

## **Sustainable fashion in emerging markets: How the consumer knowledge, emotions and cultural premises shape purchase intentions**

Ella Xu

St Cuthbert's College

DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i08.031 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i08.031>

Received: 16 July 2025 / Accepted: 24 August 2025 / Published: 2 September 2025

### **ABSTRACT**

*Sustainable consumption has become an increasingly important global matter, particularly in the fashion industry, where consumer behaviors significantly impact environmental sustainability. This review paper explores the factors influencing green apparel purchasing behavior across different cultural and economic contexts, focusing on Vietnam, Malaysia, and China. The significance of this study lies in its comparative approach to understanding sustainable fashion consumption in emerging markets, addressing a gap in literature that has historically been centered on Western consumer behavior. By synthesizing findings from key studies that employ various theoretical frameworks — such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Theory, and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) — this paper highlights the psychological, social, and economic drivers of sustainable consumption in the apparel sector. The review identifies critical factors, including materialistic values, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, accessibility, and the role of fashion consciousness in shaping green purchase intentions. The findings suggest that while sustainable consumption is influenced by personal values and environmental awareness, external factors such as price, product availability, and societal norms play a significant role in adoption rates.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable consumption, Responsible consumer behavior, Anticipated emotions (pride and guilt), Sustainable fashion, Environmental awareness, Consumer knowledge, Purchase intentions, Green marketing, Social norms

### **Introduction**

Sustainable consumption has gained increasing relevance in response to global environmental and social crises. Defined by the United Nations (UNEP, 1994) as the use of products and services that meet basic needs while minimizing resource use and environmental impact, sustainable consumption is a pressing issue that encompasses changes at the individual, societal,

and institutional levels. Within this landscape, the concept of collaborative consumption — where individuals share, swap, or access goods and services through peer-to-peer platforms — has emerged as a novel approach to reducing overconsumption. This research focuses on the psychological, structural, and socio-cultural factors that influence sustainable consumption practices within collaborative consumption models, from a cross-cultural standpoint.

Current research in the field reflects a complex interplay of theoretical, conceptual and empirical perspectives, ranging from psychological approaches to sociological and structural explanations. Scholars like Antonides (2017) and Haanpä (2023) underscore the need to integrate macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis. The diverse studies identify five factors—environmental, economic, psychological, moral and social—that shape collaborative consumption. However, they lack independent testing and may not translate across different sharing economies. Meanwhile, studies also offer a sociological analysis of the structural forces shaping sustainable consumption, highlighting the relationship between individual agency and systemic influences. Yet, the theoretical lens limits empirical applicability. Despite the growing body of literature, a lack of coherent frameworks that unify behavioral and structural insights remains, and new studies need to address how these dimensions interact in shaping sustainable behavior within collaborative consumption in a holistic manner.

The objective of this study is to examine how psychological drivers (such as personal values, perceived consumer effectiveness, and environmental concern) interact with structural and social contexts (such as norms, trust, and platform design) in influencing collaborative consumption behaviors in a holistic way. The research aims to bridge gaps in the literature by integrating findings from environmental psychology, behavioral economics, and sociological theory. It seeks to understand not only what motivates sustainable behavior but also the constraints individuals face, and how structures and institutions can either enable or hinder engagement in sustainable consumption.

Considering the above, this paper is initially exploring the behavioural, psychological and emotional aspects of sustainable consumer behaviour in order to further understand the role and responsibilities of the consumer as key stakeholder in driving sustainable consumption. We further examine the dimensions of sustainable consumption by reviewing how the micro, meso and macro aspects impact sustainable consumption in a cross-cultural context. By acknowledging and considering these dimensions in understanding and exploring sustainable consumption helps marketers, businesses, and policymakers develop targeted interventions to promote sustainability while acknowledging the complexity of the behavior and the dynamics that are involved.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Consumer's behaviour towards sustainability matters and environmental issues - The effects of emotions and knowledge.**

When conducting research on understanding human behaviour in any context, two very important determinants of the behaviour need to be considered. These are the roles of affective processing (i.e. emotions and feelings) and cognitive processing (i.e. reasoning, knowledge, analysis of information) in behavior. In the context of consumer behavior, and particularly in when it comes to sustainable consumer behavior, the approach in research is not any different. Pinzon, Bimpli, Bassi & Chen (2022) consider both affective and cognitive behavioral patterns equally important in understanding sustainable consumption. Their study provides a holistic understanding of the purchase behavior towards sustainable clothing in Brazil by exploring how anticipated emotions and consumer knowledge affect the intention to buy sustainable clothing. The problem is that despite the increasing attention to the Brazilian clothing industry, there is a lack of understanding of consumer behavior towards sustainable clothing. They also face challenges related to sustainability and high CO2 emissions related to the respective industry. The study employed a quantitative methodology. Their study used an online survey with controlled groups such as age, frequency of clothing purchases and education level. There was a total of 526 surveys collected and 506 were valid for analysis. The authors used scales to measure different aspects such as consumer knowledge, behavior, pride, guilt, intention and subjective norm. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was also employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the study. The study found out that anticipated emotions, specifically pride and guilt, significantly influence the consumers' behaviors towards sustainable clothing. As guilt and pride play a crucial role in influencing the Brazilian consumers' attitudes and intentions towards purchasing sustainable clothing, it highlights the need for emotional considerations in marketing and communication strategies for sustainable products. The stakeholders, including policymakers, manufacturers and retailers, should focus on the consumers' emotional connections to sustainable clothing as well as the knowledge and education of the consumers. Their study suggests that future research should explore the applicability of the findings in different cultural contexts, in both developing and developed countries to confirm its validity in different contexts.

