sentenced to up to four years in prison. In Europe, most countries choose to charge (or tax) plastic bags to discourage their use. The United States, Canada, and Australia, although lacking nationwide bans or fees, have implemented them vigorously in many states and cities. (tokyolife.vn, 2022a)

Box 1. Some countries in the world have implemented bans and charges for plastic bags

- Europe: England, Italy, Germany, Scotland, Wales, Denmark ...
- Asia: Japan, Thailand, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia ...
- North America - Implemented in some states and cities: Puerto Rico, New York, Seattle, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Maine ...
- South America: Some areas in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia have implemented measures to reduce the use of plastic bags such as charging fees and implementing recycling programs.
- Africa: Kenya, Mali, Cameroon, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Morocco

Source: tokyolife.vn (2022a)

In EU countries

On May 28, 2018, the European Union (EU) called on member countries to collect 90% of plastic bottles by 2025 and proposed to ban single-use plastic products such as straws, plates, spoons, chopsticks, etc. Based on the above plan, EU members must reduce the use of plastic containers for food or drinks by finding alternative solutions. Manufacturers of plastic products are required to pay waste management fees and are encouraged to use less polluting alternatives. (tokyolife.vn, 2022b)

In Germany

On November 6, 2020, the German Bundestag passed a decree banning single-use plastic products. This decree will be applied uniformly throughout the European Union (EU). Accordingly, the use and trade of single-use plastic or foam utensils will be banned from July 2021. The German Federal Environment Minister welcomed the ban and emphasized that there are eco-friendly alternatives that can be used multiple times and that eliminating single-use items will contribute to protecting parks, beaches, and oceans. (tokyolife.vn, 2022b)

In the UK

A ban on plastic tubes, cotton buds and stirrers in the UK comes into effect from 1 October 2020. This is the latest effort by the UK government to reduce the impact of plastic pollution on the environment. The ban follows an announcement in August 2020 that the charge for single-use plastic bags in the UK will double. In an effort to encourage the use of recycled plastic, the UK government will introduce a new tax, the highest in the world, on plastic packaging that does not meet a minimum threshold of 30% recycled content from April 2022. (tokyolife.vn, 2022b)

In Vietnam

In Vietnam, according to statistics from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the two major cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City alone discharge an average of 80 tons of plastic and nylon bags into the environment every day. Every day, Hanoi discharges 4,000 to 5,000 tons of waste, of which nylon waste accounts for 7-8%. (tokyolife.vn, 2022a)

In 2018, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment launched a nationwide movement "Anti-plastic waste". The movement aims to call on people to immediately change their behavior and habits of using nylon bags. Businesses, supermarkets, and shopping centers use new eco-friendly materials to replace single-use plastic products. Scientists promote research and application of production technology; encourage the development of products that can be decomposed, reused, and are eco-friendly. Domestic agencies and international partners promote forms of cooperation, support the reception of technology on management, recycling, treatment of plastic waste, and development of products to replace plastic and nylon. (tokyolife.vn, 2022a)

At the G20 summit on November 21, 2020, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc affirmed that Vietnam is determined to fight plastic waste and is implementing strong solutions to strive to not use disposable plastic products by 2025. Instead, products that can decompose well in the environment after use will be used. (tokyolife.vn, 2022b)

2.3.2. Difficulties

Consumers have become accustomed to using plastic bags because of their convenience and low cost. Changing this habit will take time and patience. Eco-friendly bags are often more expensive than plastic bags. This can make consumers hesitant to switch, especially in low-income areas. In addition, many people are not fully aware of the environmental impact of plastic bags and the benefits of eco-friendly bags. Education and awareness raising are essential but require time and resources.

In many places, recycling infrastructure is not yet developed enough to handle eco-friendly bags. This reduces the effectiveness of the transition. In some areas, eco-friendly bags are less popular and more difficult to access than plastic bags.

The plastic bag industry has a strong influence and often opposes measures to ban or restrict the use of plastic bags. Materials for making eco-friendly bags, such as recycled paper, fabric, or bioplastics, may not be available or suitable for all applications. Some specific applications of plastic bags are difficult to replace with eco-friendly bags. For example, plastic bags are lightweight and waterproof, which not all eco-friendly bags can provide.

