

SUSTAINABLE DEATHS: INVESTIGATING YOUNG ADULTS'
INTENTIONS TO COMMUNICATE AND DOCUMENT
THEIR GREEN FUNERAL PLANS

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ABSTRACT

The severe lack of end-of-life (EOL) planning in the United States (US) deserves scholarly attention. This dissertation investigated communication, psychosocial, and environmental factors that predict young adults' intentions to communicate and document their green funeral service plans. The study adapted the converged theory of planned behavior (TPB) and value-belief-norm (VBN) theoretical framework to offer a comprehensive model for understanding EOL planning processes. A sample of US adults ($N = 444$) completed an online self-report survey about their attitudes toward two green funeral service planning behaviors. Structural equation modeling results found that communication apprehension, neutral attitudes toward death, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, environmental values, connectedness to nature, awareness of ecological consequences of traditional funeral services, moral feelings of responsibility to choose a green funeral service, and personal normative beliefs toward green funerals were significantly related to young adult's communication and documentation planning intentions. The model significantly predicted 56% of the variance in communication and 50% of the variance in documentation planning intentions. Together, these findings address theoretical and conceptual gaps in understanding EOL planning. The adapted converged TPB-VBN model is an efficient framework for investigating green funeral planning intentions and can guide future research. The results can help scholars who aim to better understand the phenomena around green funeral planning and health communication and policymakers who hope to ride the wave of environmentally friendly sustainable funerary practices to improve public health outcomes.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to the future generations of the Franco family. Let this accomplishment set the precedent that you can achieve more for yourself. I hope this dissertation acts as a beacon of hope, inspiration, and encouragement for you to find your passion and pursue it deeply, dare to envision a better world and cultivate change, and, most importantly, rise against adversity and keep moving forward. Finally, let this dissertation remind you that while walking the path to self-fulfillment will be challenging, you will not walk it alone.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aimed to deepen the scientific and theoretical understanding of end-of-life (EOL) planning behaviors among an understudied population in the United States (US) through the lens of environmental health communication. This dissertation applied quantitative methods to investigate 11 communication, psychosocial, and environmental factors that predict young adults' intentions to communicate and document their green funeral service plans. The following chapter introduces the connection between environmental health communication and EOL planning outcomes, the problem statement, and the significance of the study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the study methods, research questions, and hypotheses.

Environmental Health Communication and EOL Planning

Take a moment to consider the inevitability of mortality. Death can occur without warning; it can happen at any time, any place, and at any age. Since “death is inevitable, one should try to die well” (Putney, 2012, p. 164) by taking autonomy over the unavoidable and planning for their end. While death does not make exceptions, planning for EOL helps people better manage and cope with their inevitable demise. An EOL plan ensures that the dying person lives as well as possible, helps them die with dignity, and honors their remaining wishes after their death (Bullock, 2011).

Communication is essential in understanding EOL care and planning (Wittenberg & Goldsmith, 2021). What we think EOL plans are, what it means to die, how we talk about death and EOL events, our interactions with EOL care professionals and loved ones, and which EOL

planning behaviors we choose to adopt or avoid all involve communication. EOL communication has become a vital area of study within the health communication field over the last three decades (Thompson & Harrington, 2021). Health communication scholars have emphasized the need for research to utilize theoretical frameworks to identify further barriers and promoters in EOL planning communication and documentation outcomes (Brophy et al., 2021; Wittenberg et al., 2020).

There are two major types of EOL planning: (a) advanced care and (b) aftercare planning. Advanced care planning empowers individuals to identify, communicate, and document their medical treatment preferences to healthcare providers, family, and loved ones long before a life-threatening illness, injury, or death (Stone et al., 2023). Aftercare planning empowers individuals to communicate and document their post-death service and care preferences to funeral professionals, family, loved ones, and other essential referents that can help honor their final wishes (Dark-Freudeman et al., 2020). Both types of EOL planning can alleviate uncertainty around decision-making, reduce stress and financial costs, increase the quality of personalized care, and cultivate meaningful EOL experiences for the dying person and their loved ones (Seiter, 2021; Stone et al., 2023). Yet, aftercare planning does not receive nearly as much scholarly attention as advanced care planning. This dissertation aimed to fill this gap by investigating two aftercare planning intentions: (a) communication and (d) documentation. Communication regarding aftercare preferences entails disclosing one's personal preferences to healthcare providers, family, funeral directors, and loved ones. The documentation of aftercare preferences includes expressing one's personal preferences in writing an advanced directive or other EOL document (e.g., living will).

Due to the complexity and emotional difficulty around aftercare planning, many people avoid conversations about and planning for their death until after a life-threatening event, terminal diagnosis, or unexpected loss occurs (Grant et al., 2021; Stone et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2017). Yet encouraging individuals to communicate and document their aftercare preferences can benefit the dying person and their families (Parrish, 2019). Thus, not addressing aftercare preferences before the occurrence of a life-threatening event or death significantly comprises the quality of EOL care received (Stone et al., 2023), heavily burdens families with complex decision-making tasks and unnecessary stress (Parrish, 2019; Seiter, 2020), and dramatically increases healthcare and funeral expenses (Klinger et al., 2016).

Perhaps one of the primary tenets of aftercare planning is arranging what a person wants to do with their body after they die. The two leading US funeral services involve burial or cremation rituals (Beard & Burger, 2017). In conventional burials, a mortician embalms the deceased individual through a process that drains and replaces bodily fluids with a formaldehyde-based solution and then places the body in a nonbiodegradable casket and buries the individual in a cemetery (Beard & Burger, 2017; Slominski, 2020). In US cremations, a mortician puts the deceased individual into a crematorium chamber that decomposes the body through fire incineration (burning). After this process, the mortician collects the remaining ashes and puts them in an urn for the surviving family (Beard & Burger, 2017; Slominski, 2020).

The two conventional funeral services, however, pose two substantial issues. First, they are expensive. Funeral service costs can pose financial burdens for grieving families, especially those in the lower socioeconomic class and marginalized communities (Hageman et al., 2018; Lott, 2020; Wachterman & Sommers, 2021). Second, traditional funeral practices pose severe environmental risks to the air, water, and land quality (Beard & Burger, 2017; Coutts et al.,

2018; Ferreira et al., 2017; Herring, 2019) that will further exacerbate climate changes and other environmental health hazards for the planet and future generations alike.

Green funeral planning is one understudied category of aftercare planning designed to reduce the environmental consequences of conventional services. The Green Burial Council (GBC) defines a *green funeral* as a general term for aftercare services from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials that minimize carbon footprint (Green Burial Council, 2024). Green funeral services include conservation burials, body composting, water cremation, memorial trees, or plant-based burials. Growing concerns over the environmental impacts of conventional funeral methods led to the creation of and rising interest in sustainable green funerary services (Cummins, 2020). The term ‘funerary’ describes anything related to funerals and the disposition of the dead. Moreover, research indicates that green funerals are better for the environment and more affordable than traditional burial and cremation services (Slominski, 2020). As a result, the GBC projects green funerals will be the leading funerary choice in the US over the next several decades (GBC, 2024).

The ecological components of green funeral planning garner specific scholarly consideration. Health communication scholars have advocated for the consideration of environmental elements as contributing factors to health (Chadwick, 2016, 2021; Guidotta, 2013; Villigam et al., 2010; Zoller, 2012, 2016). Furthermore, environmental health communication has become an emerging area of study within the health communication field over the last decade (Thompson & Harrington, 2021). This body of research connects environmental factors to health outcomes through factors such as air, water, land pollution, climate change, food and waste contamination, natural disasters, vector-borne diseases, and many others outside an

individual's locus of control (Chadwick, 2021). Environmental health communication likewise considers the broader impacts of these aforementioned factors on health outcomes, so emphasizing the imperative role of EOL and environmental awareness within health communication is vital. Considering ecological factors within an EOL planning context creates a unique opportunity to coalesce the EOL and environmental areas within the health communication field.

While general aftercare planning outcomes warrant the attention of health communication scholars, the environmental health communication experiences around green funeral planning garner equal importance. Green funeral planning research does not solely require identifying an individual's specific service preferences. As the popularity of green funerary services continues to grow in the US, scholars need to investigate communication and documentation outcomes related to green funeral planning. This dissertation sought to address this vital need.

Problem Statement

Addressing aftercare preferences alleviates uncertainty around decision-making, reduces stress, and cultivates meaningful EOL experiences for all involved (Seiter, 2020; Stone et al., 2023). Despite the benefits of EOL planning, only 18-36% of adults living in the US have completed advanced care or aftercare plans (Stone et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2017). Health communication scholars have acknowledged the US's severe lack of EOL plans as a systematic health issue (Wittenberg & Goldsmith, 2021). A growing body of empirical scholarship attributed EOL planning neglect to several communication barriers, psychological factors, and environmental elements. Communication barriers related to aftercare planning behaviors are communication apprehension when discussing death topics (Carmack & DeGroot, 2020), negative attitudes or anxieties toward death (Clare et al., 2020), and past experiences with

funerals and planning attempts (Chandler, 2018). Psychological factors attributed to EOL planning pertain to an individual's perceived behavioral control, attitudes, and subjective normative beliefs toward EOL planning behaviors (Brophy et al., 2021; Seiter, 2021). Environmental elements such as an individual's ecological beliefs, values, and lack of awareness contribute to EOL planning outcomes (Becher, 2022; Herring, 2019; Kavalieratos et al., 2015; Krupar, 2018; Zhongming et al., 2021). Some scholars examined specific communication (e.g., communication apprehension) or psychological factors (attitudes, perceived efficacy, social norms) to develop and evaluate effective interventions and campaigns aimed at increasing planning behavior in the US (Brophy et al. 2021; Seiter et al., 2020; Weaver et al., 2021). Yet rarely has scholarship explored the relationships between these factors and barriers.

Additionally, EOL planning research disproportionately examines specific demographic populations more than others. An extensive amount of empirical EOL planning scholarship focuses heavily on elderly populations and individuals living with life-threatening illnesses or injuries (Heyland et al., 2006; Jongaramraung et al., 2020; Ladin et al., 2018; Scheinfeld & Lake, 2021; Waller et al., 2020). Among the existing literature, researchers identified substantial EOL planning barriers such as difficulty with decision-making (Heyland et al., 2006; Waller et al., 2020), communication apprehension (Morgan et al., 2002; Scheinfeld & Lake, 2021), fear of death (Brophy et al., 2021; Jongaramraung et al., 2020), and health literacy deficiencies (Ladin et al., 2018). Other research has focused on patient-provider interactions (Russell et al., 2020; Tenzek et al., 2022), organ donation (Britt, 2022), advanced care plan uptake (Frechman et al., 2020; Seiter, 2020), planning interventions (Lee & Kim, 2022), among other strategies to better communicate EOL preferences to family, healthcare providers, and loved ones (Shearman et al.,

2021). But seldom does this body of literature examine EOL planning among the young adult population.

Young adults signify anyone between 18 and 39 years old (Erikson & Erikson, 1998; Erikson et al., 2014; Levinson, 1986). Consisting of 23% of the American population, the 75 million US young adults are not exempt from death or the need to communicate and document their EOL plans. Death does not discriminate against age; young people still die. In the US, young adults suffer from unintentional injuries from motor vehicle accidents, falls, and suffocation; illnesses related to poisoning and drug overdoses; and life-threatening events resulting from suicide or homicide attempts that may negate their EOL decision-making abilities (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018; Dark-Freudeman et al., 2020; Stone et al., 2023; United States Census Bureau, 2021). Having EOL plans at this age is just as important as having them at any time across the lifespan. Young adults are a prime demographic for studying aftercare planning intentions because they are capable of making decisions about their EOL preferences (Robinson et al., 2019; Sanders & Robinson, 2017; Stone et al., 2023). Young adults often desire autonomy over their own EOL decision-making in the occurrence of a life-threatening event (Bassett & Bussard, 2021; Weaver et al., 2021), are capable of communicating their personal, spiritual, and emotional EOL preferences (Barrison & Davidson, 2021; Cicirelli, 2010; Stone et al., 2023), and are able to document their preferences on their own (Robinson et al., 2019; Wiener et al., 2022).

Research shows that young adults are also likelier to embrace green funerals than their older adult counterparts (Bouman et al., 2020; Bouman & Steg, 2021; Cummins, 2020; Slominski, 2020). Cummins (2020) suggested that young adults' climate change anxiety may be driving the recent efforts to promote sustainable green funerary practices in the funeral industry.

As ecosystems collapse due to the climate crisis, people may become conscious about their mortality and their impact on the planet in life and after death (Becher, 2022). Thus, increased awareness of the environmental impact one's death may have on the natural environment may lead to increased environmentalism and feelings of responsibility to choose green funerary practices among US young adults.

In sum, the widespread neglect of EOL planning in the US can be viewed as a systematic health crisis that significantly diminishes the quality of EOL care, resources, bereavement, and planning outcomes (Klinger et al., 2016; Parrish, 2019; Seiter, 2020; Stone et al., 2023; Wittenberg & Goldsmith, 2021). Due to the highly personalized nature of EOL planning, research must consider values, beliefs, self-efficacy, norms, and attitudes toward actually communicating and documenting their EOL plans. EOL planning research must also expand and diversify its focus to examine individuals outside the elderly and terminally ill populations. Finally, considering the environmental factors and changing norms within the funeral industry, there is a critical need for EOL planning research to investigate what pro-environmental factors impact green funeral planning intentions among the young adult population (MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; McAfee et al., 2020; Weaver et al., 2022). For this reason, this dissertation will be the first to examine what environmental health communication factors impact young adults' green funeral intentions. A richer understanding of internal motivators and barriers around green funeral planning behaviors will increase knowledge of the scarcity of aftercare planning engagement in the US.

Dissertation Purpose

This dissertation aimed to examine communication, psychosocial, and environmental factors that predict young adults' green funeral planning intentions by adapting and applying the

converged TPB-VBN theoretical model to provide a more comprehensive and apparent understanding of young adults' EOL decision-making processes. I accomplished this aim by conducting self-report online survey responses from individuals of the US young adult population. The following research questions guided this dissertation:

RQ1: Does the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predict (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions?

RQ2: Which theoretical model holds the most statistical power for predicting (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions: the adapted converged TPB-VBN model, the original TPB model, or the original VBN theory model?

The following hypotheses guided the adapted converged TPB-VBN model relationships among US young adults:

H1: Positive attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control will be associated with a greater intent to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H2: Communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with EOL planning will significantly predict intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H3: Problem awareness will positively affect (3a) ascribed responsibility, (3b) attitudes, (3c) subjective normative beliefs, and (3d) perceived behavioral control for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H4: Subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal norms for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H5: Environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H6: Attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, past behaviors with EOL planning, environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

Justification of Methods

This dissertation aimed to better understand what factors predict two green funeral planning intentions among the US young adult population. Quantitative methods were the appropriate approach in the dissertation study, based on the research questions, hypotheses, and existing knowledge about communication, psychological, and environmental factors that influence aftercare planning outcomes. This dissertation's strategic use of quantitative methods also supplements previous qualitative and mixed-method scholarship findings around green funeral service (Slominski, 2020) and EOL planning outcomes (Sieter, 2020). The quantitative, cross-sectional method provided valuable statistics and aggregate data on the relationships between constructs on green funeral planning intentions among an understudied population. I collected the dissertation data through three online recruitment methods using Qualtrics surveys to capture young adults' intentions to communicate and document their green funeral plans.

Significance of the Dissertation

Communicating and documenting EOL plans during young adulthood and at *any* age across the developmental lifespan is beneficial for reducing stress and cultivating meaningful

EOL experiences for all involved (Dark-Freudeman et al., 2020; Seiter, 2020; Stone et al., 2023). The multifaceted, multidimensional, and highly personalized components of EOL planning require multifaceted and interdisciplinary perspectives to holistically understand motivators and barriers to EOL planning behavior. This dissertation research addressed this need to take a more complex approach to investigate planning intentions. This research enhances our conceptual knowledge of how several interdisciplinary factors collectively influence these two behavioral planning intentions among an understudied US population.

This dissertation also makes a theoretical contribution to EOL planning outcomes. This research drew upon two prominent theoretical frameworks to capture young adults' unique psychological and environmental perspectives toward green funeral planning intentions. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a well-established psychological framework for predicting an individual's intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019). Researchers have used the TPB to explain EOL planning intentions (Bresnahan et al., 2007; Britt et al., 2017; Brophy et al., 2021; Chew et al., 2019; Seiter, 2021). Research has also successfully connected the TPB to communication outcomes (Clare et al., 2020; Freytag & Rauscher, 2017; Goldman et al., 2014) and pro-environmental behaviors related to green funerals (Kim & Kim, 2012). The value-belief-norm (VBN) theory provides a linear socio-psychological model to explain attitudes and behavioral intentions associated with the natural environment (Stern et al., 1999). The VBN theory offered a practical framework to investigate green funeral planning intentions due to the undeniable relationship between environmental factors such as individual levels of environmentalism, awareness of the environmental consequences of US funeral services, and interest in green funerals (Herring, 2019; Slominski, 2020; Zhongming et al., 2017). As such, this dissertation study will be the first to apply the VBN theory in an EOL

planning context to examine pro-environmental factors that may influence green funeral communication and documentation intentions. Because both theories can predict pro-environmental outcomes, Han (2015) merged the two theoretical frameworks to create a super-predictive model to assess environmental-based behavioral intentions. This dissertation adapted and converged an existing TPB-VBN theoretical model (Han, 2015) to identify better motivators and barriers to engaging in pro-environmental EOL planning behaviors. The adapted converged TPB-VBN model included additional communication factors related to EOL planning outcomes, such as communication apprehension toward death discourse, death attitudes, and past behavioral experiences with death and EOL planning. This dissertation is the first to apply the converged TPB-VBN framework to a green funeral planning context.

The results of this dissertation may motivate future scholars to use the adapted and converged model to develop targeted EOL planning campaigns and interventions and implement systematic change to increase EOL planning occurrence. These findings may inspire scholars to evaluate the theoretical and conceptual relationships between model variables in new and insightful ways. Ultimately, this dissertation lays the groundwork for future research to increase EOL planning occurrence, which will fundamentally positively shift the culture and discourse around EOL communication and experiences in the US.

Contribution to Environmental Health Communication

Despite scholars' classification of EOL planning as a systematic health issue and calls for more research on aftercare planning, there is still relatively limited health communication research on the topic, especially among young adults. Considering the subset of planning literature on this population and the anticipated rise in green funerary practices, there is a definite need for health communication research that focuses explicitly on young adults' green funeral

planning intentions, and this dissertation addresses that need. By centering the study around green funeral planning, I carved out a new interdisciplinary research area within the environmental health communication field. Not only were the environmental effects of young adult aftercare planning studied, but I also examined psychosocial and communicative factors thought to impact planning intentions. This dissertation also adapted and tested a converged theoretical framework. This communication model offers novel insights into pro-environmental planning intentions within and outside the target population.

Looking Ahead

Chapter two begins by summarizing background information on EOL planning research in health communication, the connection between EOL planning and communication barriers, and green funeral services. Chapter two continues with a description of three theoretical frameworks. First, there will be a discussion of their history, then the incorporation of these frameworks in EOL planning research, and finally, the relationship between theory constructs and behavioral intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. Chapter three describes the dissertation's methodology, including the study's purpose, research design, ethical considerations regarding my research background, participant recruitment, data collection, study instruments, and data analytical plan. Chapter four describes the results of this dissertation. Chapter five summarizes the study findings and discusses how well the results answered the research questions. The chapter highlights a few study limitations and future research trajectories and outlines several contributions toward environmental health communication scholarship.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will first identify two types of EOL planning and further expand on aftercare planning tenets related to funeral service planning. The aftercare planning overview will include descriptions of the two traditional US funeral service options available and highlight several environmental consequences of two conventional funerary practices in the US. The chapter will then extensively detail alternative US green funerary practices to argue the importance of researching green funeral planning intentions. Next, this chapter will draw connections between investigating plants and EOL planning through an environmental health communication lens. The chapter will also introduce two theoretical frameworks to explain dissertation study research questions and hypotheses to investigate green funeral planning intentions among young adults.

EOL Planning

EOL care decision-making refers to the “multidimensional assessment and interventions provided to assist individuals and their families as they approach death” (Bullock, 2011, P. 84). Simply put, EOL treatment and care decisions solely focus on the life-prolonging and life-comforting measures and services an individual receives before and leading up to their death. The overarching goal of an EOL plan ensures that the dying person will live as well as possible, help them die with dignity, and honor their remaining wishes after their death (Bullock, 2011).

Advance Care Planning

Advanced care planning empowers individuals to decide on specific medical care and treatment services they might want to receive throughout their dying process (Dark-Freudeman

et al., 2020). A major advanced care planning decision relates to resuscitation practices during a medical emergency. Resuscitation refers to the cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) treatment protocol used when a patient's heart or breathing stops. CPR can include mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the use of a defibrillator to restart the heart via electric shock, or the insertion of tubes for intubation, breathing, feeding, and treatment (Dugdale, 2020).

Advance care planning decisions will vary depending on individual needs, location, and federal and state legislation. Other treatment decisions include choosing a location to die, withdrawing from life-saving treatments, switching from palliative care to hospice care, and selecting euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide (Harris, 2003; Masters et al., 2022; Truog et al., 2008). The most common place to die in the US is at home, surrounded by family (Wachterman et al., 2022). A study found that 31% of Americans died at home, followed by hospitals and healthcare facilities such as nursing homes or palliative care villages (Wachterman et al., 2022). Advanced care plans also empower individuals to decide when they switch from palliative to hospice care. Palliative care can begin at any time and supports individuals with terminal and non-terminal illnesses alongside curative and life-prolonging measures (Abbott et al., 2020). Hospice care begins in the last six months of life and supports the terminally ill; hospice focuses on improving the quality of life until death (Abbott et al., 2020). Decisions around euthanasia, however, are complex. Euthanasia also referred to as physician-assisted suicide, ranges from the termination of life-sustaining procedures to the administering of lethal medication by healthcare professionals (Brassington, 2020). Euthanasia is not legal in every state throughout the US, nor is it practiced at every hospital.

Taken together, addressing advanced care planning preferences alleviates uncertainty around decision-making, reduces stress and costs, increases the quality of personalized care, and

cultivates meaningful EOL experiences for the dying person, their family, healthcare providers, and loved ones (Seiter, 2021; Stone et al., 2023). The following section will discuss aftercare planning decisions.

Aftercare Planning

While advanced care planning focuses on the treatment and care an individual receives leading up to their death, aftercare planning focuses on the treatment and services an individual receives *after* they die. Aftercare planning empowers individuals to communicate and document their post-death service and body care preferences to funeral professionals, family, loved ones, and other essential referents who can honor their final wishes (Dark-Freudeman et al., 2020). Perhaps the most prominent aftercare planning decision involves funeral service arrangements. However, aftercare planning includes much more than simply deciding whether one would like to be “buried or cremated” (Lott, 2020). For instance, aftercare planning incorporates tissue, body, and organ donation decisions (Britt, 2022; Britt et al., 2021; Britt et al., 2017; Carmack & DeGroot, 2020; Morgan, 2004; Morgan & Miller, 2002ab; Morgan et al., 2005). Individuals who want a whole-body donation must consider donating to body farms, medical schools, forensic organizations, or science museums (Carmack & DeGroot, 2020). Organ donors should consider their personal preferences and comfortability toward donating specific tissues and organs, such as their eyes and skin, since donation outcomes may affect other aftercare plans, like having an open casket at a wake or viewing.

Other aftercare decisions focus on legacy projects (Beaunoyer & Guitton, 2021; Boles et al., 2020; Boles & Jones, 2021; Cahalan et al., 2022). An individual’s legacy “is an enduring representation of the self – its qualities, experiences, effects, and relationships – built and bestowed across generations” (Boles & Jones, 2021, p. 547). Legacies take many forms and

serve as avenues of connection, education, inspiration, and transformation for the loved ones the deceased individual leaves behind (Boles & Jones, 2021). Two emerging legacy-building practices in the US involve creating (1) digital and (2) physical legacy projects. Digital legacy planning involves decision-making about the digital possessions left behind after death. Digital remains include social media accounts, stored data, and personal items like pictures, videos, and content (Beaunoyer & Guitton, 2021; Morse & Birnhack, 2020). Digital EOL decisions also require individuals to choose a digital legacy contact or someone to maintain their digital possessions (Cerrillo-i-Martinez, 2018; Lange, 2015; Londono, 2013), as well as make a series of choices on data sharing, privacy, and security after they die (Holt et al., 2021). Physical legacy building projects create physical possessions to remember the deceased. Legacy projects take many shapes (e.g., hand molds, artwork, sculptures) and can significantly alleviate emotional pain and suffering between the dying person and their families (Cahalan et al., 2022).

Aftercare planning also involves choosing a health proxy or someone tasked with honoring and fulfilling the deceased's funeral wishes (Five Wishes, 2023), financial decisions (Beard & Burger, 2017), and funeral service arrangements (Orlando, 2019). Aftercare financial decisions will vary depending on the type of funeral service, the dying person's monetary net worth, remaining assets, existing properties, titles, accounts, savings, stocks, and other financial investments (Klinger et al., 2016; Orlando, 2019; Seiter, 2020). This next section will describe specific US aftercare and funeral service options.

Traditional US Funeral Service Options

Specifically, this section will examine two leading US funeral services (e.g., burial and cremation rituals). Then, I will outline the environmental consequences associated with these rituals.

Burial Services. US burial services include embalming, a viewing (e.g., wake or visitation), body transportation, religious ceremonies, headstone and coffin selection, and burial rituals (Beard & Burger, 2017; Funeralocity, 2018; Harris, 2007; Slominski, 2020). A critical facet of funeral planning revolves around body preservation or embalming. Humankind has a long history of preserving their dead, and as a result, embalming practices and techniques have evolved across religious groups and cultures. Embalming traditions in US funeral services emerged due to the American Civil War (Goles, 2022; Harris, 2007; Rostad, 2023).

Servicemembers working in the US Army Medical Corps drained the blood from fallen soldiers as a way to delay the decomposition process and safely transport their troops home to their families. This act sparked a nationwide movement among funeral professionals who adopted embalming methods as standard practices during funeral services (Goles, 2022; Rostad, 2023).

Today, embalming is a customary practice for traditional burials in Westernized civilizations that involves the sanitization, preservation, and presentation of the deceased (Batra et al., 2010; Bilge & Celik, 2017; Brenner, 2014; Goles, 2022; Macdonald & MacGregor, 1997; Rostad, 2023).

After the embalming process, funeral professionals move the body into a nonbiodegradable coffin and prepare the funeral parlor for a viewing (e.g., wake or visitation) ceremony. Viewing ceremonies provide an opportunity for those who knew the deceased to offer their support and condolences to the bereaved family. Viewings also create a space to share fond memories and anecdotes of the dead; this often takes the form of picture boards, slide shows, home videos, and storytelling among event attendees (Harris, 2007). Viewing ceremonies last from a few hours to a few days and occur at a funeral home, church, or private residence.

Viewings may be open to the public or closed to immediate family.

After the viewing, funeral professionals prepare the body for transportation and funeral procession (Harris, 2007). Depending on the individual's religious affiliation, it is typical for a funeral procession to include a church service before arriving at the cemetery. After the church service, funeral professionals transport the body to the cemetery and prepare for the final graveside funeral services. Graveside ceremonies last around 30 minutes and have a funeral officiant (e.g., minister, religious leader, friend, or family member) recite prayers, deliver a eulogy, and bid farewell to the deceased (Harris, 2007). Funeral services may restrict attendance to immediate family, welcome friends, or allow anyone from the public and the greater community. After the officiant's final farewell speech, assigned pallbearers or funeral professionals lower the casket into the ground or place the casket into a crypt or burial chamber (Harris, 2007). Once the casket is in the ground, the ceremony is complete; however, depending on cultural and religious practices, families may shovel dirt into the grave. Certain aspects of graveside services depend on cemetery guidelines, geographic location, and weather restrictions (Beard & Burger, 2017; Harris, 2007). For instance, casket lowering during winter months may not be available in northern US regions due to frozen land conditions and cemetery protocols. After the graveside ceremony, families typically travel to a reception held at a private home or an official event space to eat food, drink, and honor the deceased (Beard & Burger, 2017). Funeral professionals will take care of the remaining responsibilities at the cemetery (e.g., grave filling and headstone installation).

Cremation Services. Conventional US cremation services may include embalming, a viewing, body transportation, a cremation casket, a cremation process, religious ceremonies, and an urn (Beard & Burger, 2017; Cremation Association of North America, 2023; Slominski, 2020). Cremation practices, like embalming, have a long history, going back to 3000 BC

(CANA, 2023). There is little record of cremation in the US until the first crematory opened in 1876 in Pennsylvania. The method quickly gained popularity for its reformatory practices, and crematories began to spread nationwide. By 2021, there were over 3,000 crematories (Stewart, 2019). Due to the impact of the 2019 coronavirus pandemic, cremation is currently the most popular funeral service option in America, and 56% of deaths had cremation funeral services (CANA, 2023). Cremation offers more flexibility and opportunity to honor the deceased creatively. Outside of traditional scattering, bereaved families can turn their loved one's ashes into a painting, a diamond, jewelry or glass art, a vinyl record, a 3D printed ornament, or even a firework (Calvao & Bell, 2021; Osorino, 2011; Stewart, 2019).

Financial Costs of Traditional US Funeral Services

Funeral service costs have been rising steadily since the 1980s. At the time of writing, the average funeral in the US costs between \$7,000 and \$12,000 (Beard & Berger, 2017; National Funeral Directors Association, 2024). Funeral costs also differ across individual states and US regions. According to the NFDA, the national median funeral cost in 2021 was \$7,848, including costs for the embalming process, viewing, casket, transportation, burial, and service fees. However, this total did not include the vault price, cemetery fees, headstones, or miscellaneous cash-advance costs like the obituary prints and flower arrangements, which add thousands of dollars to this price (NFDA, 2024). After only including the vault cost of a vault, the average national median funeral cost in 2021 increased to \$9,420 (NFDA, 2024).

Cremation services are not that much cheaper. In the US, funeral services with cremation range from \$6,000 to \$8,000 (Beard & Burger, 2017; Slominski, 2020). The median average cost of an adult funeral with a viewing and cremation is \$6,970 (NFDA, 2024). This calculation includes the basic services fee, body transportation, embalming process, viewing costs, funeral

ceremony, basic memorial materials, cremation fee, cremation casket, and urn. However, the NFDA did not include the price of cemetery interment, monument costs, or cash advance charges for services such as floral arrangements. Like conventional burials, including these additional costs raise the median national average for cremation services by thousands. Hidden fees and other costs sprung on to funeral expenses can also invoke feelings of mistrust between families and funeral homes (Beard & Burger, 2017).

Other issues plaguing the traditional funeral service industry relate to price gouging, personalization, and manipulation by funeral homes and cemeteries (Harris, 2007). Individuals belonging to the older adult population often criticize conventional burial and cremation funeral services as lacking authenticity and emotionally unfulfilling events (Rostad, 2014). Funeral costs create financial stressors and burdens for families and individuals, especially those in lower socioeconomic classes (Hageman et al., 2018; Wachterman & Sommers, 2021).

Environmental Consequences of Traditional U. S. Funeral Services

In addition to financial burdens, conventional funeral services pose environmental consequences (Beard & Burger, 2017; Collins, 2022; Coutts et al., 2018; Herring, 2019; Slominski, 2020). First, traditional ground burials consume valuable land space, leak embalming chemicals into the environment, and involve nonbiodegradable materials like concrete, plastic, and steel caskets that can poison the land (Lovens & Visconti, 2018). According to Harris (2007), “a typical 10-acre swatch of cemetery ground contains enough coffin wood to construct 40 houses; nearly 1,000 tons of casket steel; 20,000 tons of vault concrete; and enough toxic embalming fluid to fill a backyard swimming pool” (p. 1). Today, there are 20,272 registered conventional cemeteries in the US, collectively spanning over 140,000 acres of land and burying on average 1250 bodies per acre. As a result of widespread embalming practices, the US buries

over 4.3 million gallons (roughly 16.3 million liters) of highly toxic embalming fluid containing arsenic and formaldehyde into the ground every year (Coutts et al., 2018; Fiedler et al., 2012; Zychowski, 2012). It is also important to note that formaldehyde is not only hazardous to the environment but is also dangerous to those who work in close contact with the cancer-causing carcinogen (Ferreira et al., 2017; Fournier, 2018).

Aside from the ecological destruction caused by burying durable caskets and vaults into the ground, scholars must also consider the footprint of their construction, transportation, and cemetery maintenance (Fournier, 2018). According to Herring (2019), “the distribution, shipping, and manufacturing of parts and caskets span the globe, creating a huge carbon footprint that is wasteful, unnecessary, and unsustainable” (p. 125). Fiedler et al. (2012) also categorized burial grounds as “a particular kind of landfill” (p. 90). Finally, Lott (2020) acknowledged that conventional cemeteries and structures in the US funeral industry no longer serve their original function and stressed the need to repurpose these spaces with cleaner, green, funerary alternatives.