On similar grounds, Wang and Wu (2016) investigated the influence of specific emotions—pride, guilt, respect, and anger—on consumers' intentions regarding sustainable consumption choices, particularly for household appliances, within an emerging country context. The study distinguishes between two facets of sustainable consumption: resisting non-energy-conserving household appliances (IRNCHA) and purchasing energy-conserving household appliances (IPECHA). It also examines the mediating role of IRNCHA in influencing IPECHA. The

primary purpose of their study was to explore the inner structure of sustainable consumption choices for household appliances (ISCCHA) and to clarify the relationships between specific emotions (pride, guilt, respect, and anger) and ISCCHA. This clarification aims to facilitate the creation of more effective policies for promoting sustainable consumption, in order to propose and test conceptual models that examine the influence of pride, guilt, respect, and anger on consumers' intentions to choose environmentally friendly products. In addition, the study also provides a new perspective by categorizing ISCCHA into two distinct behaviors: resisting non-energy-conserving household appliances (IRNCHA) and purchasing energy-conserving household appliances (IPECHA), in order to determine which emotion is most likely to predict a consumer's intention for sustainable consumption choices of household appliances. The research methodology, primarily based on quantitative analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) allows the exploratory nature of the research for predicting key target constructs (IPECHA and IRNCHA), and for explaining the complexity of the structural model and the non-normal data distribution. A survey was conducted in Hangzhou, a large city in an emerging country (China), from August 1-30, 2014. A face-to-face survey approach was used, with seven trained team members. The data analysis, via PLS-SEM with SmartPLS version 2.0, involved assessing the measurement model (internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity) and the structural model (path coefficients, predictive relevance, effect size, and mediation). Common method variance (CMV) was also assessed using Harman's single-factor test and an additional test, concluding that CMV was not a significant concern. The results indicated that pride, guilt, respect, and anger all have positive influences on the intention of sustainable consumption choices (ISCCHA). Pride has the most powerful influence among these four emotions. ISCCHA can be effectively divided into two distinct facets: intention to resist non-energy-conserving household appliances (IRNCHA) and intention to purchase energy-conserving household appliances (IPECHA). IRNCHA mediates the impact of pride, guilt, and respect on IPECHA, meaning that resistance behavior influences purchase behavior. However, anger's indirect effect on IPECHA through IRNCHA was not significant. The results directly address the research questions and purpose.

Wang and Wu's (2016) study confirm the influence of the specified emotions on sustainable consumption intentions, validate the proposed two-facet structure of ISCCHA, and identify the relative strength of each emotion's impact. Their findings provide insights into which emotions are most effective for policy makers to target. The paper implicitly acknowledges limitations by discussing the high correlation between certain emotions (e.g., pride and respect, anger and guilt), although they argue these are not major problems given theoretical and empirical precedents. The study's scope is limited to household appliances in a specific big city in an emerging country, which implies generalizability considerations. Their study contributes by demonstrating the ability of pride and guilt to influence both purchasing and resisting sustainable

consumption behaviors and confirming the positive influences of respect and anger. [1] This expands on existing studies that primarily focused on pride and guilt. It also highlights that a specific positive emotion's impact on sustainable consumption choices may not always be stronger than a specific negative emotion, challenging some established research traditions. Thus, it identifies two distinguishable facets of sustainable consumption choices, offering a more nuanced understanding compared to previous research that often treated them as a single construct. Additionally, Wang and Wu's (2016) study provides important policy implications for promoting sustainable consumption in emerging countries, suggesting that emotional appeals, particularly pride, are effective, and that policies should consider both resisting and purchasing behaviors.

On the same matter, Antonetti and Maklan (2012) specifically looked into how self-conscious emotions, specifically guilt and pride, influence consumers' perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) and, consequently, their intentions to engage in sustainable consumption. The authors argue that while PCE is a known predictor of sustainable behavior, little is understood about how to increase it. The study proposes that experiencing guilt or pride after a single consumption episode can regulate sustainable consumption by affecting consumers' general perception of effectiveness. This effect is attributed to these emotions' ability to influence perceptions of agency, making consumers see themselves as the cause of relevant sustainability outcomes and reducing their ability to use neutralization techniques to rationalize away personal responsibility. The paper highlights the implications for sustainable marketing initiatives. The authors aim to contribute to the understanding of how PCE can be increased, a variable crucial for sustainable consumption that has received little research attention regarding its promotion. Specifically, the study's objectives are to test a model showing that beliefs of effectiveness mediate the impact of guilt and pride on behavioral intentions and to demonstrate how the impact of guilt and pride on PCE is explained by these emotions' influence on consumers' ability to use neutralization techniques to justify unsustainable choices. The research methodology, primarily experimental, fits the paper's purpose since the use of controlled scenarios and quantitative measures allows for the testing of causal relationships between emotions, PCE, neutralization, and purchase intentions, which aligns with the stated objectives of understanding how these emotions influence and regulate sustainable consumption. Sampling was done using Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT), an online crowdsourcing platform. For study 1, they comprised 415 US residents who consumed coffee at least occasionally. Study 2, on the other hand, involved 135 US consumers of coffee. The recruitment of coffee consumers is relevant given the use of coffee purchasing scenarios to elicit emotions. However, as an online panel, it might introduce some self-selection bias, though the authors note its suitability for such research. The analysis was conducted using a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. SmartPLS 2.0 was used, with a bootstrapping procedure (5,000 re-samples) to test the

significance of loadings for both measurement and structural models. Manipulation checks were performed to ensure scenarios effectively elicited the intended emotions. The use of PLS-SEM is justified as ideal for exploratory research leading to theory development, which aligns with the paper's aim to explore a new area of research. The authors also conducted a Sobel test to confirm the statistical significance of the mediation effect of PCE.

Antonetti and Maklan's (2012) study found that guilt and pride lead to future intentions, guilt and pride positively influence PCE, and PCE mediates the effect of emotions on sustainable consumption intentions. The model explained 32% of the variance in sustainable grocery intentions. They further found that guilt and pride negatively influence the likelihood of using neutralization techniques and neutralization negatively influences PCE. The model explained 46% of the variance in purchase intention. Overall, Antonetti and Maklan's (2012) study collectively demonstrated that guilt and pride regulate sustainable consumption by impacting neutralization techniques and PCE, forcing consumers to acknowledge their personal responsibility for sustainability outcomes. Lastly, the authors explicitly identified that the research relied on eliciting emotions in a controlled environment, suggesting a need for further investigation through longitudinal studies to track changes in consumer beliefs over time. The model was also explored only within the context of ethical consumption, and future research should explore its applicability to other sustainable behaviors like recycling or energy conservation. The study measured consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable alternatives, not actual behavior, acknowledging the well-documented gap between intentions and actions. However, Antonetti and Maklan's (2012) research contributes to the understanding of PCE, a variable consistently documented as important in sustainable consumption but rarely explored regarding how to increase it. Their study builds on existing work on self-conscious emotions and self-regulation, demonstrating their role in sustainable consumption beyond anticipated emotions or personal traits. The study significantly contributes to the literature on neutralization techniques in ethical consumption, showing that guilt and pride can counteract consumers' tendency to rationalize unethical behavior. The paper argues that emotional experiences are more effective in influencing PCE than mere informational strategies, aligning with and extending previous research on the limitations of information-based interventions, offering valuable insights for both theory and practice