Box 2. Ho Chi Minh City consumers still maintain the habit of using plastic bags

Despite causing many consequences for the environment, plastic bags are still present everywhere in life because of their convenience. Depending on the size and use, the price of plastic bags will vary, the price of plastic bags only ranges from 20,000 - 50,000 VND/kg. Due to their low cost and convenience, plastic bags appear everywhere in people's lives.

In Ho Chi Minh City, there are 1,800 tons of plastic waste every day, including hundreds of thousands of plastic bags, but only 200 tons are collected and recycled.

Source: Phuong Quyen, Tien Quoc (2023)

Thus, the transition will take time for consumers, businesses, and stakeholders to adapt to new alternatives. It requires the cooperation of many parties, from governments businesses, to the consumer community. Education campaigns, financial support, and appropriate infrastructure development are needed to promote this transition.

III. Research method

To study "The trend of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags among Vietnamese consumers", the research team used two research methods including desk research (reviewing documents published in the media) and sociological survey (collecting questionnaires from Vietnamese consumers). The data will be compiled and analyzed using Excel and SPSS software.

With the desk research method, the research team reviewed documents on plastic bags, eco-friendly bags, and the level of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags... through the Google Scholar search engine and information pages related to plastic bags and eco-friendly bags. From there, the research team developed a survey form to conduct a sociological survey on the trend of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags among Vietnamese consumers.

Using sociological survey method, the research team conducted a preliminary survey and discussed with 15 Vietnamese consumers who are interested and wondering about choosing plastic bags and eco-friendly bags. The discussion used a preliminary questionnaire with the following contents:

- General information about the survey participants
- Filter the survey participants to see if they use plastic bags or have switched to using eco-friendly bags?
- For those who use plastic bags, what is the purpose of using the product?
- Consider the level of plastic bag use of the survey participants (for those who use plastic bags)?
- Find out the reasons for those who do not want to switch from using plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags?
- Conversion rate from plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags?
- Why are plastic bags becoming more popular and tending to switch to using eco-friendly bags?
- What characteristics do consumers expect from eco-friendly bags?
- Consider the factors affecting the conversion from plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags?
- What difficulties do consumers encounter when switching from plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags?

The participants of the preliminary survey were discussed and freely expressed their opinions on relevant aspects to complete the survey. The preliminary research results were used to complete the research questionnaire. After having a complete survey, the research team sent and collected the survey via the link on Google Form (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeA0TAnho4MZY58ueEoR7zRaUp-q86lb0FdQV7Lvp5tpFR4w/viewform>) with the target audience being consumers in Vietnam.

The data collection method was conducted by the research team based on the convenience sampling method and the "snowball" method (a method of finding the next subject based on the suggestion or introduction of the subject just surveyed) to ensure sufficient sample size as required. The number of survey questionnaires collected was 193, of

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which 165 questionnaires (85.5% of the total questionnaires collected) were from consumers who knew about eco-friendly bags and were considered and analyzed for the trend of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags.

4. Survey Results

4.1. Description of Survey Participants

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Participants

Gender	Quantity	Percentage (%)	Academic level	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Male	42	25.5	High school	19	11.5
Female	122	73.9	College	8	4.8
Does not wish to respond	1	0.6	Currently studying atgraduate school	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>	Work	138	83.6
Living area	Quantity	Percentage (%)	Retire	0	0
Urban	150	90.9	<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>
Suburban	15	9.1	Age	Quantity	Percentage (%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>	Under 18	19	11.5
Income (million VND)	Quantity	Percentage (%)	18 - 21	11	6.7
< 5	40	24.2	22 - 31	86	52.1
5 - 10	43	26.1	32 - 41	45	27.3
10 - 15	41	24.8	42 - 51	3	1.8
15 - 20	15	9.1	52 - 61	1	0.6
20 - 30	11	6.7	62 and above	0	0
30 -40	5	3	<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>
40 - 50	1	0.6	Using plastic bag?	Quantity	Percentage (%)
> 50	9	5.5	Yes	154	93.3
<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>	No	11	6.7
			<i>Total</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Survey results

About the educational level of the survey participants

Of the 165 survey participants, 19 were high school students (11.5%); 8 were university students (4.8%); 138 were working (83.6%).