There is a common misconception that cremation is a sustainable option for ground burial because it requires less nonbiodegradable materials and land space (Lovens & Visconti, 2018; Zhongming et al., 2021). However, a growing body of research suggests cremation is no more environmentally efficient than burial services. Cremation requires fossil fuels for decomposition and releases toxic emissions like mercury and carbon dioxide into the environment (Calvao & Bell, 2021; Harris, 2007; Lovens & Visconti, 2018; Slominski, 2020; Zhongming et al., 2021). Approximately three million people die in the US each year. Based on the cremation rate in the US of 56% in 2021 and the Co₂ emission rate of 150 kg per body, the annual cremation emission amounts to over 252 million kilograms of carbon dioxide every year (Slominski, 2020).

Furthermore, cremated ashes contain incredibly high pH and sodium levels that are toxic to plant life (Neustadt, 2023) and will damage the environment if scattered or buried without an organic mixture designed to lower the pH and dilute the sodium levels (Fournier, 2018; Herring, 2019).

To summarize, conventional US funeral services pose severe health risks to the human population and the overarching environment. Increased environmental awareness around the negative impact of these funeral services has increased demand for sustainable funerary practices. The following aftercare planning section will outline alternative sustainable or green funeral services available in the US and discuss ways to enact those solutions using communication strategies and practices.

Alternative US Green Funeral Preferences

The leading funeral service options (e.g., embalming, ground burial, and cremation) involve resource-intensive practices that are environmentally damaging, financially burdensome, and often emotionally unfulfilling (Cou tts et al., 2018; Herring, 2019). With growing environmental concerns about climate change and global warming, Americans must innovate our funerary practices to incorporate more eco-friendly and sustainable services. As a result, many legally sustainable funeral service alternatives in the US exemplify environmentally friendly approaches to funerals, as they avoid embalming, only permit biodegradable materials, and protect the natural environment. For consistency, the remainder of this dissertation will refer to these sustainable funeral service alternatives as “green funerals.”

The Green Burial Council (GBC) defines a *green funeral* as a general term for aftercare services from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials that minimize carbon footprint (Green Burial Council, 2024). Green funeral services include conservation burials, body composting, water cremation, memorial trees, or

plant-based burials. The contemporary concept of green funerals originated in England in the 1990s (Coutts et al., 2018). Cemetery managers considered the idea of promoting natural burials, also called *green burials*, as the ecologically benevolent form of funeral ritual reflective of the approaches humans used to bury their dead long before the rise of the conventional funeral industry (Herring, 2019). The movement towards natural burials birthed the eco-death movement throughout the US and Western European societies. In 1998, South Carolina opened the first-ever conservation burial ground in the US. Then, in 2005, the eco-death movement established the national non-profit Green Burial Council to oversee and advocate green burial projects across the country (GBC, 2024; Herring, 2019). Today green funerals can vary greatly and may include body donation, water burials, aquamation, natural burials, body composting, mushroom burials, and plant-based burials (Biotree, 2021; Carmack & DeGroot, 2020; Capsula Mundi 2021; Carson, 2011; Coeio, 2021; Herring, 2019; Maclean, 2018; Lovens & Visconti, 2018; Recompose, 2021; Stewart, 2019).

Natural Burials. Natural, or conservation, burials are the leading US green funeral service option and take superiority as the “greenest” burial method (Lovens & Visconti, 2018). The overarching goal of natural burials is to bury the dead as naturally as possible while protecting and restoring the surrounding natural environment. Therefore, per the Green Burial Council requirements, natural burials do not include grave liners or vaults (GBC, 2023). The body is either not encased or placed in a burial container made from biodegradable materials (e.g., pine, wicker, bamboo, cardboard, or fabric made from natural fibers). Natural burials require a shallow grave in either a graveyard or a more natural setting to facilitate decomposition. Local rocks, stones, or native plant species can mark the grave’s sight; however,

there will not be a commercial headstone (Carson, 2011; GBC, 2023; Herring, 2019; Maclean, 2018). Finally, natural burials do not embalm the deceased.

While no green funeral service option is ‘greener’ than the standard natural burial, which protects and restores our natural environment (Lovens & Visconti, 2018), the two following best sustainable alternatives include human body composting and water-based cremation methods (MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Olson, 2019; Recompose, 2023; Slominski, 2020).

Body Composting Burials. The concept of human body composting is a viable green funeral service option for urban areas where natural or conventional ground burials are not feasible. Specifically, human body composting, or “natural organic reduction, is a managed biological process used to convert organic material, including human remains, into a stable, earthy organic material unrecognizable as human remains” (Recompose, 2023). In May of 2019, Washington state legalized the practice of recomposition, an indoor natural organic reduction method that merges green burial processes with livestock mortality composting (Recompose, 2023). The first ever human composting company, *Recompose*, opened its doors in 2021 and has since captivated the green funeral service industry with its truly sustainable recomposition methods and emotionally fulfilling services. Currently, the company only offers services to individuals living in Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, California, and New York or states that have legalized the practice of recomposition. The company provides bereaved families firsthand services such as a viewing ceremony and composting preparation (e.g., surrounding the body with wood chips, alfalfa, and straw before placing them in a composting vessel). The human composting process takes six to ten weeks and produces one cubic yard of soil per body. Each body will spend 30 days in a composting vessel. Afterward, employees transfer the soil into a compost bin to cure and dry for two to six weeks (Recompose, 2023). Furthermore, this

technique utilizes one-eighth the energy of conventional burial or cremation and saves .84 to 1.4 metric tons of carbon dioxide each time someone chooses human composting.

Aquamation Burials. Water-based cremation methods also offer a legally sustainable alternative to convention cremation methods in the US (Olsen, 2016). Alkaline hydrolysis, also known as aquamation, ‘hydromation,’ or water cremation, dissolves human tissue using a reductive chemical process composed of 90% water and five percent alkali (MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Olsen, 2016). The heated liquid solution is a sterile yet effective method to reduce a body to bones within hours. After the initial reduction process, a cremation technician will remove and pulverize the bones (Olsen, 2016). The produced ash gets packaged and returned to the family. Conventional cremations use eight times more energy than water cremations. Conventional cremations also emit significantly more greenhouse gases and other toxins, such as mercury, in the burning process, while aquamation does not. Finally, compared to conventional cremations, water cremations reduce an individual’s carbon footprint by over 75% (MacMurray & Futrell, 2019).

In sum, natural burials, body composting, and water cremation are three innovations of the eco-death movement designed to promote sustainable alternatives to traditional US funeral services. Green funerals cost less than ground burial and cremation services. On average, US natural burials and water cremations cost between \$2,000 and \$3,500 (Maclean, 2018; Steele, 2019), and body composting services range from \$4,000 to \$5,000 (Recompose, 2023). Growing concerns over the environmental impacts of traditional funeral methods led to the creation of and growing interest in sustainable funerary alternatives that are better for the environment and more affordable than conventional services (MacMurray& Futrell, 2019; Recompose, 2021; Slominski, 2020).

Alternative Greenwashing Services. However, other green funeral service options warrant discussion due to greenwashing marketing ploys (Herring, 2019). *Greenwashing* refers to the “products and services that appear eco-friendly on the surface, but that carries an environmental or carbon footprint that offsets any positive gains” (Herring, 2019, p. 129). The most notable and recent greenwashing attempts include mushroom suit products (Coeio, 2021) and plant-based burial services (Biotree, 2021; Capsula Mundi, 2021; Steele, 2019). For example, in the spring of 2021, consumers flocked to the Coeio company website to purchase mushroom suit burial products, claiming to naturally decompose a body through a biodegradable shroud infused with mushroom spores (Coeio, 2021). Yet the company shut down later that year due to product design malfunctions. Other plant-based burial products have taken the green funeral service market by storm in recent years (Capsula Mundi, 2016; Biotree, 2021). Most notably, the Capsula Mundi biodegradable egg-shaped pods claimed to grow a tree out of deceased people’s remains (Capsula Mundi, 2021). The product failed to do this. Other companies offered reduced versions of this idea, with biodegradable tree urns containing seeds or tree saplings. Conversely, biodegradable tree urns do not grow a tree out of the ashes; instead, the urns house the cremated remains in a separate compartment of the urn (Biotree, 2021). Once the urn breaks down, the remaining high PH and sodium levels in the cremated ash disrupt the plant root systems and harm the growing tree sapling since undiluted cremains are toxic for plants (Neustadt, 2023).

However, the cacophony of greenwashing schemes should not detract from other legitimate green burial services. Two other innovative products on the market facilitate environmental scattering and marine life. First, the Let Your Love Grow (2023) organic mixing compound for diluting ashes facilitates environmentally safe burials and scatterings (Neustadt,

2023). Second, Eternal Reef's (2020) artificial reef balls safely store cremated ashes and promote marine life conservation. Synthetic reef balls enhance the longevity of coral reefs and marine life (Eternal Reefs, 2020).

Greenwashing marketing ploys take advantage of consumers' connections to trees and nature (Bekoff, 2023; Pustarfi, 2021) to encourage the purchasing behavior of pseudo-green funeral service products. Said another way, greenwashed burial products often mislead consumers to either (a) believe that 'green' products are more eco-friendly than they genuinely are or (b) completely disregard the scientific evidence behind the marketing ploys (Fournier, 2018). Greenwashing is problematic for the success of the eco-death movement and the future EOL aftercare planning approaches.

Green Funeral Planning. While greenwashing does complicate the selection of genuinely green funerals (e.g., natural burial, body composting, or water cremation), the more pressing barrier to green funeral service selection is the lack of it. Standardized EOL planning documents like the Five Wishes planning form do not include green funeral service options. The document provides two traditional funeral options and does not provide any space to specify personal wishes: "After my death, I would like my body to be (circle one): buried OR cremated" (Five Wishes, 2023, p. 9). This dichotomous choice restricts individuals' ability to personalize or further specify their funeral preferences. Restrictive planning document choices also increase the odds of making an uninformed aftercare planning decision due to excluding alternative green funerary service choices.

As a result, the demand for more unique and personalized services by the US older adult population created more green funeral service planning options. Growing environmentalism and climate change trends have also created a demand for green funeral service options. According to

MacMurray and Futrell (2019), “Society is already embracing pro-environmental attitudes and eco-death options calibrated well to realign contemporary death systems with these changing worldviews” (p. 12). As a result, green funerals are becoming a popular aftercare choice among Americans because they use biodegradable and sustainable alternative methods (Cummins, 2020; Krupar, 2018; Slominski, 2020). Additionally, due to unlimited access to digital information and recent developments of the eco-death system, young adults are now at the forefront of the shift towards environmentally friendly green funeral service options (Lott, 2020). Aftercare planning practices will likely change over the next several decades due to increased informed decision-making during aftercare planning activities. There is a need to examine how change happens within the death systems, and, more specifically, researchers need to investigate factors that motivate people’s end-of-life choices (MacMurray & Futrell, 2019).

Ferriera and colleagues (2017) argued green funerals yielded many economic, human, and environmental health benefits. For instance, green burials are a land conservation tool to promote environmental health (Coutts et al., 2018). Some scholars suggest that green funerals may reconstruct the EOL experience for the deceased and the surviving kin due to their ability to connect loss with new life (Becher, 2022; Herring, 2019; Krupar, 2018). Overall, rising green funeral trends (Yang, 2023) have significantly impacted the US funeral industry by offering solutions that are more ecologically sustainable, cost-effective, and more beneficial to the bereaved (Beard & Burger, 2017; Ferreira et al., 2017; MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Slominski, 2020).

Plants and Aftercare Planning: Environmental Health Communication

People have used plants in funeral rituals dating as far back as the sixth century BCE (Boi, 2012; Dafni et al., 2020), and a rich body of literature outlines plant usage in EOL contexts

(e.g., Green, 2019; Goody & Poppi, 1994; Hall & Kuth, 2019; Imperi, 2018; Imperi, 2021; Phaneuf, 2021). Initially, plants and flowers served to mask the odor of the decaying body during viewings and traditional funeral services (Green 2019). As a result of the consistent presence of flowers and plants during funeral rituals, people began ascribing meaning and symbolically associating certain plants with EOL rituals, and these customs are continuously practiced in Westernized cultures today (Goody & Poppi, 1994; Phaneuf, 2021). A commonly held belief among funeral directors and service providers in the US is that plants and flowers promote emotional processing and health benefits, and that specific colors and types of plants and flowers symbolize different meanings for the deceased, their bereaved loved ones, and those approaching their death (Phaneuf, 2021). For instance, green floral arrangements symbolize nature, wellness, and acceptance of loss, while daisies symbolize peace and hope (Phaneuf, 2021). Dafni and colleagues (2020) acknowledged that common plants such as sage, rosemary, myrtle, and basil hold a unique meaning and purpose within EOL rituals and practices across cultures and human history. Sage symbolizes protection against the evil eye, witches, demons, and other spiritual entities. In Westernized European cultures and Christian legends, rosemary symbolizes remembrance and the soul's eternity and is presented in EOL rituals to guide souls to the afterlife. Myrtle represents purification and provides a natural incense at viewings, and basil symbolizes good luck wishes to the deceased as they enter the next chapter of existence (Dafni et al., 2020).

Scholarship has since drawn connections between environmental awareness about the climate crisis and the increasing interest in green funerary practices (Becher, 2022; Clayden & Dixon, 2007; Kim & Shin, 2012; Slominski, 2020). For instance, Clayden and Dixon (2007) explored motivations for choosing natural burials and the role of plants as memorial objects. The

study found that participants' biggest motivators for selecting a green burial were memorialization (e.g., becoming a memorial tree that would continue to grow long after their death) and burial environment (e.g., natural burial settings are more aesthetic than traditional cemeteries). The study also found that the values placed on trees by bereaved individuals may cultivate personal and cultural memorialization and remembrance (Clayden & Dixon, 2007). Another study examined trees' symbolic nature and connection with the deceased (Becher, 2022). The article proposed interpreting deceased persons as living trees to foster relationships of care for the environment and reconnect death with life (Becher, 2022). Recognizing people as trees or plants allows the bereaved to engage in meaning-making by associating their loss with new life (Becher, 2022). Together, these studies provide a foundation for the underlying influence environmental awareness, values, and beliefs may have on aftercare planning choices.

In addition, this scholarship coalesces the environmental and health communication fields. Health communication scholars argued that ecological factors contribute to health outcomes (Chadwick, 2016, 2021; Guidotta, 2013; Villigram et al., 2010; Zoller, 2012, 2016). This body of scholarship linked the environment to health outcomes through air, water, land pollution, climate change, food and waste contamination, natural disasters, vector-borne diseases, and many other environmental factors outside an individual's locus of control (Chadwick, 2021). Guidotta (2013) argued that ecological science theories and models fail to incite behavioral change. They advocated that communication scholars' available models and theoretical frameworks can be crucial in promoting environmental health concepts to predict behavioral change intentions. Chadwick (2016) also advocated for the importance of health communication scholarship to address various health effects, such as mortality rates, food disparities, air contamination, land and water pollution, illness, suffering, and injuries due to

natural disasters from climate change (Chadwick, 2016, 2021). Other environmental health communication research identified the benefits of using medical and healthcare providers as climate change advocates and promoters of environmental health behaviors during patient-provider interactions (Villigram et al., 2010).

Research on the role of plants on health acknowledged that plants and flowers can positively enhance people's emotional and mental well-being (Bekoff, 2023; Cummins, 2020; Hall & Knuth, 2019). For example, plants have positively impacted depression, anxiety, feelings of gratitude, and mindfulness (Hall & Knuth, 2019). Recognizing plants as people requires researchers to examine and develop effective message strategies promoting using plants in EOL rituals to investigate grief processing and death acceptance. Furthermore, researchers can use health communication theories to promote environmental awareness and green funeral service options on aftercare planning PSAs, education materials, messages, and planning documents. In sum, the connections between the role of plants on EOL planning intentions lay at the intersection of environmental health communication. Only a handful of studies currently assess how green funeral service planning intentions fit into this research space (e.g., MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Slominski, 2020). This dissertation will attempt to further carve out this space by assessing green funeral service planning intentions among young adults living in the US.

Theory

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to examine what factors impact green funeral planning intentions among healthy young adults living in the US. This section will first identify several factors known to affect EOL planning intentions. Then, this section will draw connections between EOL planning intentions and two theoretical frameworks, starting with the

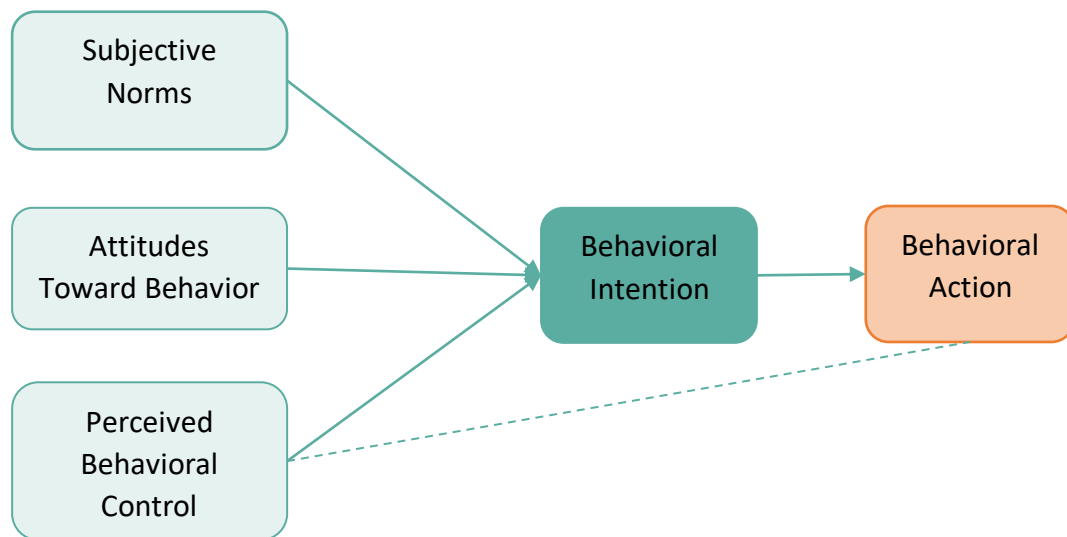
theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) and the value-belief-norm theory (VBN; Stern et al., 1999).

Theory of Planned Behavior

Due to the highly personalized nature of EOL planning, researchers must consider individual values, beliefs, self-efficacy, norms, attitudes, and knowledge of aftercare service options to understand their communicative intentions with green funeral planning. The TPB is a well-established psychological framework for predicting an individual's intention and behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019).

Ajzen (1985) developed the TPB from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; 2010), which postulates that volitional factors determine an individual's decision-making. According to the TPB, the ultimate predictor of an individual's behavior is their intention to perform that behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019). The theory articulates three determinants of behavioral intentions: subjective normative beliefs, attitudes, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985, 1991, 2006, 2013; see Figure 1 for a visual).

Figure 1. Original Model for the Theory of Planned Behavior



Note. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991).

First, a person's *subjective normative beliefs* refer to their "perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 1881). Significant others, parents, family, friends, healthcare professionals, or any other referent individual or group may influence an individual's perceived social pressure to perform the target behavior (Ajzen, 2020; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Furthermore, perceived social pressure to engage in the behavior depends on whether a vital person approves, disapproves, or performs the behavior in question themselves (Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019). For example, Korean adults were likelier to select a green funeral service (e.g., tree burial) if they perceived people who are important to them as approving of their funeral service choice (Kim & Kim, 2012). Previous research on subjective norms regarding funeral planning directly affects behavioral intentions to engage in funeral planning (Freeman et al., 2022; Kemp & Komp, 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012). Therefore, subjective normative beliefs around EOL green funeral planning will be associated with a greater intent to select, communicate, and document green funeral plans among young adults.

Second, *attitude* refers to "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Simply put, an individual's subjective evaluation of the outcomes and experience required of performing a behavior will lead to either a positive or negative attitude toward that behavior (Ajzen, 2020; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). For example, EOL planning scholarship has found that individuals with favorable attitudes toward EOL planning (e.g., beliefs that EOL planning is desirable or important) are more likely to document EOL plans themselves (Bresnahan et al., 2007; Brophy et al., 2021; Freeman et al., 2022; Kemp & Komp, 2010). Other research has found that individuals with favorable attitudes toward green funerals are likelier to select and communicate their green

funeral plans (Kim & Kim, 2012; Seiter, 2021). Attitudes toward green funerals will be associated with a greater intent to select, communicate, and document green funeral plans among young adults.

Third, *perceived behavioral control* (PBC) refers to a person's perceived self-efficacy or ease or difficulty with performing a behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2006, 2013, 2020; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Ajzen (1991) developed TPB as an extension of the theory of reasoned action to account for the perceived self-efficacy of the behavior in question. PBC derives from control factors and beliefs that can hinder or enable a person's ability to perform the intended behavior (Ajzen, 2020). Control factors may involve internal skills and abilities, such as knowledge about behavior, and external determinants, such as the availability of resources, legislation, and cooperation by other people (Ajzen, 2020). Control beliefs refer to a person's ability to perform the behavior in question depending on the presence or absence of control factors (Yzer & Van Den Putte, 2014). Ajzen (2020) states that PBC moderates attitudes and SN's influence on behavioral intention. As such, "a favorable attitude and a supportive subjective norm is said to lead to the formation of a favorable behavioral intention to the extent that people believe that they are capable of performing the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 2020, p. 316). Suppose a person lacks the self-efficacy to complete the behavior in question. In that case, they will not engage in that behavior even if they hold a favorable attitude or SN toward that behavior.

Overall, the TPB provides an excellent framework to examine green funeral planning intentions among the US young adult population. Communication scholars have used the TPB to explain and predict a myriad of health communication behaviors related to communicating intentions to wear face masks (Kim & Tandoc, 2022), exercise (Eng et al., 2022), eat healthy foods (Yee et al., 2019), use condoms (Guan et al., 2016), and vape or use e-cigarettes (Yang,

2023) across various populations, cultures, and age groups. Within the existing EOL health communication scholarship, researchers have used TPB to assess behavioral health outcomes related to organ donation (Bresnahan et al., 2007; Britt et al., 2017), advanced care planning intentions (Brophy et al., 2021; Seiter, 2021), and EOL planning campaign development (Chew et al., 2019). For instance, a study used the TPB to examine the organ donation willingness of individuals living in Japan, Korea, and the US and found that attitudes toward donation and communication with family significantly predicted organ donation behaviors for respondents across cultures (Bresnahan et al., 2007). Another study that examined rural college students' attitudes, normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control regarding intent to register as organ donors found that only attitudes and perceived behavioral control predicted organ donation intention, while social normative beliefs did not (Britt et al., 2017). According to Britt and colleagues (2017), one reason for this finding may be that young adults do not place that much consideration on family members' approval of organ donation as necessary when deciding to become organ donors themselves (Britt et al., 2017). However, past scholarship has traditionally supported subjective norms as a significant predictor of organ donation intentions (Bresnahan et al., 2007; Rocheleau, 2013).

Scholars have also used TPB to predict pro-environmental behaviors (see Yuriev et al., 2020, for a scoping review). For instance, TPB has been used to examine pro-environmental behaviors related to recycling (Kumar, 2019), traveling (Han, 2015), and electric vehicle buying (Tu & Yang, 2019). Other scholarship has used TPB to examine intentions of purchasing sustainable health products such as green skincare ointments (Hsu et al., 2017), organic foods (Carfora et al., 2019), and reusable menstrual products (e.g., diva cup; Milne & Barnack-Tavlaris, 2019). Findings from this collection of research have shown that favorable attitudes

toward pro-environmental behavior, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict individuals' intentions towards and performance of the pro-environmental behavior in question.

In a green funeral planning context, for a person to cultivate a positive intention toward green funeral planning, they must first believe they have the resources and the opportunity to engage in green funeral planning. Additionally, individuals may intend to plan their funerary preferences. Still, they may not follow through with their intentions if they do not believe they possess the necessary skills or resources to complete green funeral plans (Ajzen, 1991). This dissertation conceptualizes perceived behavioral control as confidence in communicating and documenting green funeral planning preferences (Ajzen, 2020), given the relationship between attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intent and the body of research that suggests a positive relationship among these variables. The following hypothesis outlines the relationships among the TPB variables for US young adults' intentions to engage in green funeral planning.

H1: Positive attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control will be associated with a greater intent to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

EOL Planning Barriers and Planning Intentions

Despite the benefits of EOL planning, only 18-36% of adults living in the US have completed advanced care or aftercare plans (Stone et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2017). Health communication scholars attribute the severe lack of EOL plans in the US to several factors: the difficulties associated with EOL decision-making, the role of communication in EOL planning,

fears of death or death anxiety, and mixed support regarding past experiences of death impacting EOL planning behavior.

First, funeral planning encompasses the multidimensionality of death and dying across the physical, spiritual, psychological, and virtual domains (Franco & Carmack, 2022; Kehl, 2006). The highly personalized nature of death and the dying experience can make EOL decision-making difficult (Borrat-Besson et al., 2020; Fakhri et al., 2016; Galushko et al., 2012; Morrison et al., 2021; Wallace et al., 2019). Every individual requires unique EOL care treatment and services depending on their medical and personal needs (Feder et al., 2020; Lamahewa et al., 2017). Standardized EOL planning documents such as Five Wishes, a user-friendly advance directive in the United States that helps individuals identify their basic EOL planning preferences, have been criticized for not tailoring to specific individual needs, which ultimately decreases the overall quality of received EOL care (Morrison et al., 2021). Educational public service announcement materials have also lacked personalized messages targeting EOL-specific benefits, barriers, and resources, which may reduce an individual's willingness and perceived self-efficacy to engage in EOL planning (Seiter, 2020). Therefore, future EOL research and planning materials should consider individual values, beliefs, self-efficacy, norms, attitudes, and awareness of EOL treatment and aftercare service options.

Second, communication plays a significant role in EOL planning (Brophy et al., 2021; Franco & Carmack, 2022; Freytag & Rauscher, 2017; Grant et al., 2021; Scott & Caughlin, 2014; Thompson & Harrington, 2021). Both the quality of communication (Scott & Caughlin, 2014; Van Scoy et al., 2017) and internal apprehension to engage in discussions around death, dying, and EOL topics (Bendel et al., 2022; Carmack & DeGroot, 2016, 2020) can serve as either a barrier or a promoter of EOL planning. Personal and familial attitudes and beliefs about

death and death anxiety directly impact an individual's willingness to communicate about EOL topics (Clare et al., 2020; Freytag & Rauscher, 2017; Seiter & Brophy, 2020). Additionally, an individual's physical and mental ability to discuss EOL decisions and their perceived inability to plan for their death also contribute to difficulty communicating EOL preferences (Seiter & Brophy, 2020).

Communication apprehension about death refers to an "individual's fear associated with real and anticipated communication about the experience of death and dying" (Carmack & DeGroot, 2016, p. 240). The Communication Apprehension about Death Scale (CADS) measures individual levels of anxiety and avoidance when communicating about one's mortality or anticipated death (Carmack & DeGroot, 2016). A growing body of scholarship has used CADS to examine health issues directly related to death and end-of-life care decisions (Bendel et al., 2022; Carmack & DeGroot, 2020; Conley, 2021; Seiter, 2021; Weaver et al., 2022). One study used CADS to evaluate the effectiveness of a health intervention to promote the benefits of EOL planning (Weaver et al., 2022). Another study assessed aftercare preferences and found that high communication apprehension about death negatively impacts an individual's EOL decisions to donate their organs or body (Carmack & DeGroot, 2020). Communication apprehension plays a significant role in identifying, communicating, and documenting EOL preferences. As such, this dissertation builds on this work and uses CADS to understand how communication apprehension about death impacts young adults' green funeral intentions.

While scholarship has yet to connect the three TPB determinants with CADS, research has shown that CADS significantly predicts behavioral intention (Carmack & DeGroot, 2020). Studies examining communication apprehension, anxiety, or avoidance and the TPB have demonstrated that communication apprehension significantly impacts attitudes, social normative

beliefs, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention outcomes (Goldman et al., 2014). For example, a study found that college students with high levels of communication apprehension were significantly less likely to discuss condom usage with their peers (Goldman et al., 2014). Furthermore, the TPB study found that college students with high levels of communication apprehension also had negative or unfavorable attitudes about discussing condoms with their sex partners, did not believe their peers wanted to discuss condom usage, and did not believe they were capable of discussing condom usage with their peers (Goldman et al., 2014). This finding is consistent with other scholarship examining communication apprehension and TPB outcomes (Guan et al., 2016).

Third, death attitudes about death and dying may create unintentional barriers to aftercare planning outcomes relating to communication, documentation, and treatment and care preferences (Brown et al., 2014; Clare et al., 2020; Fakhri et al., 2016; Wong et al., 1994). *Death attitudes* often refer to feelings toward one's mortality, fear, apprehension, anticipation, awareness of death, dying, and impermanence (Clare et al., 2020). Attitudes toward death and ineffective communication about EOL preferences create unintentional barriers to patients receiving the EOL care they may desire (Brown et al., 2014; Carmack & DeGroot, 2016; Clare et al., 2020; Dobbs et al., 2012; Fakhri et al., 2016; Schrader et al., 2010). Death anxiety pertains to the feelings of fear, apprehension, anticipation, and awareness of death, dying, and impermanence (Brophy & Seiter, 2021; Clare et al., 2020). According to Lehto and Stein (2009), the development and experience of death anxiety involves cognitive, emotional, social, and motivational components to occur in individuals. Research has found that being afraid of death and dying can lead to avoidant behavioral responses to seeking medical attention or discussing their EOL preferences (Schrader et al., 2010). Brown and colleagues (2014) found that death

anxiety may contribute to decreased communication regarding the patient's EOL preferences. Findings from another study showed that avoidant death anxiety coping can compromise EOL communication (Clare et al., 2020). Their study also found that greater awareness of death anxiety can help overcome avoidant coping. In sum, existing research suggests that death anxiety may affect people's EOL preferences in positive and negative ways. The death attitude profile-revised is a valid and reliable measure for assessing death attitudes within the health communication domain (Wong et al., 1994). The healthy young adult population tends to hold increased feelings of death anxiety and fear of death and dying (Dobbs et al., 2012; Takeshita et al., 2021; Thorson & Powell, 1984). Given the significant role death attitudes may play among this target population, it is necessary to include death attitudes when examining aftercare planning intentions.

Research has also found connections between attitudes toward death and dying and the TPB (e.g., Brophy et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2014; Clare et al., 2020; Freytag & Rauscher, 2017). Specifically, research has supported the findings that an individual's level of death anxiety significantly influences willingness to engage in EOL planning conversations (Freytag & Rauscher, 2017). Said another way, high levels of death anxiety demotivate the desire to engage in EOL conversations and overall EOL planning motivations (Brophy et al., 2021). One study that examined the role death anxiety plays in advanced care planning intentions found that high levels of death anxiety negatively affected self-efficacy toward planning, social normative beliefs, and attitudes toward EOL planning intentions (Brophy et al., 2021).

Finally, there are mixed findings and support about whether *past behavioral experiences with death and EOL planning* impact future EOL planning intentions. In an EOL planning context, past behaviors refer to previous experiences with decision-making, communicating, and

documenting personal aftercare preferences (Chandler, 2018; Hayslip et al., 2007). Some research suggests that having past experiences related to the behavior will significantly predict the intention to engage in the behavior in question (Ajzen, 2011; Anderson et al., 2013). Findings from a study examining relationships between healthcare professionals' personal experiences of loss and their advanced care practices supported this notion (Wallace et al., 2018). Results revealed that 60% of healthcare providers who experienced loss had completed an EOL plan compared to 44% of professionals who did not experience loss. Providers with personal experiences with loss were also more likely to have shared their advanced care plans with their providers and family members (Wallace et al., 2018). Hayslip and colleagues (2007) also found support that past behavior with funeral services plays a significant role in grief processing, and an individual's past experiences with EOL events should be incorporated into funeral coping measures (Hayslip et al., 2007).

There are ongoing debates about the role of past behaviors concerning the TPB framework (Ajzen, 2011). Other scholarship, however, suggests that past behavior may moderate behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 2020; Fekadu & Kraft, 2001; Norman et al., 2000; Reuveni & Werner, 2015). However, moderation effects, specifically with past behavior on EOL planning behaviors, have not been tested, and future research is needed to classify past behavior as a barrier or promoter of EOL planning. As such, the current dissertation will examine how past behaviors with EOL planning relate to aftercare planning intentions among the young adult population.

One of the main criticisms around TPB is the lack of inclusion of past behavior in the model. Among TPB research, there is building support that past behaviors predict intention to engage in certain behaviors (Anderson et al., 2013; Bamberg et al., 2003; Carmack & Heiss,

2018; Sommer, 2011). Outside of TPB, past behavior may play a significant role in grief processing and be incorporated into funeral coping measures (Hayslip et al., 2007). However, past behavior is seldom examined within EOL planning contexts. One study found that past experiences with loss positively predicted EOL planning intentions (Wallace et al., 2018). For this reason, the current research will incorporate past behaviors with EOL planning and funeral experiences into the model.

Given the relationship between communication apprehension about death, attitudes toward death and dying, and past behaviors related to death and EOL planning on behavioral intent, it seems reasonable that these variables will significantly predict green funeral planning intentions.