Further, Wang, Bao, Wang and Wu (2017) explored the effects of different emotional green appeals on consumers' attitudes towards advertisements, perceived value and purchase intentions for green products. The study identified a gap in understanding how emotional appeals, particularly admiration and disdain, influence consumer behavior in the context of green marketing. The authors employed field experiments focusing on energy-saving and environmentally friendly refrigerators. Four video advertisements were made by the research

team which present the emotional green appeals in the following order: proud appeal, guilty appeal, admitting appeal, and disdainful appeal. A random sampling method was used to ensure better representation and was carried out in Hangzhou with 400 sample responders. The data was collected through a conditional process model analysis which examined the relationships between emotional green appeals and consumer responses. An interesting element of this study is that it investigates the moderating effects of Confucian culture and green involvement, although these were found not to be significant. The findings reveal that different emotional appeals significantly impact consumers' attitudes towards advertisements and their perceived value of green products. Specifically, admiration appeals are more effective in promoting purchase intentions compared to disdainful appeals. The study also highlights that attitude and perceived value mediate the relationship between emotional appeals and purchase intention. They concluded that embedding admiration in green appeals can enhance consumer attitudes and perceived value, ultimately prompting purchase intentions. The research provides implications for marketing strategy creators that may improve on the promotion effect. They suggest that enterprises should focus on understanding consumer attitudes towards green appeals to improve advertising effectiveness.

Additionally, Wang, Bao, Wang and Wu's (2017) study emphasized the need for further exploration of emotional appeals in green marketing strategies. More recently, Umar (2022) explored the relationship between perceived emotional consumption characteristics (ECC) and service recovery satisfaction (SRS) among young Italian fast-fashion consumers, particularly focusing on the impact of service failure and recovery efforts. A two-steps cluster analysis and a multiple moderated mediation analysis were performed to analyze the data. The study employed an on-line survey and collected data from a sample of 942 young Italian fast-fashion consumers. There was a series of 18 pretest face-to-face interviews with individuals to address any potential limitations or risk of bias before carrying out the formal quantitative analysis. They used a two-steps cluster analysis and a multiple moderated mediation analysis to analyze the data. The results indicated a significant direct effect of perceived ECC on recovery satisfaction, with a partial mediation effect through perceived justice. The findings also revealed that the relationship between ECC and recovery satisfaction was weaker in causes of process failures compared to outcome failures. The study highlights that even for fast-fashion products, young consumers are concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchasing decisions and tend to align their purchase behavior with their attitudes which has significant implications for ethical fashion. Enhancing perceived ECC can lead to higher recovery satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of service recovery effort in fostering consumer forgiveness and desire to reciprocate. The author proposes that future research should further explore the dynamics of service recovery in different contexts and among diverse consumer groups. The research is carried out among Generation Y's consumers in Italy so therefore respondents from other

countries and cultures may have different attitudes, intentions and behaviors. Culture influences how sustainability issues are viewed and approached in different contexts and situations.

Specifically on the importance of culture and lifestyles in the context of sustainable consumption, a review study conducted by Laurett, Finisterra do Paço and Mainardes (2019) aims to explore sustainable consumer lifestyles and sustainable consumption, by emphasizing the need for a shift in individual behaviors towards more sustainable practices. The objectives of the study focus on understanding how consumers can adopt sustainable lifestyles and the factors influencing these changes. The authors acknowledge the complexities of adopting sustainable lifestyles and understanding the motivations behind such consumer behavior. In order to delve into the subject, the authors investigate the barriers and drivers of sustainable consumption. The paper suggests a broad analysis of consumer behaviors, indicating a diverse range of perspectives may have been considered. The analysis seems to involve synthesizing various themes related to sustainable consumption, such as anti-consumption and collaborative consumption. The study has identified a growing awareness among consumers regarding sustainable practices, with some already making lifestyle changes. These findings demonstrate a positive trend towards sustainable consumption as a lifestyle choice. The paper identifies limitations in understanding the full scope of consumer motivations and barriers to sustainable consumption and hence it suggests that further research is needed to explore these areas in depth. The conclusions drawn are connected to broader discussions in the literature on sustainable consumption, highlighting the additional need for systemic changes in consumer behavior and the role of social marketing in facilitating these changes (Laurett, Finisterra do Paço and Mainardes, 2019).

Looking into further contextual details, Fröhlich, Sellmann and Bogner (2012) investigated the impact of situational emotions on the intention for sustainable consumer behavior among fifth-grade students following a short-term, student-centered educational intervention. Their study employed a quasi-experimental design to assess changes in students' intentions, knowledge, and connectedness to nature, while also measuring their situational emotions (interest, well-being, and boredom). The findings suggest that while the intervention initially fostered an intention for environmentally friendlier consumption, this intention did not persist long-term and was not linked to knowledge gain or connectedness to nature. Instead, the immediate effect was strongly correlated with positive situational emotions experienced during the program, highlighting their importance in short-term educational outcomes for sustainability education. Their study's primary purpose is to trace the effects of emotions on intentions for pro-environmental behavior after a learning intervention, specifically focusing on sustainable consumerism related to food and agriculture. The authors aim to determine if raising students' interest through an educational program that elicits positive emotions can deepen cognitive engagement and thinking. The chosen instruments (GEB subscale for consumerism, INS scale, and situational emotions

questionnaire) are appropriate for measuring the variables identified in the research questions. The sampling was done through an opportunity sample. Participants were 176 fifth graders (11-13 years old) from three secondary schools in Upper Franconia, Bavaria. A control group of 56 fifth graders was also included. The data were analyzed using PASW Statistics 18. Dependent t-tests were used for intra-group comparisons of consumerism scores over time (T1, T2, T3). Pearson's correlation was used to examine relationships between post-score means of consumerism and INS, knowledge, and situational learning emotions. The internal consistency of the consumerism subscale (Cronbach's alpha of 0.85) indicates good reliability.