About the gender of the survey participants

Of the 165 survey participants, 122 were female (73.9%); 42 were male (25.5%) and 1 survey participant did not want to specify their gender (0.6%).

About the living area of the survey participants

Of the 165 survey participants, 150 lived in the inner city (90.9%) and 15 lived in the suburbs (9.1%).

About the age of the survey participants

Of the 165 survey participants, 19 were under 18 years old (11.5%); 11 were between 18 and 21 years old (6.7%); 86 were between 22 and 31 years old (52.1%); 45 were between 32 and 41 years old (27.3%); 3 were between 42 and 51 years old (1.8%) and 1 was between 52 and 61 years old (0.6%).

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About the monthly income of the survey participants

Of the 165 survey participants, 40 had a monthly income of less than VND 5 million (24.2%); 43 had a monthly income of VND 5 to less than VND 10 million (26.1%); 41 had a monthly income of VND 10 to less than VND 15 million (24.8%); 15 had a monthly income of VND 15 to less than VND 20 million (9.1%); 11 had a monthly income of VND 20 to less than VND 30 million (6.7%); 5 had a monthly income of VND 30 to less than VND 40 million (3%); 1 had a monthly income of VND 40 to less than VND 50 million (0.6%) and 9 survey participants had a monthly income of more than VND 50 million (5.5%).

4.2. The trend of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags

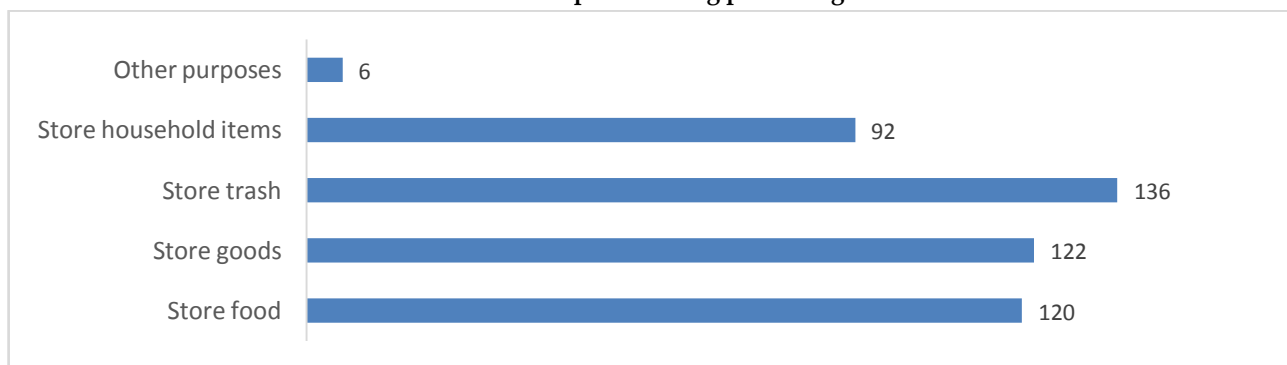
About the level of awareness of eco-friendly bag products

Of the 193 survey participants, 165 were aware of the product (85.5%) and 28 were unaware of the product (14.5%). This shows that a large proportion of the survey participants were aware of eco-friendly bag products.

Use of plastic bags

Of the 165 people who knew about eco-friendly bags, **154 people (93.3%) used plastic bags**, and only a few people, 11 people (6.7%), said they did not use plastic bags/had switched to using eco-friendly bags.