H2: Communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with EOL planning will significantly predict intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

Additionally, green funeral planning intentions may be related to individual levels of environmentalism and connections to the natural environment. Growing empirical research advocates that plants and the natural environment can significantly influence health-related behaviors and outcomes related to emotional health and mental well-being (Becher, 2022; Bekoff, 2023; Hall & Knuth, 2019; Mayer & Frantz, 2004). According to Hall and Knuth (2019), plants can cultivate feelings of gratitude and mindfulness, lessen depression and anxiety, and promote altruistic behavior. Furthermore, research has shown that an individual's connection to nature and the natural environment is vital to fostering pro-environmental behaviors (Becher, 2022; Mayer & Frantz, 2004). Scholarship has since drawn connections between environmental awareness about the climate crisis and the increasing interest in natural burials and memorial

trees (Becher, 2022; Clayden & Dixon, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2012). For instance, research on green planning intentions has found that individuals who work closely with nature in their careers (e.g., environmentalists) and those who are aware of green funerals are significantly more likely to choose green funerals compared to non-environmentalists or individuals who did not know green funeral services existed (Zhongming et al., 2021). Other work revealed a relationship between green funeral planning interests and preferences in choosing a funeral service that will help the bereaved heal and positively impact the environment (Herring, 2019; Slominski, 2020). Several pro-environmental factors may affect Green funeral planning intentions that the TPB framework does not account for. Therefore, EOL planning research must consider how individual levels of environmentalism and other pro-environmental factors impact green funeral planning intentions. The VBN theory (Stern et al., 1999) offers a viable framework to investigate how pro-environmental behaviors affect green funeral planning intentions. The following section briefly overviews the theoretical framework and frames an argument for applying the theory to green funeral planning research.

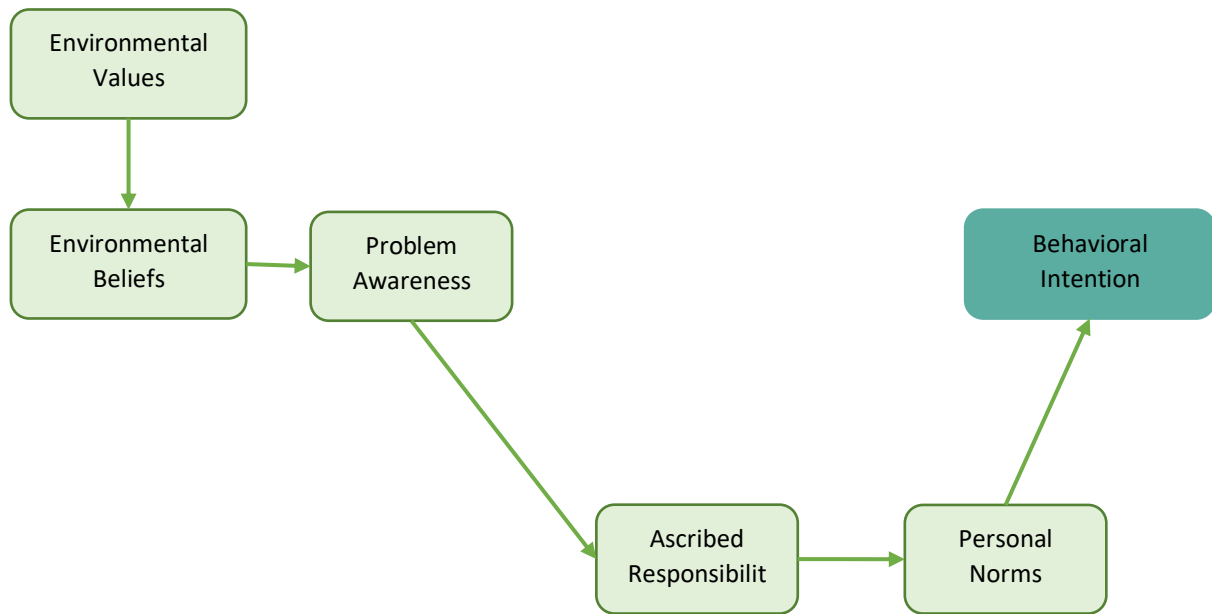
Value-Belief-Norm Theory

There is no avoiding the underlying connection between green funeral service appeal and pro-environmental worldviews (Cummins, 2020; Krupar, 2018; MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Slominski, 2020). The VBN theory provides a linear socio-psychological model to explain attitudes and behaviors associated with the natural environment (Stern et al., 1999). Growing empirical support suggests that the VBN theory is successful in describing one's pro-environmental behavior and behavioral intentions across cultures, populations, communities, and topics (Bouman & Steg, 2021; Han, 2015; Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999; Whitley et al., 2018). Outside of the communication studies, researchers found that the VBN theory significantly

predicted behavior around workplace energy conservation (Mamun et al., 2022), sustainability practices (Whitley et al., 2018), national park visitation likelihood (Sharma & Gupta, 2020), natural food consumption (Carfora et al., 2021), and environmental literacy (Liobikienė & Poškus, 2019).

As depicted in Figure 2, the VBN theory includes five sequential determinants of pro-environmental intentions: environmental values, environmental beliefs, adverse consequences for valued objects, ascribed responsibility, and a sense of obligation to take pro-environmental action (Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999). The idea is that environmental values (e.g., biospheric values) influence ecological worldviews (e.g., environmental beliefs; connectedness to nature), which in turn affect an individual's adverse consequences for valued objects (e.g., problem awareness). Problem awareness then affects an individual's ascribed responsibility to take pro-environmental action and, in turn, impacts an individual's sense of obligation to take pro-environmental actions (e.g., personal norms around the intended behavior). (Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Stern, 2000; Stern et al, 1999).

Figure 2. *The Original Model for the Value-Belief-Norm Theory*



Note. The value-belief-norm theory (VBN) predicts pro-environmental behavioral intention.

Environmental values refer to “a desirable trans-situational goal varying in importance, which serves as a guiding principle in the life of a person or other social entity” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 21). There are three types of environmental values: biospheric, altruistic, and egotistic principles (DeGroot et al., 2007; Han et al., 2010; Han, 2015; Stern et al., 1999). Biospheric values are “values emphasizing the environment and the biosphere itself” (De Groot et al., 2007, p. 104). According to Whitley and colleagues (2018), different environmental values impact other decision-making behaviors; for example, highly biospheric and altruistic individuals are more likely to engage in sustainability behaviors than egoistic individuals. Therefore, in an EOL planning context, biospheric individuals may be more likely to prefer a green funeral service option.

Environmental beliefs. Environmental beliefs consist of two separate metrics: Ecological worldviews (Cordano et al., 2011; Han, 2015; Stern, 2000) and connectedness to nature (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). According to Stern (2000), ecological worldviews capture an individual's "propensity to take actions with pro-environmental intent" (p. 411). Therefore, environmental beliefs about the benefits of green funeral service options may impact green funeral service planning decisions. Furthermore, research suggests that environmentalism is an ecological worldview; one form of environmentalism pertains to an individual's connectedness to nature (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). Existing scholarship previously linked individual environmental beliefs with connections to trees and nature (Cummins, 2020; MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Pustarfi, 2021). According to the VBN theory, underlying linkages between environmental values and environmental values suggest that environmental values will positively affect environmental beliefs in a green funeral planning context.

Problem Awareness. Often termed "awareness of adverse consequences," problem awareness refers to an individual's cognizance about the environmental impacts related to completing a pro-social or pro-environmental action (Bamberg et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Stern et al., 1999). Conceptually, problem awareness may trigger an individual's personal norms that determine the likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior to prevent damaging environmental outcomes (DeGroot & Steg, 2009).

Ascribed Responsibility. An individual's ascribed responsibility indicates their "feelings of responsibility for the negative consequences of not acting pro-socially" (DeGroot & Steg, 2009, p. 421). Said another way, becoming aware of an environmental consequence that one's intended behavior may cause may evoke feelings of responsibility to avoid or change one's behaviors or intentions. Ascribed responsibility directly relates to an individual's personal

normative beliefs (DeGroot & Steg, 2009). According to the VBN theory, there are underlying linkages between problem awareness and ascribed responsibility to engage in green funeral planning.

Personal Norms. Sometimes called “sense of obligation to take pro-environmental actions,” personal normative beliefs are an individual’s perceived “moral obligation to perform or refrain from specific actions” (Schwartz & Howard, 1981, p. 191). Personal norms items will measure an individual’s moral obligation to engage in or avoid doing specific actions (Schwartz & Howard, 1981; DeGroot et al., 2007). When a stimulus threatens an individual’s values, their personal norms become stronger (Bouman et al., 2020ab; Schwartz, 1977; Steg, 2016; Stern, 2000). Therefore, personal norms are an essential predictor of completing pro-environmental actions (Schwartz, 1977; Steg, 2016; Stern, 2000).

Applications of the VBN theory among the existing environmental communication research primarily focused on environmental message effects (Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2019; Commerçon et al., 2023; Golebie & van Riper, 2019; Kim & Shin, 2017). For example, a study examined three commonly used terms in environmental campaign messages and found that Americans negatively associated *carbon pollution* with environmental destruction, “carbon emissions” with pollution, and “greenhouse gas emissions” with climate change (Commerçon et al., 2023). Another study found that Americans’ pro-environmental views and perceived climate change severity significantly predicted support for environmental tax policy campaign messages (Kim & Shin, 2017).

In health communication, scholars used the VBN theory to understand individuals’ responses to global environmental crises during the coronavirus pandemic (Bouman & Steg, 2021). Researchers rarely used the VBN theory to examine health phenomena related to

environmental risks despite the many attempts made by health communication scholars to study these linkages (Chadwick, 2016, 2021; Guidotta, 2013; Myrick, 2019; Villigram et al., 2010; Zoller, 2012, 2016). According to Chadwick (2021), “the environment and human health are linked through our exposure to toxic chemicals; air, water, and ground pollution; climate change; extractive and energy industries; contaminated food; and natural disasters” (p. 489). Presenting environmental and climate change effects as a health issue creates new opportunities for theory application, such as the VBN theory, to study behavioral health outcomes related to environmental risks. Research at the intersection between environmental and health communication also creates opportunities for health communication scholars to examine EOL planning behavior and decision-making related to environmentalism (e.g., green funeral service selection, environmental literacy, and planning options, plant usage preferences). Considering the growing demands for green funerals in the US and emerging connections to pro-environmental worldviews (Cummins, 2020; Krupar, 2018; MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Slominski, 2020), there is now a need for this environmental health communication research. Therefore, the proposed study will be the first to use the VBN theory to examine funeral planning intentions that involve pro-environmental behaviors such as selecting, communicating about, and documenting green funeral plans.

While scholars have used the VBN theory to investigate pro-environmental behavioral intentions across cultures, populations, and age groups, no one has used the theory to examine pro-environmental intentions associated with green funeral planning. The VBN theory offers a practical framework to investigate green funeral planning intentions due to the undeniable relationship between environmental factors (e.g., individual levels of environmentalism, awareness of the ecological consequences of US funeral services) and interest in green funerals

(Herring, 2019; Slominski, 2020; Zhongming et al., 2017). As such, this dissertation study will be the first to apply the VBN theory in an EOL planning context to examine pro-environmental factors that may influence green funeral selection, communication, and documentation intentions.

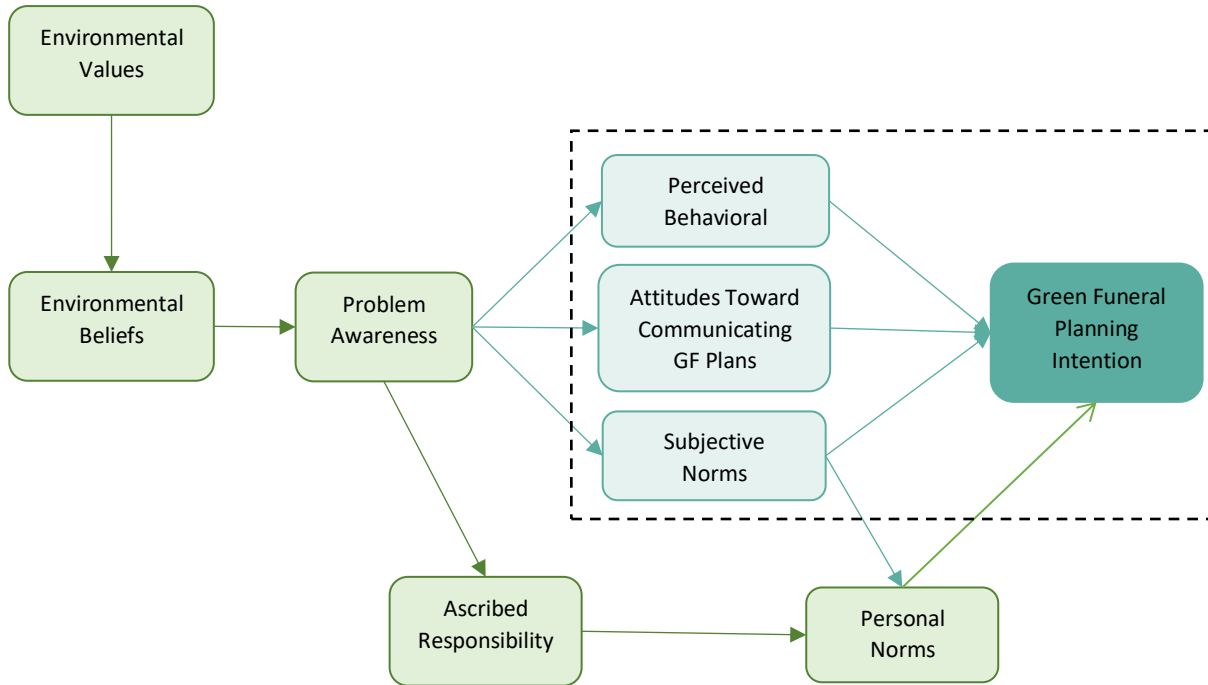
Merging the TPB to the VBN Theory to Examine Green Funeral Intentions

The TPB has been used to predict green funeral (e.g., memorial tree) selection intentions (Kim & Kim, 2012), recycling habits among young adults (Kumar, 2019), green lodging intentions (Han et al., 2010; Han & Kim, 2010), among other pro-environmental behaviors (see Yuriev et al., 2020 for a review). While the VBN theory has yet to examine EOL post-humous phenomena, it has been used to predict pro-environmental behavior associated with sustainable practices among young adults (Whitley et al., 2018) and holds potential for EOL planning applications.

Overall, the TPB and VBN theoretical models significantly predict unique aspects of behavioral intentions. Han (2015) merged the two theoretical frameworks to create a model to assess environmental-based behavioral intentions to visit green hotels (see Figure 3). The converged TPB-VBN model connects problem awareness related to the environmental consequences of not performing the pro-environmental behavior to TPBs attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control toward the targeted behavioral intention or outcome. Han's (2015) study found that the converged model had better predictive power over green hotel travel intentions than the original TPB or VBN models (Han, 2015). Previous scholarship used this model to predict various pro-environmental intentions associated with natural food selection (Carfora et al., 2021), locally produced organic food consumption (Chen,

2020), and energy conservation motivations to mitigate climate change (Gkargkavouzi et al., 2019; Wittenberg et al., 2018), and electronic appliance usage (Wang et al. 2023).

Figure 3. The Merged Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory Model



Note: The applied model extends Han’s (2015) attempt to converge the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the value-belief-norm theory (VBN) to predict pro-environmental behavioral intention. The light green shaded constructs represent VBN variables. The blue-shaded constructs inside the dotted box represent the original variables of TPB.

Previous research has connected the VBN construct, problem awareness, with TPB components such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Carfora et al., 2021; Chen, 2020; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010). For instance, a study tested the TPV-VBN model. It confirmed the interrelationships among the constructs within the TPB framework and the crucial role of problem awareness in efficiently predicting environmental behavior (Gkargkavouzi et al., 2019). Therefore, environmental beliefs may positively affect problem awareness in a green funeral planning context.

H3: Problem awareness will positively affect (3a) ascribed responsibility, (3b) attitudes, (3c) subjective normative beliefs, and (3d) perceived behavioral control for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

Other TPB-VBN scholarship identified a significant relationship between personal and subjective norms on pro-environmental behaviors (Carfora et al., 2021; Chen, 2020; Han, 2015). Findings across the literature suggest that activation of VBN's personal normative beliefs is a composite procedure influenced by TPB's subjective normative beliefs (Carfora et al., 2021; Han, 2015; Steg et al., 2014). A handful of existing empirical research studies verified the effect of subjective norms on personal norms (Wittenberg et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2017). Thus, the relationship likely holds in a green funeral planning context.

H4: Subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal norms for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

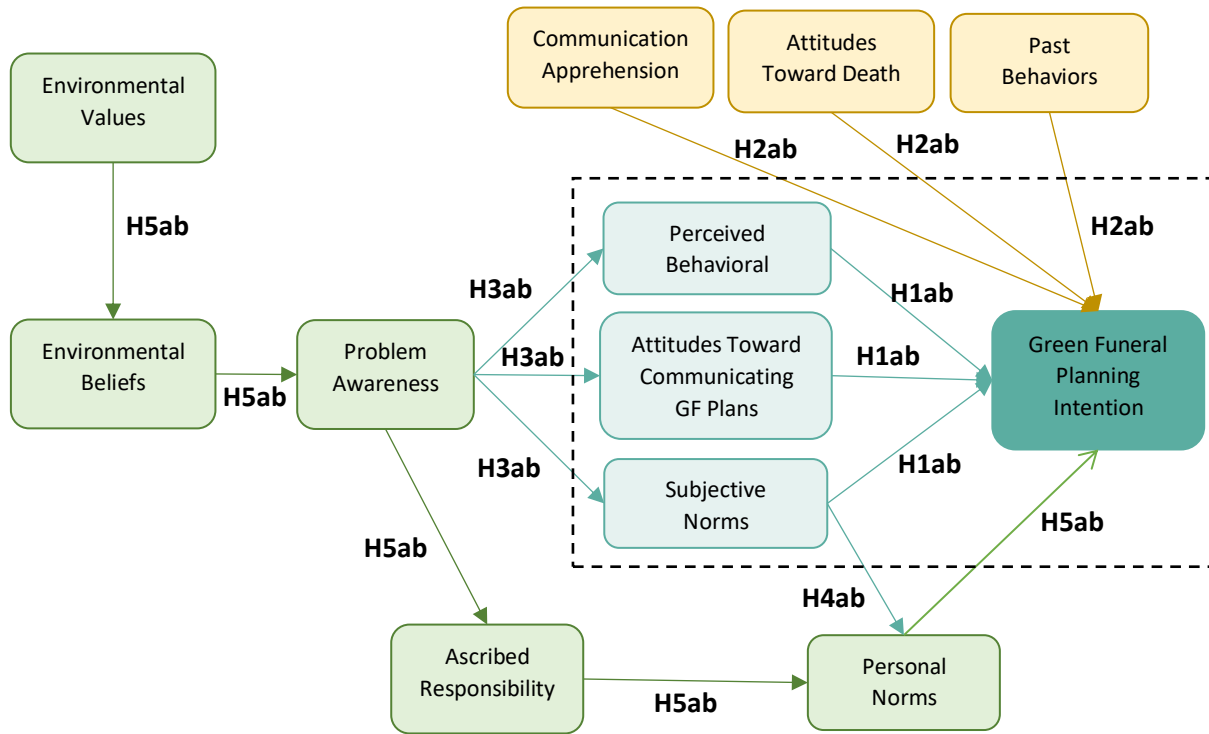
Given the relationships between environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms on behavioral intent, and the body of research that suggests a positive relationship among these variables to predict pro-environmental behaviors, it is not unreasonable to assume that the five VBN constructs will significantly indicate behavioral intention to green funeral plans among young adults.

H5: Environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

Due to the environmental, health, and communication factors related to green funeral planning intentions, this dissertation adapted the existing converged TPB-VBN framework (Han,

2015) to investigate young adults’ planning intentions to communicate and document their green funeral preferences (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Theory Model



Note. The adapted converged TB-VBN model extends Han’s (2015) original framework that merged the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the value-belief-norm theory (VBN) to predict pro-environmental behavioral intentions. The adapted model includes 12 constructs and 15 causal linkages to predict young adults’ intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document their green funeral plans. The light green shaded constructs represent VBN variables. The blue-shaded constructs inside the dotted box represent the original variables of TPB. The yellow-shaded constructs represent the extension variables derived from the TPB and health communication literature.

The highly individualized nature of death, dying, and EOL planning created a necessity for the converged TPB-VBN theoretical model to include three EOL planning barriers. The extended converged TPB-VBN had individuals' CADs, attitudes toward death and dying, and past behavioral experiences with funeral planning. High communication avoidance and anxiety levels might dissuade EOL planning behaviors (Seifart et al., 2020; Tripken & Elrod, 2018); thus, including CADs in the model allowed me to understand how communication apprehension about death impacts green funeral intentions. Research suggests that young adults tend to hold increased feelings of death anxiety and fear of death and dying (Brown et al., 2014; Clare et al., 2020; Fakhri et al., 2016; Thorson & Powell, 1984; Wong et al., 1994). Death attitudes often refer to feelings toward one's mortality, fear, apprehension, anticipation, awareness of death, dying, and impermanence (Clare et al., 2020). The death attitude profile-revised is a valid and reliable measure for assessing death attitudes within the health communication domain (Wong et al., 1994). Given the significant role death attitudes may play among this target population, it is necessary to include them in the extended TPB-VBN model. Finally, past behavioral experiences with planning may create unintentional barriers to EOL planning outcomes relating to communication and documentation outcomes. Mixed empirical findings on past behavior's role in the TPB framework suggest that there is still much to learn about this relationship. This dissertation is the first to include the three communication barriers in the existing TPB-VBN model. As a result, this study did not predict the relationships between communication barriers and any of the TPB or VBN constructs.

Consequently, Han's (2015) theoretical converged TPB-VBN model and existing health communication literature guided the hypothesis creation and quantitative study design processes (Ajzen, 1991, 2013; Bamberg et al., 2007; Carmack & DeGroot, 2016; Carmack & Heiss, 2018;

Cordano et al., 2011; DeGroot et al., 2007; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999; Schwartz, 1981; Wong et al., 1994).

H6: Attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, past behaviors with EOL planning, environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

Study Overview

This dissertation investigated two distinct green funeral behavioral intentions among healthy US young adults' intention to (1) communicate and (2) document green funeral plans to answer the following research question:

RQ1: Does the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predict (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions?

To do this, I adapted and extended Han's (2015) converged TPB-VBN model, which merged the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and the VBN (Stern et al., 1999) to predict the intention of pro-environmental behaviors. The extended model assessed three TPB variables: attitudes towards green funeral intention intentions, perceived behavioral control towards green funeral intentions, and social norms towards green funeral intention outcomes; and five VBN variables: environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, personal sense of obligation to take pro-environmental action (personal norms). In addition, this study extended the congealed VBN-TPB model by adding three factors known to impact EOL planning intentions: communication apprehension about death, past experiences with EOL

planning, and attitudes toward death and dying. The adaption of communication barriers into the converged TPB-VBN model led me to ask a secondary research question:

RQ2: Which theoretical model holds the most statistical power for predicting (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions: the adapted converged TPB-VBN model, the original TPB model, or the original VBN theory model?

Overall, this dissertation asked two overarching research questions and six hypotheses and explored whether 11 factors (attitudes toward green funeral intentions, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death and dying, past behaviors with EOL planning, environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms) significantly predict behavioral intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral preferences among US young adults.

Chapter II Summary

Chapter II began with an overview of two tenants of EOL planning and detailed several existing green funeral services to showcase the growing number of environmentally friendly US funerary options. Then, I reviewed aftercare planning scholarship related explicitly to EOL planning barriers and environmental issues related to funerary practices to draw connections to EOL planning within the ecological health communication domain. I discussed the TPB and VBN theories to explain why I used them to assess green funeral planning intentions. Finally, I introduced Han's (2015) converged TPB-VBN theoretical model for predicting pro-environmental behaviors. I outlined existing scholarship that previously used the converged TPB-VBN model to build support for why I adapted the framework to fit within the green funeral planning context. The current dissertation used the adapted converged TPB-VBN model

to predict young adults (a) communication and (b) documentation intentions toward planning a green funeral service (please see Figure 1 for a visual). The chapter concluded with a description of the dissertation study objectives and hypotheses.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Chapter III begins with my statement of research positionality and self-reflexivity. I present participant sample descriptives and the recruitment process and describe the online survey elements and participant procedures. I outline the quantitative survey-based design and present all survey instruments and measurement descriptions. The chapter concludes with a detailed analytical plan for the collected survey data. I provide descriptions outlining the analytical procedures for data collection and cleaning, preliminary data analysis, and primary analytical plan to answer each research question, relational hypothesis, and nested model comparisons. Looking ahead, Chapter IV reports all study analyses identified in Chapter III.

Statement of Positionality and Reflexivity

Positionality considers how factors such as “political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, ethnicity, race, social class, status, dis(abilities), and so on” collectively impact an investigator’s research approach (Holmes, 2020, p. 2). Self-reflexivity considers how a researcher’s opinions, values, and actions shape how they generate, analyze, and interpret data (Jafar, 2018). While quantitative research seldom includes positionality and reflexivity statements, studies show that incorporating these statements facilitates the production of thoughtful and honest academic work (Jafar, 2018; Wilson et al., 2022). Including positionality statements in quantitative research can provide insights into what initially led that researcher to conduct the study and reflect upon how that research was carried out (Jafar, 2018).

As a first-generation Hispanic-Portuguese woman and post-positivist researcher from a low socioeconomic class, my positionality profoundly influences my approach to exploring the multidimensional nuances of EOL planning. I openly acknowledge that my lived experiences with death and loss, my spirituality, and my cultural upbringing fuel my perspectives on EOL planning and my commitment to this research. My experiences as someone who has navigated the complexities of communicating and documenting EOL decisions and loss within and outside of the Portuguese community shape my perspective and guide this dissertation's motivations. These experiences include both the beauty in cultivating positive perspectives toward death acceptance and my relationships with my deceased and the hindrance of witnessing first-hand how the lack of EOL communication and documentation leads to racial, financial, and familial disparities during already difficult times of loss and grief, especially among the young adult, minority, and low-income populations.

My exposure to death and loss throughout my upbringing cultivated a meaningful connection to this dissertation topic. My fascination with green funerals inadvertently began when I was about five years old following the death of my pet cat, Sassy. Shortly after my family and I buried Sassy in the backyard, a plant began to grow out of his grave. At first, we thought the plant was a weed, but to our surprise, the sapling blossomed into a beautiful birch tree. The unexpected birth of this tree during my period of grief shaped how I viewed death and loss. Sassy's coincidental green burial initiated the social construction of my beliefs toward the interconnectivity of life, death, and nature. Ultimately, this early life experience cultivated my interest in green burials and inspired me to have a body compost burial after I die. My experiences interning in a funeral home furthered my passion for understanding how EOL

planning behaviors and death perspectives intersect with the broader health communication discourse.

My experiences specifically with losing young, loved ones, whose short lives were supposed to be ahead of them instead of behind them, challenged me to accept the inevitability of mortality and taught me the importance of EOL planning. My past experience working in a funeral home also motivated me to normalize discussions around EOL planning for myself and everyone around me.

I am not shy in sharing that I documented my EOL plans and communicated my wishes to my loved ones. I often promote EOL planning in my death education seminars and advocacy work, and I have noticed that individuals subconsciously hold this sort of stagnant connotation towards EOL planning, almost as if planning for their death is as final as drawing their last breath. However, I challenge this socially learned association and argue that EOL planning is a fluid process instead of a stagnant final task. My green funeral plans have evolved as I mature and further educate myself about the latest practices and services. I have changed my mind countless times about whether I want to be intubated or resuscitated and updated my forms accordingly. I updated my digital legacy contact on my social media accounts as friendships and relationships grew and changed. I have vacillated between body composting and water cremation, updated my forms, and relayed this change to my family. And that is okay!

EOL planning is a continued discussion with yourself that evolves and changes as one moves throughout one's lifespan. EOL planning gives planners full autonomy to make important decisions for themselves. Finally, having documented plans provides me with some peace of mind. I know that I did my part to provide my family with a framework that helps them handle my death and honor my life. Having documented plans and continual conversations about my

EOL wishes helps alleviate some unnecessary burdens and guesswork during an already emotionally heavy and difficult time. To me, documenting and communicating EOL plans means that I helped create a healthy space for my surviving loved ones to grieve.

I am acutely aware that my implicit biases and feelings toward death and EOL planning may influence my interpretations of my study findings. However, my post-positivist research approach and commitment to investigator objectivity buffer any personal biases I may have throughout this research process. My positionality highlights the importance of amplifying diverse perspectives within the EOL communication discourse scholarship. Moreover, my reflexivity statement emphasizes my dedication to conducting this research with integrity, consistency, and an unwavering commitment to cultivating positive change within the EOL communication space.

Participants and Sample Demographics

A power analysis using G*Power indicated that 385 participants were necessary to attain an adequate sample size. I recruited over 600 young adults to participate in an online Qualtrics survey to ensure I met statistical power. Anyone older than 18 years old and meeting all eligibility criteria could complete the survey. Due to the young adult focus, the following dissertation analysis included only data from individuals who were 18-39 years old. It is important to note that this dissertation only assessed individuals who would like to have a green funeral service when they die. If an individual did not want a green funeral and instead expressed interest in traditional burial, cremation, or whole-body donation services, then they could not participate in the dissertation project.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment occurred following Institutional Review Board approval (approval number: 23-06-6670) and involved three approaches: (1) snowball sampling through social media, (2) university student recruitment, and (3) Prolific Academic recruitment. Please see Appendix A for each method's complete set of participant recruitment materials. Recruitment flyers advertised that researchers from the University of Alabama sought individuals to complete an online survey about death and green funeral services. All recruitment flyers clearly stated eligibility requirements, the approximate survey completion length (15-20 minutes), instructions for compensation for university students and Prolific participants, and emphasized that participation is entirely voluntary. The alternative to study involvement across all three recruitment methods was non-participation.

Social media recruitment occurred through specific online platforms. I posted recruitment flyers on Facebook (e.g., EOL and Death Scholars group), Reddit (subreddits: r/Death, r/Greenburial, r/DeathPositive, and r/SampleSize), Instagram, and LinkedIn (stories on my public profiles). The EOL and Death Scholars Facebook group is a 217-member private group for academics and scholars to gather, discuss death topics, and share and disseminate research studies outside the community. The r/Death is a 45.6k member subreddit for discussions related to death and dying. r/Greenburial is a 139-member subreddit for discourse about green burial practices. r/DeathPositive is a 16.7k member community for indulging in death-related interests, discussions, and exploring relationships with mortality. r/Samplesize is a 210k member subreddit for posting and taking online surveys and polls. Recruitment flyers encouraged participants to share the study information with others in their personal and professional networks to generate snowball sampling. Social media participants did not receive compensation for their participation.

University student recruitment occurred through the University of Alabama college participation pool. I asked fellow faculty members to share the study recruitment information in their classes and with other faculty in their professional networks at the university. University students who completed the study through the participation system earned course credit for their participation.

Prolific Academic recruitment occurred through the Prolific crowdsourcing website. Prolific is a useful academic research-based resource for online survey-based data collection. The Prolific platform is known to collect high-quality data (Peer et al., 2017) and be more affordable than other crowdsourcing sites such as Amazon Mechanical Turk. A fixed-pay compensation system on the Prolific Academic platform incentivized users to participate in the study. Participants earned up to \$3.00 for completing the online survey.

Sample Demographics

Data collection yielded 614 total survey responses across the university students ($n = 6$), social media ($n = 150$), and Prolific Academic ($n = 458$) recruitment methods. Among this data set, I removed 170 responses for the following reasons: missing or incomplete data ($n = 51$), the participant was not between 18-39 years old ($n = 74$), failed at least one of the attention checks ($n = 14$), did not want a green funeral service ($n = 24$), and did not live in the US ($n = 7$). The final sample contained 444 completed responses: 2 university students, 59 social media, and 382 Prolific Academic participants.

All participants were between 18 and 39 ($M = 30.43$, $SD = 5.37$). The sample primarily included females ($n = 221$, 49.78%) followed by males ($n = 188$, 42.34%), nonbinary individuals ($n = 17$, 3.83%), transgender individuals ($n = 8$, 1.80%), genderfluid individuals ($n = 4$, 0.90%), agender individuals ($n = 3$, 0.68%), and a handful participants who preferred not to state their

gender identity ($n = 3$, 0.68%). Roughly two-thirds of the participant sample identified as White ($n = 286$, 64.41%), followed by Black ($n = 55$, 12.39%), Biracial meaning two or more races ($n = 39$, 8.78%), Asian ($n = 36$, 8.11%), Hispanic/Latinx ($n = 22$, 4.96%), Native American or Alaska Native ($n = 2$, 0.5%), and four participants preferred not to state their racial identity ($n = 4$, 0.9%). Roughly one-fourth of individuals indicated that they lived in the southeastern region of the US ($n = 111$, 25.17%). The remaining sample was spread out across the northeast ($n = 98$, 22.22%), midwest ($n = 91$, 20.63%), west ($n = 73$, 16.55%), southwest ($n = 52$, 11.79%), and northwest ($n = 16$, 3.63%).

Participants' education levels varied; one-third reported having a bachelor's degree ($n = 150$, 33.78%). Others disclosed that they had some college education ($n = 98$, 22.07%) or received a high school diploma or GED ($n = 73$, 16.44 %). A subset of participants had completed a graduate degree ($n = 68$, 15.32%) or an associate degree ($n = 50$, 11.26%). Two participants had not completed high school ($n = 2$, 0.50%), and three preferred not to disclose their education level ($n = 3$, 0.68%).