The results demonstrated a significant short-term increase in intention for environmentally friendly consumerism immediately after the intervention, strongly linked to situational emotions (interest, well-being, boredom). However, this intention did not persist after seven weeks, nor did it correlate with connectedness to nature or knowledge scores. The results confirm that the intervention affected intentions short-term and clarify the role of situational emotions, while showing no lasting impact or link to INS/knowledge. The authors explicitly identified several limitations. The short duration of the program (90 minutes per learning circle) was likely too brief to induce persistent behavioral changes. The study did not address all topics of the GEB consumerism subscale, which might have limited the observed impact on pro-environmental behavior. Restrictions by the Bavarian Ministry of Education prevented gathering data from parents, which could have provided insight into the influence of family shopping behavior. The influence of taste preference for food among adolescents was noted as a potential reason for the attitude-behavior gap. The conclusions are well-linked to the general debate in the literature. The paper acknowledges that the absence of long-term behavioral effects aligns with findings from other studies. It emphasizes the importance of situational emotions in immediate educational outcomes, a point that has often been disregarded in educational research. The authors also discuss the controversial role of cognitive knowledge and connectedness to nature in influencing pro-environmental behavior, positioning their findings within this ongoing discussion. They suggest that repeated educational lessons and broader content might be necessary for sustained effects, echoing existing research on long-term interventions. The study contributes to the understanding that short-term interventions can increase engagement in pro-environmental behavior but highlights the need for further research on learning emotions and factors influencing consumerism in adolescence.

Further research conducted more recently by Sun, Sarfraz, and Ozturk (2023) delves into the emotional and psychological underpinnings of sustainable consumption behavior, with a particular focus on how consumers' emotional states—especially psychological well-being—interact with environmental awareness to drive eco-conscious actions. Their study is situated within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior but goes further by integrating

emotional and identity-based constructs to explain why individuals engage in sustainable practices. Drawing on data from 379 Chinese respondents obtained through convenience sampling across multiple urban areas, the study applies structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the relationships between environmental concern, psychological well-being, pro-environmental self-identity, and willingness to pay for green products. The results reveal a significant and positive link between psychological well-being and sustainable consumption behavior, indicating that individuals who feel a sense of life satisfaction, emotional control, and purpose are more inclined to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles. Importantly, the study identifies mediating roles for both willingness to pay and self-identity, showing that emotional fulfillment fosters not just intention but tangible behavior, especially when individuals see eco-consciousness as part of who they are.

These findings offer meaningful contributions to both theory and practice. For policymakers and marketers, the study suggests that strategies aiming to promote sustainability should not only appeal to rational arguments or factual knowledge but should also target emotional engagement and identity formation. Campaigns that link sustainable behaviors to personal well-being—such as improved health, self-worth, or a sense of contributing to a larger cause—could be more effective in shifting consumer behavior. Theoretically, the paper advances the literature by framing sustainable consumption not merely as a rational decision but as an emotionally motivated and identity-driven process. It opens up new perspectives in environmental psychology by positing psychological well-being as both a motivator and a reward for sustainable behavior. However, the study does have limitations, including the use of non-random sampling and its cultural specificity, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, while it highlights the role of psychological well-being, it does not unpack which specific emotional dimensions are most influential—such as happiness, eco-anxiety reduction, or social belonging—which presents a fruitful area for future research. Overall, the study enriches the debate by showing that emotions and knowledge together create a powerful synergy for driving pro-environmental behavior, suggesting that the path to sustainability may begin as much in the heart as in the mind.

On the same grounds, Lavuri, Roubaud and Grebinevych (2023) investigated the factors influencing sustainable consumption behavior, specifically focusing on egoistic values, altruistic values, and social consumption motivation as 'stimulus factors'. Their study examines how these factors influence 'organism factors'—pro-environmental self-identity (PESI) and attitude towards sustainability—and ultimately 'response factors,' which is sustainable consumption behavior. The research also explores the moderating role of environmental protection emotion (EPE). The study utilized the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory as its theoretical framework and collected data from 328 Indian customers who recently purchased sustainable products. The

primary aim of their study was to examine the influence of egoistic and altruistic values, and social consumption motivation (stimulus factors) on sustainable consumption behavior (response factor), while considering the mediating roles of pro-environmental self-identity and attitude (organism factors), and the moderating effect of environmental protection emotion. The authors also aim to provide new insights into existing literature on sustainable consumption behavior in the Indian context and to help eco-friendly businesses understand customer purchasing aspirations and create innovative strategies. The chosen Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory allows for the examination of external factors (stimuli) influencing internal processes (organism) leading to observable outcomes (response). This framework directly supports the investigation of the relationships outlined in the research questions. The study employed convenience and purposive sampling techniques to collect data from Indian customers. The authors also conducted a non-response bias test, which indicated no significance. While convenience sampling is generally less rigorous than probability sampling, its combination with purposive sampling and the subsequent non-response bias test indicates an effort to mitigate potential limitations. For an exploratory study in an emerging market context, this approach can be considered acceptable, though it impacts the generalizability of the findings. The data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 23.0v. This two-step approach involved evaluating the measurement model (MM) and then the structural model (SM). The hypotheses (H1a-H5) were supported, indicating significant positive effects of stimulus factors on organism and response factors, and significant mediating roles of PESI and attitude. Environmental protection emotion was found to significantly moderate several relationships (H6a-e).

The findings of Lavuri, Roubaud and Grebinevych's (2023) study confirm that stimulus factors (egoistic/altruistic values, social consumption motivation) positively influence PESI, attitude, and sustainable consumption behavior. They also confirm the mediating roles of PESI and attitude, and the moderating effect of environmental protection emotion. The authors acknowledge limitations, primarily regarding the sampling method. They state that the results may not be helpful for future research that does not use a random sampling method. They also mention that the study was conducted in India, suggesting a need for similar studies in other regions for comparison. Furthermore, they highlight that other factors influencing sustainable consumption behavior, such as social, psychological, technological, and perceived threats, were not included. Despite these, the study contributes to the understanding of sustainable consumer behavior by applying the S-O-R model in the Indian context, addressing a gap in the literature. It reinforces existing knowledge about the importance of egoistic and altruistic values, and social consumption motivation, while also highlighting the crucial mediating roles of pro-environmental self-identity and attitude, and the moderating effect of environmental protection emotion. The findings support the idea that PESI is a good determinant of sustainable purchasing

decisions and that identity campaigning can encourage sustainable behaviors. The paper also emphasizes the importance of emotions in influencing consumer satisfaction and purchasing behavior regarding sustainable goods, connecting to broader discussions on consumer psychology and environmental marketing.

