Thinking Green but Buying Thoughtless?

An Empirical Examination of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap among German Clothing Consumers

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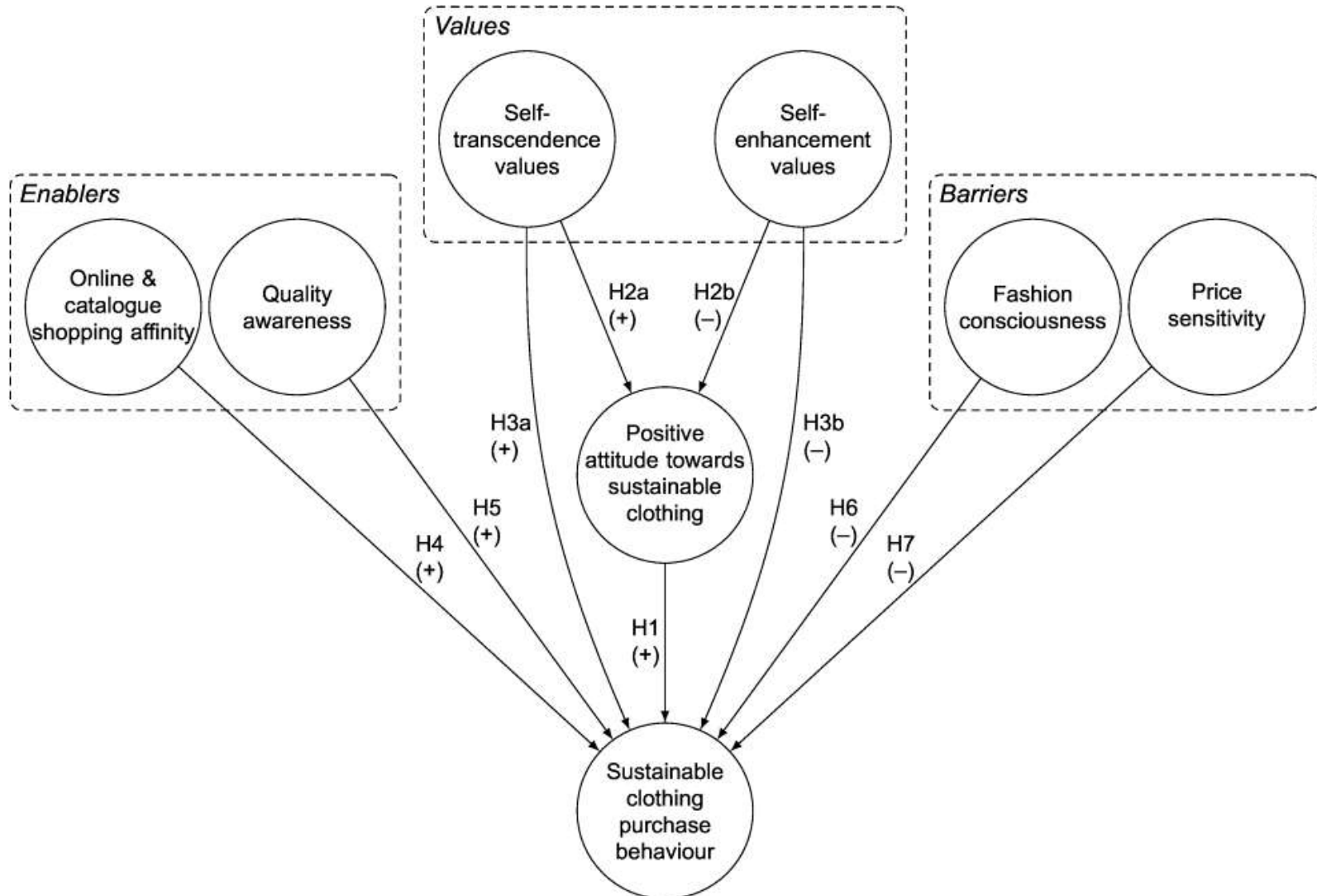**SustEcon Conference 2017 – Paper Session V**