Religious affiliation also varied. Most individuals reported that they were Christian ($n = 132$, 29.73%), followed by Agnostic ($n = 126$, 28.38%), Atheist ($n = 77$, 17.34%), Spiritual ($n = 24$, 5.41%), Jewish ($n = 9$, 2.03%), Buddhist ($n = 5$, 1.13%), Hindu ($n = 3$, 0.68%), or Muslim ($n = 2$, 0.45%). Forty-seven participants disclosed that they were not religious ($n = 47$, 10.59%). Fourteen participants stated their religious affiliation was not mentioned ($n = 14$, 3.15%), and five individuals did not know ($n = 5$, 1.13%).

Finally, the sample differed the most across green funeral service preferences. It is important to note that the survey did not restrict participants from selecting one green funeral service option. Instead, the survey presented this question in a multiple-entry choice format, and

participants could choose as many service types as they wanted. Plant-based services were most preferred ($n = 252$, 20.47%), followed by water cremation ($n = 185$, 15.03%), body composting ($n = 164$, 13.33%), conservation burial ($n = 162$, 13.16%), environmental scattering ($n = 129$, 10.48%), coral reef burial ($n = 128$, 10.40%), mushroom burial ($n = 104$, 8.45%), and sea burials ($n = 97$, 7.88%).

Survey

The average time for participants to complete the survey was approximately 18 minutes to complete ($M = 18.19$, $SD = 17.15$). I programmed the survey in Qualtrics, a university-supported software compatible with Prolific Academic. The survey comprised 112 questions assessing twelve constructs and participants' demographic information. Please see Appendix B to see the complete survey questionnaire.

The survey began with informed consent. Appendix C provides the informed consent for the three participant recruitment methods. The informed consent identified instructions on completing the survey and listed the benefits and risks associated with participating in the study. While there were no more than minimal risks for participating in the dissertation project, there is a slight risk of psychological or emotional pain due to the sensitivity of the research topic. If psychological pain did occur, the informed consent provided resources for participants to use. Resources included links to the Mental Health America and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website links. The final section of the informed consent presented the study participation consent statement.

After participants consented to the study, they answered the eligibility criteria. Four categorical (yes/no) questions asked whether individuals (1) were at least 18 years old, (2) lived in the US, (3) could read or understand English, and (4) wanted a green funeral service. If a

participant did not meet an eligibility requirement, the survey ended. If a participant met all inclusion criteria, they began the online Qualtrics survey. The survey asked participants for seven demographic items, including their age, via a numeric text-entry format. Participants also disclosed their gender, race, level of completed education, region of residence in the US, green funeral service preference, and religious affiliation via multiple-choice question format.

Next, participants answered questions about EOL planning barriers, the TPB, and the VBN theory presented in randomized order to control testing effects, such as questionnaire response fatigue (Jeong et al., 2023). The survey displayed all items in a matrix table using a 7-point Likert scale format. The EOL barrier section contained 48 items: 32 attitudes toward death and dying items, 12 items related to CADS, and four items related to past experiences with funerals and EOL planning. I adopted all EOL planning barrier items from relevant health communication (Carmack & DeGroot, 2016) and psychology scholarship (Ajzen, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Wong et al., 1994). The TPB section contained 20 total items: six subjective normative belief items, six perceived behavioral control items, and eight questions about attitudes toward green funeral planning intentions. I adapted TPB items from relevant TPB-based scholarship (Ajzen, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010ab). Ajzen's (2013) survey construction recommendations also helped inform TPB item construction. The VBN theory section contained 28 items: 4 environmental values, 14 environmental beliefs, four problem awareness items, three ascribed responsibility items, and three personal normative beliefs. I adopted all VBN theory items from existing green behavioral scholarship and adapted them to fit into a green funeral planning context (Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Stern et al., 1999).

The final section of the survey included six green funeral planning intention items. Participants could also provide additional open-ended (text-entry) responses if they wanted to share anything related to their experiences with or feelings toward green funerals and EOL planning, or any feedback about the survey. The survey's final question asked participants if they wanted to learn more about green funeral services or EOL planning materials. The survey provided interested individuals with additional links to educational materials. The survey thanked social media participants and ended. Prolific participants were then rerouted to their Prolific Academic profile to receive compensation for their time. University students were forwarded to the university SONA system to receive course credit for their participation.

Instruments

EOL Planning Barriers

Communication Apprehension about Death (CADS). CADS is a 12-item measure for assessing an individual's willingness to discuss topics related to death and dying (Carmack & DeGroot, 2016). CADS comprises two subscales: communication anxiety and communication avoidance. Participants rated statements such as "I feel anxious talking about the fact that I am going to die one day" and "I avoid talking about death at all costs" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Higher scores denoted higher communication apprehension about death topics.

The overall CADS measure met the standard reliability threshold ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.59$). The communication avoidance ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 2.72$, $SD = 1.49$) and communication anxiety ($\alpha = .95$, $M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.93$) scales met reliability standards and scores aligned with existing scholarship (e.g., Carmack & DeGroot, 2020; Weaver et al., 2023).

Death Attitudes. The adapted death attitude profile revised (DAP-R) scale is a 32-item measure for assessing attitudes toward death and dying (Wong et al., 1994). DAP-R comprises five subscales: death avoidance, fear of death, approach acceptance, escape acceptance, and neutral acceptance. Participants will rate items such as “the subject of life after death troubles me greatly” and “I have an intense fear of death” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Higher scores denoted unfavorable attitudes toward death for each subscale.

All DAP-R subscales met the standard reliability threshold: death avoidance ($\alpha = .96$, $M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.79$), fear of death ($\alpha = .94$, $M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.73$), approach acceptance ($\alpha = .97$, $M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.64$), escape acceptance ($\alpha = .91$, $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.49$), and neutral acceptance ($\alpha = .77$, $M = 5.55$, $SD = 0.96$). Scale metrics align with existing DAP-R applications (Clare et al., 2020; Wong et al., 1994).

Past Behaviors. Four categorical items measured past behavioral experiences with funeral attendance and EOL planning attempts (Ajzen, 2013; Carmack & Heiss, 2018). Participants rated items such as “I have communicated my funeral preferences in the past” and “I have documented my funeral preferences in the past” in a dichotomous yes/no format. Among the sample, roughly 60% of young adults reported that they had communicated funeral preferences in the past ($N = 265$, 59.68%) while only approximately 40% had not ($N = 179$, 40.31%). Conversely, only 19% of participants reported that they had previously documented their funeral preferences ($N = 86$, 19.36%) while the majority of participants did not have prior documentation experiences ($N = 385$, 80.63%). Few participants reported past experiences with attending a green funeral service ($N = 45$, 10.13%), but the grave majority of participants had no prior experiences with green funeral services ($N = 399$, 89.86%). On the contrary, approximately

88% of participants had attended a conventional (e.g., burial or cremation) service ($N = 392$, 88.28%) while only 12% had no past funeral attendance experience ($N = 52$, 11.71%).

Green Funeral Planning Outcomes

Six adapted green funeral planning items measured individuals' green funeral planning intentions (Ajzen, 1991, 2013; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010ab). Three items measured communication intentions. Three items measured documentation intentions. Participants rated items such as "I will communicate my intentions to have a green funeral service with those closest to me" and "I am willing to document my green funeral service plans," using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *extremely disagree* to (7) *extremely agree*. Higher scores denoted a higher likelihood of performing the behavioral intention.

The communication intentions measure met the standard reliability threshold ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.04$). The documentation intentions measure also had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.03$). Behavioral intention values align with existing scholarship (Han, 2015).

TPB Variables

Attitudes Toward Green Funeral Planning Intentions. Attitudes are "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). Eight items measured attitudes toward green funeral planning intentions (Ajzen, 2006; Ajzen, 2013; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010). Four items measured attitudes toward communicating, and four measured documenting intentions. Participants rated statements such as, "For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is" and "For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is" on a 7-point semantic (opponent-word) differential scale ranging from *unrealistic* to *realistic*,

undesirable to desirable, foolish to wise, and unimportant to important. Higher scores denoted more favorable attitudes toward planning intention.

Attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans met the standard reliability threshold ($\alpha = .88$, $M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.09$). Attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans also had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .89$, $M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.16$). These findings align with existing TPB scholarship (Britt et al., 2017; Han, 2015; Seiter, 2021).

Subjective Normative Beliefs. This measurement refers to an individual's "perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 1881). Six adapted items measured subjective normative beliefs toward green funeral planning intentions (Ajzen, 2006; Ajzen, 2013; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010). Three items measured subjective normative beliefs toward communicating, and three measured documenting intentions. Participants rated statements such as "people who are important to me would prefer that I communicate my green funeral service plan" on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Higher scores denoted higher perceived social pressure to perform a green funeral intention.

Subjective normative beliefs toward communicating green funeral plans met the standard reliability threshold ($\alpha = .82$, $M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.22$). Subjective normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans also had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.20$). These findings align with existing TPB scholarship (Britt et al., 2017; Han, 2015; Seiter, 2021).

Perceived Behavioral Control. A total of six adapted items captured a participant's perceived ease or difficulty communicating and documenting green funeral plans (Ajzen, 2006; Ajzen, 2013; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010). Three items measured

perceived behavioral control toward communicating, and three measured documenting intentions. Participants rated items such as “I am confident that I can communicate my wish to have a green funeral service with those closest to me” on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Higher scores denoted a higher perceived ability to communicate or document green funeral plans.

Perceived behavioral control toward communicating green funeral plans met the standard reliability threshold ($\alpha = .70$, $M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.13$). Subjective normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans also had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .75$, $M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.20$). These findings align with existing TPB scholarship (Britt et al., 2017; Han, 2015; Seiter, 2021).

VBN Variables

Environmental Values. An ecological value refers to “a desirable trans-situational goal varying in importance, which serves as a guiding principle in the life of a person or other social entity” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 21). A biospheric value orientation indicates “values emphasizing the environment and the biosphere itself” (De Groot et al., 2007, p. 104). Four items captured biospheric values. Participants rated statements such as “respecting the earth” and “protecting the environment” using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *very unimportant* to (7) *very important*. Higher scores denoted higher regard for the environment.

The environmental values scale had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .86$, $M = 6.13$, $SD = 0.84$). This finding aligns with existing VBN scholarship (Han, 2015; Stern et al, 1999; Whitley et al., 2018).

Environmental beliefs. This unidimensional instrument measures the strength of an individual’s perceived connection to the environment (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). Fourteen items

comprised the connectedness to nature (CTN) scale. Participants rated items such as “I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me,” using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree*. Higher scores denote higher belongingness to the natural world.

The environmental beliefs scale had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .80$, $M = 5.01$, $SD = 0.78$). This finding aligns with existing VBN scholarship (Han, 2015; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Pustarfi, 2021; Stern et al, 1999).

Problem Awareness. Problem awareness refers to an individual’s awareness of the environmental consequences related to the funeral industry (Bamberg et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010; Stern et al., 1999). Four adapted items measured problem awareness. Participants rated items such as “traditional funeral services generate the environmental impacts on the neighboring areas and wider environments” on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *extremely disagree* to (7) *extremely agree*. Higher scores denoted increased problem awareness about the environmental consequences of having a conventional funeral service.

The problem awareness scale had an acceptable standard reliability ($\alpha = .85$, $M = 5.47$, $SD = 1.01$). This finding aligns with existing VBN scholarship (DeGroot & Steg, 2009; Han, 2015; Stern et al, 1999).

Ascribed Responsibility. An individual’s “feelings of responsibility for the negative consequences of not acting pro-socially” (DeGroot & Steg, 2009, p. 421) refers to their ascribed responsibility to perform green funeral planning intentions. Three adapted items captured ascribed responsibility. Participants rated items such as “I feel that every individual is jointly responsible for the environmental deteriorations caused by the funeral industry” on a 7-point

Likert scale ranging from (1) *extremely disagree* to (7) *extremely agree*. Higher scores denoted higher feelings of responsibility to have a green funeral.

The ascribed responsibility scale had an acceptable reliability score ($\alpha = .89$, $M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.43$). This finding aligns with existing VBN scholarship (DeGroot & Steg, 2009; Han, 2015; Stern et al, 1999).

Personal Norms. Personal normative beliefs refer to an individual's moral obligation to engage in or avoid doing specific actions (Schwartz & Howard, 1981; DeGroot et al., 2007). I adapted the personal norms scale from Han's (2015) sense of moral obligation to take environmental action scale. Three items measured a participant's moral obligation to engage in green funeral planning intentions. Participants rated items such as "I feel morally obliged to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *extremely disagree* to (7) *extremely agree*. Higher scores denoted a heightened sense of obligation to have a green funeral.

The personal normative beliefs scale had an acceptable reliability score ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 4.53$, $SD = 1.43$). This finding aligns with existing VBN scholarship (Bouman et al., 2020; DeGroot & Steg, 2009; Han, 2015; Stern et al, 1999).

Analytical Plan

This dissertation aimed to examine communication, psychosocial, and environmental factors that predict young adults' green funeral planning intentions by adapting and applying the converged TPB-VBN theoretical model to provide a more comprehensive and apparent understanding of young adults' EOL decision-making processes. I accomplished this aim by conducting self-report online survey responses from individuals of the US young adult population. The following research questions guided this dissertation:

RQ1: Does the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predict (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions among US young adults?

RQ2: Which theoretical model holds the most statistical power for predicting (a) communication and (b) documentation planning intentions among US young adults: the adapted converged TPB-VBN model, the original TPB model, or the original VBN theory model?

The following hypotheses guided the adapted converged TPB-VBN model relationships among US young adults:

H1: Positive attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control will be associated with a greater intent to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H2: Communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with EOL planning will significantly predict intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H3: Problem awareness will positively affect (3a) ascribed responsibility, (3b) attitudes, (3c) subjective normative beliefs, and (3d) perceived behavioral control for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H4: Subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal norms for intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H5: Environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intention to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

H6: Attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, past behaviors with EOL planning, environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms will significantly predict behavioral intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

I analyzed the quantitative self-report data using R and IBM SPSS 28. I employed Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step analytical procedure to conduct my primary analysis and answer **RQ1, RQ2, and H1-5ab**. This procedure assessed the green funeral planning measurement models across the two green funeral planning intention outcomes. The remaining analysis involved hypothesis testing using correlation analyses and stepwise regression to answer **H6ab** (Cohen et al., 2013; Hayes, 2022; Keith, 2015).

Assessment of the Measurement Model

The first step of Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) analytical process required an assessment of the measurement model. I conducted descriptive data using the R *psych* and *car* packages screening to gauge whether any violations of the assumptions exist (e.g., check for skewness, kurtosis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, multivariate linearity, and homoscedasticity). I also ran scale reliability metrics to attain Cronbach alphas for each assessment (reported above). I performed confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) using maximum likelihood regressions in R using the *lavaan* package to provide an overall model assessment (e.g., goodness of fit). I compared the model fit indices to the established criteria for "good": CFI ≥ 0.90 or TLI ≥ 0.90 and RMSEA ≤ 0.09 or SRMR ≤ 0.09 , and "excellent" fit: CFI ≥ 0.95 or TLI ≥ 0.95 and RMSEA ≤ 0.08 and SRMR ≤ 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

I evaluated latent constructs for consistency, validity, and reliability metrics. Using standardized factor loadings and unique variances, I measured internal consistency through composite reliability scores for each latent construct. Composite reliability scores above .6 indicate acceptable reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). I attained construct validity using factor loadings to calculate average variance extracted metrics (AVE; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hair and colleagues (2010) state that factor loading values 0.7 and above indicate acceptable construct validity. According to Mendes de Santo and Cirillo (2021), “AVE is a measure of the amount of variance captured by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error” (p. 1). AVE values above 0.5 indicate acceptable reliability, and values greater than 0.7 indicate excellent reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014; Mendes de Santos & Cirillo, 2021). Discriminant validity ensures that latent constructs share more variance with their observed variables than other constructs within a model. I assessed discriminant validity through average shared variance (ASV) scores for each latent construct. I calculated ASV scores by comparing the AVE score for each latent construct to the squared correlation coefficients between that construct and the other constructs in the model. I found efficient discriminant validity in cases where the AVE of a construct was greater than the squared correlation between that construct and any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Instances where the level of square root of AVE was less than the correlations between latent constructs indicated an issue of multicollinearity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Multicollinearity occurs when latent constructs in a model are highly correlated to each other; this creates difficulty choosing significant variables, attaining stable correlation coefficients, and increases the likelihood of overfitting the SEM model (Keith, 2015). I assessed multicollinearity by plotting the correlation matrix of all latent constructs included in the SEM model.

Structural Equation Modeling

The second step in Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) analytical plan required structural equation modeling (SEM) using R version 4.3.2 *lavaan*, *sem*, *semTools*, *semPlot*, and *ggplot2* packages to identify the best-fitting model and test construct relationships. R's *lavaan* package is a standard package for SEM analyses because it provides a comprehensive set of functions for specifying, estimating, and interpreting SEM models (Rooseel, 2012). SEM is a multivariate technique appropriate for testing models comprising various independent and dependent variables with potential mediation and moderation effects (Hair et al., 2010). This analysis comprehensively assessed which factors predicted green funeral planning communication and documentation intentions among young adults. Additional model comparisons identified the converged communication and documentation model's predictive power compared to the original TPB and VBN theory models.

I reported all goodness-of-fit statistics such as chi-square, degrees of freedom, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, AIC, and BIC metrics (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The analysis compared the converged TPB-VBN theory model to the original TPB and VBN theory models. This comparison allowed me to identify the model that best predicts green funeral behavioral intentions. I reported all model metrics (e.g., goodness-of-fits) within the results description. Finally, I tested the hypothesized relationships (H1-H5) based on the SEM results for the adapted converged TPB-VBN model.

Correlation Analyses and Stepwise Regression Models

I used IBM SPSS 28 and R to answer **H6ab**. To understand what factors significantly predict green funeral planning intentions and answer the final hypothesis (H6), I first ran correlation analyses on all model variables to identify whether a relationship existed between

independent variables and to determine the magnitude of that relationship (Kafle, 2019; Keith, 2015). Two-tailed Pearson correlations identified the relationships between the 11 predictor variables. If multicollinearity existed, I addressed this issue using either a variable selection method, variable transformation technique, or a principal component analysis, depending on the data output and the severity of multicollinearity.

Next, I conducted stepwise multiple regression models in R using the *MASS*, *car*, and the *stats* base packages to determine significant predictors of young adults' intentions to **(H6a)** communicate and **(H6b)** document green funeral services. The *MASS* package offers various statistical methods, multivariate analysis, and robust regression functions (Venables & Ripley, 2002). The *car* package is a standard companion to applied regression analyses (Fox & Weisberg, 2011). Stepwise regression is a multiple regression technique used to build the best-fitting model that accounts for the most variance in the outcome variable (based on R^2 values; Cohen et al., 2013; Hayes, 2022; Keith, 2015). I reported the model summary (e.g., R^2 and F statistics and p values) for each dependent outcome (e.g., intentions to communicate and document green funeral preferences). In addition, I reported unstandardized beta coefficients, standard error, beta coefficients, multicollinearity outputs, and residual analysis plots.

This method is beneficial in exploratory studies, when testing for associations, and when relationships among predictors are unknown (Keith, 2015). Compared to simultaneous (e.g., forced entry) and sequential (e.g., hierarchical) regression techniques, the stepwise regression model is the most appropriate method to test the proposed study hypotheses. In hierarchical regression models, I decided which predictor variables to enter into the model and at what stage based on their substantive knowledge of existing variable relationships and scholarship, hypotheses, and statistical expertise (Cohen et al., 2013; Keith, 2015). By contrast, stepwise

regressions use an iterative computer algorithm to select independent variables to create the best-fitting model (Keith, 2015). This step-by-step process “involves adding or removing potential explanatory variables in succession and testing for statistical significance after each iteration” (Hayes, 2022, p.1).

Furthermore, “stepwise regression can be achieved either by trying out one independent variable at a time and including it in the regression model if it is statistically significant or by including all potential independent variables in the model and eliminating those that are not statistically significant” (Hayes, 2022, p. 1). In addition, regression modeling allows me to include non-latent variables, such as past behavioral experiences with communicating and documenting EOL plans (a categorical, dichotomous variable) into the model. SEM modeling does not handle non-latent constructs well. Therefore, stepwise regression modeling is the most appropriate and efficient analytical technique for the current dissertation project, and this test will provide an additional perspective on factors that efficiently predict young adults’ intentions to communicate and document their green funeral plans.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III began with my statement of research positionality and self-reflexivity. I presented participant sample descriptives and the recruitment processes. I outlined the quantitative survey-based design and survey instruments. The chapter reintroduced the dissertation research questions and hypotheses and concluded with a detailed analytical plan for the collected survey data. Looking ahead, Chapter IV reports all dissertation study analyses and findings for all preliminary and primary analyses, research questions, and hypotheses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to assess what environmental, psychosocial, and health communication factors impact young adults' intentions to communicate and document their green funeral plans. In this chapter, I review the SEM results for RQ1 and hypotheses (H1-H5) for each green funeral planning intention, starting with communication and then documentation. I present model fit comparisons across each green funeral intention to answer RQ2. Then, I describe the regression and correlational analyses results to answer H6 for both communication and documentation intentions.

Intentions to Communicate Green Funeral Plans

This section examines three behavioral intention models for communicating green funeral plans. **RQ1** asked whether the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predicts communication planning intentions among young adults in the US. I assessed the adapted converged TPB-VBN measurement model and conducted SEM statistics. **RQ2** asked which model held the most statistical power for predicting communication intentions for green funeral planning. I followed the same analytical plan to answer this question and evaluated the measurement models and SEMs for the original TPB and VBN models. I tested relational hypotheses **H1ab-H5ab** with the SEM output for the converged TPB-VBN model.

The Original TPB Communication Model

Assessment of the TPB Measurement Model. The confirmatory factor analysis on the original TPB communication model revealed a strong fit: $\chi^2 (59) = 188.358, p < .001$; CFI =

0.960, TLI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.053 based on Hu and Bentler (1999). It is important to note that χ^2 test statistics in SEM can be sensitive to larger sample sizes (Hair et al., 2009) and tend to increase as sample size and model complexity increases. The following SEM analyses were considerate of χ^2 values when assessing model fit metrics. Table 1 reports the TPB communication model variables' standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics. Composite reliability values ranged from .644 to .917 and exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The construct validity assessment yielded AVE values ranging from .694 to .875 and met the baseline recommendations of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values were higher than the square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the original TPB communication model.

Table 1. Composite reliability and construct validity for the communication TPB model

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attitudes	Attcom1	0.805	0.884	0.807
	Attcom2	0.814		
	Attcom3	0.783		
	Attcom4	0.834		
Subjective Normative Beliefs	SNB1	0.692	0.751	0.776
	SNB2	0.658		
	SNB3	0.773		
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.474	0.644	0.694
	PBC2	0.463		
	PBC3	0.869		
Communicating GF plans	Outcome1	0.873	0.917	0.875
	Outcome2	0.896		
	Outcome3	0.891		

Note. This table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis. Model goodness of fit: χ^2 (59) = 188.358, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.960, TLI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.053.

TPB Communication SEM Model. The original TPB SEM revealed a satisfactory fit: χ^2 (59) = 185.298, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.053, $R^2 = 0.484$ and explained 48% of the overall variance in communicating green funeral plan intentions. I conducted modification indices to assess the model's potential to improve (Han et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2016). I considered modification indices with MI values greater than 30.00 as my base threshold throughout the SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2009). Appendix D lists all item statements and their involvement in all SEM communication models. I added two residual correlations: one for perceived behavioral control and one for subjective normative beliefs. The modified TPB model had an excellent fit compared to the original model: χ^2 (57) = 111.333, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.983, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.053, $R^2 = 0.488$ accounting for approximately 49% of the variance in communicating green funeral plan intentions.

This analysis examined whether communication attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control (e.g., self-efficacy) predicted young adults' intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. The SEM results showed that participants' attitudes ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$), and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) were positively related to their intentions to communicate green funeral plans.

The Original VBN Communication Model

Assessment of the VBN Measurement Model. The confirmatory factor analysis on the original VBN communication model revealed an unsatisfactory fit: χ^2 (419) = 1471.104, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.878, TLI = 0.865, RMSEA = 0.075, SRMR = 0.078 based on Hu and Bentler (1999). Inspection of standardized factor loadings revealed four environmental belief items below the .6 standard. This finding indicated that further modifications were necessary.

Modifications indices suggested removing the four environmental belief items to improve model fit. One item from the problem awareness construct and one from environmental values loaded onto all four VBN constructs and increased multicollinearity within the model. Therefore, I removed five total items from the model to improve model fit. The modified CFA for the original VBN communication model displayed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(260) = 742.254, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.065, SRMR = 0.053.

Table 2 reports the VBN communication model variables' standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics. Composite reliability values ranged from .605 to .946 and exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The construct validity assessment yielded AVE values ranging from .577 to .886 and met the baseline recommendations of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values were higher than the square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the original VBN communication model.

Table 2. Composite reliability and construct validity: Communication VBN model

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Environmental Values	Evalues1	0.890	0.863	0.703
	Evalues 3	0.829		
	Evalues 4	0.772		
Environmental Beliefs	CTN1	0.818	0.605	0.577
	CTN2	0.822		
	CTN3	0.692		
	CTN5	0.685		
	CTN6	0.761		
	CTN7	0.733		
	CTN8	0.610		
	CTN9	0.705		
	CTN10	0.622		
	CTN11	0.827		
	Problem Awareness	ProbA1		

	ProbA2	0.753		
	ProbA3	0.882		
Ascribed Responsibility	AscribedR1	0.777	0.891	0.747
	AscribedR2	0.785		
	AscribedR3	0.912		
Personal Norms	PersNorms1	0.893	0.930	0.826
	PersNorms2	0.876		
	PersNorms3	0.815		
Communicating GF plans	Outcome1	0.862	0.946	0.886
	Outcome2	0.899		
	Outcome3	0.897		

Note.
This

table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis.

Goodness of fit for the communication VBN model: $\chi^2(260) = 742.254, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.065, SRMR = 0.053.

VBN Communication SEM Model. The initial VBN SEM revealed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(270) = 946.759, p < .001$; CFI = 0.910, TLI = 0.900, RMSEA=0.075, SRMR=0.154, $R^2 = 0.184$ and explained 18% of the overall variance in communicating green funeral plan intentions.

However, the high SRMR value indicated the need for further analysis. For clarity, SRMR values above .08 suggest poor fit, but there may be room for improvement (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

I conducted modification indices to identify potential improvements in the model. I only considered modification indices greater than 30.00 to reduce the risk of overfitting the model. I added three residual correlations between personal norms and the environmental values, beliefs, and ascribed responsibility constructs. I also included three additional residual correlations among observed variables. The modified VBN model had an enhanced fit compared to the original SEM model: $\chi^2(264) = 746.742, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.927, RMSEA = 0.064, SRMR = 0.079, $R^2 = 0.190$ accounting for 19% of the variance in communicating green funeral plan intentions.

This analysis examined whether environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal normative beliefs predicted young adults' intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. The SEM results showed that participants' environmental values ($\beta = 0.64, p < 0.001$), environmental beliefs ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$), ascribed responsibility ($\beta = 0.66, p < 0.001$), personal norms ($\beta = 0.44, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their intentions to communicate green funeral plans.

The Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Communication Model

Assessment of the Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Measurement Model. The original assessment model included three TPB, five VBN, and seven EOL barrier constructs on intention to communicate green funeral wishes. Notably, the model did not include past behavioral experiences with communicating EOL plans because it was not a latent construct. The confirmatory factor analysis on the adapted converged TPB-VBN communication model revealed a marginally acceptable fit: $\chi^2(2882) = 6090.173, p < .001$; CFI = 0.903, TLI = 0.896, RMSEA = 0.049, SRMR = 0.055 based on Hu and Bentler (1999). Items with standardized factor loadings below the 0.6 standard warranted removal from the model. To improve model fit, I omitted two death attitudes items from the fear and neutral constructs with low factor loadings. I also removed four environmental belief items with low factor loadings. I conducted modification indices to identify parameters to improve model fit but did not make any further changes to the model. The modified CFA for the original VBN communication model displayed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(2654) = 5295.228, p < .001$; CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.907, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.046.

Table 3 reports standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics from the converged TPB-VBN communication model variables. All composite reliability scores

ranged from .662 to .977 and exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). All AVE values ranged from .632 to .959 and confirmed construct validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values were higher than the square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the converged TPB-VBN communication model.

Table 3. Composite reliability and construct validity: Adapted TPB-VBN communication model.

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Communication Anxiety	CAX1	0.869	0.977	0.959
	CAX2	0.885		
	CAX3	0.897		
	CAX4	0.924		
	CAX5	0.832		
	CAX6	0.899		
Communication Avoidance	CAV1	0.801	0.964	0.944
	CAV2	0.811		
	CAV3	0.878		
	CAV4	0.839		
	CAV5	0.914		
	CAV6	0.889		
Neutral Acceptance of Death	Neutral1	0.816	0.871	0.808
	Neutral2	0.905		
	Neutral3	0.890		
Communication Attitudes	Attcom1	0.804	0.882	0.873
	Attcom2	0.814		
	Attcom3	0.783		
	Attcom4	0.835		
Subjective Normative Beliefs	SNB1	0.687	0.739	0.699
	SNB2	0.656		
	SNBcom	0.777		
Perceived behavioral control	PBC1	0.483	0.682	0.632
	PBC2	0.477		
	PBCcom	0.845		
Environmental Values	Evalues1	0.859	0.899	0.838
	Evalues-3	0.809		
	Evalues-4	0.804		

Environmental Beliefs	CTN1	0.818	0.912	0.772			
	CTN2	0.817					
	CTN5	0.682					
	CTN6	0.758					
	CTN7	0.731					
	CTN8	0.607					
	CTN9	0.705					
	CTN10	0.619					
	CTN11	0.826					
	Problem Awareness	ProbA1			0.827	0.865	0.854
		ProbA2			0.753		
ProbA3		0.878					
Ascribed Responsibility	AscribedR1	0.788	0.811	0.779			
	AscribedR2	0.794					
	AscribedR3	0.901					
Personal Norms	PersNorms1	0.894	0.822	0.813			
	PersNorms2	0.873					
	PersNorms3	0.817					
Communicating GF plans	Outcome1	0.863	0.851	0.845			
	Outcome2	0.883					
	Outcome3	0.881					

Note. This table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis. Goodness of fit for the communication adapted converged TPB-VBN model: χ^2 (2654) = 5295.228, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.907, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.046.

Converged TPB-VBN Communication SEM Model. This analysis examined whether communication anxiety and avoidance, five attitudes towards death acceptance (fear, avoidance, approach, neutral, and escape), communication attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, environmental values and beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal normative beliefs predicted young adults' intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. The initial converged TPB-VBN SEM revealed an unsatisfactory fit: χ^2 (2806) =

6146.378, $p < .001$; CFI = 0.889, TLI = 0.887, RMSEA = 0.052, SRMR = 0.087, $R^2 = 0.500$ and explained 50% of the overall variance in communicating green funeral plan intentions.

I conducted modification indices to identify parameters to enhance model fit. I followed the same approach from the original TPB and VBN model modifications when adding residual correlations. Again, I made model modifications while being mindful not to overfit the model. Among TPB constructs, I included two residual correlations between subjective normative beliefs and perceived behavioral control items. Among VBN constructs, I added three residual correlations between personal norms and the environmental values, beliefs, and ascribed responsibility constructs. I also included four residual correlations among observed variables for the environmental values and ascribed responsibility constructs.

The communication barrier constructs required close inspection of all standardized regression coefficients and p-values. Results revealed that four death attitudes constructs (fear, approach, escape, and avoidance) did not significantly predict intention to communicate green funeral service plans. Further inspection of these constructs' modification indices showed fear and avoidance observed variables loaded onto several other latent constructs, including the two communication apprehension constructs, environmental values, and the outcome variable. I removed the four death attitudes constructs because they created a significant amount of covariance within the model. Finally, I added residual correlations between the two communication apprehension constructs, communication anxiety, and avoidance, and six correlations between their observed variables. Modification indices also suggested the inclusion of a residual correlation between communication avoidance and ascribed responsibility.

Overall, **RQ1** asked whether the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predicts communication planning intentions among young adults in the US. SEM

results found that the modified converged TPB-VBN model had a strong fit compared to the original model: $\chi^2 (1086) = 1965.179, p < .001$; CFI = 0.947, TLI = 0.943, RMSEA = 0.043, SRMR = 0.074, $R^2 = 0.559$ and accounted for approximately 56% of the variance in communication intentions. These model fit findings indicate that the converged TPB-VBN model answers RQ1.

Communication Model Comparisons. My RQ2 asked which theoretical model holds the most statistical power for predicting communication planning intentions among young adults in the US: the adapted converged TPB-VBN model, the original TPB model, or the original VBN theory model? To answer this question, I conducted model comparisons to identify the superiority of the adapted converged TPB-VBN ($\chi^2 (1085) = 1965.179, p < .001$; CFI = 0.947, TLI = 0.943, RMSEA = 0.043, SRMR = 0.074, $R^2 = 0.559$) framework compared to the original TPB ($\chi^2 (57) = 111.333, p < .001$; CFI = 0.983, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.069, SRMR = 0.053, $R^2 = 0.488$) and VBN theory model ($\chi^2 (264) = 746.742, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.927, RMSEA = 0.064, SRMR = 0.079, $R^2 = 0.194$).