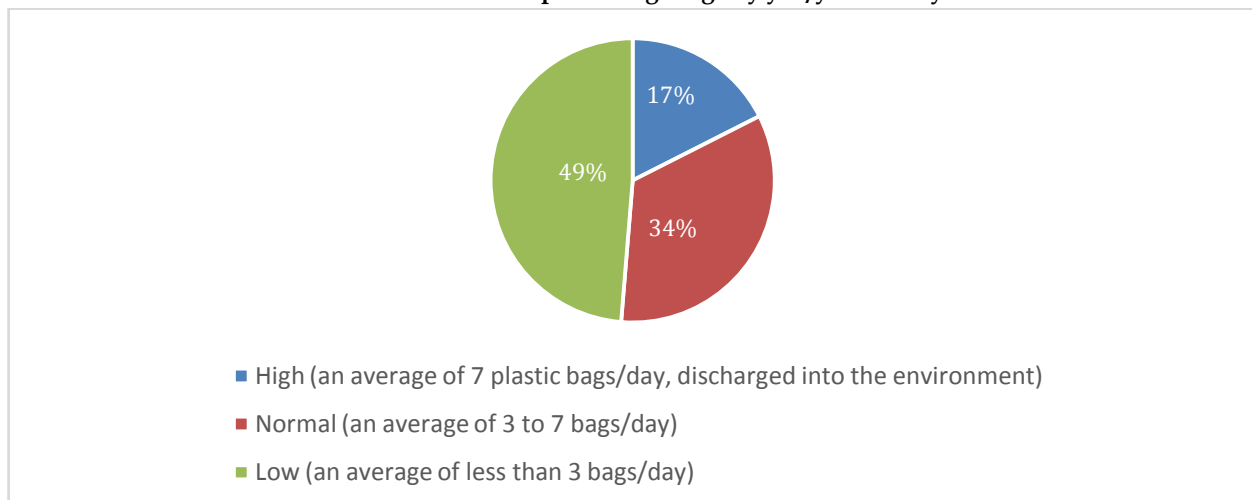
Chart 1. Purpose of using plastic bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 154 survey participants, 120 people used plastic bags to store food (77.9%); 122 people chose to store goods (79.2%); 136 people used them to store trash (88.3%); 92 people stored household items and 6 people used plastic bags for other purposes (3.7%) ...

Chart 2. Level of plastic bag usage by you/your family

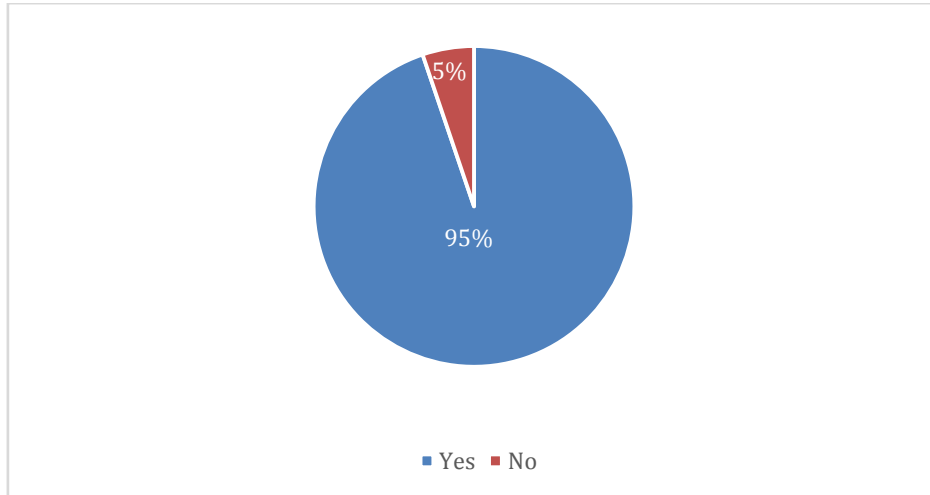


Source: Survey results

Of the 154 survey participants, 27 people used them at a high level (an average of 7 plastic bags/day, discharged into the environment, accounting for 17%); 52 people used them at a normal level (an average of 3 to 7 bags/day, accounting for 34%); 75 people used them at a low level (discharged into the environment, 49%).

Trends in switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags

Chart 3. Trends in switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 154 survey participants, 146 people tend to want to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags; only 8 people have no intention or desire to switch.