As the specific area of interest is growing, further recent studies investigate the impact and the role of affective reasoning in sustainable consumption. Particular attention is drawn to the study by Kulkarni, Kaur, Ray and Mishra (2025) that investigates the factors influencing the intention to use sustainable mobility in metropolitan cities of India, focusing on the role of self-directed values, environmental norms, and their interconnections. Specifically, the authors aim to investigate the effect of self-directed values, biospheric values, social values and ecological values on the intention to use sustainable mobility. The study integrates two prominent theories: the Value-Belief-Norms (VBN) theory and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), to develop a path analytic model. The study uses of Partial-Least-Squares & Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and the sampling was done using a judgmental sampling technique. Respondents were approached from Tier-I and Tier-II Indian cities (Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore) through personal contacts and social media. A key inclusion criterion was that participants must have used sustainable mobility in the last three months. Data collection occurred from September to November 2023, through both online and offline modes. The authors specifically explore how negative moral values, such as anger and guilt, along with biospheric and ecological values, contribute to pro-environmental attitudes and the intention to adopt sustainable mobility. Their findings suggest that self-directed values stimulate pro-environmental beliefs and attitudes, which in turn encourage the adoption of sustainable mobility, highlighting a 'feel bad, and make good' approach. The research is directly addressing a gap in existing literature regarding the influence of personal and social psychological factors, particularly self-values, on sustainable mobility intentions. It sets the stage for a detailed investigation into the psychological underpinnings of pro-environmental behavior in the context of transportation.

Kulkarni, Kaur, Ray and Mishra's (2025) study found strong statistical significance for various paths in the model, indicating that self-directed values, biospheric values, and ecological values positively influence environmental concern, which in turn affects ecological responsibility, personal norms, and ultimately, the intention to use sustainable mobility. The R-squared values for the dependent variables are also provided, suggesting a reasonable explanatory power of the model. The findings confirm that self-directed values (particularly negative moral values like anger and guilt), along with biospheric and ecological values, are significant precursors to the intention to use sustainable mobility. The study's conclusion reiterates that the internalization of values and value-based realization are significant for sustainable mobility, and that the integrated

VBN-TRA framework effectively showcases the impact of values on intention. The 'feel bad and make good' approach is highlighted as an empirical outcome, directly addressing the initial query about self-values and intentions. The authors explicitly identify two main limitations of their study. Firstly, the scope of Moral Emotions as the study was scoped only to negative moral emotions (guilt and anger). The authors suggest that future research could incorporate positive moral values like pride and respect. Secondly, the dependent variable (intention) as the study used 'intention to use sustainable mobility' as the dependent variable, which allowed for predictions but not direct conclusions about continuous usage. They recommend future work to conduct real-life experiments to explore actual sustained behavior. On a practical level, the implications of this study can be discussed as to how policymakers and managers can promote sustainable mobility, contributing to ongoing efforts to shift consumer behavior towards more eco-friendly options.

Last but not least, Joshua, Yadav and Shankar (2025) have also investigated the critical determinants of consumers' sustainable consumption intention, but this time focusing on the interplay of emotional value, trend affinity, and past sustainable practices. Their study applies the Theory of Reciprocal Determinism (TRD) to provide a novel perspective on understanding consumer behavior in the context of sustainable consumption. The study aims to bridge the 'attitude-behavior gap' often observed in sustainable consumption research by examining how various psychological, interpersonal, socio-psychological, and behavioral factors influence consumers' sustainable consumption intentions. The findings offer insights for policymakers and practitioners to promote sustainable consumption and minimize environmental damage. The core problem identified by the authors is the persistent 'attitude-behavior gap' in sustainable consumption, where consumers' positive attitudes do not always translate into actual sustainable behavior. Existing theories often fail to fully explain this gap, particularly regarding the impact of past sustainable behavior on future intentions. The research seeks to address this by exploring the role of various factors and the TRD framework.

The paper articulates the need to investigate how consumer attitude can be realized as actual sustainable consumption behavior and identifies specific factors (emotional value, trend affinity, past practices, social influence, perceived consumer effectiveness, and attitude) as potential determinants of sustainable consumption intention. Given the objective of understanding consumer behavior and the relationships between psychological and behavioral constructs, a quantitative survey-based approach was employed. The application of TRD, which considers personal, behavioral, and social factors, aligns with the survey's ability to collect data on these diverse variables, and the sampling was done using a convenience sampling method. Survey instruments were distributed among students on university premises in India, focusing on young Indian consumers. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, with 310 returned and 282

usable responses for analysis. While convenience sampling is practical for accessibility, it introduces potential biases. The authors acknowledge this as a limitation, noting that focusing on young consumers might bias findings as they are more inclined to give socially desirable responses. This suggests that while the method was practical, its appropriateness is limited by the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to investigate the predictive strength of measured constructs and test hypotheses. The results were largely conclusive, supporting all ten hypotheses (H1-H10). Trend affinity, supportive behavior towards environmental organizations, emotional value, social influence, and perceived consumer effectiveness all positively influenced sustainable consumption intention. Attitude towards sustainable consumption was also found to have a significant positive influence on intention. Attitude partially mediated the relationships between supportive behavior and sustainable consumption intention, and emotional value and sustainable consumption intention. The results identified the key determinants of sustainable consumption intention and confirmed the mediating role of attitude, thereby contributing to understanding the attitude-behavior gap within the TRD framework. The findings explicitly link trend affinity, emotional value, past practices (supportive behavior), social influence, and perceived consumer effectiveness to sustainable consumption intention, fulfilling the stated objectives.

To highlight that Joshua, Yadav and Shankar's (2025) study measured intention, not actual behavior, leading to a potential 'value-action gap' that future research should address. The use of cross-sectional data limits findings, suggesting a need for longitudinal designs. The focus on young consumers might bias findings due to their inclination for socially desirable responses, recommending data collection from other age groups. However, the conclusions are well-linked to the general debate in the literature. The study's main contribution is establishing TRD as an effective framework for studying sustainable consumption behavior, highlighting its ability to treat behavior as a predictor variable and integrate environmental, personal, and behavioral factors. It discusses how prior sustainable behaviors can shape future behavior, reinforcing learning and engagement. The findings on trend affinity, emotional value, social influence, and perceived consumer effectiveness are discussed in relation to previous studies, either confirming or extending existing knowledge. The study also emphasizes the mediating role of attitude, which is a significant point in the attitude-behavior gap debate. The practical implications for marketers and policymakers further connect the research to real-world efforts in promoting sustainable consumption. However, in order to fully understand sustainable consumption, the actual role and responsibilities of the consumer should be considered. The next section focuses on these.