Table 4 displays the results of the model. The converged communication model ($\chi^2/df = 1.81$) had a better fit than the original TPB ($\chi^2/df = 1.95$) and VBN theory ($\chi^2/df = 3.04$). The converged communication model ($R^2 = 0.558$) included a greater predictive ability for communication intention than the original TPB ($R^2 = 0.488$) and VBN theory ($R^2 = 0.194$). Overall, the TPB model indices demonstrate a great model fit. The original VBN theory indices reveal a good model fit, but this model has low explanatory power compared to the TPB and converged communication model. Finally, considering model complexity, the adapted converged TPB-VBN framework outperforms the original TPB and VBN theory models, with its acceptable fit indices and high explanatory power.

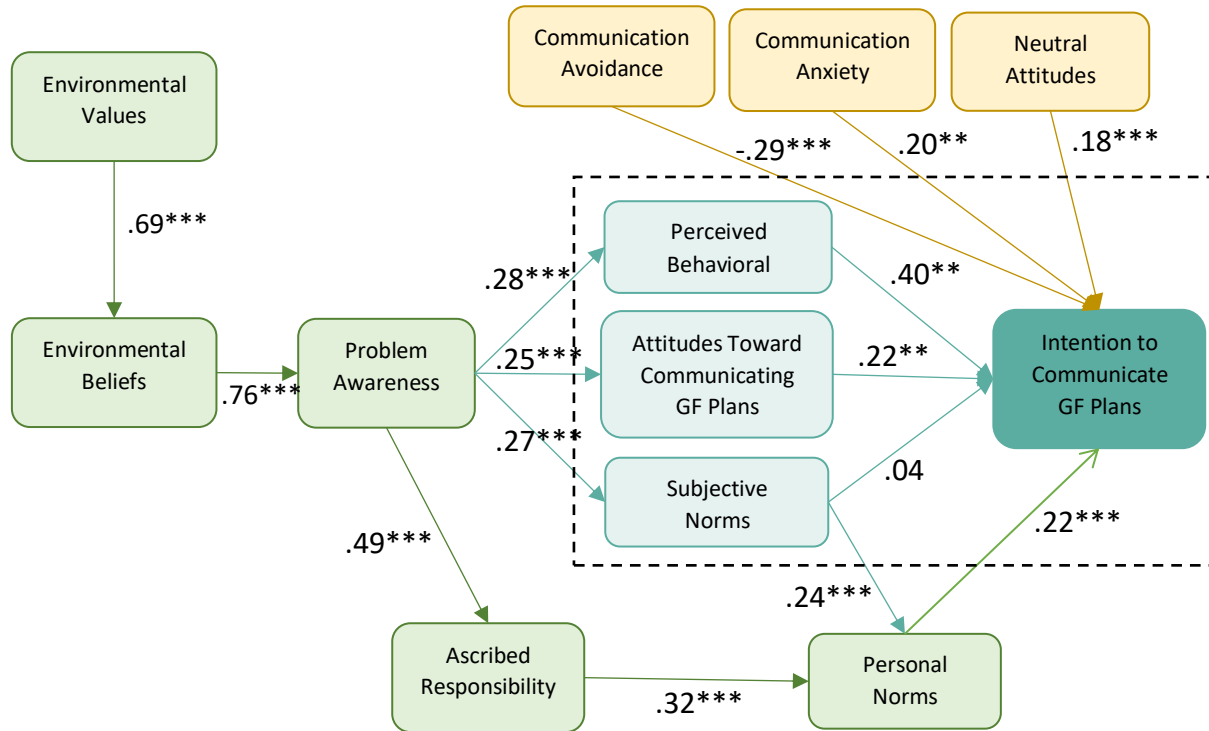
Table 4. Model comparisons across nested communication models

Goodness-of-fit statistics	TPB	VBN theory	Converged model
χ^2	111.33	746.74	1965.17
<i>df</i>	57	264	1085
χ^2/df	1.95	3.04	1.81
CFI	0.983	0.936	0.947
TLI	0.976	0.927	0.943
RMSEA	0.069	0.064	0.043
SRMR	0.053	0.079	0.074
AIC	16350.32	30377.92	62441.366
BIC	16381.58	303637.77	63014.78
R^2	48.8	19.0	55.9

Note. The following list explains the abbreviations displayed above. χ^2 = Chi-square test statistic, *df* = Degrees of freedom, χ^2/df = Chi square difference test, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual, AIC = Akaike information criterion, BIC = Bayesian information criterion, and R^2 = R-squared value.

Relational Hypothesis Testing. I used standardized SEM regression coefficients to analyze relational hypotheses **H1-H5a** within the adapted converged TPB-VBN model. Figure 5 visualizes the tested hypothesis relationships existing within the model. This analysis provides insight into how model constructs predict intentions to communicate green funeral plans.

Figure 5. Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Communication Model SEM Relationships



Note. This figure provides the standardized regression coefficients from SEM relational hypothesis tests on young adult’s intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. The green constructs represent VBN theory variables. Blue constructs inside of the dotted box represent TPB variables. Pale yellow constructs represent communication barriers. Regression coefficients were significant at the following levels:

*** = β significant at $p < .001$

** = β significant at $p < .01$

* = β significant at $p < .05$

H1a hypothesized that positive attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control would be associated with a greater intent to communicate green funeral plans. SEM results found partial support for **H1a**. Participants' attitudes ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$), subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.04, p = .562$), and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their intentions to communicate green funeral plans. However, subjective normative beliefs did not significantly predict communication intentions.

H2b hypothesized that communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with EOL planning would significantly predict intention to communicate green funeral plans. I found partial support for **H2a** due to the exclusion of four attitudes about death (fear, approach, escape, and avoidant) and past behaviors with communicating EOL plans from the model. The converged TPB-VBN model included three EOL barrier constructs: communication anxiety ($\beta = 0.20, p = .003$), communication avoidance ($\beta = -0.29, p < .001$), and neutral attitudes toward death acceptance ($\beta = 0.18, p < .001$). Communication anxiety and neutral death attitude constructs were positively related to their intentions to communicate green funeral plans. Communication avoidance was negatively associated with communication intentions, suggesting that for every unit increase in communication avoidance, a unit decreased in willingness to engage in green funeral planning discussions.

H3a hypothesized that problem awareness would positively affect (3a) ascribed responsibility, (3b) attitudes, (3c) subjective normative beliefs, and (3d) perceived behavioral control for intention to communicate green funeral plans. SEM results revealed support for **H3a**. Participants' communication attitudes ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.001$), subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$), and ascribed responsibility ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their awareness of environmental consequences

from traditional funeral services. Findings suggest that for every unit increase in attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans, subjective normative beliefs, perceived self-efficacy for communicating plans, and moral feelings of responsibility to choose a green funeral service, there will be a unit increase in awareness of the environmental consequences of traditional funeral services.

H4a predicted that subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal normative beliefs. Results found support for this relationship. Participant's subjective beliefs ($\beta = 0.24, p = 0.001$) were positively related to their personal norms. This finding suggests that subjective norms may actually mediate the relationship between personal norms and participants' intentions to communicate green funeral plans.

Finally, **H5a** predicted that environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms would significantly predict behavioral intention to communicate green funeral plans. SEM results revealed support for **H5a**. Participants' environmental values ($\beta = 0.69, p < 0.001$), environmental beliefs ($\beta = 0.76, p < 0.001$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.001$), ascribed responsibility ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.001$), personal norms ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their intentions to communicate green funeral plans. Findings suggest that for every unit increase in relationships with environmental values, connectedness to nature, awareness of environmental consequences of traditional funeral services, moral feelings of responsibility to choose a green funeral service, and personal normative beliefs toward green funerals, a unit increases in intentions to communicate green funeral plans.

Intentions to Document Green Funeral Plans

This section examines three behavioral intention models for documenting green funeral service plans: the original TPB, VBN, and the adapted converged TPB-VBN models. To answer **RQ1**, I assessed the adapted converged TPB-VBN measurement model and conducted SEM statistics. **RQ2** asked which model held the most statistical power for predicting documentation intentions for green funeral planning. I followed the same analytical plan to answer this question and evaluated the measurement models and SEMs for the original TPB and VBN models. I tested relational hypotheses **H1-H5b** with the SEM output for the converged TPB-VBN model.

The Original TPB Documentation Model

Assessment of the TPB Measurement Model. The confirmatory factor analysis on the original TPB documentation model revealed an excellent fit: $\chi^2(59) = 194.269, p < .001$; CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.941, RMSEA = 0.072, SRMR = 0.068. No modifications were necessary. Table 5 reports the TPB documentation model variables' standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics.

Note. This table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis. Model goodness of fit: $\chi^2(59) = 194.269, p < .001$; CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.941, RMSEA = 0.072, SRMR = 0.068.

Composite reliability values exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and ranged from .744 to .898. The construct validity assessment yielded AVE values ranging from .494 to .747. Perceived behavioral control did not meet the baseline recommendation of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hair and colleagues (2009) suggest that if a latent construct's AVE score is lower than the 0.5 threshold, then it should be removed from the model. However, if a construct has an acceptable composite reliability value higher than 0.6 and an acceptable Cronbach's alpha, than the convergent validity of that construct is still adequate (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, perceived behavioral control meets the criteria for maintaining adequate validity and will remain in the model analysis. The AVE values were higher than the

Table 5. Composite reliability and construct validity: Documentation TPB Model.

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Attitudes	Attdoc1	0.734	0.893	0.676
	Attdoc2	0.837		
	Attdoc3	0.834		
	Attdoc4	0.877		
Subjective Normative Beliefs	SNB1	0.861	0.826	0.617
	SNB2	0.845		
	SNBdocu	0.629		
Perceived Behave Control	PBC1	0.640	0.744	0.494
	PBC2	0.652		
	PBCdoc	0.805		
Documenting GF plans	Outcome1	0.838	0.898	0.747
	Outcome2	0.851		
	Outcome3	0.903		

square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the original TPB documentation model.

TPB Documentation SEM Model. The original TPB SEM revealed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(48) = 145.346, p < .001$; CFI = 0.964, TLI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.068, SRMR = 0.063, $R^2 = 0.362$ and explained 36% of the overall variance in documenting green funeral plan intentions. I

conducted modification indices to identify any potential parameters to improve the model. Appendix D lists all item statements and their involvement in all SEM documentation models. I added two residual correlations for the perceived behavioral control and subjective normative beliefs constructs. Modification indices suggested that I remove one observed variable from documentation attitudes because it loaded onto perceived behavioral control and created multicollinearity within the model. The modified TPB model had an excellent fit compared to the original model: $\chi^2(46) = 75.513, p < .001$; CFI = 0.989, TLI = 0.984, RMSEA = 0.038, SRMR = 0.031, $R^2 = 0.362$ accounting for approximately 36% of the variance in documenting green funeral plan intentions.

This analysis examined whether documentation attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control (e.g., self-efficacy) predicted young adults' intentions to document their green funeral plans. The SEM results showed that participants' attitudes ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$) and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their intentions to document green funeral plans. Subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.08, p = 0.181$) did not significantly predict participants' documentation intentions.

The Original VBN Documentation Model

Assessment of the VBN Measurement Model. The confirmatory factor analysis on the original VBN documentation model revealed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(419) = 1462.499, p < .001$; CFI = 0.902, TLI = 0.889, RMSEA = 0.076, SRMR = 0.075. Inspection of standardized factor loadings revealed four environmental belief items below the .6 standard. This finding indicated that further modifications were necessary. Modifications indices suggested removing the four environmental belief items to improve model fit. One item from the problem awareness construct and one from environmental values loaded onto all four VBN constructs and increased

multicollinearity within the model. An environmental values' observed variable loaded onto the environmental beliefs construct ($MI = 160.01$), so I removed it. Therefore, I removed seven total items from the model to improve model fit. The modified CFA for the original VBN documentation model displayed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(260) = 755.885, p < .001$; CFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.922, RMSEA = 0.066, SRMR = 0.053.

Table 6 reports the VBN documentation model variables' standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics. Composite reliability values ranged from .864 to .920 and exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The construct validity assessment yielded AVE values ranging from .538 to .755 and met the baseline recommendations of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values were higher than the square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the original VBN documentation model.

Note. This table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis. Model goodness of fit: $\chi^2(260) = 755.885, p < .001$; CFI = 0.933, TLI = 0.922,

Table 6. Composite reliability and construct validity: Documentation VBN Model.

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Environmental Values	Evalues1	0.830	0.889	0.728
	Evalues 3	0.893		
	Evalues 4	0.836		
Environmental Beliefs	CTN1	0.815	0.920	0.538
	CTN2	0.825		
	CTN3	0.713		
	CTN5	0.683		
	CTN6	0.778		
	CTN7	0.731		
	CTN8	0.611		
	CTN9	0.697		
	CTN10	0.618		
	CTN11	0.822		
	Problem Awareness	ProbA1		
ProbA2		0.754		
ProbA3		0.883		
Ascribed Responsibility	AscribedR1	0.877	0.895	0.741
	AscribedR2	0.887		
	AscribedR3	0.816		
Personal Norms	PersNorms1	0.902	0.902	0.755
	PersNorms2	0.879		
	PersNorms3	0.824		
Documenting GF plans	Outcome1	0.828	0.899	0.747
	Outcome2	0.852		
	Outcome3	0.911		

RMSEA = 0.066, SRMR = 0.053.

VBN Documentation SEM Model. The initial VBN SEM revealed an unsatisfactory fit: $\chi^2(294) = 1195.795, p < .001$; CFI = 0.884, TLI = 0.872, RMSEA = 0.083, SRMR = 0.161, $R^2 = 0.176$ and explained 18% of the overall variance in documenting green funeral plan intentions. Similar to the VBN communication model, an SRMR value of .161 indicated an unsatisfactory

fit and the need for model modifications. I conducted modification indices to identify parameters to improve the model. I removed one observed variable from environmental beliefs because it loaded onto environmental values. I added one additional residual correlation among ascribed responsibility observed variables.

Modification indices results also suggested that I add a bidirectional path between environmental values and personal norms, a path between environmental beliefs and personal norms, and from problem awareness to personal norms to improve model fit. However, adding too many paths without strong theoretical or empirical justification can lead to a model that fits the current data well but may not generalize to new data in future replication or application studies (Hair et al., 2010). In the current analysis, including new paths risked overfitting the model, reduced model generalizability, and lacked sufficient theoretical justification. I did not include any new paths within the model for these reasons. Still, modification indices highlighted the need to address the strong relationships related to personal normative beliefs and the VBN constructs. I addressed this need by including three residual correlations between personal norms and the environmental values, beliefs, and problem awareness constructs.

The modified VBN model had an acceptable fit compared to the original SEM model: $\chi^2(242) = 688.844, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.927, RMSEA = 0.064, SRMR = 0.077, $R^2 = 0.189$ accounting for approximately 19% of the variance in documentation intentions. The VBN theory model goodness of fit indices suggests an adequate fit despite the low explanatory power to predict young adults' intentions to document their green funeral plans.

This analysis examined whether environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal normative beliefs predicted young adults' intentions to document their green funeral plans. The SEM results showed that participants' environmental

values ($\beta = 0.60, p < 0.001$), environmental beliefs ($\beta = 0.37, p < 0.001$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.39, p < 0.001$), ascribed responsibility ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.001$), personal norms ($\beta = 0.44, p < 0.001$) related to their intentions to document green funeral plans. The positive relationships indicated by the beta coefficients and p-values suggest that these factors significantly influence individuals' intentions in this context. These findings suggest that young adults with stronger environmental values, beliefs, awareness of environmental issues, a sense of responsibility, and personal normative beliefs are more likely to express intentions to document their green funeral plans.

The Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Documentation Model

Assessment of the Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Measurement Model. The original assessment model included three TPB, five VBN, and seven EOL barrier constructs on intention to document green funeral wishes. The model did not include past behavioral experiences documenting EOL plans because it was not a latent construct. The initial confirmatory factor analysis on the adapted converged TPB-VBN documentation model revealed a marginally acceptable fit: $\chi^2(3200) = 6819.921, p < .001$; CFI = 0.887, TLI = 0.879, RMSEA = 0.050, SRMR = 0.061. Inspection of standardized factor loadings revealed that one observed variable for the neutral death attitudes construct was below the .6 standard (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), and I removed the item. Modification indices suggested removing the four environmental belief items to improve model fit due to increased multicollinearity within the model. I removed one problem awareness observed variable because it loaded onto four other VBN constructs. One environmental values item loaded onto the environmental beliefs construct, and I removed it to reduce multicollinearity. I omitted seven total items from the model to improve model fit. The

modified CFA for the original VBN documentation model displayed a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2(2654) = 5395.880, p < .001$; CFI = 0.910, TLI = 0.903, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.046.

Table 7 reports the standardized factor loadings, composite reliability, and validity metrics from the converged TPB-VBN documentation model variables. All composite reliability scores exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and ranged from .745 to .956. All AVE values ranged from .495 to .783 and confirmed construct validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Perceived behavioral control did not meet the 0.5 cutoff. However, perceived behavioral control has an acceptable composite reliability value higher than 0.6 and an acceptable Cronbach's alpha, resulting in an adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, perceived behavioral control will remain in the model analysis. The AVE values were higher than the square of correlations between latent variables. Therefore, results indicated sufficient discriminant validity for the constructs in the converged TPB-VBN documentation model.

Table 7. Composite reliability & construct validity: Documentation Converged TPB-VBN model.

Latent Variable	Measurement item	Standardized loading estimate (β)	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Communication Anxiety	CAX1	0.871	0.956	0.783
	CAX2	0.884		
	CAX3	0.895		
	CAX4	0.924		
	CAX5	0.833		
	CAX6	0.899		
Communication Avoidance	CAV1	0.874	0.953	0.772
	CAV2	0.883		
	CAV3	0.871		
	CAV4	0.894		
	CAV5	0.886		
	CAV6	0.863		

Neutral Acceptance of Death	Neutral1	0.823	0.904	0.760			
	Neutral2	0.904					
	Neutral3	0.886					
Attitudes	Attdoc1	0.731	0.893	0.676			
	Attdoc2	0.837					
	Attdoc3	0.834					
	Attdoc4	0.879					
Subjective Normative Beliefs	SNB1	0.864	0.814	0.599			
	SNB2	0.842					
	SNBdocu	0.585					
Perceived Behavioral Control	PBC1	0.647	0.745	0.495			
	PBC2	0.674					
	PBCdoc	0.783					
Environmental Values	Evalues1	0.828	0.890	0.729			
	Evalues 3	0.892					
	Evalues 4	0.840					
Environmental Beliefs	CTN1	0.816	0.911	0.535			
	CTN2	0.825					
	CTN5	0.711					
	CTN6	0.684					
	CTN7	0.775					
	CTN8	0.613					
	CTN9	0.700					
	CTN10	0.622					
	CTN11	0.821					
	Problem Awareness	ProbA1			0.828	0.864	0.679
		ProbA2			0.754		
ProbA3		0.885					

Ascribed Responsibility	AscribedR1	0.879	0.895	0.740
	AscribedR2	0.884		
	AscribedR3	0.817		
Personal Norms	PersNorms1	0.904	0.902	0.754
	PersNorms2	0.877		
	PersNorms3	0.823		
Documenting GF Plans	Outcome1	0.840	0.899	0.748
	Outcome2	0.851		
	Outcome3	0.902		

Note. This table reports the standardized factor loadings from the modified confirmatory factor analysis. Model goodness of fit: $\chi^2(2654) = 5395.880, p < .001$; CFI = 0.910, TLI = 0.903, RMSEA = 0.048, SRMR = 0.046.

Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Documentation SEM Model. This analysis examined whether communication anxiety and avoidance, neutral attitudes towards death acceptance, documentation attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, environmental values and beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal normative beliefs predicted young adults' intentions to document their green funeral plans. The initial converged TPB-VBN SEM revealed an unsatisfactory fit: $\chi^2(2626) = 5672.530, p < .001$; CFI = 0.899, TLI = 0.893, RMSEA = 0.051, SRMR = 0.073, $R^2 = 0.499$ and explained approximately 50% of the overall variance in documenting green funeral plan intentions.

I ran modification indices to provide necessary insights into model improvement based on relevant literature (Han et al., 2010; Paul et al., 2016). Modification indices suggested I add one residual correlation between two subjective normative beliefs items.

Among VBN constructs, I added two residual correlations between personal norms and environmental values and ascribed responsibility constructs. I also correlated two observed

variables in the ascribed responsibility construct. Finally, I removed one item from environmental beliefs because it loaded onto the environmental values construct. Modification indices suggested that I add paths from environmental values and communication anxiety to personal norms and from environmental beliefs to ascribed responsibility. However, I did not add any new paths to the model to maintain modeling consistency and generalizability.

An inspection of EOL barrier constructs' standardized regression coefficients and p-values revealed that four death attitudes constructs (fear, approach, escape, and avoidance) did not significantly predict intention to document green funeral service plans. Further inspection of these constructs' modification indices showed fear and avoidance observed variables loaded onto several other latent constructs, including the two communication apprehension constructs, environmental values, and the outcome variable. Collectively, the four death attitudes constructs created a significant amount of covariance within the model, and I removed them. I added a residual correlation between the two communication apprehension constructs: communication anxiety and communication avoidance. I correlated two observed variables and removed an observed variable from communication avoidance because it loaded onto ascribed responsibility. Modification indices also suggested the inclusion of a residual correlation between communication avoidance and ascribed responsibility.

Overall, the modified TPB-VBN model had an improved and acceptable fit compared to the original model $\chi^2(991) = 1967.871, p < .001$; CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.070, $R^2 = 0.499$ accounting for roughly 50% of the variance in documenting green funeral plan intentions. Goodness-of-fit indices suggest that the converged model explained young adults' intentions to document their green funeral plans well.

Documentation Model Comparisons. To answer **RQ2**, I conducted nested model comparisons to identify the superiority of the adapted converged TPB-VBN ($\chi^2(991) = 1967.871, p < .001$; CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.932, RMSEA = 0.047, SRMR = 0.070, $R^2 = 0.497$) framework compared to the original TPB ($\chi^2(46) = 75.513, p < .001$; CFI = 0.989, TLI = 0.984, RMSEA = 0.038, SRMR = 0.031, $R^2 = 0.362$) and VBN theory model ($\chi^2(242) = 688.844, p < .001$; CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.927, RMSEA = 0.064, SRMR = 0.077, $R^2 = 0.189$). Table 8 displays the results of the model. The converged documentation model ($\chi^2/df = 1.99$) had a better fit than the original VBN theory ($\chi^2/df = 2.85$), but not the original TPB ($\chi^2/df = 1.64$). The TPB had the lowest χ^2/df ratio among the documentation models. Overall, the converged documentation model ($R^2 = 0.499$) included a greater predictive ability for documentation intention than the original TPB ($R^2 = 0.362$) and VBN theory ($R^2 = 0.189$).

Table 8. Nested model comparisons across documentation models

Goodness-of-fit statistics	TPB	VBN theory	Converged TPB-VBN
χ^2	75.51	688.84	1967.87
df	46	242	991
χ^2 / df	1.64	2.85	1.99
CFI	0.989	0.936	0.937
TLI	0.984	0.927	0.932
RMSEA	0.038	0.064	0.047
SRMR	0.031	0.077	0.070
AIC	15529.90	29525.58	60568.769
BIC	15660.96	29763.072	61129.89

R^2

36.2

18.9

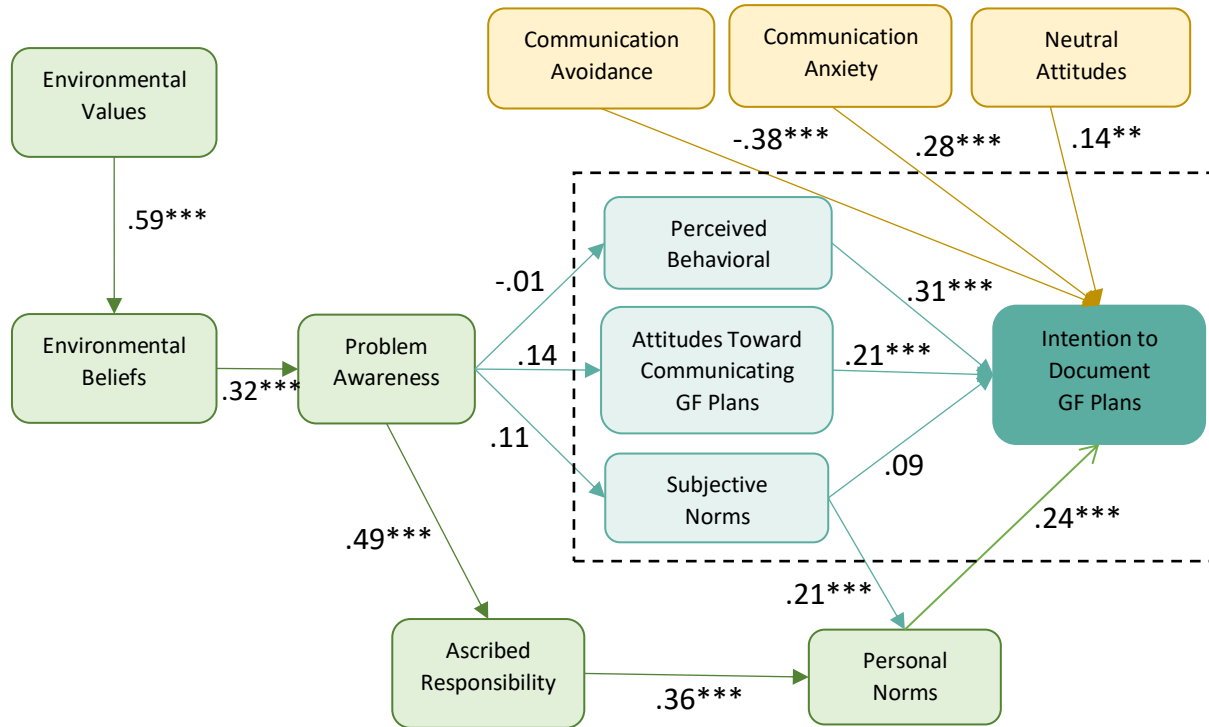
49.6

Note. The following list explains the abbreviations displayed above. χ^2 = Chi-square test statistic, df = Degrees of freedom, χ^2 / df = Chi square difference test, CFI = Comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker-Lewis index, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual, AIC = Akaike information criterion, BIC = Bayesian information criterion, and R^2 = R-squared value.

Overall, the TPB model indices indicate an excellent model fit for predicting documentation intentions and outperformed the converged TPB-VBN model across all goodness-of-fit indices except the R-squared value. The original VBN theory indices reveal a good model fit, but this model has low explanatory power compared to the TPB and converged documentation model. Finally, considering model complexity, the adapted converged TPB-VBN framework may provide a better explanation for intentions to document green funeral plans compared to the original theoretical frameworks.

Relational Hypothesis Testing. I used SEM standardized regression coefficients to analyze relational hypotheses **H1-H5b** within the adapted converged TPB-VBN model. Figure 6 visualizes the tested hypothesis relationships existing within the model. This analysis explains how model constructs predict intentions to document green funeral plans.

Figure 6. Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Documentation Model SEM Relationships



Note. This figure provides the standardized regression coefficients from SEM relational hypothesis tests on young adult’s intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. The green constructs represent VBN theory variables. Blue constructs inside of the dotted box represent TPB variables. Pale yellow constructs represent communication barriers. Regression coefficients were significant at the following levels:

*** = β significant at $p < .001$

** = β significant at $p < .01$

* = β significant at $p < .05$

SEM results found partial support for **H1b** because not all three TPB constructs predicted documentation intentions. Participants’ attitudes ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$) and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.001$) were positively and significantly related to their intentions to

document green funeral plans. Subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.09, p = .217$) did not significantly predict documentation intentions.

I found partial support for **H2b** due to the exclusion of four attitudes about death (fear, approach, escape, and avoidant) and past behaviors with documenting EOL plans from the model. The converged TPB-VBN model included three EOL barrier constructs: communication anxiety ($\beta = 0.28, p < .001$), communication avoidance ($\beta = -0.38, p < .001$), neutral attitudes toward death acceptance ($\beta = 0.14, p = .001$). Communication anxiety and neutral death attitude constructs were positively related to their intentions to document green funeral plans. Communication avoidance was negatively related to documentation intentions, suggesting that for every unit increase in documentation avoidance, a unit decreased in willingness to engage in green funeral planning discussions.

SEM results did not support **H3b**. Documentation attitudes ($\beta = 0.12, p = 0.081$), subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.11, p = 0.227$), and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = -0.01, p = 0.864$) were not significantly related to problem awareness. Notably, perceived behavioral control had a nonsignificant negative relationship with problem awareness, indicating that for every unit increase in environmental consequences, there is a unit decrease in participants' perceived self-efficacy to document their green funeral plans. Findings revealed that participants' attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans and subjective normative beliefs did not statistically relate to their problem awareness of the environmental consequences of traditional funeral services.

H4b predicted that subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal normative beliefs. Results found support for this relationship. Participant's subjective beliefs ($\beta = 0.21, p < 0.001$) were positively related to their personal norms. This finding suggests that subjective

norms may actually mediate the relationship between personal norms and participants' intentions to document green funeral plans.

Finally, SEM results revealed support for **H5b**. Participants' environmental values ($\beta = 0.59, p < 0.001$), environmental beliefs ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.001$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.001$), ascribed responsibility ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.001$), personal norms ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.001$) were positively and significantly related to their intentions to document green funeral plans. Findings suggest that for every unit increase in relationships with environmental values, connectedness to nature, awareness of environmental consequences of traditional funeral services, moral feelings of responsibility to choose a green funeral service, and personal normative beliefs toward green funerals, a unit increases in intentions to document green funeral plans.

Regression Analyses for Green Funeral Planning Intentions

This final section includes correlational and regression results to answer **H6** and determine significant predictors of young adults' intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral services. To reiterate, **H6ab** hypothesized that participant's attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, past behaviors with EOL planning, environmental values, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms would significantly predict behavioral intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document green funeral plans.

I first conducted Pearson correlations to identify the relationships between the 12 predictor variables. Then, I ran two step-wise regression models on all study variables for (a) communication and (b) documentation intentions.

Communication Intentions. Please see Table 9 for the Pearson correlation coefficients matrix between variable constructs.

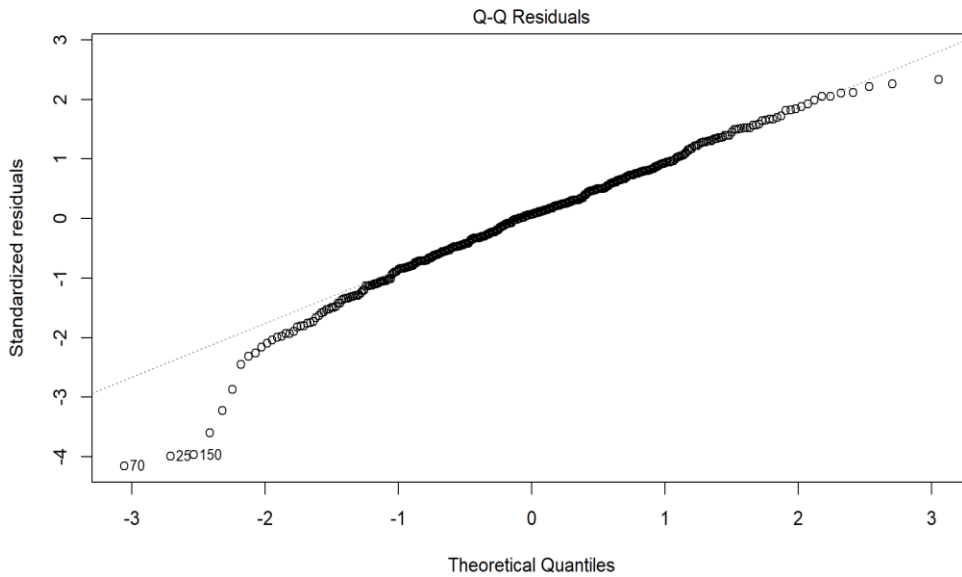
Table 9. Correlations matrix communication converged TPB-VBN model

	CAX	CAV	Neut	ATT	SNB	PBC	Evals	EBfs	ProbA	AscrbR	PN	OutCom
CAX	1.00											
CAV	0.78	1.000										
Neut	-0.13	-0.28	1.00									
ATT	0.00	-0.01	0.05	1.000								
SNB	0.00	-0.02	0.05	0.57	1.000							
PBC	0.00	-0.02	0.05	0.59	0.56	1.00						
Evals	0.02	-0.12	0.36	0.13	0.14	0.15	1.000					
EBfs	0.01	-0.08	0.25	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.69	1.000				
ProbA	0.01	-0.06	0.19	0.25	0.27	0.28	0.52	0.38	1.00			
AscrbR	0.00	0.12	0.09	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.25	0.17	0.49	1.000		
PN	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.23	0.22	0.24	0.57	0.38	0.45	0.46	1.000	
OutCom	-0.05	-0.18	0.28	0.54	0.48	0.62	0.32	0.21	0.33	0.17	0.37	1.00

Note. The following list explains the abbreviations used above CAX = communication anxiety, CAV = communication avoidance, Neut = neutral attitudes toward death acceptance, ATT = attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans, SNB = subjective normative beliefs toward communicating green funeral plans, PBC = perceived behavioral control toward communicating green funeral plans, Evals = environmental values, EBfs = environmental beliefs, ProbA = problem awareness of the environmental consequences from conventional funerary practices, AscrbR = ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral service, PN = personal normative beliefs toward communicating green funeral plans, and OutCom = outcome of communicating green funeral plans.