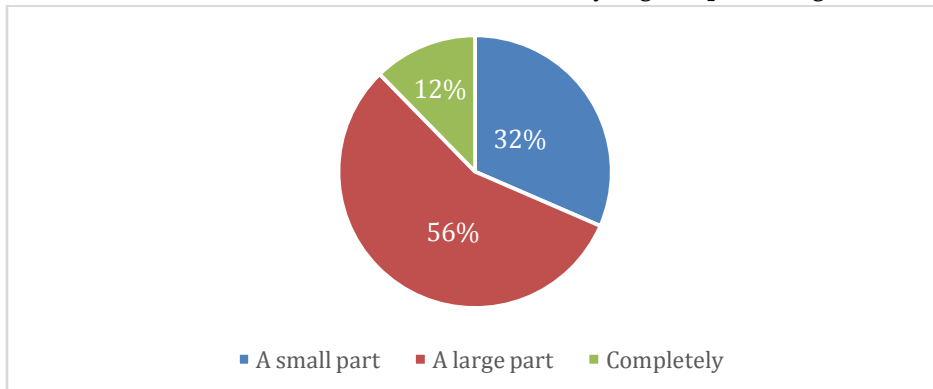
Chart 4. Reasons for not wanting to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 8 people who do not want to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags, the reasons are as follows: 5 people feel that eco-friendly bags are not as convenient as plastic bags (62.5%); 3 people notice that not many people around them use eco-friendly bags (37.5%); 6 people said that they are in a passive position and cannot use eco-friendly bags (shops, supermarkets, markets all use plastic bags to store food, goods, etc.) (accounting for 75%); 5 people find that the price of eco-friendly bags is higher than that of plastic bags (62.5%); and 2 people simply do not like to use eco-friendly bags (25%).

Chart 5. Level of substitution of eco-friendly bags for plastic bags



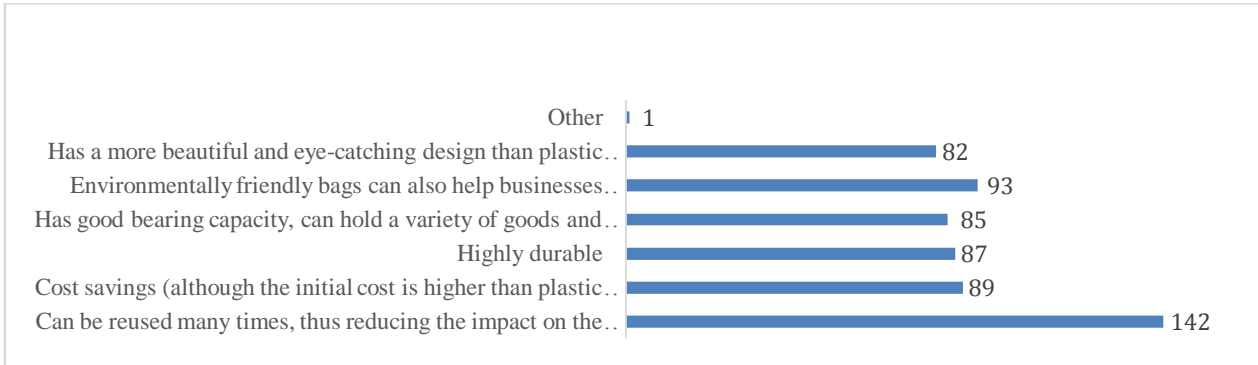
Source: Survey results

Of the 154 people who use plastic bags, 146 people tend to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags, along with 11 people who do not use plastic bags/ have switched to using eco-friendly bags. A total of 157 people were included in the survey with further questions about the trend of switching to using eco-friendly bags.

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Of the 146 people who tend to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags, 46 people said that eco-friendly bags can replace a small part of plastic bags (32%); 82 people said that eco-friendly bags can replace a large part of plastic bags (56%); and 18 people said that eco-friendly bags can replace them completely (12%).