1. Introduction

- Sustainable clothing: discrepancy between consumer attitudes and actual consumer behaviours

  → **Attitude-behaviour gap (ABG)**

- SDG 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production"

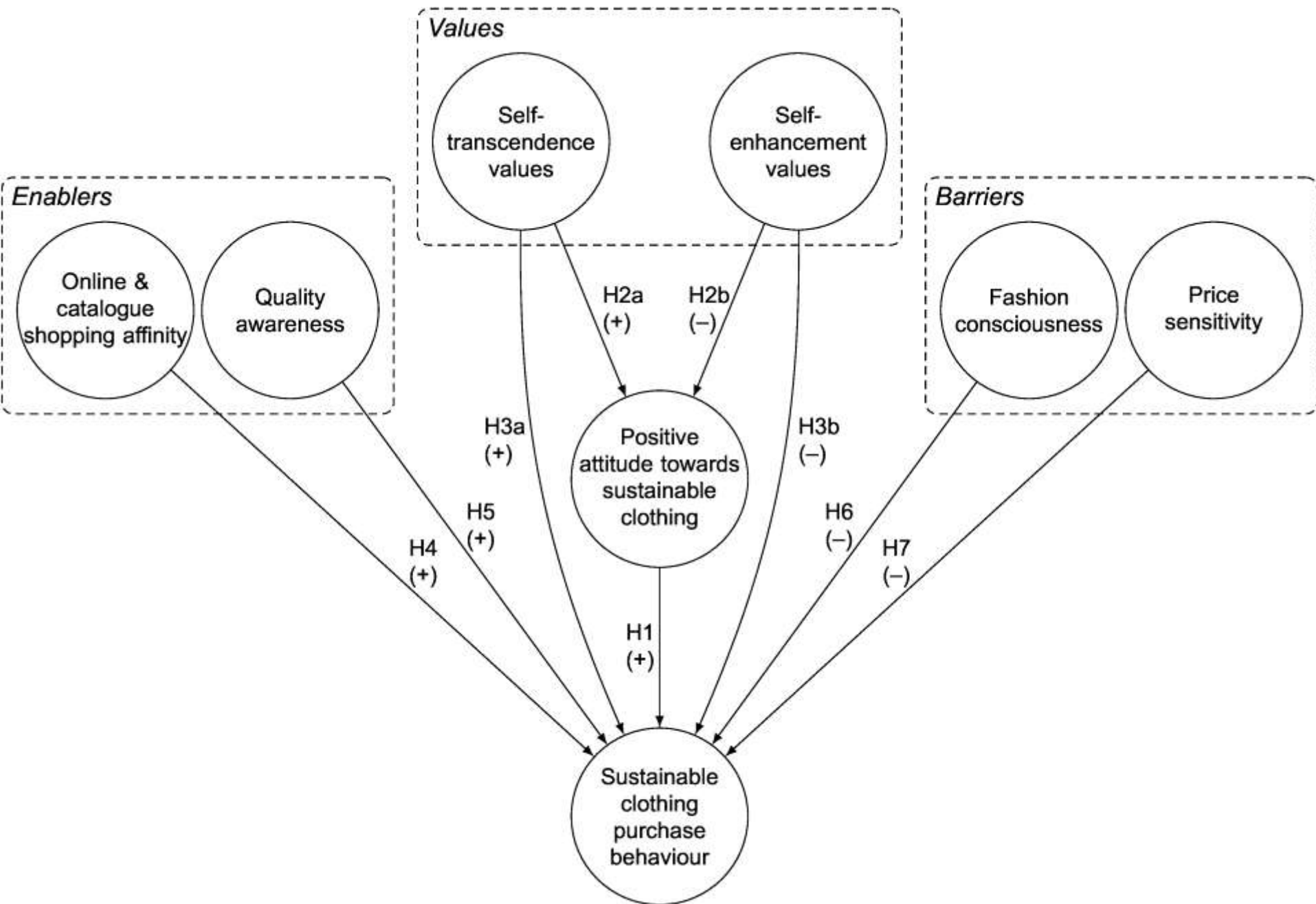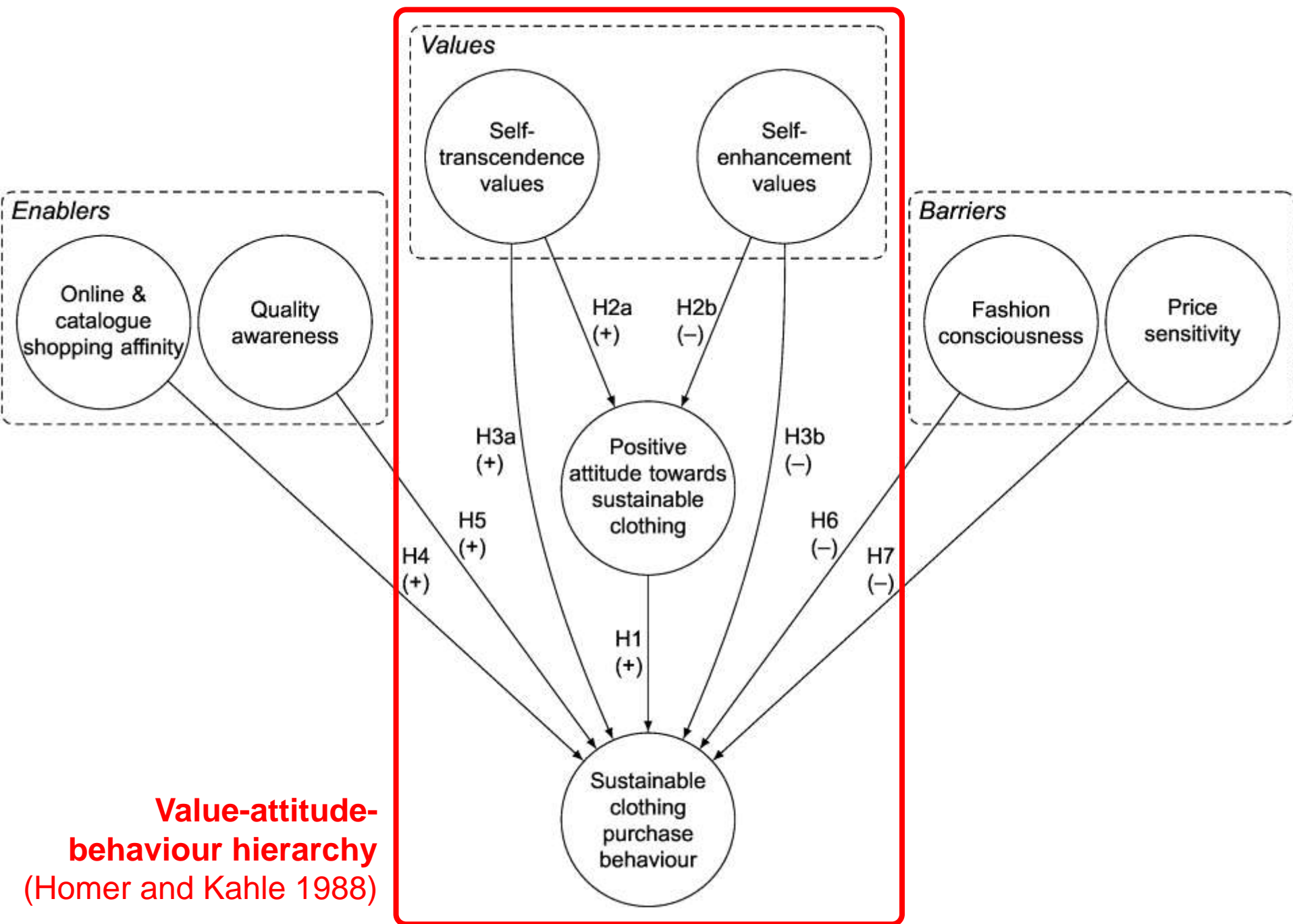- Need for research on ABG in sustainable clothing

1. Introduction

- Sustainable clothing: discrepancy between consumer attitudes and actual consumer behaviours

  → **Attitude-behaviour gap (ABG)**

- SDG 12 "Responsible Consumption and Production"

- Need for research on ABG in sustainable clothing

- Research questions:

  – **How large is a possible gap** between the positive attitude towards sustainable clothing and actual sustainable clothing purchase behaviour?