Before I conducted a step-wise regression with communication intentions as the dependent variable, I plotted QQ-Residuals to check the assumption of normality of residuals (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Communication QQ-Plot Residuals

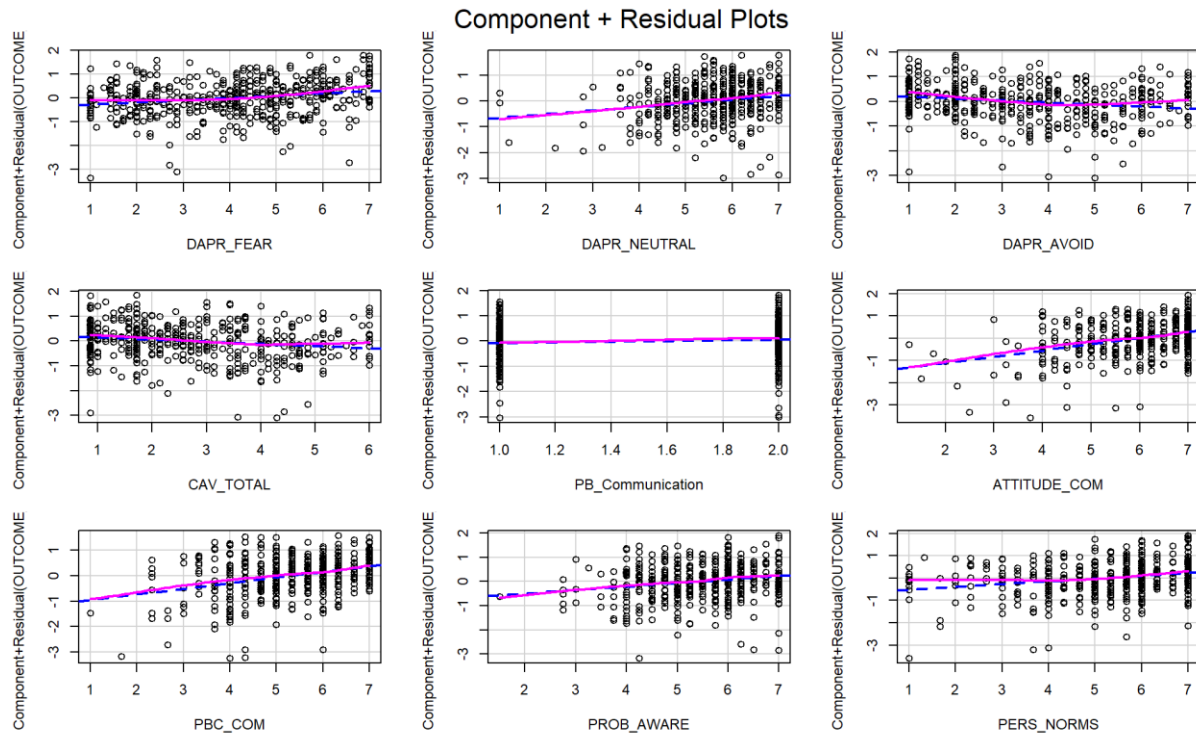


Note. The visualized QQ-plot shows that the communication intention residuals closely follow the diagonal line and indicate that the residuals are normally distributed. Therefore, it was safe to proceed with the regression analysis.

I retained eight EOL barriers in the first block: five death attitude variables (fear, avoid, neutral, escape, and approach), communication anxiety, communication avoidance, and past behaviors with communicating EOL wishes (a dummy coded variable based on self-report data that individuals had communicated their EOL plans in the past). In the second block, I entered three TPB variables: attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control. The third block contained five VBN theory variables: environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms.

The regression analysis ran for eight iterations. The final model was significant: $F(9, 434) = 45.15, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.473$, and explained approximately 47% of the overall variance. In this model, communication avoidance ($\beta = -0.09, p = 0.001$), neutral attitudes toward death acceptance ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.001$), fearful ($\beta = 0.10, p = 0.001$) and avoidant attitudes toward death ($\beta = -0.08, p = 0.01$), past experiences communicating EOL plans ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.05$), attitudes toward communicating EOL plans ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.001$) and personal norms ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of documentation intentions. I plotted all component and residual plots for each predictor in the mode (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Communication Predictor's Component and Residual Plots

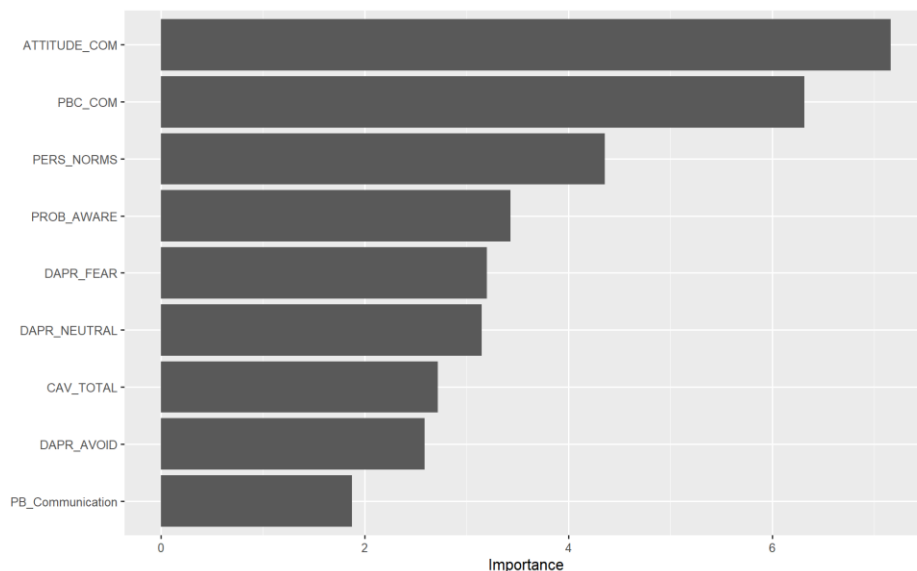


Note. All residual plots suggest a normative relationship between the residual and communication intentions except for the categorical dichotomous predictor: past behavioral experiences with communicating EOL plans. The abbreviated predictor names are as follows:

DAPR_FEAR = fearful attitudes toward death, DAPR_NEUTRAL = natural death attitudes, DAPR_AVOID = avoidant attitudes toward death, CAV_TOTAL = communication avoidance around communicating green funeral plans, PB_Communication = past behavioral experiences with communicating EOL plans, ATTITUDE_COM = attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans, PBC_COM = perceived behavioral control toward communicating green funeral plans, PROB_AWARE = problem awareness of environmental consequences toward conventional funerary practices, and PERS_NORMS = personal normative beliefs toward green funeral plans.

I plotted the regression predictor variables to visualize the role each variable played in predicting communication intentions. The following figure visualizes the importance of each significant predictor in the final regression analysis (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Visualization of Communication Model Predictor Importance



Note. This chart suggests that attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans had the most significant impact on communication intentions. The abbreviated predictor names are as follows: DAPR_FEAR = fearful attitudes toward death, DAPR_NEUTRAL = natural death

attitudes, DAPR_AVOID = avoidant attitudes toward death, CAV_TOTAL = communication avoidance around communicating green funeral plans, PB_Communication = past behavioral experiences with communicating EOL plans, ATTITUDE_COM = attitudes toward communicating green funeral plans, PBC_COM = perceived behavioral control toward communicating green funeral plans, PROB_AWARE = problem awareness of environmental consequences toward conventional funerary practices, and PERS_NORMS = personal normative beliefs toward green funeral plans.

The communication regression model findings suggest that communication avoidance and avoidant attitudes toward death are significantly and negatively related to communication intentions. As avoidant communication and attitudes toward death increase, participants' likeliness to document their green funeral plans decreases. Overall, the linear step-wise regression model results found that past experiences with EOL communication, three death attitudes, communication avoidance, two of the three TPB variables, and two VBN theory variables explain about 48% of communication intentions among young adults.

Documentation Intentions. Please see Table 10 for the Pearson correlation coefficients matrix between variable constructs.

Table 10. Correlations matrix documentation converged TPB-VBN model

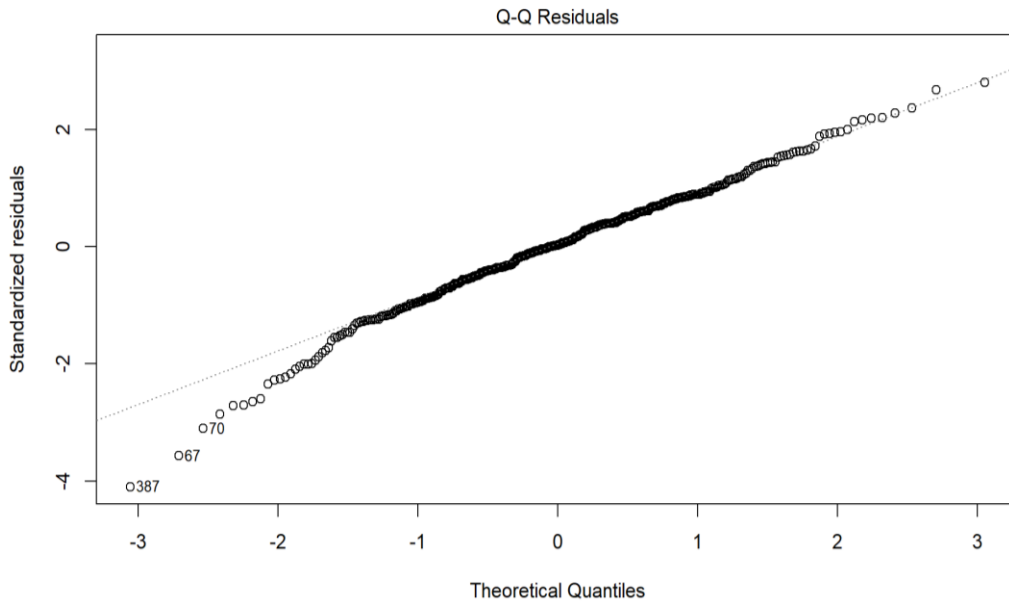
	CAX	CAV	Neut	ATT	SNB	PBC	Evals	EBfs	ProbA	AscrbR	PN	OutDoc
CAX	1.00											
CAV	0.79	1.000										
Neut	-0.13	-0.28	1.00									
ATT	-0.11	-0.14	0.19	1.000								
SNB	-0.15	-0.14	0.15	0.59	1.000							
PBC	-0.04	-0.06	0.14	0.39	0.52	1.00						
Evals	-0.01	-0.12	0.32	0.30	0.21	0.22	1.000					
EBfs	-0.00	-0.07	0.18	0.18	0.12	0.13	0.59	1.000				

ProbA	-0.03	-0.05	0.01	0.24	0.22	0.13	0.24	0.35	1.00			
AscrbR	-0.02	0.12	0.05	0.12	0.10	0.07	0.119	0.17	0.49	1.000		
PN	-0.04	0.02	0.05	0.16	0.24	0.13	0.47	0.40	0.32	0.43	1.000	
OutDoc	-0.10	-0.26	0.32	0.47	0.47	0.50	0.35	0.23	0.21	0.11	0.33	1.00

Note. The following list explains the abbreviations used above: CAX = communication anxiety, CAV = communication avoidance, Neut = neutral attitudes toward death acceptance, ATT = attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans, SNB = subjective normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans, PBC = perceived behavioral control toward documenting green funeral plans, Evals = environmental values, EBfs = environmental beliefs, ProbA = problem awareness of the environmental consequences from conventional funerary practices, AscrbR = ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral service, PN = personal normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans, and OutDoc = outcome of documenting green funeral plans.

I plotted QQ-Residuals to check the assumption of normality of documentation intention residuals (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Documentation QQ-Plot Residuals

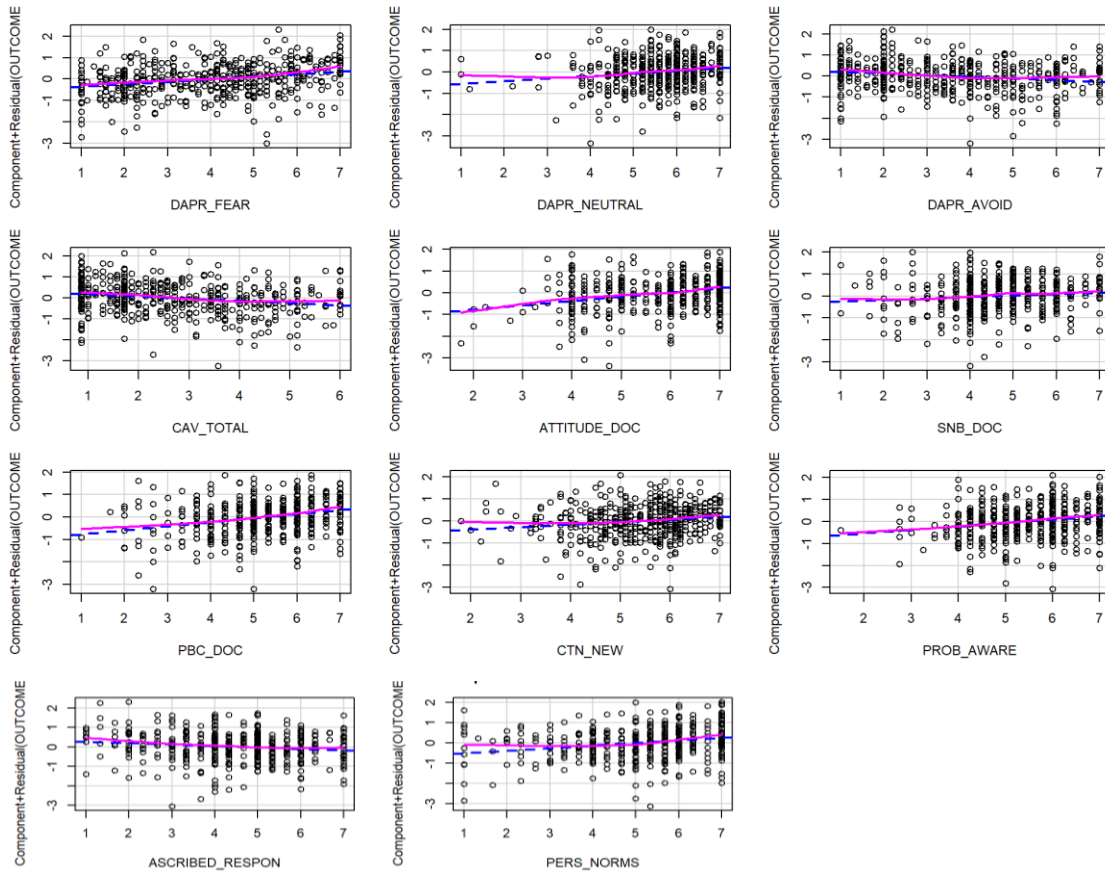


Note. The visualized QQ-plot shows that the documentation intention residuals reasonably follow the diagonal line and indicate that the residuals are normally distributed. Therefore, it was safe to proceed with the regression analysis.

I conducted a step-wise regression with documentation intentions as the dependent variable. I retained eight EOL barriers in the first block: five death attitude variables (fear, avoid, neutral, escape, and approach), communication anxiety, communication avoidance, and past behaviors while documenting EOL wishes (a dummy coded variable for the presence of existing EOL documents). In the second block, I entered three TPB variables: attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control. The third block contained five VBN theory variables: environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms.

The regression analysis ran for six iterations. The final model was significant: $F(11, 432) = 32.17, p < 0.001, R^2 = 0.436$. In this model, communication avoidance ($\beta = -0.11, p = 0.001$), neutral attitudes toward death acceptance ($\beta = 0.12, p = 0.001$), fearful ($\beta = 0.12, p < 0.001$) and avoidant attitudes toward death ($\beta = -0.08, p < 0.001$), EOL documentation attitudes ($\beta = 0.20, p < 0.001$), subjective normative beliefs ($\beta = 0.07, p < 0.01$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.001$), environmental beliefs ($\beta = 0.11, p < 0.01$), problem awareness ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.001$), ascribed responsibility ($\beta = -0.07, p < 0.01$), and personal norms ($\beta = 0.13, p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of documentation intentions. I plotted all component and residual plots for each predictor in the model (see Figure 11).

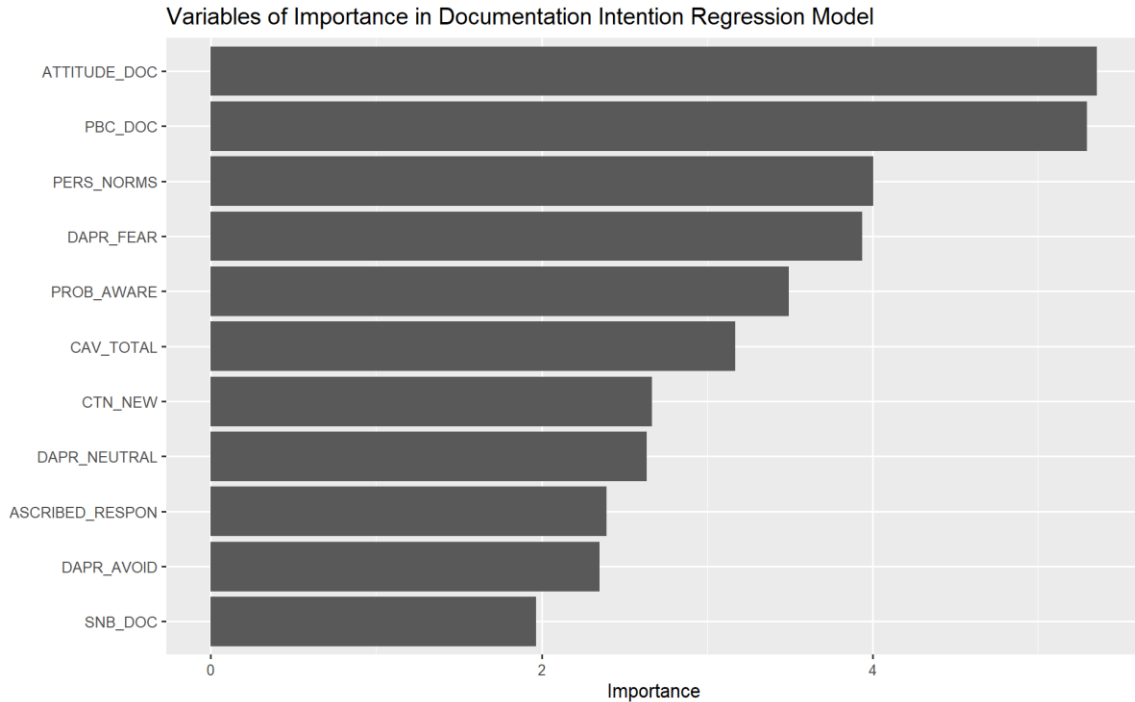
Figure 11. Documentation Predictor's Component and Residual Plots



Note. All residual plots suggest a normative relationship with the documentation intention outcome variable. The abbreviated predictor names are as follows: DAPR_FEAR = fearful attitudes toward death, DAPR_NEUTRAL = natural death attitudes, DAPR_AVOID = avoidant attitudes toward death, CAV_TOTAL = communication avoidance around discussing documentation plans, ATTITUDE_DOC = attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans, SNB_DOC = subjective normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans, PBC_DOC = perceived behavioral control toward documenting green funeral plans, CTN_NEW = environmental beliefs, PROB_AWARE = problem awareness of environmental consequences toward conventional funerary practices, ASCRIBED_RESPON = feelings of ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral service, and PERS_NORMS = personal normative beliefs toward green funeral plans.

The following figure visualizes the importance of each significant predictor in the final regression analysis (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Visualization of Documentation Model Predictor Importance



Note. This chart suggests that attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans had the most significant impact on documentation intentions. This plot visualizes the role each variable plays in predicting documentation intentions. The abbreviated predictor names are as follows: DAPR_FEAR = fearful attitudes toward death, DAPR_NEUTRAL = natural death attitudes, DAPR_AVOID = avoidant attitudes toward death, CAV_TOTAL = communication avoidance around discussing documentation plans, ATTITUDE_DOC = attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans, SNB_DOC = subjective normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans, PBC_DOC = perceived behavioral control toward documenting green funeral plans, CTN_NEW = environmental beliefs, PROB_AWARE = problem awareness of environmental consequences toward conventional funerary practices, ASCRIBED_RESPON =

feelings of ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral service, and PERS_NORMS = personal normative beliefs toward green funeral plans.

Together, regression model findings suggest that communication avoidance, avoidant attitudes toward death, and ascribed responsibility are significantly and negatively related to documentation intentions. Interestingly, past experiences documenting EOL wishes ($\beta = 0.03$, $p = 0.464$) were not significantly related to documentation intentions. The model explains about 44% of the variance for young adults' intentions to document their green funeral wishes.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed the SEM results for **RQ1** and hypotheses (**H1ab-H5ab**) for each green funeral planning intention, starting with communication and then documentation. I presented nested model fit comparisons across each green funeral intention to answer **RQ2**. Then, I described the step-wise regression and correlational analyses results to answer **H6ab** for both communication and documentation intentions.

Chapter V will extensively discuss the findings presented in this chapter and offer insights into result interpretations. Chapter V will also address dissertation study limitations, highlight future directions, and conclude with a general summary of this dissertation project.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I elaborate on the core findings from the SEM and regression analyses to identify how well the study answered research questions and hypotheses for both green funeral planning intentions. Afterward, I outline several theoretical and disciplinary contributions this dissertation research offers to the scientific community. I present study limitations and propose directions for future inquiries within the sustainable EOL planning research agenda. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overarching summary of this dissertation project.

Core Findings

This section delves into the SEM results for the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model outcomes to provide further interpretation of study findings. I begin with an overview of **RQ1** results, then discuss my findings from relational hypotheses **H1ab-H5ab**. I will discuss the nested model comparison findings concerning green funeral planning research (**RQ2**). Then, I offer insights into the regression and correlation analysis results to answer **H6ab** for communication and documentation intentions.

RQ1: Efficiency of the Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Models and RQ1

This dissertation's overarching question was whether the adapted converged TPB-VBN model could successfully explain pro-environmental EOL planning intentions. The goodness-of-fit metrics and SEM findings suggested that the adapted converged TPB-VBN theoretical model significantly predicts green funeral planning intentions and efficiently answered **RQ1**. Overall,

the converged TPB-VBN communication model significantly explained 56% of the variance among communication and 50% of the variance for documentation intentions, respectively. These findings indicate that the model variables positively influence green funeral planning intentions. Specifically, communication avoidance and anxiety, neutral death attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective normative beliefs, attitudes toward funeral planning, environmental values and beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral, and personal normative beliefs collectively explain 56% and 50% of the variability among young adult's pro-environmental behavioral intentions to communicate and document their green funeral plans.

Relational Hypotheses H1ab-H5ab

The relational hypotheses findings offered keen insights into the converged TPB-VBN model relationships. **H1ab** predicted that the TPB variable constructs would significantly predict both behavioral intentions. Interestingly, SEM results revealed partial support for this hypothesis. A participant's attitudes and perceived behavioral control significantly predicted their green funeral planning intentions, but subjective normative beliefs did not. This finding suggests that on its own, subjective normative beliefs may not play a significant role in predicting intentions related to green funeral planning.

The finding that subjective normative beliefs did not significantly predict communication or documentation intentions seems to conflict the substantial body of literature supporting the powerful influence social pressures play on behavioral intentions (e.g., Ajzen, 1991, Ajzen, 2020; Ajzen & Kruglanski, 2019; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Freeman et al., 2022; Kemp & Komp, 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012). However, this counterintuitive finding does align with an existing EOL planning study (e.g., Brophy et al., 2021) which found that subjective normative beliefs

may not fully capture the complexity of EOL decision-making, as people often weigh their personal values against social expectations. Said another way, EOL planning engagement is a highly personal process that may be less likely to be influenced by perceived external social pressures or expectations.

In addition, **H4ab** findings offered a new perspective on the role of subjective normative beliefs within the model. This hypothesis posited that subjective normative beliefs will positively affect personal normative beliefs, and SEM findings fully supported this prediction. Participants who perceive stronger social normative beliefs about communicating and documenting green funeral plans also tend to have stronger personal norms supporting this behavior. This result suggests that subjective normative beliefs may mediate the relationship between personal norms and participants' intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. This finding means that the effect of personal normative beliefs on intentions may be transmitted through the influence of subjective normative beliefs. Study results align with previous scholarship findings that considered social norms as a mediator between personal norms and pro-environmental behavioral intentions (Awais et al., 2022; D'Arco et al., 2023; Fang et al., 2017; Helferich et al., 2023). These results shed significant insights into the mechanisms by which socially held beliefs may influence personal norms and, in turn, influence young adults' intentions to engage in specific behaviors related to green funeral planning.

H2ab hypothesized that communication apprehension about death, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with EOL planning would significantly predict the intention to communicate green funeral plans. SEM results partially supported this hypothesis due to the exclusion of certain variables from the converged TPB-VBN model. Model modification indices suggested removing four attitudes about death (fear, approach, escape, and avoidant). The death attitude

constructs did not significantly predict the intention to communicate nor document green funeral plans and significantly increased instances of multicollinearity within the model. Removing the four constructs better stabilized the model. SEM analyses also excluded past behavioral experiences with funeral planning because this variable was not a latent construct.

Therefore, the H2ab relational hypothesis analysis assessed three EOL barrier constructs on green funeral planning intentions. Results revealed that communication anxiety and neutral attitudes toward death acceptance positively predict intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. Communication avoidance negatively predicts green funeral planning intentions. These findings offer novel insights into the role of communicative factors in young adults' intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. For instance, this dissertation is one of the first research studies to include communication apprehension constructs in a SEM analysis to investigate their influence on pro-environmental planning intentions. Previous research has connected the communication apprehension about death scale (CADS; Carmack & DeGroot, 2016) to the theory of planned behavior constructs to predict advanced care planning intentions (Seiter, 2021). The study conceptualized that CADS is counterproductive in EOL planning contexts because communication apprehension may negatively relate to attitudes toward advanced care planning, influencing behavioral intentions to engage in planning (Seiter, 2021). Notably, the study did not analyze the relationships between CADS, attitudes, and advanced care planning outcomes; however, this conceptualization partially aligns with the current dissertation findings in that communication avoidance negatively influenced green funeral planning intentions. The SEM analyses revealed the importance of parsing the CADS into separate latent constructs rather than treating communication apprehension as one cohesive construct. Parsing CADS into two individual latent variables

enabled me to find that communication anxiety positively predicted pro-environmental behavioral intentions. This finding is significant because communication avoidance and anxiety may play different roles in EOL planning outcomes. Future research is needed to better understand these underlying constructs.

H3ab hypothesized that problem awareness of environmental consequences from conventional funeral services would positively influence participants' communication attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, and ascribed responsibility related to intentions to communicate green funeral plans. Study findings revealed mixed support across the two planning outcomes. The SEM results supported **H3a** and disclosed positive relationships between problem awareness and the four constructs. The results suggest that individuals who are more aware of the environmental consequences of conventional funeral services are also more likely to have positive attitudes, stronger subjective normative beliefs, higher perceived self-efficacy, and a greater sense of moral responsibility to discuss green funeral service plans.

Conversely, I found minimal support for **H3b**. The three TPB constructs did not significantly relate to problem awareness of environmental consequences from conventional funeral services, but ascribed responsibility did. There was no substantial evidence to support a significant positive association between attitudes and subjective norms toward documenting green funeral plans and problem awareness. The non-significant negative beta coefficient for perceived behavioral control indicates no statistically significant relationship between perceived self-efficacy to report green funeral plans and problem awareness. Participants' attitudes toward documenting green funeral plans, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived self-efficacy to document plans did not statistically relate to their awareness of the environmental consequences of conventional funeral services.

There may be several reasons for the discrepancy between **H3ab** findings. For example, mixed findings could be attributed to measurement error or unobserved, unique aspects of communication and documentation planning intentions. Previous TPB-VBN model studies found significant positive relationships between problem awareness and TPB constructs (Carfora et al., 2021; Chen., 2020; Gkargkavouzi et al., 2019; Han, 2015). Ultimately, considering that this dissertation is the first application of the TPB-VBN model in an EOL planning context, future research is needed to assess the relationships between problem awareness and TPB constructs.

Finally, **H5ab** predicted that environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms would significantly predict the behavioral intention to communicate green funeral plans. The SEM results revealed strong support for this hypothesis. The findings suggest that individuals with stronger environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, feelings of responsibility, and personal normative beliefs related to green funerals are more likely to express an intention to communicate green funeral plans. These findings map onto previous VBN scholarship (e.g., Bilandzic & Sukalla, 2019; Bouman & Steg, 2021; Commerçon et al., 2023) and highlight the importance of these factors in shaping pro-environmental behavioral intentions within the EOL planning space.

RQ2: Nested Model Comparisons

RQ2 asked which theoretical model holds the most statistical power for predicting planning intentions among young adults in the US. Nested model comparison results found that the adapted converged TPB-VBN framework outperformed the original TPB and VBN theory models' complexity, fit indices, and high explanatory power for predicting sustainable funerary planning discourse and documentation intentions.

The original VBN theory indices revealed a good model fit. Still, on its own, the VBN theory model holds low explanatory power for both planning intentions compared to the original TPB and converged TPB-VBN models. Notably, the finding of the original VBN model's low descriptive ability was not unsurprising. The model significantly predicted 19% of the variance for the pro-environmental factors related to a participant's environmental beliefs, values, problem awareness, personal norms, and feelings of environmental responsibility to engage in green funeral planning. The VBN model findings highlight these factors' significant role in aftercare planning outcomes and indicate the importance of including environmental factors in future green funerary research. In all, the inclusion of environmental factors in future research encourages researchers to consider the broader context and ecological implications of aftercare planning and respond to the need for more comprehensive, multidimensional approaches that extend beyond the health-related decision-making factors.

The original TPB model indices indicated an excellent model fit for both green funeral planning outcomes. The TPB variables significantly predicted 49% of the variance for communication intentions and explained 36% of the variance for documentation intentions. These findings map onto the existing research showcasing how the TPB efficiently predicts EOL planning behaviors related to advanced care planning (Brophy et al., 2021), campaign development (Chew et al., 2019), and organ donation (Bresnahan et al., 2007; Britt et al., 2017).

Overall, the converged TPB-VBN model predicts unique aspects of pro-environmental behavioral intentions that the original theoretical frameworks do not capture. This highly predictive model holds potential for future research investigating other EOL planning experiences regarding pro-environmental behaviors. I will outline some future directions later on in this chapter.

Regression Model Results

The results from the step-wise regression model offer supplementary insights into how the data predict green funeral planning intentions. Both regression models included 11 predictors, categorized into three blocks: EOL barriers, TPB variables, and VBN theory variables.

Communication Model. The linear step-wise regression model explained about 47% of the variation in communication intentions among young adults. Findings suggest that factors, including past experiences, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, problem awareness, and personal norms, significantly influence young adults' intentions to communicate their green funeral plans. Notably, communication avoidance and avoidant attitudes toward death were negatively related to communication intentions, suggesting that as avoidance and avoidant attitudes increase, the likelihood of documenting green funeral plans decreases. Regression results echoed the SEM findings and emphasized the importance of addressing communication and psychological barriers to EOL planning behaviors. Furthermore, regression results showed that past behavioral experiences with planning, positive attitudes toward EOL communication, perceived behavioral control, problem awareness, and personal norms positively contribute to communication intentions.

Documentation Model. The linear step-wise regression model explained about 44% of the variation in documentation intentions among young adults. Findings revealed that fearful and avoidant attitudes toward death acceptance, communication avoidance, and ascribed responsibility negatively influenced documentation intentions. Neutral attitudes toward death, documentation attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, environmental beliefs, problem awareness, and personal norms positively related to

documentation intentions. Interestingly, past behavioral experiences with funeral documentation did not significantly predict current intentions to document green funeral wishes.

Regression Model Interpretations. Across the two regression models, communication avoidance, neutral attitudes toward death acceptance, fearful attitudes toward death, and avoidant attitudes toward death were common significant predictors of planning intentions. Perceived behavioral control, attitudes toward green funeral planning intentions, problem awareness, and personal norms also significantly predicted outcomes in both models. Results imply that these communicative, psychological, and environmental factors play a consistent role in predicting both communication and documentation intentions.

The documentation intentions regression model included additional predictors such as subjective normative beliefs, environmental beliefs, and ascribed responsibility. These three factors were solely specific to the act of documentation and did not exist in the communication intention model. This finding suggests that previous behaviors may have different implications for communication and documentation intentions.