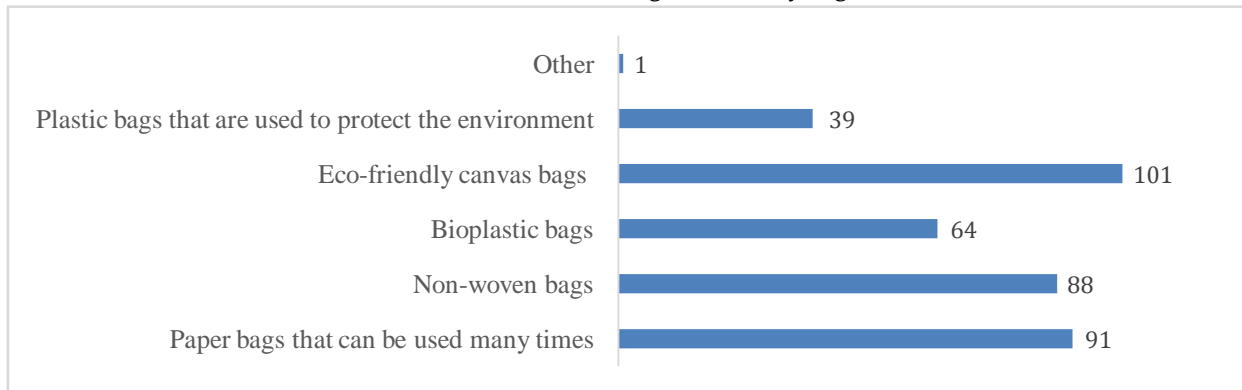
Chart 6. Reasons for switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 157 survey participants, 142 said the reason for switching to eco-friendly bags was because they could be reused many times, thus reducing the impact on the environment (90.4%); 89 said they used them to save costs (although the initial cost is higher than plastic bags, in the long run, using eco-friendly bags can save costs) (56.7%); 87 said eco-friendly bags are durable (55.4%); 85 said eco-friendly bags have good load-bearing capacity and can hold a variety of goods and items (54.1%); 93 said eco-friendly bags also have the ability to support businesses in promoting their brands to consumers better (59.2%); 82 people find the bag more beautiful and eye-catching than plastic bags (52.2%); and 1 person has other reasons (0.6%).

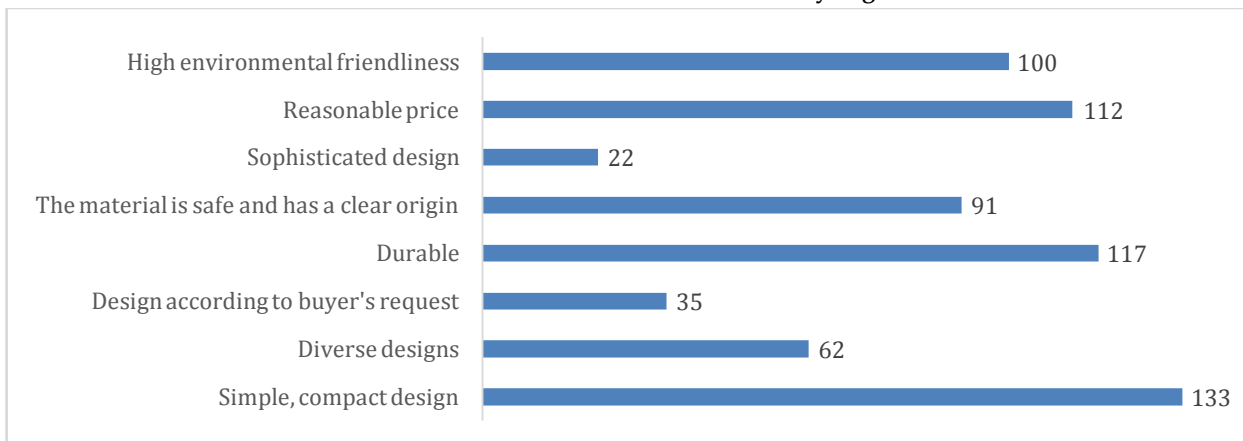
Chart 7. Trends in using eco-friendly bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 157 survey participants, 91 people want to use reusable paper bags (58%); 88 people want to use non-woven fabric bags (56.1%); 64 people want biodegradable plastic bags of plant origin (40.8%); 101 people like eco-friendly canvas bags (64.3%); 39 people like plastic bags used to protect the environment (24.8%); and 1 person uses other types of bags (0.6%).