  – **Which factors hinder (barriers) or enhance (enablers)** sustainable clothing purchase behaviour?

2. Conceptual Model

Values

Self-transcendence values

Self-enhancement values

Enablers

Online & catalogue shopping affinity

Quality awareness

Barriers

Fashion consciousness

Price sensitivity

H2a (+)

H2b (−)

H3a (+)

H3b (−)

H5 (+)

H4 (+)

H6 (−)

H7 (−)

Positive attitude towards sustainable clothing

H1 (+)

Sustainable clothing purchase behaviour

Value-attitude-behaviour hierarchy (Homer and Kahle 1988)

Schwartz's theory of basic human values (Schwartz 1992, 1994)

Values

Self-transcendence values

Self-enhancement values

Enablers

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H2a (+)

H2b (−)

H3a (+)

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Positive attitude towards sustainable clothing

H5 (+)

H6 (−)

H4 (+)

H7 (−)

H1 (+)

Sustainable clothing purchase behaviour
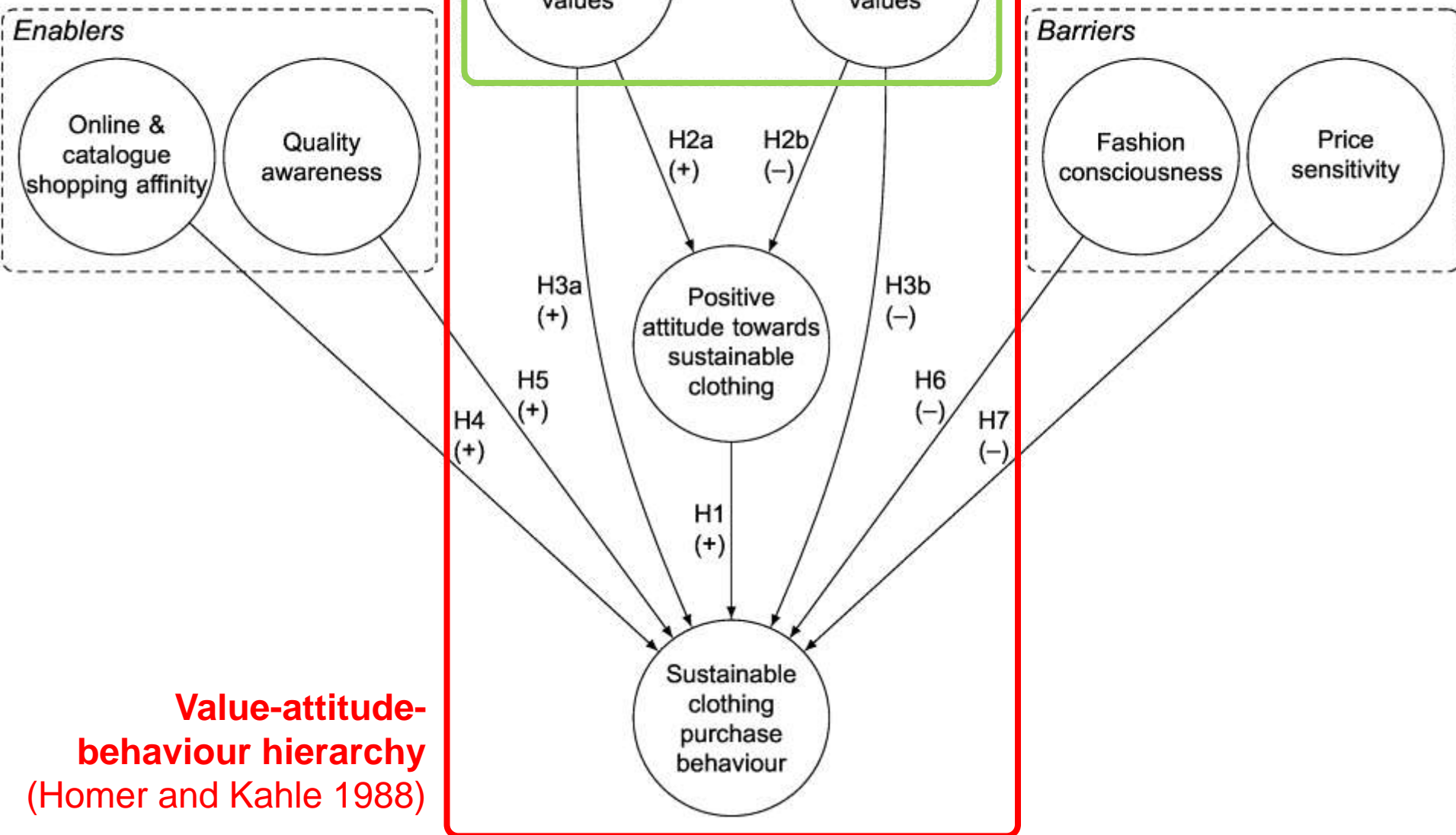
Value-attitude-behaviour hierarchy (Homer and Kahle 1988)