Past experiences documenting EOL wishes did not significantly predict documentation intentions. This finding contrasts with the communication intentions model, in which past behavioral experiences with communicating EOL plans were a significant predictor. One reason for this difference may be attributed to the lack of past documentation experience in the sample. For instance, the majority of participants reported that they did not have prior documentation experiences ($N = 385, 80.63\%$) yet roughly 60% of young adults reported that they had communicated funeral preferences in the past ($N = 265, 59.68\%$). This finding suggests that there may be additional barriers, such as lack of access to EOL planning documents or low EOL planning literacy, inhibiting young adults from engaging in documentation intentions and

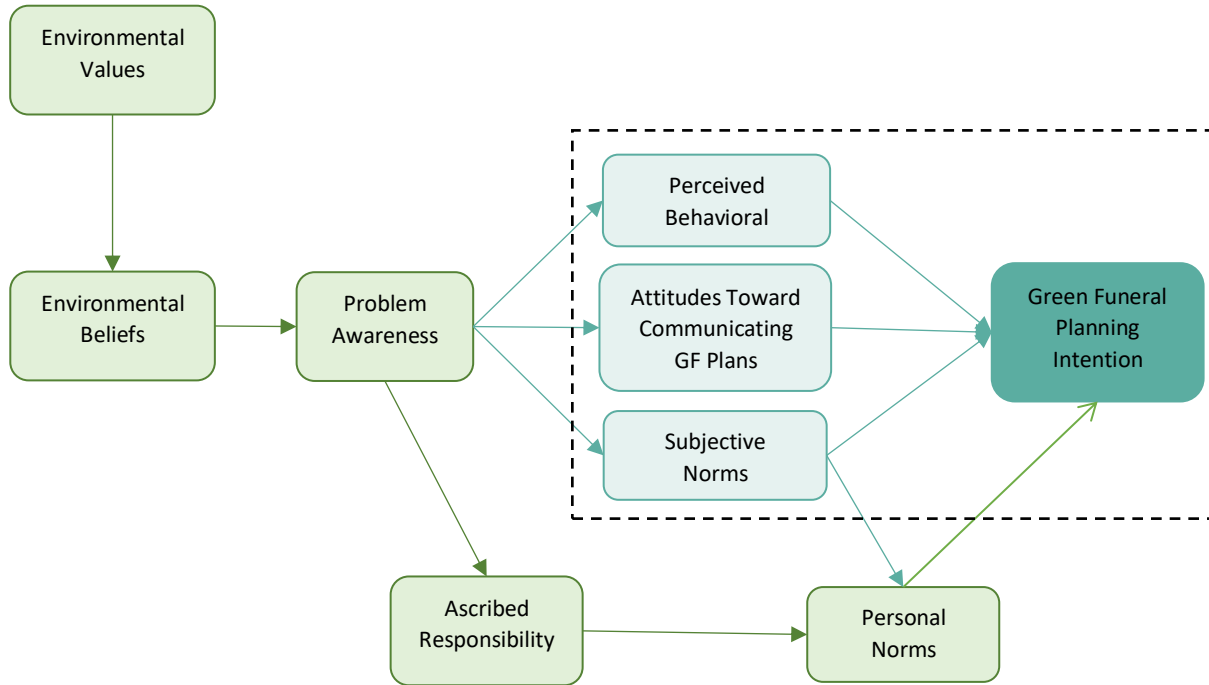
behaviors. Future research is needed to further understand specific factors that may hinder or promote documentation intentions.

Overall, both models accentuate the importance of communicative (i.e., communication avoidance), psychological (e.g., attitudes, avoidance, fear), and environmental factors (e.g., environmental beliefs, personal norms) in shaping intentions related to green funeral planning. Regression findings imply that addressing psychological barriers, enhancing positive attitudes, and increasing awareness of environmental consequences can foster intentions for future communication and documentation of green funeral plans. The explained variances of 48% and 44% indicate that while the models are informative, there are still unaccounted factors influencing green funeral planning intentions. In sum, a comprehensive approach to promoting green funeral planning intentions should consider tailoring interventions to address the unique aspects of communication and documentation behaviors that may enhance the development of future initiatives promoting sustainable EOL planning among young adults.

Theoretical Contributions

The convergence of TPB and VBN theories suggests that both psychological factors (TPB) and environmental values and beliefs (VBN) are relevant in understanding factors influencing pro-environmental behaviors (Figure 3; Han, 2015).

Figure 3. The Merged Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory Model



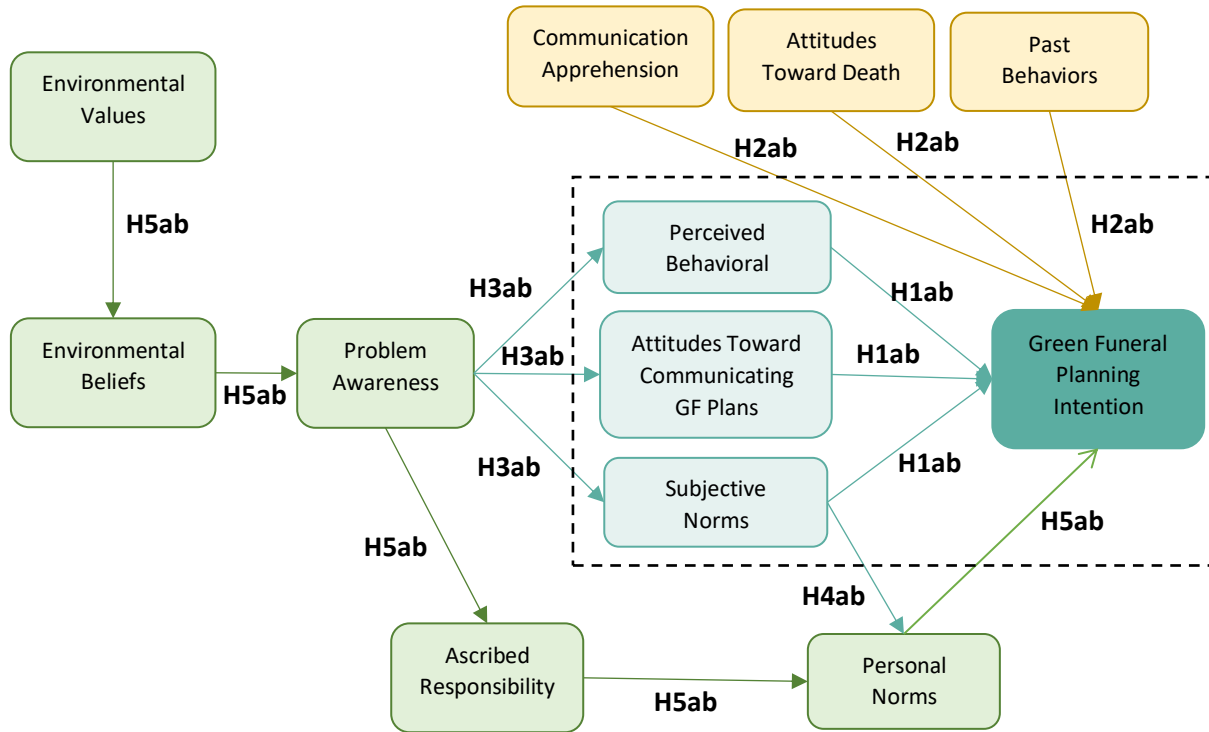
Note: The applied model extends Han’s (2015) attempt to converge the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the value-belief-norm theory (VBN) to predict pro-environmental behavioral intention. The light green shaded constructs represent VBN variables. The blue-shaded constructs inside the dotted box represent the original variables of TPB.

The TPB emphasizes the role of psychological factors such as attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control to determine an individual’s behavioral intention to perform a targeted behavior (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). The VBN theory provides a linear socio-psychological model to explain attitudes and behaviors associated with the natural environment (Stern et al., 1999). Including VBN theory in the converged model highlights the importance of environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms (Stern et al., 1999). The converged model emphasizes the relationships between awareness of the resulting environmental consequences of not engaging in the desired pro-

environmental behavior and an individual's attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived self-efficacy (or ability) to perform that pro-environmental behavior (Han, 2015). The model also accounts for the relationship between subjective and personal normative beliefs on behavioral outcomes (Han, 2015; Wittenberg et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2017).

The utilization of the adapted converged TPB-VBN model (Figure 4) in this dissertation study generated several noteworthy theoretical contributions. First, the adapted converged theoretical model offers a novel application for future EOL planning research within the emerging environmental health communication field. This dissertation research is the first to apply the converged model to investigate green funeral planning outcomes. The existing body of environmental psychology and communication scholarship used the converged model to predict various pro-environmental intentions associated with natural food selection (Carfora et al., 2021; Chen, 2020), energy conservation (Gkargkavouzi et al., 2019), electronic appliance usage (Wang et al., 2023) and waste consumption (Huang et al., 2023; Siguroardottir, 2017). A handful of existing TPB-VBN theory scholarship investigated the relationships between product death and consumer waste culture related to trending fast-tech purchases like smartphones and tablets (Sari et al., 2021; Yla-Mella et al., 2015). Within these studies, *product EOL* referred to consumers discarding their current electronic smart devices in exchange for the newest available products; this premature product death contributes to the developing environmental e-waste crisis in countries like Indonesia (Sari et al., 2021). These findings emphasized how individuals' ecological consciousness and moral considerations influence intentions concerning product death and contributing to e-waste.

Figure 4. Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Theory Model



Note: The adapted converged TB-VBN model extends Han’s (2015) original framework that merged the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the value-belief-norm theory (VBN) to predict pro-environmental behavioral intentions. The adapted model includes 12 constructs and 15 causal linkages to predict young adults’ intentions to (a) communicate and (b) document their green funeral plans. The light green shaded constructs represent VBN variables. The blue-shaded constructs inside the dotted box represent the original variables of TPB. The yellow-shaded constructs represent the extension variables derived from the TPB and health communication literature.

Until now, scholars have never used the converged framework in an EOL planning space. The TPB is a staple EOL planning framework (e.g., Brophy et al., 2021) that significantly

explains communication and documentation outcomes. The dissertation findings indicate that these psychological factors are crucial in shaping intentions related to green funeral planning. The VBN theory showcased how an individual's environmental values, beliefs, awareness, and personal norms contribute to the unique context of green funeral planning intentions. Including the VBN factors aligns with the growing recognition of the importance of sustainability and environmental considerations in various aspects of life, including EOL decisions. Together, the theoretical converged theoretical model provides a more holistic understanding of individuals' intentions. It recognizes that both internal psychological processes and external normative and value-based considerations jointly contribute to shaping intentions related to green funeral planning.

Second, the adapted converged theoretical model provides a nuanced understanding of barriers and facilitators to green funeral planning intentions. This dissertation is the first to adapt the converged model to include communicative EOL barriers such as communication apprehension, anxiety, and death perspectives. Adopting communicative EOL planning barriers (e.g., communication avoidance and anxiety) in the model yielded several noteworthy theoretical insights. Dissertation findings showed the importance of parsing the CADS (Carmack & DeGroot, 2016) constructs and suggested that communication avoidance and anxiety may play differing roles in EOL planning outcomes.

The adapted model creates opportunities for future research to examine how communication constructs theoretically and conceptually relate to the TPB and VBN constructs. It is important to note that this dissertation research did not explicitly predict relationships between CADS and converged model constructs. While studies examining communication apprehension and the TPB have demonstrated that communication apprehension significantly

impacts attitudes, social normative beliefs, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention outcomes (Goldman et al., 2014), scholarship has yet to examine theoretical connections between CADS, the three TPB determinants and the five VBN constructs. Therefore, the lack of theoretical and empirical scholarship contributed to the adapted model design. Interestingly, modification indices recommendations during SEM analyses suggested paths between model constructs. Namely, both outcome model would improve with an additional path between communication avoidance and ascribed responsibility. This path indicates that an individual's avoidance of communicating about green funeral plans may be related to their internalized feelings of responsibility to document their EOL plans. Modification indices suggested an additional path between communication anxiety and personal normative beliefs toward documenting green funeral plans. This path indicates that an individual's communication anxiety around discussing EOL topics (e.g., funeral planning) may be related to their beliefs about performing that EOL topic. Conceptually, the connection between communication anxiety and personal norms makes sense; if an individual is highly anxious when discussing funeral plans and does not have a strong internal moral obligation to engage in funeral planning tasks, they may be less likely to perform that EOL planning task. The SEM analysis also found that attitudes toward death constructs such as fear of death and death avoidance items significantly loaded onto the communication anxiety and avoidance constructs, respectively. This finding points to the bidirectional relationship between communication apprehension and death attitudes that may play on planning outcomes. However, health communication scholars must investigate these relationships further to better understand these connections and build upon our existing theoretical frameworks.

Third, using and applying the adapted converged theoretical model offer practical implications for designing health campaigns, interventions, and educational materials to promote green funeral planning. The adapted converged TPB-VBN model can serve as a foundation for researchers interested in developing health campaigns to promote pro-environmental funerary services and EOL planning engagement. Health interventions can address communicative barriers to overcome discomfort and distress around communicating and documenting highly personalized and sensitive EOL preferences. Finally, this theoretical framework may encourage the development of death education materials that facilitate the normalization of death discourse, EOL planning occurrence, and the growing number of environmentally friendly funerary choices available in the US.

The adapted converged TPB-VBN findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of green funeral planning intentions by integrating communicative, psychological, and environmental factors. This integration enhances the comprehensiveness of the theoretical framework and provides valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers interested in promoting sustainable end-of-life planning behaviors among young adults. The converged model offers a new holistic opportunity for studying green EOL planning behaviors and creates new opportunities to learn latent variable relationships grounded in theory. Dissertation findings also create new avenues for future research exploring the interplay between psychological and environmental factors in other green funerary contexts or within different age groups.

Disciplinary Contributions

Overall, this dissertation expands upon our conceptual knowledge of factors that contribute (and may not contribute) to communicating and documenting green funeral plans

among the young adult population. This dissertation study offers several disciplinary contributions across different scientific fields.

Among the field of health communication, the incorporation of communication variables in the dissertation recognizes the vital role communication plays in shaping intentions related to green funeral planning. The adapted converged TPB-VBN model offers a nuanced and holistic approach to exploring EOL planning discourse and communicative outcomes. Health communication scholars can use the adapted converged TPB-VBN theory to promote environmental awareness and green funeral service options on aftercare planning PSAs, education materials, messages, and planning documents. Health communication scholars can also draw on the model to examine additional communication barriers and promoters of EOL planning outcomes such as family communication patterns (Fitzpatrick, 2004; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006), EOL terminology literacy (Olsson et al., 2021), and access to planning materials (Smith et al., 2022). Research suggests that a family's communication environment influences EOL planning discourse and engagement (Horning & Bown, 2023; Shearman et al., 2021). Including a health literacy construct in the model may offer new insights into the effects of not understanding the EOL planning terminology, services, or funerary practices available to the individual. Finally, health communication scholars can draw on this research to promote accessible and inclusive EOL planning materials. The existing standardized EOL planning documents, like the Five Wishes planning form, do not include green funeral service options. This dissertation research highlights the importance of including sustainable funerary choices in planning documents. Health campaigns have the potential to cultivate positive change within this space and increase planning engagement within the US young adult population.

The examination of behavioral intentions within the framework of the TPB perpetuates our scientific understanding of how attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control influence decision-making in the context of green funeral planning. This research also builds upon the limited literature on pro-environmental behaviors within the EOL planning space. Moreover, this study provides insights into how individuals' perceptions of what is socially expected or personally valued influence their intentions in green funeral planning.

Within the environmental communication field, this dissertation research provides insights into how individuals' attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control interact with environmental values, beliefs, and problem awareness in EOL planning. This research also broadens the scope of exploring sustainable practices in the specific domain of funeral planning. Said another way, this research extends the existing body of environmental literature and addresses the intersection of environmental sustainability and individual decision-making regarding end-of-life choices, highlighting the relevance of sustainable practices even in traditionally conventional areas.

The application of the adapted converged TPB-VBN framework coalesces the environmental and health communication fields and showcases how ecological factors contribute to health outcomes. This research aligns with existing scholarship linking the environment to health outcomes (Chadwick, 2021). The adapted converged TPB-VBN framework provides communication scholars an available model to examine promoting environmental health concepts to predict behavioral change intentions and answers Chadwick's (2016) call for health communication scholarship to investigate health outcomes related to climate change.

Interestingly, plant-based services such as becoming a memorial tree or plant were the most preferred green funerary choice among the young adult sample. This finding supports the

growing body of research assessing the relationship between plants and EOL health outcomes (Bekoff, 2023; Cummins, 2020; Hall & Knuth, 2019; MacMurray & Futrell, 2019; Slominski, 2020). Recognizing memorial plants as people generates a new environmental health communication research subfield. Scholars can build on this dissertation research to develop effective message strategies promoting using plants in EOL rituals to investigate grief processing and death acceptance. They can further examine the connections between the role certain green funeral services play on EOL planning intentions.

Outside of the environmental health communication domain, this dissertation offers implications for public health and bioethics as it delves into the ethical considerations and decision-making processes related to EOL planning. Integrating environmental values and beliefs into this domain contributes to a broader understanding of how individuals approach ethical considerations in their EOL choices. Study findings offer practical intervention and policy development insights, contributing to applied disciplines. Understanding the factors that influence green funeral planning intentions can inform the development of targeted interventions and policies to promote sustainable practices in EOL planning.

In summary, the study makes interdisciplinary contributions by addressing environmental, psychological, communicative, and behavioral aspects of green funeral planning intentions among young adults. This dissertation research enriches various disciplines by providing a nuanced understanding of decision-making processes in a context that intersects sustainability, psychology, communication, and EOL studies.

Limitations & Directions for Future Research

Despite the strengths of a quantitative structural equation modeling approach to investigating green funeral planning intentions, this dissertation has a few methodological and content-related limitations.

First, I acknowledge that the dissertation's focus on young adults may limit generalizability to other age groups or populations. While the young adult population is a perfectly acceptable, developmentally appropriate, and justifiable target population of study among green funeral planning intentions, I cannot generalize study findings to anyone outside the 18–39-year age range. Different age cohorts may have distinct attitudes and experiences, and caution should be exercised when extrapolating findings to broader demographics. Future research could investigate how these factors vary among older adults, middle-aged individuals, and children across different cultures, socioeconomic classes, and religious groups.

The study's focus on green funeral planning intentions may limit its generalizability to other pro-environmental behaviors. Future research should expand beyond communication and documentation intentions and examine different types of green funerary and pro-environmental EOL plans, such as purchasing behavior. Research could also investigate different EOL contexts, such as the relationship between green funeral engagement (e.g., participation or attendance) and death acceptance outcomes. Further future research could examine intentions to incorporate plants within conventional funeral services or choose holistic plant-based palliative and hospice care treatments. Unique factors may influence different behaviors, and caution should be exercised when applying these findings to other sustainability domains.

One way to reduce the generalizability mentioned above limitations is replication. Future research should consider conducting replication studies to validate the identified additional paths in different samples or contexts. Replication enhances the generalizability of findings and

strengthens the overall validity of the converged TPB-VBN model relationships in predicting green funeral intentions.

Second, relying on self-report measures introduces the potential for social desirability bias. This phenomenon is where participants may provide responses they perceive as socially acceptable. This bias could impact the accuracy of reported intentions and behaviors. Future research on this topic might benefit from utilizing a mixed-methodological approach to capture participant's open-ended responses toward study constructs. Specifically, the qualitative research component will provide a richer understanding of individuals' motivations, barriers, and experiences related to green funeral planning. Qualitative methods allow researchers to gain deeper insights into the underlying factors that quantitative measures may not fully capture. So, incorporating both methodological approaches into future studies offers a holistic comprehension of existing nuances with green funeral planning intentions.

Also, the current cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causation, as the data captures participants' associations and perspectives toward study variables at one point in time. Experimental and longitudinal studies are necessary to explore relational causation and changes in green funeral planning intentions and behaviors over time. These methodological approaches would significantly help scholars capture the dynamics of decision-making processes and assess how attitudes and experiences evolve.

Third, I measured past behavioral experiences as a dichotomous, categorical variable. Participants self-reported whether they had or had not previously communicated their aftercare plans to a loved one. This method of measuring past behavioral experiences may have oversimplified the nuanced nature of past behavioral experiences with funeral planning, as individuals may have varied experiences that impact their intentions differently. The remaining

unexplained variance in the converged TPB-VBN models may be attributed to factors not included in the model, measurement error, or other unobserved variables. Past behavioral experiences with EOL planning significantly predicted communication intentions in the regression model. However, I did not include past behavioral experiences as a variable in the SEM model because it was not a latent construct.

The debate on whether past behavioral experiences can be measured as a latent construct is ongoing (Ajzen, 2020). Some researchers conceptualize past behavioral experiences as complex and multifaceted constructs. For example, if past behavioral experiences involve various aspects such as frequency, intensity, or duration, these dimensions can be represented as indicators of a latent variable. Treating past experiences as a latent variable allows researchers to model the complexity of these relationships more comprehensively. For example, previous research using past behavior as a latent variable serves as a strong predictor for intent (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002; Akdeniz et al., 2023; Carmack & Heiss, 2018; Rhodes & Courneya, 2003). Capturing the multidimensional facets of past behavioral experiences in an EOL planning context proves difficult. One study assessed prior experience with death using a three-item assessment to predict EOL product purchasing behavior (Sheng et al. 2019). The items included Likert statements such as “planning for death is necessary,” “preplanning for death is essential,” and “preplanning made the process easier for the grieving family and friends.” While the study findings support the idea that prior experience plays a significant role in EOL product purchasing behavior, we must consider the measurement items comprising this latent construct (Sheng et al., 2019). Two of the three items may be better classified as attitudes toward planning rather than capturing previous planning experiences. Research is needed to investigate the dimensionality of

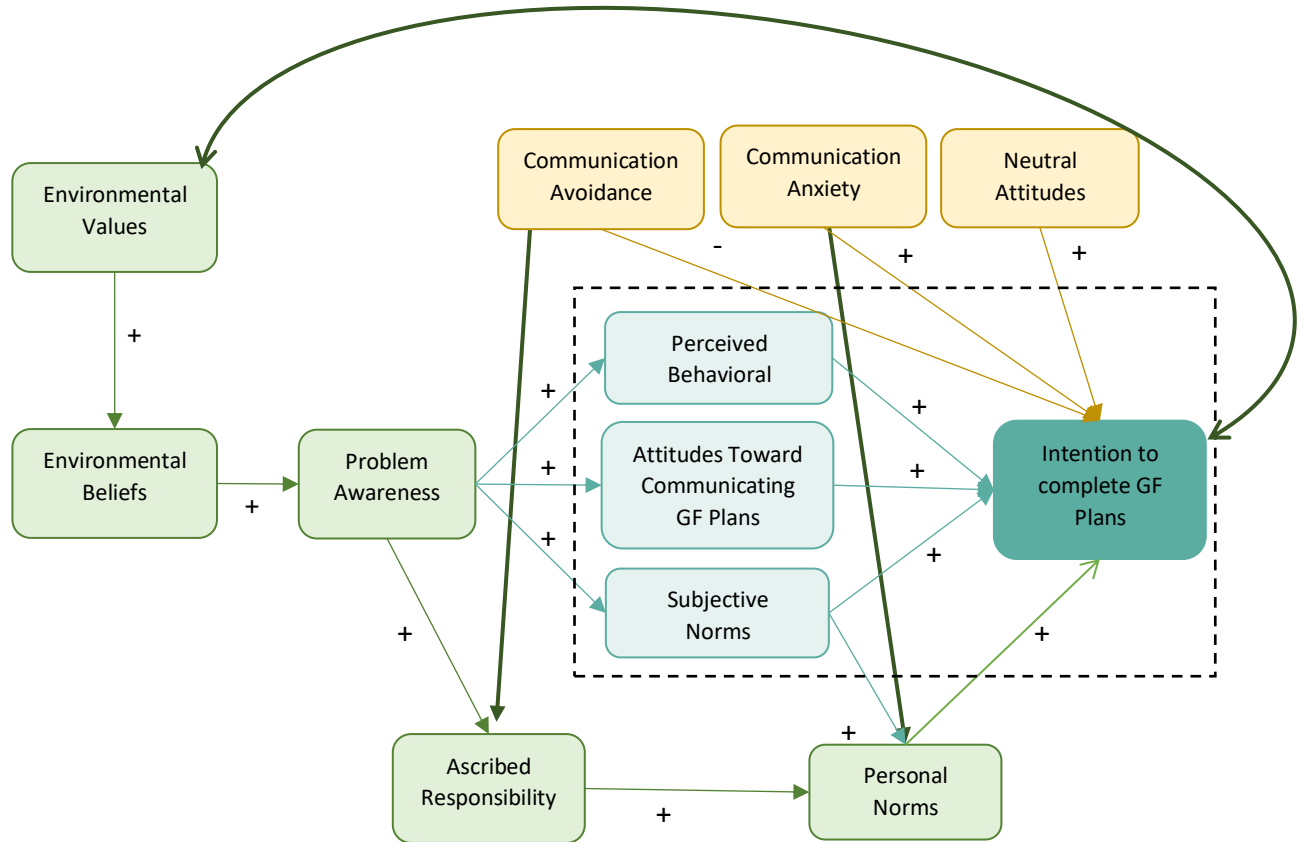
past behavioral experiences within the EOL planning space and develop a valid and reliable metric that efficiently captures existing underlying concepts or traits.

Additional directions for future research might include model enhancement inquiries to explore discovered cyclical relationships. For instance, future research could evaluate and refine the measurement model by analyzing the modification indices related to indicator loadings and error terms. Doing this can involve considering potential cross-loadings or covariances between indicators that may improve the overall fit and precision of the adapted converged TPB-VBN model.

For example, modification indices suggested the addition of several paths to enhance the measurement model. Figure 7 highlights a few of the implied relationships between model constructs. One suggested cyclical, or bi-directional, relationship connected the green funeral planning outcome construct to environmental values. This cyclical path challenges the linear socio-psychological approach Han's (2015) converged model uses to explain attitudes and pro-environmental behaviors. A bi-directional relationship implies that in the context of green funeral planning, an individual's environmental values, beliefs, and attitudes may significantly influence intentions to communicate and document their EOL plans, and in turn, EOL planning engagement may reinforce that individual's environmental values, beliefs, and attitudes toward planning. Reconceptualizing the model as a cyclical relationship is significant because it changes the role behavioral outcomes play on the myriad of communicative, psychological, and environmental factors that collectively drive EOL planning engagement. A cyclical model captures the highly personalized and complex relationships involved in EOL planning and creates future opportunities for theory development. In sum, model evaluation presents new ways

to study EOL planning behaviors that concern future outcomes, necessitate thinking about death and dying, and typically lack adequate participation from the public.

Figure 13. Adapted Converged TPB-VBN Model SEM Relationship Exploration



Note. This figure visualizes existing relationships between the adapted converged TPB-VBN model framework that predicts young adults' intentions to complete green funerals (GF) planning tasks. The teal constructs inside the dashed box represent TPB variables. The green constructs represent the VBN theory variables. The light-yellow constructs represent communication barriers. The bold, dark green lines represent future research opportunities to examine the relationship between constructs.

Note 2. A + signifies a positive relationship between constructs.

Note 3. A - Signifies a negative relationship between constructs.

Future research could investigate potential mediating relationships between latent constructs. **H4ab** results found that subjective normative beliefs may mediate the relationship between personal norms and participants' intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. Further examining these pathways can provide insights into the underlying mechanisms through which social and personal normative constructs influence each other in the context of green funeral planning.

Future research should further explore the relationship between communication apprehension about death s and VBN constructs. Modification indices during the SEM analyses suggested that adding a path between communication avoidance and ascribed responsibility would significantly improve model fit. This path suggests that an individual's unwillingness to engage in discussions about green funeral planning may be mediated by their internal feelings of moral obligation to engage in green funeral planning outcomes. SEM modification indices results also suggested adding a path between communication anxiety and personal normative beliefs to improve model fit. This path suggests that an individual's anxiety about communicating EOL wishes may impact their normative beliefs toward EOL planning outcomes. For instance, if a young adult holds positive personal beliefs about green funeral planning but becomes highly anxious when discussing EOL topics, they may be less likely to engage in EOL planning behaviors. Therefore, future research is needed to assess these relationships.

Another direction of future research could explore possible moderation effects to examine whether the relationships between the adapted converged TPB-VBN latent constructs vary based on additional moderating variables. Moderation effect investigations could involve testing interaction terms to assess whether the strength or direction of paths differs across different age or demographic groups. For example, research found that individuals who work

closely with nature in their careers (e.g., environmentalists) and those who are aware of green funerals are significantly more likely to choose green funerals compared to non-environmentalists or individuals who did not know green funeral services existed (Zhongming et al., 2021). Thus, occupation may moderate an individual's level of environmentalism and impact green funeral planning outcomes. Therefore, exploring additional potential moderators such as income, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, race, and age will add a nuanced perspective to the adapted converged TPB-VBN model.

Other areas of future research involve incorporating demographic and socioeconomic factors into the SEM model and further investigating the role these variables play on EOL planning outcomes. This dissertation study measured participants' religious affiliation, education level, race, gender, age, and geographic region demographics. However, aside from age categorization, none of these demographic variables were included in the analyses. Future research need to examine how such factors relate to specific green funeral service preferences, and communication and documentation behavioral outcomes. Additional research is needed to assess variation among planning intentions between older and younger adults. Research could also investigate factors such as family communication patterns (Fitzpatrick, 2004; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2006), cultural background, religiosity, and past experiences with alternate EOL planning activities (e.g., digital legacy engagement) impact future intentions to engage in EOL planning.

Digital legacy building and memorialization planning on social media accounts such as Meta's Facebook and Instagram platforms often are young adult's initial exposure to EOL planning (Boles et al., 2020; Boles & Jones, 2021; Cahalan et al., 2022; Kneese, 2023). Social media platforms help to normalize EOL planning engagement by prompting users to identify

their digital legacy contacts, or managers, to manage the digital remains left behind after the original account holder dies (Kneese, 2023). Future research should investigate the role digital legacy planning can play on promoting aftercare and advanced care planning engagement. Digital legacies may also cultivate environmentally friendly options to memorialize the deceased through the use of mediated and digital spaces to honor lost loved ones. Future research could also implement EOL planning practices through mediated platforms to increase accessibility of planning resources and forms.

Finally, future research should examine new ways to measure and incorporate death attitudes in the adapted converged TPB-VBN model. Only neutral acceptance of death, one of the five death attitudes profile-revised (Wong et al., 1994) subscales, predicted green funeral planning outcomes. The fear of death and death avoidance constructs loaded onto the communication anxiety and avoidance constructs, respectively. This finding speaks to the conflation between fear of death and death anxiety. While the terms are mainly used synonymously in research, the two concepts, “death anxiety” and “fear of death,” are distinguished as being two separate affective experiences or emotional phenomena (Lehto & Stein, 2009). Across the social sciences, “death anxiety” is often used as a shorthand for the “cluster of death attitudes characterized by fear, threat, unease, discomfort, and similar negative emotional reactions, as well as anxiety in the psychodynamic sense as a kind of diffuse fear that has no clear object” (Neimeyer et al., 2004, p 47). There is not a precise universal definition for death anxiety. Nor are there basic terms that are grounded in an explicit conceptual framework. Thus, removing the four other measures (e.g., fear, avoidance, escape, and approach) from the adapted converged TPB-VBN model implies that DAPR may not be an efficient approach for capturing young adults’ perspectives toward their mortality. Therefore, there is a severe need for

scholarly attention on developing efficient death anxiety measurements, especially within the EOL planning and health communication field.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of integrating communicative constructs (e.g., communication apprehension), psychological factors from the TPB, and environmental values and beliefs from the VBN theory. Communication avoidance emerges as a barrier to both communication and documentation intentions. Strategies to address communication apprehension and promote open discussions about green funeral planning may enhance the likelihood of individuals expressing and documenting their preferences. Psychological factors such as attitudes, subjective normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control play a significant role in shaping intentions to communicate and document green funeral plans. Communication apprehension, attitudes about death, and past behaviors with end-of-life planning are identified as both barriers and facilitators. Dissertation findings revealed that environmental concepts matter for sustainable EOL planning. Pro-environmental variables such as environmental values, beliefs, problem awareness, ascribed responsibility, and personal norms are crucial in predicting green funeral planning intentions. Emphasizes the importance of individuals' environmental consciousness and moral considerations when making EOL decisions. Overall, converging these theoretical frameworks and constructs provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing green funeral planning intentions.

The study results offer practical implications for intervention design. Strategies should address psychological barriers, enhance positive attitudes, and increase awareness of environmental consequences. Scholars can tailor communication campaigns, educational initiatives, and policy interventions based on the identified predictors. The dissertation also

provides a nuanced understanding of intentions by differentiating between communication and documentation intentions. Factors influencing these intentions may vary, and interventions should consider the unique aspects of each.

Past experiences, particularly with end-of-life planning discussions, significantly predict communication intentions. This finding underscores the impact of previous behaviors on current intentions and suggests that interventions should consider individuals' histories in promoting sustainable end-of-life planning.

The dissertation findings suggest potential mediating relationships, indicating that subjective normative beliefs may mediate the relationship between personal norms and intentions to communicate green funeral plans. Further exploring these mediating mechanisms can deepen our understanding of the decision-making process.

The SEM results show a high percentage of variance explained (e.g., 56% for communication intentions and 50% for documentation intentions). While this indicates a robust model fit, it also suggests that unaccounted factors influence green funeral planning intentions, highlighting the complexity of this decision-making process.

This dissertation contributes to multiple disciplines, including environmental psychology, sustainability studies, thanatology (or EOL) studies, communication studies, behavioral economics, and public health. It exemplifies the value of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and promoting pro-environmental behaviors.

In conclusion, this dissertation advances our understanding of the factors influencing green funeral planning intentions among young adults, emphasizing the need for integrated theoretical frameworks and targeted interventions that address the communicative, psychological, and environmental considerations involved in EOL planning. These nuanced

insights can guide future research and inform practical strategies for tackling the lack of EOL planning as a systematic issue and encouraging young adults to adopt and plan for sustainable funerals.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Flyers

Prolific Users Recruitment Statement

Study Title: A survey about green funerals and end-of-life plans

Study Description: This study assesses people's attitudes about death and green funeral planning. The survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- at least 18 years old
- able to read English (to understand the consent form and survey questions)
- live in the United States
- want to have a green funeral service after you die.
 - **A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.**

I appreciate your interest in this research.