## **2. Sustainable consumption and the responsibility of the consumer**

When it comes to understanding sustainable consumption in any sector, the phenomenon under investigation needs to take into account the role and impact of each key player being involved in the phenomenon. Putting the emphasis and the burden of proof to the organisations is only a partial solution and assessment of the situation. In order to ensure a balanced assessment on the issue Luchs, Phipps and Hill, (2015) raised the issue of considering the consumer responsibility for sustainable consumption (CRSC) and as a result the authors explored CRSC relationship with the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumption, by focusing on how CRSC relates to sustainable consumption behaviors and the factors influencing this relationship. The methodology employed utilized empirical studies to gather data on consumer responsibility and its effects on sustainable consumption. While specific details on sampling were not provided in the contexts, the analysis appears to be appropriately executed, linking consumer responsibility to sustainable consumption behaviors and demonstrating a positive interactive effect between attitudes and felt responsibility. The results indicated that a heightened sense of personal responsibility can lead to more sustainable consumption behaviors. The conclusions drawn are linked to broader debates in the literature, particularly regarding the role of consumer responsibility in sustainable consumption and the implications for marketing and policy (Luchs, Phipps & Hill, 2015).

A year later, Hosta and Žabkar (2016) explored the dimensions of sustainable and responsible consumer behavior. The study distinguishes sustainable consumption, which focuses on minimizing environmental impact, from responsible consumption, which considers ethical, social, and environmental factors. It identifies key obstacles that consumers face, such as a lack of awareness, perceived inconvenience, financial constraints, and skepticism about the effectiveness of responsible actions. The study also proposes a framework for Responsible and Sustainable Consumer Behavior (RSCB), which includes factors such as individual motivation, social influence, perceived consumer effectiveness, and structural constraints. Through a synthesis of literature and interviews, the analysis found that consumer actions are often inconsistent, with a gap between intention and behavior due to competing personal and societal priorities. The conclusions highlight the need for further research on how to bridge this intention-behavior gap, the role of external influences such as policy and marketing, and the impact of long-term behavioral shifts in promoting responsible consumption.

Luchs and Miller (2014) also explored consumer responsibility in sustainable consumption and emphasized on the need for a scale to measure consumers' felt responsibility for sustainability (CFRS). The authors focused on understanding how personal norms and ascription of responsibility influence consumer behavior and attempted to address the gap between consumers' sustainability attitudes and behaviors. The study's methodology utilized a scale adapted from workplace measures to assess CFRS in the context of consumption. The analysis involved

correlating CFRS with consumer behavior in product choices, demonstrating a clear relationship between higher CFRS scores and sustainable product selection, while it effectively links the scale to actual consumer behavior. The results indicate that CFRS can predict sustainable consumption behaviors, thus enriching the discussion about the role of consumers in sustainability, while advocating for a shift in focus from corporate to consumer responsibility.

In an integrated review, Nangia, Bansal, and Thaichon (2023) explored the factors that promote responsible consumer behavior (RCB) to identify research gaps and propose future research agendas aimed at encouraging RCB. This focus is particularly relevant given the growing urgency of sustainable consumption practices in contemporary society. The study employed bibliometric analysis and a manual literature review to provide a comprehensive understanding of advancements in RCB research. Through thematic analysis, the authors identified key themes and trends that shape the conceptual structure of RCB. The results highlighted several key factors influencing RCB, including personal values, social norms, environmental awareness, perceived consumer effectiveness, and regulatory policies. Additionally, psychological barriers, such as skepticism about corporate sustainability claims and perceived inconvenience, were noted as challenges to responsible consumption. The conclusions connect RCB to the broader debate on sustainability by emphasizing its role in addressing environmental, social, and economic concerns. Specifically, the study underscores how RCB contributes to reducing carbon footprints, promoting ethical labor practices, and fostering economic resilience through sustainable business models. The authors stress the need for further research on behavioral interventions, policy effectiveness, and corporate accountability to enhance consumer participation in responsible consumption.

Another element to consider when exploring the role of the consumer in sustainable and responsible consumption is the government's position and political ideologies behind it. A paper titled "Sustainable Consumption in the United Kingdom: The 'Responsible' Consumer and Government at 'Arm's Length'" (Hobson, 2004) explores the ideological foundations of the UK Labour government's approach to sustainable consumption. Hobson (2004) critiques the notion that individuals are solely responsible for sustainable consumption, arguing that this perspective overlooks broader institutional and ideological factors. While Labour's policies aim to place people at the center of sustainable development, they often fail to challenge the prevailing patterns of excessive consumption in the UK. Hence, a more direct political leadership to address the complexities of consumption and its impact on sustainability is needed, highlighting the need for effective institutional frameworks to support sustainable practices. Hobson (2004) highlights the disconnect between Labour's stated goals and the realities of consumption practices by demonstrating that Labour's approach has not significantly impacted unsustainable consumption patterns due to the lack of a direct political leadership. The importance of Hobson's (2004) study

is that it illustrates how ideological commitments shape policy effectiveness in promoting sustainable consumption, while it argues that the effectiveness of a policy is not solely dependent on the individual, but it is a matter of a systemic solution.

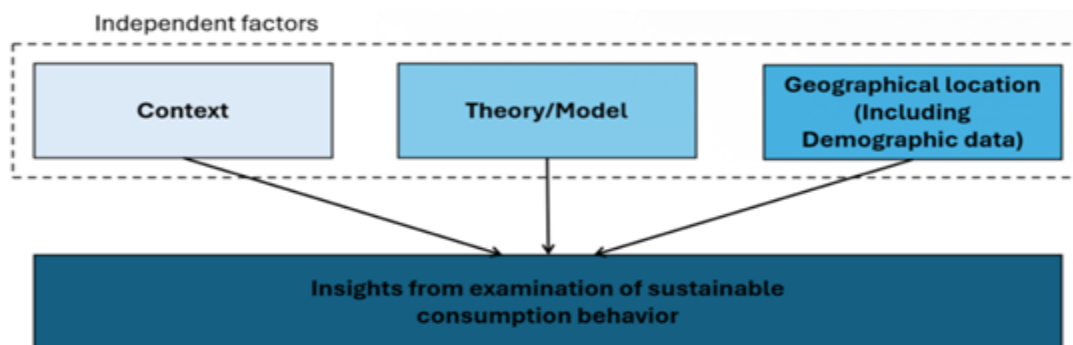
Further, Santos-Corrada, Méndez-Tejeda, Flecha-Ortiz and Lopez (2023) explored the relationship between consumer behavior and sustainable consumption within the framework of the circular economy, aiming to understand how consumer behavior influences sustainable consumption practices in this specific context. The study identified key motivations for sustainable consumption, including environmental awareness, social responsibility, and perceived personal benefits (e.g. cost savings). Conversely, the main barriers included lack of information, perceived inconvenience, higher costs of sustainable products, and skepticism about corporate sustainability claims. Additionally, the study highlighted the disconnection between consumer intentions and actions in adopting sustainable behaviors, attributing this gap to factors such as habitual purchasing behaviors, lack of trust in sustainability labels, and the perceived difficulty of making sustainable choices. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study examined the complex relationships between consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchasing intentions. The results revealed that consumer awareness has a direct positive effect on attitudes toward sustainability, which in turn positively influences purchasing intentions. However, perceived barriers were found to mediate this relationship, sometimes weakening the direct influence of positive attitudes on sustainable purchasing behavior. The study's conclusions emphasize the importance of integrating consumer behavior insights into sustainability strategies and policies. Specifically, it highlights the need for targeted education campaigns, clearer sustainability labeling, and policy interventions that reduce perceived barriers to sustainable consumption, ultimately fostering broader adoption of circular economy practices. Echoing Hobson's (2004) position towards systemic sustainability.