3. Sample

- Empirical data from a market research study commissioned by Hess Natur-Textilien GmbH

- Online survey administered to German women of the middle- to high-priced clothing segment

  → Younger and higher educated

- 1085 usable questionnaires

- Survey period in March 2013

4. Measures

| Construct	Measure
STV: Self-transcendence values	Biospheric Altruistic
SEV: Self-enhancement values	Egoistic Hedonic
Att: Positive attitude towards sustainable clothing	Ecological attribute Social attribute
Bhv: Sustainable clothing purchase behaviour	Share of expenses for organic clothing
OCSA: Online and catalogue shopping affinity	Share of online and catalogue channel relevance
QualA: Quality awareness	5-year guarantee Life-long guarantee
FashC: Fashion consciousness	Fashion brand 1 Fashion brand 2
PrSens: Price sensitivity	Importance of price

4. Measures

Construct	Measure	Factor loading	Construct reliability		
			α	ω	AVE
STV: Self-transcendence values	Biospheric	0.779	0.707	0.710	0.552
	Altruistic	0.702			
SEV: Self-enhancement values	Egoistic	0.771	0.629	0.636	0.469
	Hedonic	0.595			
Att: Positive attitude towards sustainable clothing	Ecological attribute	0.882	0.846	0.849	0.738
	Social attribute	0.833			
Bhv: Sustainable clothing purchase behaviour	Share of expenses for organic clothing	0.986	(fixed at 0.85)		
OCSA: Online and catalogue shopping affinity	Share of online and catalogue channel relevance	0.978	(fixed at 0.85)		
QualA: Quality awareness	5-year guarantee	0.888	0.851	0.863	0.762
	Life-long guarantee	0.850			
FashC: Fashion consciousness	Fashion brand 1	0.649	0.712	0.737	0.592
	Fashion brand 2	0.856			
PrSens: Price sensitivity	Importance of price	0.867	(fixed at 0.85)		