Survey: [**TAKE THE SURVEY HERE**](#)

Social Media Recruitment Statement

Participants Needed!

Courtney Franco and Dr. Rebecca Britt at the University of Alabama are conducting a study about death and green funeral planning. We are looking for people who would like to participate in this study.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- at least 18 years old
- able to read English (to understand the consent form and survey questions)
- live in the United States
- want to have a green funeral service after you die.
 - **A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.**

If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey (approximately 15-20 minutes).

Participation is voluntary. You will not be compensated for your time.

Your responses are anonymous. Below is a link to the study:

[\[TAKE THE SURVEY HERE\]](#)

If you know anyone who wants a green funeral service and meets the study eligibility criteria stated above, please share this study link with them! If you have questions about the study, please contact Courtney L. Franco at clfranco@crimson.ua.edu.

Thank you for your participation in and helping share this study!

University Student Recruitment Statement

SONA Explanation:

Brief recruitment statements are all uploaded to the participants. Posting study descriptions to the SONA Systems website (<https://www.cis.ua.edu/research/research-participant-pool/>) is the primary means of advertising studies to students in the pool. Researchers may contact pool instructors to promote their studies in the classroom. University students sign up, take the survey link, and earn credit through the SONA system. Below is the recruitment flyer.

Recruitment Statement:

This study aims to examine people's attitudes toward death and green funeral planning. This study involves completing an anonymous online survey of approximately 15-20 minutes.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- at least 18 years old
- able to read English (to understand the consent form and survey questions)
- live in the United States
- want to have a green funeral service after you die.
 - **A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several types of green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.**

[\[TAKE THE SURVEY HERE\]](#)

APPENDIX B

Qualtrics Survey

Eligibility Questions

Please answer the following questions to determine if you are eligible to participate in this study:

Eligibility_age Are you at least 18 years old?

No (1)

Yes (2)

Eligibility_location Are you currently living in the United States?

No (1)

Yes (2)

Eligibility_English Can you read in English?

No (1)

Yes (2)

GF_Eligibility A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die. **Do you want to have a green funeral service when you die?**

- Yes, I want to have a green funeral when I die (1)
- No, I do not want a green funeral when I die (2)

End of Block: Eligibility

Start of Block: Demographic Information

Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

GFS_Preference A **green funeral** is a general term used to describe post-death care, from death to disposition, using only natural means (nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint). There are several types of green funeral services. What type of green funeral service would you like to have? Please pick as many as you want.

- Cremation (water cremation) - Your body will be cremated through an environmentally friendly water dissolution process and placed in an urn.
- Body compost burial - Your body will be composted and turned into soil.
- Coral reef pod - Your cremated remains will be infused into a coral reef ball and placed into the ocean to foster marine life.
- Environmental scattering - Your cremated remains will be infused with an environmentally safe compound and then scattered in the place of your choosing.
- Mushroom suit burial - Your body will be buried in a suit infused with mushrooms and buried in a natural setting.
- Plant based service (e.g., memorial tree pod) - Your cremated remains will be used to grow a tree or plant.
- Sea burial - Your body or cremated remains will be released into the ocean.
- Standard green burial (conservation burial) - Your body will be buried without embalming in a natural setting.
- I do not want a green funeral service.
- Other _____

Demo_Age How old are you?

Demo_Gender Please select the gender you identify as

- Gender Fluid (1)
- Man (2)
- Non-binary (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
- Transgender man (5)
- Transgender woman (6)
- Woman (7)
- Not listed here (8) _____

Demo_Race Choose one or more races that you identify as

- White or Caucasian (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- Hispanic or Latinx (3)
- American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native (4)
- Asian (5)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (6)
- Other (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

Demo_Education What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school, but no degree (1)
- High school diploma or GED (2)
- Some college, but no degree (3)
- Associates or technical degree (4)
- Bachelor's degree (5)
- Graduate or professional degree (MS, PhD, JD, MD) (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

Demo_Region What region of the United States do you currently live in?

- Midwest (1)
- Northeast (2)
- Northwest (3)
- Southeast (4)
- Southwest (5)
- West (6)

Demo_Region_Grewup What region of the United States did you grow up in?

- Midwest (1)
- Northeast (2)
- Northwest (3)
- Southeast (4)
- Southwest (5)
- West (6)
- I did not grow up in the U.S., but I currently live here (7)

Demo_Religion What is your current religion, if any?

- Agnostic (not sure there is a God) (1)
- Atheist (do not believe in God) (2)
- Buddhist (3)
- Christian (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Orthodox, Protestant) (4)
- Hindu (5)
- Jewish (6)
- Mormon (7)
- Muslim (Sunni, Shia, etc.) (8)
- Spiritualist (9)
- Don't know (10)
- I do not have a religion (11)
- Other (12) _____

Demo_Religious_value How might your religious or spiritualist values influence your ability to have a green funeral service?

End of Block: Demographic Information

Start of Block: EOL_Barriers

EOL Barrier Questions

Please read each statement about death carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with each one by selecting one of the following options from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree.

DAPR_Fear

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Death is no doubt a grim experience. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The prospect of my own death arouses anxiety in me. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am disturbed by the finality of death. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an intense fear of death. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The subject of life after death troubles me greatly. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The fact that death will mean the end of everything as I know it frightens me. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The uncertainty of not knowing what happens after death worries me (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DAPR_Avoidance

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I avoid death thoughts at all costs. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whenever the thought of death enters my mind, I try to push it away. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always try not to think about death. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid thinking about death altogether. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to have nothing to do with the subject of death. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Attention_Check Which of the following is a vegetable? 🥦

- Egg (1)
- Salmon (2)
- Broccoli (3)
- Chicken (4)
- Milk (5)
- Pizza (6)

Page Break

DAPR_Neutral

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Death should be viewed as a natural, undeniable, and unavoidable event. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is a natural aspect of life. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would neither fear death nor welcome it. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is simply a part of the process of life. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is neither good nor bad. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DAPR_Escape

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Death will bring an end to all my troubles. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death provides an escape from this terrible world. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is deliverance from pain and suffering. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I view death as a relief from earthly suffering. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see death as a relief from the burden of this life. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

DAPR_Approach

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe that I will be in heaven after I die. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is an entrance to a place of ultimate satisfaction. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that heaven will be a much better place than this world. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death is a union with God and eternal bliss. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death brings a promise of a new and glorious life. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I look forward to a reunion with my loved ones after I die. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see death as a passage to an eternal and blessed place. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Death offers a wonderful release of the soul. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One thing that gives me comfort in facing death is my belief in the afterlife. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I look forward to
life after death.
(10)

End of Block: EOL_Barriers_DAPR

Start of Block: EOL_Barriers_PAST

Past Behaviors with EOL Planning

PB_Communication I have communicated my funeral preferences in the past.

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Display This Question:

If I have communicated my funeral preferences in the past = Yes

Past_Comm_YES Please tell me more about that experience. Why did you decide to communicate your funeral preferences?

Display This Question:

If I have communicated my funeral preferences in the past = No

Past_Comm_NO Why have you not communicated your funeral preferences?

PB_GFAttendance I have attended a green funeral service in the past.

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

PB_TFAttendance I have attended a traditional funeral (burial or cremation) service in the past.

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Page Break

PB_Documentation I have documented my funeral preferences in the past

- No (1)
- Yes (2)

Display This Question:

If I have documented my funeral preferences in the past = Yes

Past_Document_YES Why did you document your funeral preferences?

Display This Question:

If I have documented my funeral preferences in the past = No

Past_Document_NO Why have you not documented your funeral preferences?

End of Block: EOL_Barriers_PAST

Start of Block: EOL_Barriers_COM

Communication Apprehension About Death Questions:

CAX Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel anxious talking about never thinking or experiencing anything again. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious talking about how it will feel to be dead. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious talking about the shortness of life. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious talking about the fact that I am going to die one day. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious talking about dying young. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel anxious talking about the total isolation of death. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

CAV Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I avoid talking about death altogether. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid talking about death at all costs. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have an intense fear of talking about death. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always try to not talk about death. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am tense and nervous while participating in discussions about death. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am tense and nervous while discussing death. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: EOL_Barriers_COM

Start of Block: TPB

TPB Questions

For the next three statements, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement using the four opponent-word pairs (e.g., unrealistic-realistic). For example, if you strongly consider a statement to be "unrealistic", please choose the bubble closest to the "unrealistic" prompt. Selecting the bubble closest to "realistic" indicates that you strongly associate the statement to be realistic. Choosing the middle bubble indicates that you are undecided about the statement.

TPB_ATT_Selection

For me, having a green funeral service when I die is

unrealistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	realistic
undesirable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	desirable
foolish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	wise
unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	important

TPB_ATT_Comm

For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is

unrealistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	realistic
undesirable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	desirable
foolish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	wise
unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	important

TPB_ATT_Doc For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is

unrealistic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	realistic
undesirable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	desirable
foolish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	wise
unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	important

Page Break

Please read the prompt below and each statement. Then indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

TPB_SBN Most people who are important to me...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
... think I should have a green funeral service when I die (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...would want me to have a green funeral service when I die (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

TPB_SBN People whose opinions I value would prefer that I...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
... have a green funeral service when I die (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... communicate my green funeral service plan (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... document my green funeral service plans (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attention_Check4 Please answer the following prompt:

	strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree
Please choose "strongly agree" to continue (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

TPB_PBC Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Whether or not I have a green funeral service is completely up to me (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that I can have a green funeral service when I die (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that I can communicate my wish to have a green funeral service with those closest to me (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident that I can document my green funeral service plans (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the resources, time, and opportunities to have a green funeral service when I die (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: TPB

Start of Block: VBN

Attention_Check2

The following question is to verify that you are a real person.

Please type in the term **purple** into the text box.

Page Break

VBN_Evalues Please read the following items and assess how **important** each statement is to you.

	Extremely unimportant	unimportant	somewhat unimportant	neither important nor unimportant	somewhat important	important	extremely important
Respecting the earth (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unity with nature (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protecting the environment (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preventing pollution (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

VBN_EBeliefs_CTN Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I recognize and appreciate the intelligence of other living organisms (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel disconnected from nature (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I think of my life, I imagine myself to be part of a larger cyclical process of living (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel a kinship with animals and plants (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel as though I belong to the Earth as equally as it belongs to me (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel part of the web of life (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel that all inhabitants of Earth, human, and nonhuman, share a common 'life force' (10)

Like a tree can be part of a forest, I feel embedded within the broader natural world (11)

When I think of my place on Earth, I consider myself to be a top member of the hierarchy that exists in nature (12)

I often feel like I am only a small part of the natural world around me, and that I am no more important than the grass on the ground or the birds in the trees (13)

My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the natural world (14)

Page break

VBN_Prob_Awareness Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The funeral industry causes pollution, climate change, and exhaustion of natural resources (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traditional funeral sites (e.g., cemeteries) negatively affect the neighboring land areas and natural environment. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traditional funeral services cause environmental deterioration (e.g., land pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, excessive use of energy) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Green funerals practicing energy/water conservation, waste reduction, and diverse eco-friendly activities help to minimize the environmental degradations
(4)



VBN_AscribedR Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

by selecting one of the following options from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe that every individual is partly responsible for the environmental problems caused by the funeral industry (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that every individual is jointly responsible for the environmental deteriorations caused by the funeral industry (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Every individual must take responsibility for the environmental problems caused by traditional funeral services (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

VBN_PersNorms

Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel morally obliged to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel personally obliged to die in an environmentally sound way, such as by having a green funeral service (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a moral obligation to take the environmental problems caused by the traditional funeral services into account when making funeral service decisions (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: VBN

Start of Block: Outcomes

Attention_Check_3

The following question is to verify that you are a real person.



Attention_Check_3 Which of the following is pictured in the image above?

- Clown (1)
- Flower (2)
- Puppy (3)
- Fish (4)
- Banana (5)

Page Break

Outcome_Selection Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am willing to have a green funeral service when I die (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I plan to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will expend effort on having a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Outcomes_Comm Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am willing to share my green funeral service plans with those closest to me (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will communicate my intentions to have a green funeral service with those closest to me (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will expend effort on communicating my plans to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service with those closest to me (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Outcomes_Doc Please indicate how well you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am willing to document my green funeral service plans (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will document my intentions to have a green funeral service in a will or advance care document (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will expend effort on documenting my plans to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page Break

Why_GF? Why do you want a green funeral service?

Page Break

Additional_Text_2 Would you like to share anything else about your experiences with or feelings towards end-of-life planning?

Page Break

GF_Behavior Thank you for participating in this study! Would you like to learn more about green funeral service websites and end-of-life planning materials?

- Yes, I am interested! (1)
- No, I am not interested (2)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Thank you for participating in this study! Would you would like to learn more about green funeral... = Yes, I am interested!

Links Here are some options for additional Green Funeral and EOL Planning information. Please select as many as you'd like:

- Body Composting (1)
- Green funeral (2)
- Coral reef burial (3)
- Water cremation (4)
- Environmental ash scattering (5)
- Plant-based memorials (6)
- Green Burial Planning Guide (7)

Display This Question:

If Here are some options for additional Green Funeral and EOL Planning information. Please select as many as you'd like: q://QID52/SelectedChoicesCount Is Greater Than or Equal to 1

Link_Pages Thank you for your interest in Green Funeral Services! Below are URL links to more information about the different funeral types and EOL planning guides:

[Body Composting](#)

[Green funerals](#)

[Coral reef burial](#)

[Water cremation](#)

[Environmental ash scattering](#)

[Plant-based memorials](#)

[Green Burial Planning Guide](#)

End of Block: Outcomes

Survey Thank you message.

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent for all Recruitment Methods

Prolific Recruitment Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Key Information: This is a consent form to participate in a research study. It contains information about what to expect if you decide to participate. For this study:

- You will read a consent form about the study.
- You will answer non-identifying questions about yourself.
- You will complete a 20-minute survey with closed- and open-ended questions about your opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

Study Eligibility:

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must be living in the United States.
- You must be able to read in English (to read the consent and survey).
- You must want to have a green funeral service after you die.

A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.

Purpose of the research study: This study aims to examine people's opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

What you will do in the study: If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey that collects non-identifying demographic information. You will be asked questions about your thoughts about green funeral end-of-life planning. Once you answer all survey questions, you will have completed the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

IRB Approval Code: xx-xx-xxxx

Benefits: There are no direct benefits from participation in this research.

Risks: The risks created by this study are minimal. The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with participating in everyday life). Although, with any study, this may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. This means that there is a slight risk of psychological or emotional pain

due to the sensitivity of the topics, but these effects are not expected or anticipated. Although psychological pain is not expected to occur, if psychological pain does occur, the researchers can provide the following sources for participants. Here are some additional resources:

- Mental Health America (formerly the National Mental Health Association) is a website that provides information about finding support groups and mental health professionals in a participant's area: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/help>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free and confidential support system for anyone living in the U.S. It operates 24/7 and connects callers with trained volunteers. Callers do not have to be suicidal to call; anyone experiencing distress can call. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may email or call the principal investigator. The consent forms will also list the primary investigator's contact information so that the participants can obtain more information about where or how to discuss concerns regarding the project's content and results with those qualified. You can also obtain a summary of the results of this study by contacting the researcher (see above information) after May 2024.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data.

All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study (which includes publication of manuscripts), all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can end participation at any time during the study.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the survey, your response data will still be stored because there is no way to identify your non-identifying response data in Qualtrics.

How to withdraw from the study: You can withdraw by simply exiting the survey. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Because data are anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once your data has been submitted.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will receive a Prolific completion code after you finish taking this survey. Enter this completion code into your Prolific account to be compensated for your time.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact, the principal investigators:

Courtney L. Franco

Doctoral Candidate, ABD

University of Alabama

College of Communication & Information Sciences
Telephone: 774-229-7484
Email: clfranco@crimson.ua.edu

Dr. Rebecca K. Britt

Associate Dean of Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity
University of Alabama
College of Communication & Information Sciences
Email: rkbritt@ua.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:

The University of Alabama Office for Research Compliance (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <https://research.ua.edu/compliance/irb/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@ua.edu.

Study Participation Agreement:

By clicking to the next page, you agree to participate in the research study described above. If you do not agree to participate in the research study described above, please close and exit the survey.

Social Media Recruitment Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Key Information: This is a consent form to participate in a research study. It contains information about what to expect if you decide to participate. For this study:

- You will read a consent form about the study.
- You will answer non-identifying questions about yourself.
- You will complete a 20-minute survey with closed- and open-ended questions about your opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

Study Eligibility:

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must be living in the United States.
- You must be able to read in English (to read the consent and survey).
- You must want to have a green funeral service after you die.

A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to examine people's opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

What you will do in the study: If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey that collects non-identifying demographic information. You will be asked questions about your thoughts about green funeral end-of-life planning. Once you answer all survey questions, you will have completed the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

IRB Approval Code: xx-xx-xxxx

Benefits: There are no direct benefits from participation in this research.

Risks: The risks created by this study are minimal. The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with participating in everyday life). Although, with any study, this may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. This means that there is a slight risk of psychological or emotional pain due to the sensitivity of the topics, but these effects are not expected or anticipated. Although psychological pain is not expected to occur, if psychological pain does occur, the researchers can provide the following sources for participants. Here are some additional resources:

- Mental Health America (formerly the National Mental Health Association) is a website that provides information about finding support groups and mental health professionals in a participant's area: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/help>

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free and confidential support system for anyone living in the U.S. It operates 24/7 and connects callers with trained volunteers. Callers do not have to be suicidal to call; anyone experiencing distress can call.
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may email or call the principal investigator. The consent forms will also list the primary investigator's contact information, so that the participants can obtain more information about where or how to discuss concerns with those qualified regarding the project's content and results. You can also obtain a summary of the results of this study by contacting the researcher (see above information) after May 2024.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data.

All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study (which includes publication of manuscripts), all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can end participation at any time during the study.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the survey, your response data will still be stored because there is no way to identify your non-identifying response data in Qualtrics.

How to withdraw from the study: You can withdraw by simply exiting the survey. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Because data are anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once your data has been submitted.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will not be compensated for participating in the study.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact, the principal investigators:

Courtny L. Franco

Doctoral Candidate, ABD

University of Alabama

College of Communication & Information Sciences

Telephone: 774-229-7484

Email: clfranco@crimson.ua.edu

Dr. Rebecca K. Britt

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If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:
The University of Alabama Office for Research Compliance (205)-348-8461 or toll-free at 1-877-820-3066. You may also ask questions, make suggestions, or file complaints and concerns through the IRB Outreach Website at <https://research.ua.edu/compliance/irb/>. You may email the Office for Research Compliance at rscompliance@ua.edu.

Study Participation Agreement:

By clicking to the next page, you agree to participate in the research study described above. If you do not agree to participate in the research study described above, please close and exit the survey.

University Student Recruitment Informed Consent

Please read this informed consent carefully before you decide to participate in the study.

Key Information: This is a consent form to participate in a research study. It contains information about what to expect if you decide to participate. For this study:

- You will read a consent form about the study.
- You will answer non-identifying questions about yourself.
- You will complete a 20-minute survey with closed- and open-ended questions about your opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

Study Eligibility:

- You must be at least 18 years old.
- You must be living in the United States.
- You must be able to read in English (to read the consent and survey).
- You must want to have a green funeral service after you die.

A green funeral is a general term that describes post-death care, from death to decomposition, using only natural or nontoxic preservation techniques and organic materials with minimal carbon footprint. Several green funeral services include green burials, body composting, water cremation, and memorial trees. To participate in this study, you must want to have a green funeral service when you die.

Purpose of the research study: This study aims to examine people's opinions toward green funeral services and end-of-life planning.

What you will do in the study: If you agree to participate, you will complete an online survey that collects non-identifying demographic information. You will be asked questions about your thoughts about green funeral end-of-life planning. Once you answer all survey questions, you will have completed the study. Participation is completely voluntary.

IRB Approval Code: xx-xx-xxxx

Benefits: There are no direct benefits from participation in this research.

Risks: The risks created by this study are minimal. The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with participating in everyday life). Although, with any study, this may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. This means that there is a slight risk of psychological or emotional pain due to the sensitivity of the topics, but these effects are not expected or anticipated. Although psychological pain is not expected to occur, if psychological pain does occur, the researchers can provide the following sources for participants. Here are some additional resources:

- Mental Health America (formerly the National Mental Health Association) is a website that provides information about finding support groups and mental health professionals in a participant's area: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/help>

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free and confidential support system for anyone living in the U.S. It operates 24/7 and connects callers with trained volunteers. Callers do not have to be suicidal to call; anyone experiencing distress can call.
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may email or call the principal investigator. The consent forms will also list the primary investigator's contact information, so that the participants can obtain more information about where or how to discuss concerns with those qualified regarding the project's content and results. You can also obtain a summary of the results of this study by contacting the researcher (see above information) after May 2024.

Confidentiality: The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and other information that could be used to identify you will not be collected or linked to the data.

All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study (which includes publication of manuscripts), all data will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can end participation at any time during the study.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the survey, your response data will still be stored because there is no way to identify your non-identifying response data in Qualtrics.

How to withdraw from the study: You can withdraw by simply exiting the survey. There is no penalty for withdrawing. Because data are anonymous, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once your data has been submitted.

Compensation/Reimbursement: You will receive course credit for participating in the study. The alternative to participation is non-participation in this specific study. Students in the pool can select other studies to obtain credit or complete other non-research alternatives to earn credit as offered by course instructors.

If you have questions about the study or need to report a study related issue please contact, the principal investigators:

Courtney L. Franco

Doctoral Candidate, ABD

University of Alabama

College of Communication & Information Sciences

Telephone: 774-229-7484

Email: clfranco@crimson.ua.edu

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If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, would like to make suggestions or file complaints and concerns about the research study, please contact:

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Study Participation Agreement:

By clicking to the next page, you agree to participate in the research study described above.

If you do not agree to participate in the research study described above, please close and exit the survey.

APPENDIX D

List of Study Construct Items

Attitudes Toward Green Funeral Planning Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
<i>Green Funeral Selection</i>	
ATTGF1 ★	For me, having a green funeral service when I die is <i>extremely unrealistic – extremely realistic</i>
ATTGF2★	For me, having a green funeral service when I die is <i>extremely undesirable – extremely desirable</i>
ATTGF3★	For me, having a green funeral service when I die is <i>extremely foolish – extremely wise</i>
ATTGF4★	For me, having a green funeral service when I die is <i>extremely unimportant – extremely important</i>
<i>Green Funeral Communication</i>	
ATTCOM1	For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is <i>extremely unrealistic – extremely realistic</i>
ATTCOM2	For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is <i>extremely undesirable – extremely desirable</i>
ATTCOM3	For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is <i>extremely foolish – extremely wise</i>
ATTCOM4	For me, communicating my green funeral service plan to those closest to me is <i>extremely unimportant – extremely important</i>
<i>Green Funeral Documentation</i>	
ATTDOC1	For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is <i>extremely unrealistic – extremely realistic</i>
ATTDOC2	For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is <i>extremely undesirable – extremely desirable</i>
ATTDOC3	For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is <i>extremely foolish – extremely wise</i>
ATTDOC4	For me, documenting my green funeral service plan is <i>extremely unimportant – extremely important</i>

Note. I developed the above attitudes toward green funeral planning intention items using existing TPB literature (Azjen, 2013; Fishbein & Azjen, 2010; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010).

Note 2. ★ = item note used in SEM analysis

Subjective Normative Beliefs Toward Green Funeral Planning Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
SNB1	Most people who are important to me think I should have a green funeral service when I die
SNB2	Most people who are important to me would want me to stay at a green funeral service when I die
SNBselect ★	People whose opinions I value would prefer that I have a green funeral service when I die
SNBcom	People whose opinions I value would prefer that I communicate my green funeral service plan
SNBdocu	People whose opinions I value would prefer that I document my green funeral service plans

Note. I developed the above subjective normative belief items using existing TPB

literature (Azjen, 2013; Han et al., 2010; Han, 2015). A ★ = item note used in SEM analysis.

Perceived Behavioral Control Toward Green Funeral Planning Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
PBC1	Whether I not I have a green funeral service when I die is completely up to me
PBC2	I am confident that I can have a green funeral service when I die
PBCSelect★	I am confident that I can communicate my wish to have a green funeral service with those closest to me
PBCCom	I am confident that I can document my green funeral service plans
PBCDoc	I have resources, time, and opportunities to have a green funeral service when I die

Note. I developed the above perceived behavioral control items using existing TPB literature

(Ajzen, 2013; Han et al., 2010; Han, 2015). A ★ = item note used in SEM analysis.

Communication Apprehension About Death Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
<i>Communication Anxiety</i>	
CAX1	I feel anxious talking about never thinking or experiencing anything again
CAX2	I feel anxious talking about how it will feel to be dead
CAX3	I feel anxious talking about the shortness of life
CAX4	I feel anxious talking about the fact that I am going to die one day
CAX5	I feel anxious talking about dying young
<i>Communication Avoidance</i>	
CAV1	I avoid talking about death altogether
CAV2	I avoid talking about death at all costs
CAV3	I have an intense fear of talking about death
CAV4	I always try to not talk about death
CAV5	I am tense and nervous while participating in discussions about death
CNX6	I am tense and nervous while discussing death

Note. I developed the above perceived behavioral control items using existing

communication apprehension literature (Carmack & DeGroot, 2017; Carmack &

DeGroot, 2020). All communication apprehension items were used in SEM analyses.

Death Attitudes Profile Revised Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
<i>Neutral Acceptance</i>	
Neutral1	Death should be viewed as a natural, undeniable, and unavoidable event
Neutral2	Death is a natural aspect of life
Neutral3 ❖	I would neither fear death nor welcome it
Neutral4	Death is simply a part of the process of life
Neutral5 ❖	Death is neither good nor bad
<i>Escape Acceptance</i>	
Escape1 ❖	Death will bring an end to all my troubles
Escape2 ❖	Death provides an escape from this terrible world
Escape3 ❖	Death is deliverance from pain and suffering
Escape4 ❖	I view death as a relief from earthly suffering
Escape5 ❖	I see death as a relief from the burden of this life
<i>Approach Acceptance</i>	
Approach1 ❖	I believe that I will be in heaven after I die
Approach 2 ❖	Death is an entrance to a place of ultimate satisfaction
Approach 3 ❖	I believe that heaven will be a much better place than this world
Approach4 ❖	Death is a union with God and eternal bliss
Approach5 ❖	Death brings a promise of a new and glorious life
Approach6 ❖	I look forward to a reunion with my loved ones after I die
Approach7 ❖	I see death as a passage to an eternal and blessed place
Approach8 ❖	Death offers a wonderful release of the soul
Approach9 ❖	One thing that gives me comfort in facing death is my belief in the afterlife
Approach10 ❖	I look forward to life after death
<i>Death Avoidance</i>	
Avoid1 ❖	I avoid death thoughts at all costs
Avoid2 ❖	Whenever the thought of death enters my mind, I try to push it away
Avoid3 ❖	I always try to not think about death
Avoid4 ❖	I avoid thinking about death altogether
Avoid5 ❖	I try to have nothing to do with the subject of death
<i>Fear of Death</i>	
Fear1 ❖	Death is no doubt a grim experience
Fear2 ❖	The prospect of my own death arouses anxiety in me
Fear3 ❖	I am disturbed by the finality of death
Fear4 ❖	I have an intense fear of death
Fear5 ❖	The subject of life after death troubles me greatly
Fear6 ❖	The fact that death will mean the end of everything as I know it frightens me
Fear7 ❖	The uncertainty of not knowing what happens after death worries me

Note. I developed the above perceived behavioral control items using existing communication apprehension literature (Wong et al., 1994). A ❖ = denotes that the item removed from the SEM analysis.

Past Behavioral Experiences with EOL Planning Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
PB1★	I have communicated my funeral preferences in the past
PB2★	I have attended a green funeral service in the past
PB3★	I have attended a traditional funeral service in the past
PB4★	I have documented my funeral preferences in the past

Note. I developed the above past behavior items using existing TPB literature (Ajzen, 2013; Carmack & Hess, 2016).

Note 2. ★ = item not used in SEM analysis.

Environmental Values Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
Evalues1	Respecting the earth
Evalues2 ❖	Unity with nature
Evalues3	Protecting the environment
Evalues4	Preventing pollution

Note. I developed the above environmental values items using existing VBN

literature on biospheric values (DeGroot et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Stern, 1999). A ❖ =

denotes that the item removed from the SEM analysis.

Environmental Beliefs Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
CTN1	I often feel a sense of oneness with the natural world around me
CTN2	I think of the natural world as a community to which I belong
CTN3	I recognize and appreciate the intelligence of other living organisms
CTN4 ❖	I often feel disconnected from nature
CTN5	When I think of my life, I imagine myself to be part of a larger cyclical process of living
CTN6	I often feel a kinship with animals and plants
CTN7	I feel as though I belong to the Earth as equally as it belongs to me
CTN8	I have a deep understanding of how my actions affect the natural world
CTN9	I often feel part of the web of life
CTN10	I feel that all inhabitants of Earth, human, and nonhuman, share a common 'life force'
CTN11	Like a tree can be part of a forest, I feel embedded within the broader natural world
CTN12 ❖	When I think of my place on Earth, I consider myself to be a top member of the hierarchy that exists in nature
CTN13 ❖	I often feel like I am only a small part of the natural world around me, and that I am no more important than the grass on the ground or the birds in the trees
CTN14 ❖	My personal welfare is independent of the welfare of the natural world

Note. I developed the above environmental beliefs items using existing VBN

literature on connectedness to nature (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). A ❖ = denotes that the item removed from the SEM analysis.

Problem Awareness Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
ProbA_1	The funeral industry causes pollution, climate change, and exhaustion of natural resources
ProbA_2	Traditional funeral services generate the environmental impacts on the neighboring areas and wider environments
ProbA_3	Traditional funeral services cause environmental deteriorations (e.g., land pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, excessive use of energy)
ProbA_4 ❖	Green funeral services practicing energy/water conservation, waste reduction, and diverse eco-friendly activities help to minimize the environmental degradations (reverse code)

Note. I developed the above problem awareness, or adverse consequences for valued

object, items using existing VBN literature (DeGroot et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Stern,

1999). A ❖ = denotes that the item removed from the SEM analysis.

Ascribed Responsibility Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
AscribedR_1	I believe that every individual is partly responsible for the environmental problems caused by the funeral industry
AscribedR_2	I feel that every individual is jointly responsible for the environmental deteriorations caused by the funeral industry
AscribedR_3	Every individual must take responsibility for the environmental problems caused by traditional funeral services

Note. I developed the above ascribed responsibility to have a green funeral service

items using existing VBN literature (DeGroot et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Stern, 1999).

All ascribed responsibility items were used in all SEM analyses.

Personal Normative Belief Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
PersNorms_1	I believe that every individual is partly responsible for the environmental problems caused by the funeral industry
PersNorms_2	I feel that every individual is jointly responsible for the environmental deteriorations caused by the funeral industry
PersNorms_3	Every individual must take responsibility for the environmental problems caused by traditional funeral services

Note. I developed the personal norms toward green funeral service planning items

using existing VBN literature (DeGroot et al., 2007; Han, 2015; Stern, 1999). All

personal normative belief items were used in SEM analyses.

Green Funeral Planning Behavioral Intention (Outcome) Items

Construct Name	Item Statement
<i>Selection Intentions</i>	
GFOutcome1 ★	I am willing to have a green funeral service when I die
GFOutcome2 ★	I plan to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die
GFOutcome3 ★	I will expend effort on having a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service when I die
<i>Communication Intentions</i>	
ComOutcome1	I am willing to share my green funeral service plans with those closest to me
ComOutcome2	I will communicate my intentions to have a green funeral service with those closest to me
ComOutcome3	I will expend effort on communicating my plans to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service with those closest to me
<i>Documentation Intentions</i>	
DocOutcome1	I am willing to document my green funeral service plans
DocOutcome2	I will document my intentions to have a green funeral service in a will or advance care document
DocOutcome3	I will expend effort on documenting my plans to have a green funeral service instead of a traditional funeral service

Note. I developed the behavioral intention outcome items using existing TPB

literature (Ajzen, 2013; Han, 2015; Han et al., 2010). A ★ = item not used in SEM analysis.

IRB APPROVAL LETTER



eProtocol
801 University Blvd
Tuscaloosa AL
TEL: 205 348 6457

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: October 26, 2023
TO: Franco, Courtney, CIS Graduate Studies
Britt, Rebecca, College of Communication and Information Sciences, Evans, William, Communication & Information Sciences
FROM: Shirley, Edward, Senior Research Compliance Specialist, NM Expedited
PROTOCOL TITLE: Sustainable End-of-life planning: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory to Predict Young Adults' Green Funeral Intentions in the United States
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 23-06-6670
APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: October 26, 2023 Expiration Date: October 25, 2024

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: Sustainable End-of-life planning: An Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory to Predict Young Adults' Green Funeral Intentions in the United States. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under University of Alabama's Federal Wide Assurance 00004939 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under Committee's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Shirley, Edward

Shirley, Edward

Approval Period: October 26, 2023 through October 25, 2024
Review Type: EXPEDITED
IRB Number: 03