In 2024 Syed, Acquaye, Khalfan, Obuobisa-Dario and Yamoah conducted a systematic review of theories and models that explain sustainable consumption behavior (SCB). They identified key drivers influencing SCB and aimed to consolidate diverse approaches into a guiding framework for future studies. They highlighted the complexities of SCB, particularly on the gap between intention and actual behavior, and pointed towards the need for multi-dimensional approaches that consider psychological, social, and contextual factors. The authors utilized the Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome (PICO) approach to define their research questions and guide the literature review. They analyzed a total of 64 studies published between 2012 and 2022, focusing on 14 theories and models related to SCB. The review included a comprehensive search process that involved identifying various theories and models, followed by a detailed inclusion and exclusion process to ensure relevant articles were selected. The search string used

for identifying relevant literature was tailored to each theory or model, ensuring a thorough exploration of the literature.

In their review the authors found that the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was the most frequently employed framework, appearing in 29 studies (Syed, Acquaye, Khalfan, Obuobisa-Dario and Yamoah, 2024). This theory emphasizes the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on SCB. Other notable frameworks included Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory, which were used in 5 and 4 studies, respectively. The findings suggest a trend towards expanding TPB to incorporate factors like altruism and environmental concern. The research highlighted that both internal motivations (e.g., personal values) and external factors (e.g., social norms, policy interventions) significantly influence SCB. Syed, Acquaye, Khalfan, Obuobisa-Dario and Yamoah (2024) propose a guiding framework (Figure 1) for future SCB studies that emphasizes the importance of contextual nuances and interdisciplinary collaboration. The review underscores the need for further research to bridge the gap between intention and behaviour, suggesting that future studies should adopt more comprehensive models that account for the complexities of human behaviour in the context of sustainability.

**Figure 1: Proposed relation of insights and combination of Context, Geographical location, and Theory/Model utilized (from Syed, Acquaye, Khalfan, Obuobisa-Dario and Yamoah (2024), p.46).**



On similar premises, Vargas-Merino, Rios-Lama, Panez-Bendezú (2023) presented a systematic review of the scientific literature on sustainable consumption (SC). The primary objective of the research is to analyze and systematize the existing scientific literature on sustainable consumption, highlighting its complexities and the various factors influencing consumer behaviour. The paper addresses how sustainable consumption is conceptualized and characterized within the literature, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by consumers in adopting sustainable practices. The authors utilized specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The authors utilized specific inclusion and exclusion criteria—such as selecting peer-reviewed

articles written in English, focusing on consumer behavior in the context of sustainability, and excluding studies unrelated to individual consumption practices or those centered solely on industrial or governmental sustainability efforts—based on the research objectives, ensuring a comprehensive selection of relevant articles without temporality constraints. based on the research objectives, ensuring a comprehensive selection of relevant articles without temporality constraints. The authors conducted a systematic review using the PRISMA 2020 methodology, which ensured a transparent and replicable process. They disclosed search strings and dates, along with the results obtained from databases like Web of Science and Scopus. The analysis included descriptive and narrative results, which were organized into graphs and thematic categories. This structured approach allowed for a clear presentation of the systematized articles and their ideas related to sustainable consumption. The findings revealed that sustainable consumption is a complex and nebulous concept, characterized by a lack of consensus in definitions and overlapping ideas. This complexity makes it challenging to analyze and apply in practical scenarios. The results also highlighted the neglect of the consumer aspect in the circular economy, indicating that most studies focus on production rather than the consumer's role, which is crucial for achieving sustainability. Additionally, the research emphasized the importance of government involvement in promoting sustainable consumption, suggesting that effective policies and tools are necessary to support consumers in adopting sustainable practices.

Vargas-Merino, Rios-Lama, Panez-Bendezú (2023) acknowledged that their review was limited to articles indexed in Web of Science and Scopus, potentially overlooking relevant literature from other sources, such as conference papers and grey literature. This limitation may have resulted in the exclusion of significant ideas and perspectives. Some articles were not accessible due to language barriers, which further restricted the breadth of the literature considered in the review. While efforts were made to prioritize high-impact journals, the authors recognized that relevant literature from lower-impact journals might have been ignored, which could affect the comprehensiveness of their findings. In summary, the analysis was thorough and well-structured, leading to significant insights about sustainable consumption. However, the limitations regarding literature scope and potential biases in article selection highlight areas for improvement in future research. The conclusions drawn from the research are linked to ongoing debates in the literature regarding sustainable consumption, emphasizing the need for a cohesive understanding of the concept and its implications for future research. Overall, the study effectively contributes to the discourse on sustainable consumption by providing a structured analysis of existing literature and identifying key areas for further exploration.

Further, Verkuil, Milow, Hinz and Al-Kilani (2024) explore the motivations and behaviours of Generations Y and Z regarding second-hand luxury goods. The authors aim to understand how these younger consumers perceive second-hand luxury items and the factors influencing their

purchasing decisions. The purpose is clearly articulated, focusing on the intersection of luxury consumption and the sustainability among younger demographics. The research question revolves around understanding the appeal of second-hand luxury goods to Generations Y and Z. It seeks to identify the underlying motivations for their purchasing behavior, which is purposeful and relevant given the current trends in consumer behavior and sustainability. The paper's purpose and objectives directly address the growing interest in second-hand luxury among younger consumers. The authors effectively outline the significance of this trend in the context of environmental awareness and economic factors. The analysis was executed using qualitative coding techniques, which helped in identifying key themes and patterns in the data.