Chart 8. Characteristics of eco-friendly bags

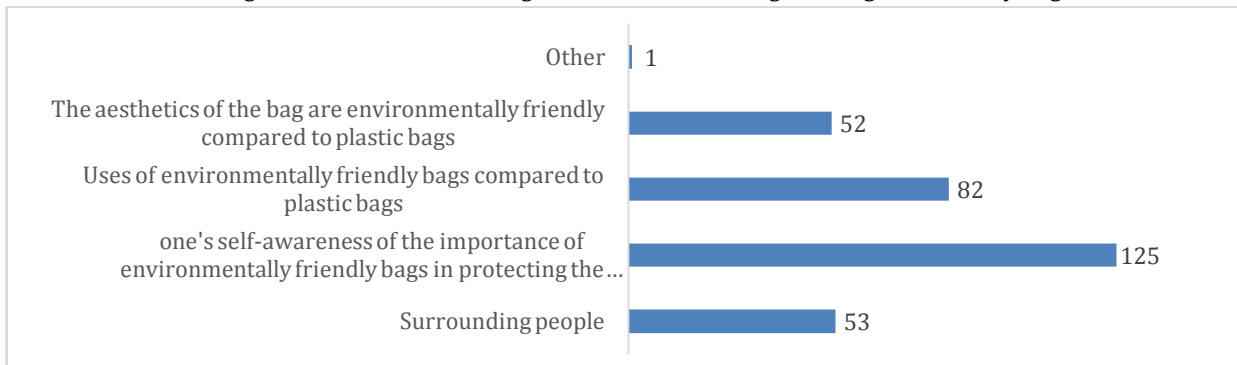


Source: Survey results

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Of the 157 survey participants, 113 people prefer simple, compact bag designs (84.7%); 62 people prefer diverse designs (39.5%); 35 people tend to design according to request (22.3%); 117 people tend to choose durable bags (74.5%); 91 people choose based on the criteria of safe materials and clear origin (58%); 22 people prefer sophisticated designs (14%); 112 people want reasonable prices (71.3%); and 100 people are interested in high environmental friendliness (63.7%).

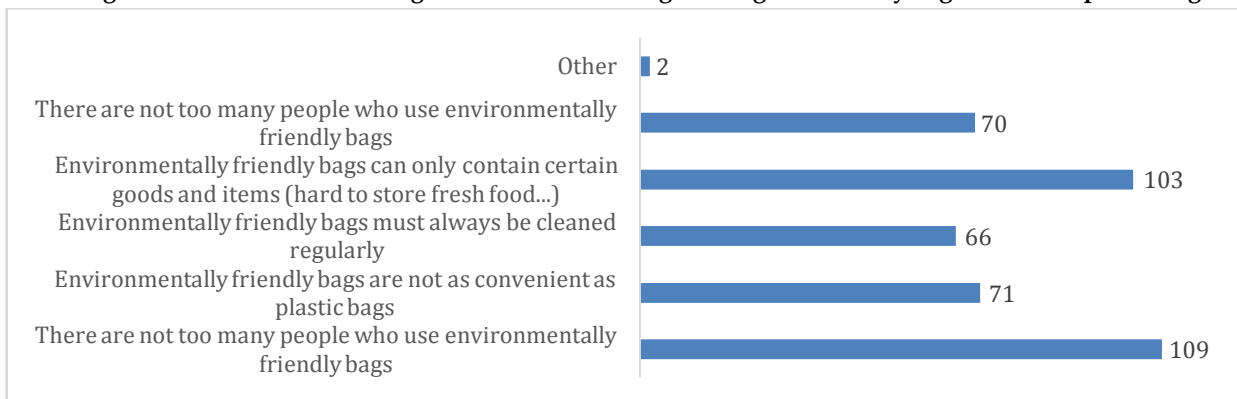
Figure 9. Factors influencing the trend of switching to using eco-friendly bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 157 survey participants, 53 people said that the factors influencing the switch to using eco-friendly bags were people around them (33.8%); 125 people were personally aware of the importance of eco-friendly bags in protecting the environment (79.6%); 82 people recognized the usefulness of eco-friendly bags compared to plastic bags (52.2%); 52 people were interested in the aesthetics of eco-friendly bags compared to plastic bags (33.1%); and 1 person said other reasons (0.6%).