5. Results
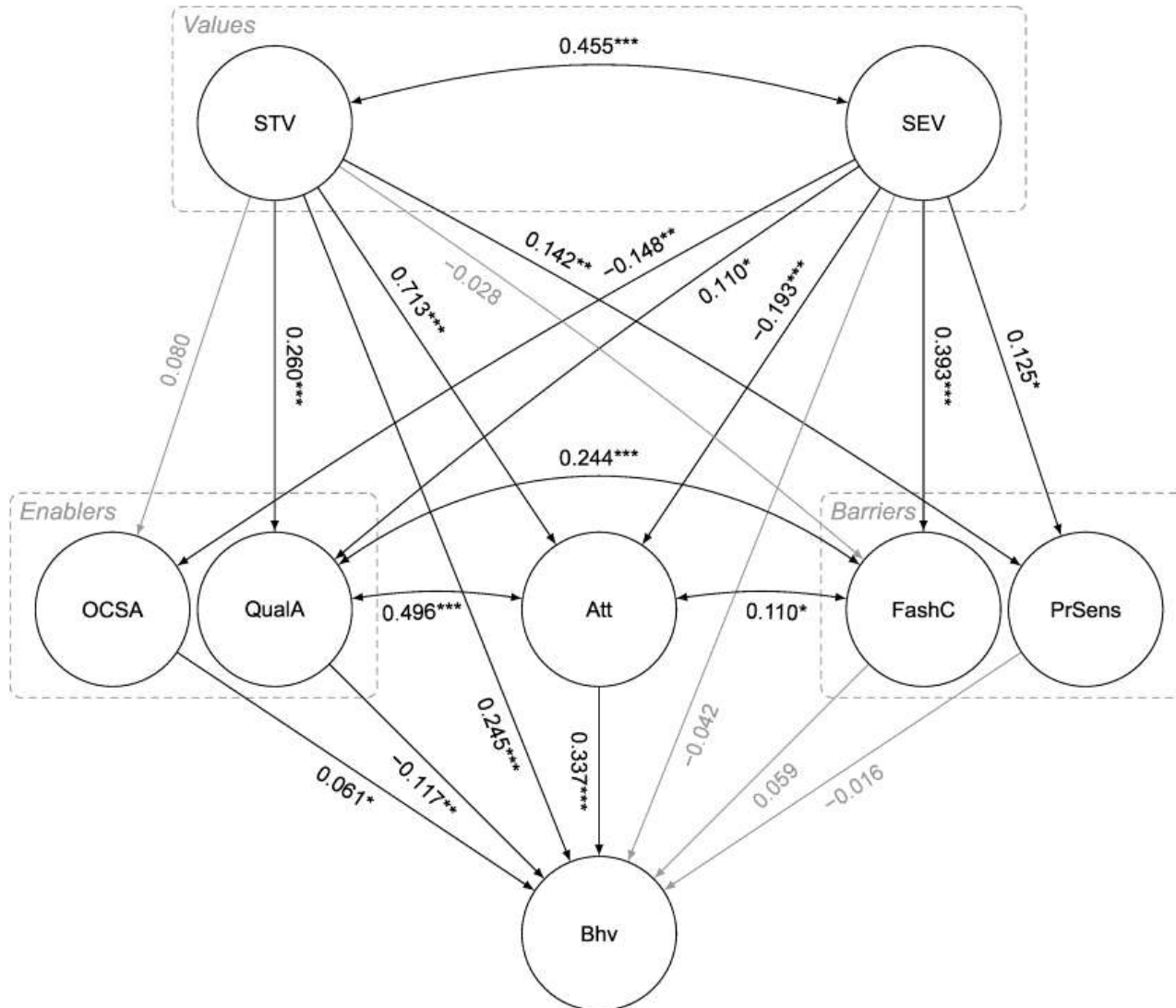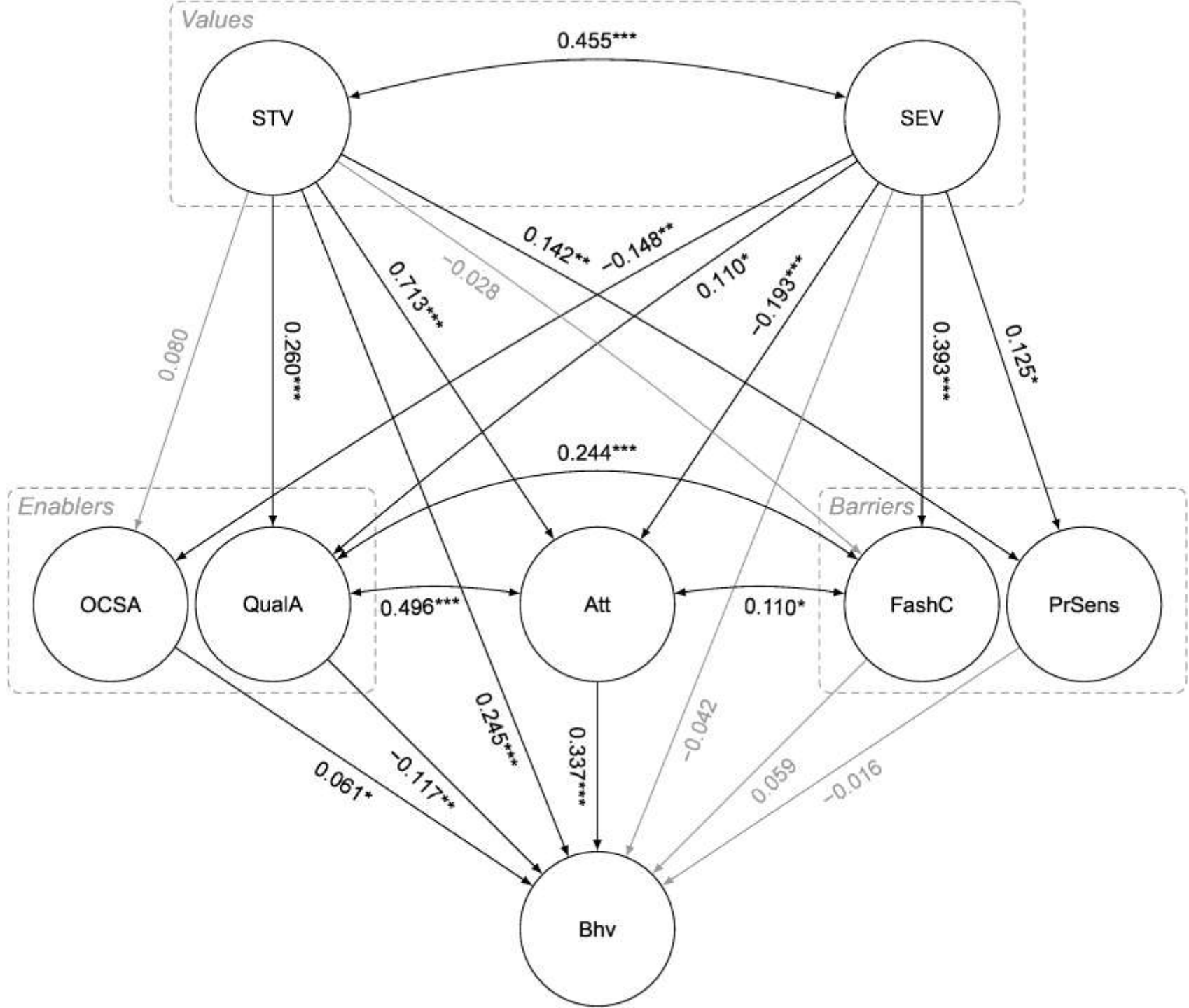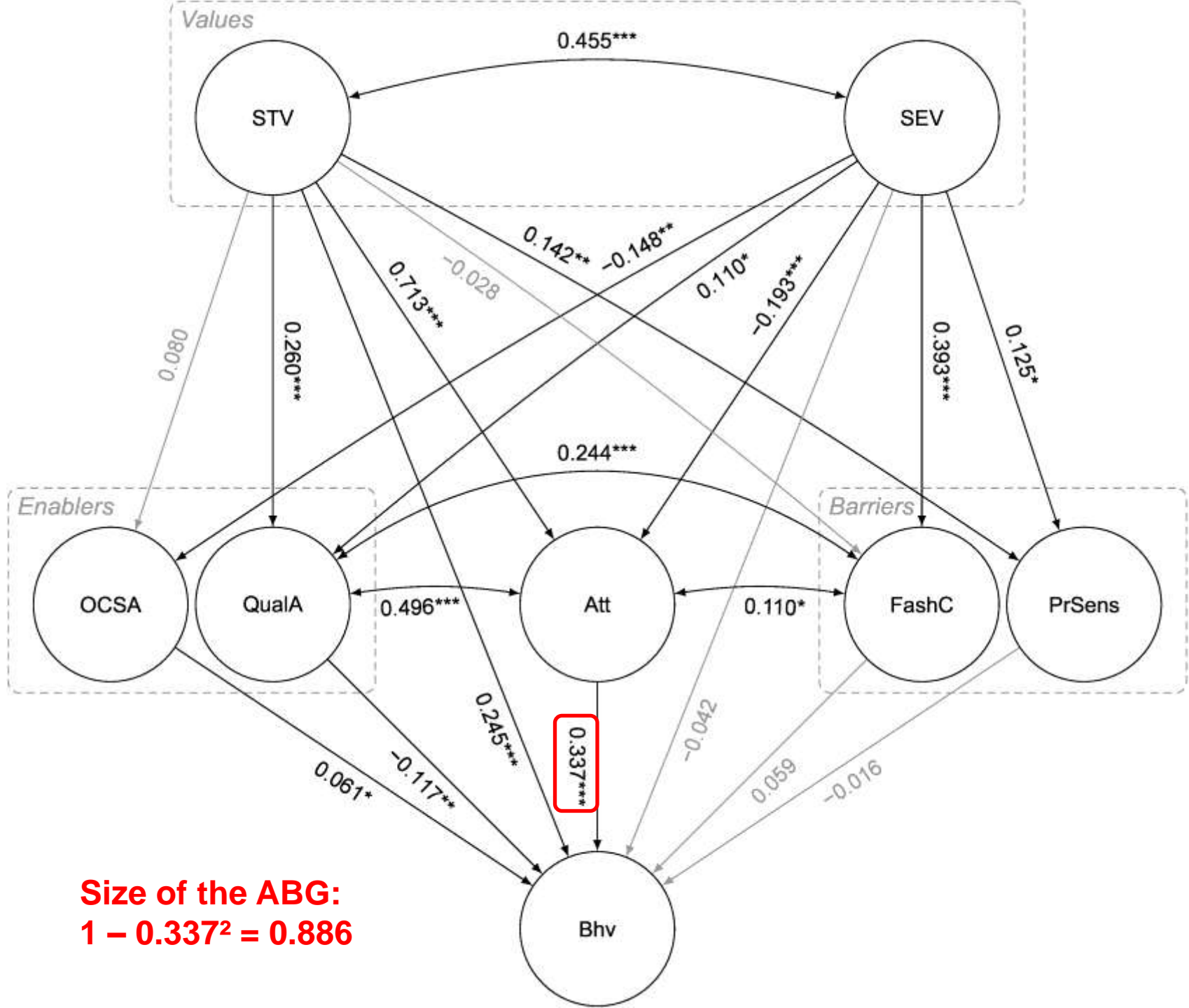
Size of the ABG:
1 − 0.337² = 0.886

6. Highlights

- A large ABG in sustainable clothing exists (RQ1)

- A positive attitude and self-transcendence values are major drivers of sustainable clothing purchases (RQ2)

- Online and catalogue shopping affinity enables sustainable clothing purchase behaviour (RQ2)

- Self-enhancement values and awareness for product longevity are barriers to sustainable clothing purchases (RQ2)

6. Implications

- Policy makers
  - Educational measures

- Marketers
  - Information on sustainability
  - Availability in stationary stores
  - Durable clothes, information on durability

- Researchers
  - Product longevity
  - Human values
  - Other behavioural gaps

Thank you for your attention.

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