Figure 10. Difficulties affecting the trend of switching to using eco-friendly bags instead of plastic bags



Source: Survey results

Of the 157 survey participants, 109 people said that the difficulty of switching from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags is due to *the initial cost of eco-friendly bags being much higher than that of plastic bags* (69.4%); 71 people found that eco-friendly bags are not as convenient as plastic bags (45.2%); 66 people said that eco-friendly bags always need to be cleaned regularly (42%); 103 people said that *eco-friendly bags can only hold certain goods and items (it is difficult to hold fresh food, etc.)* (accounting for 65.6%); 70 people said that not many people use eco-friendly bags (44.6%); and 2 people gave other reasons (1.2%).

5. Discussion

Some conclusions can be drawn from the survey results:

The number of people who know about eco-friendly bag products accounts for a large proportion of the survey participants; however, the number of people who are still using plastic bags accounts for a high proportion. The results also show that the number of people who tend to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags accounts for a large proportion.

Those who do not want to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags mainly because they are in a passive position and cannot use eco-friendly bags (shops, supermarkets, markets all use plastic bags to store food, goods, etc.), and eco-friendly bags are not as convenient as plastic bags, etc.

For those who tend to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags, the majority think that eco-friendly bags can replace plastic bags.

The reason why many people choose to switch from plastic bags to eco-friendly bags is because they can be reused many times, thereby reducing the impact on the environment, and eco-friendly bags also have the ability to

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support businesses to promote their brands to consumers better. The preferred type of bag is the eco-friendly canvas bag, and the simple, compact design bag. The factor that is said to have a great influence on the trend of switching to using eco-friendly bags is the self-awareness of the importance of eco-friendly bags in protecting the environment. The main difficulty in switching from using plastic bags to eco-friendly bags, as recorded by the survey results, is that the initial cost of eco-friendly bags is much higher than that of plastic bags, and eco-friendly bags can only hold certain goods and items (it is difficult to hold fresh food, etc.).

The transition from using plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags is an important goal to protect the environment and reduce plastic waste. To promote this process, it is necessary to coordinate many measures synchronously, such as:

Policies and laws:

It is necessary to issue policies and laws to ban or restrict the use of plastic bags, along with strict penalties. Apply environmental taxes or fees on plastic bag products to encourage consumers and businesses to switch to using eco-friendly bags.

Education and awareness raising:

Organize communication campaigns to raise awareness about the harmful effects of plastic bags on the environment. Include content on environmental protection and the benefits of eco-friendly bags in school curricula.

Encourage and support businesses:

Provide subsidies or tax incentives for businesses that produce and distribute eco-friendly bags. Provide technical and financial support to businesses in researching and developing products to replace plastic bags.

Encourage consumers:

Organize programs to exchange old plastic bags for free or discounted eco-friendly bags. Provide incentives and discounts when customers use eco-friendly bags at stores and supermarkets.

Develop a collection and recycling system:

Build and improve a collection and recycling system for plastic bags and eco-friendly bags to ensure they are not thrown away indiscriminately. Create advanced recycling facilities to process plastic bags effectively, minimizing negative impacts on the environment.

Research and develop new products:

Invest in research and development of new eco-friendly bags that are biodegradable or reusable. Search for new, eco-friendly materials to replace plastic in bag production.

International cooperation:

Participate in international programs and initiatives to reduce plastic waste and protect the environment. Learn and apply successful experiences from other countries in reducing the use of plastic bags. The synchronous implementation of the above solutions will contribute to promoting the transition from using plastic bags to using eco-friendly bags effectively.

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