Verkuil, Milow, Hinz and Al-Kilani (2024) study's findings demonstrated a clear link between the motivations of Generations Y and Z and their purchasing behaviors regarding second-hand luxury goods. Young consumers are motivated by the aspiration to enhance their social status through the ownership of luxury items, even if they are second hand. This desire for upward mobility plays a significant role in their purchasing decisions. The emotional connection to brands and the desirability of luxury items are strong motivators. The rarity of second-hand luxury items also adds to their appeal. Consumers enjoy the thrill of discovering unique pieces that are not readily available in mainstream retail, which enhances their shopping experience. Therefore, the research findings indicate that young consumers exhibit a strong enthusiasm for second-hand luxury items, driven by a combination of social, emotional, and experiential factors. The authors acknowledge certain limitations, such as the sample size and demographic constraints, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Despite the enthusiasm for secondhand luxury purchases, the research raises questions about why this enthusiasm does not necessarily translate into broader support for ecological and environmental causes. This disconnect highlights a complex relationship between consumer behavior and environmental consciousness.

### **3. Sustainable consumption: micro, meso and macro perspectives in a cross-cultural context**

Sustainable development requires meeting present needs without compromising future generations, and sustainable development relies on macro-level institutions and micro-level individual actions. Considering the importance of these forces, an interesting study by Haanpää (2007) analyzes how the structures influence social life in understanding and practicing sustainability, by focusing on macro and micro relationships. Investigating these structures helps understand why eco-friendly attitudes often do not lead to corresponding behaviors. While the focus on the structural approaches is important, other perspectives like cultural analysis shall also be considered. Giddens and Lawson's (1984) theories on structure have faced criticism but provide a basis for further theorizing. Giddens (1984) distinguishes between structure and

system, emphasizing the role of social systems. Lawson's (1984) ideas align with Giddens, viewing routines as expressions of pre-existing social structures. Macro-level structures often refer to institutions, while micro-level structures focus on individual factors. Institutions can be classified into regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive categories. Then, a meso-level approach is introduced to bridge the gap between macro and micro analyses. Meso-level functions as a theoretical field for observing interactions between macro and micro levels. Haanpää's (2007) paper emphasizes the need to consider both individual and institutional contexts in research. Theoretical examples from macro, micro, and meso levels are used to explain sustainable consumption and a two-way thesis of global environmentalism highlights differences between rich and poor societies. What is important to note is that micro-level research examines the relationship between environmental attitudes and behavior, focusing on cost implications. It emphasizes that understanding social processes requires a mechanism-based approach to link different levels of analysis.

On the same topic Antonides (2017) presents a compilation of studies examining sustainable consumption from macro, meso, and micro perspectives. It highlights factors influencing eco-behavior, including political polarization, nationality, and collective action. The author is reviewing studies that cover topics such as sustainable food consumption, the impact of social and moral dilemmas, and segmentation of eco-conscious consumers. Various methodologies, including surveys, field experiments, and eye-tracking, are employed to explore consumer attitudes toward sustainability in fashion. However, the study compiles the above data in order to develop a scale for measuring collaborative consumption specifically in car-sharing contexts. While it underscores the complexity of consumer behavior, it emphasizes the need for a multifaceted approach integrating policy interventions, marketing strategies, and behavioral psychology to promote sustainability. Confirmatory factor analysis was used, resulting in five factors. Socio-environmental consciousness, trust, social identity, convenience and economic benefits. While the study design is coherent, it is noted a lack of independent testing for their model and the focus solely on car-sharing may limit its application in different contexts.

Very recently Haanpä (2023) examines different aspects of the notion of structure, particularly the relationship between macro- and micro-levels, and discusses the role of these structures in sustainable consumption research. It also explores the methodological implications of this integration, distinguishing between methodological holism and individualism. The author emphasizes theoretical discussions based on various social structures. It focuses on sociological explanatory schemes, such as institutions and social mechanisms, to analyze sustainable consumption. However, it does not delve into other approaches, which may limit the scope of the analysis. The analysis is conducted through a theoretical lens, examining causal relationships and interactions between structural levels. The results found that the interplay between macro- and

micro-level structures significantly shapes sustainable consumption patterns. It also highlights that while institutional policies and social mechanisms guide consumer behavior, individual agency also plays a crucial role in determining sustainable choices. It emphasizes that sustainable consumption cannot be understood through a purely structural or individualistic lens; rather, a combined approach is necessary. The author acknowledges limitations related to its structural approach, noting that it emphasizes theoretical discussions over empirical analysis. This limitation is crucial for understanding the scope of the findings. The study corroborates the position of broader debates in the literature on sustainable consumption and social structures, particularly on the dichotomy between macro and micro perspectives in social sciences, and hence on the conceptualisation and theorisations in sustainable consumption.

Moving now towards specific contextual details that have been researched in the light of sustainable consumption research, Rahman, Fung and Chen (2020) investigated how gender differences and consumer innovativeness influence young Chinese consumers' choices between product-related and sustainable cues in clothing purchases. Their research highlights the increasing awareness of sustainability among affluent Chinese consumers and examines the impact of various product cues on their purchasing decisions. It is important to explore the relationship between gender, consumer innovativeness, and clothing choices related to sustainability in consumer choices in an emerging market context as this provides a framework for understanding how sustainable consumption is evolving in various economic conditions. The study's findings reveal significant differences in how genders and innovation seekers evaluate clothing products in line with sustainability standards and goals. In particular it is found that female consumers tend to prioritize sustainable attributes, such as eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices, when selecting clothing. In contrast, male consumers are more inclined to focus on product-related attributes like durability, functionality, and brand image. This insight emphasizes the need for targeted marketing strategies that consider these factors to effectively promote sustainable products. Similar studies have explored these dynamics, for instance, research published in the *Journal of Consumer Policy* by Mooradian et al. (2012) found that women are generally more likely than men to express concern about the environmental impacts of their consumption and to act upon those concerns.

Recent research further reinforces the gendered nuances in sustainable consumption, particularly within the evolving Chinese consumer landscape. Anon et al. (2023) examine post-pandemic sustainable behavior in China and highlight that women exhibit a higher level of emotional engagement and moral responsibility regarding environmental protection. Their findings suggest that women are not only more inclined to support sustainable brands but are also more willing to pay a price premium for eco-friendly goods—an observation aligned with earlier studies but now contextualized in the aftermath of COVID-19, which appears to have heightened consumer

sensitivity toward health and environmental risks. Furthermore, Akbar and Hoffmann (2023) provide a broader meta-perspective by synthesizing key variables that influence sustainable consumption. Their review underscores gender and consumer innovativeness as consistent drivers, noting that women across cultures tend to engage more with pro-environmental behavior and that consumer innovativeness—particularly among youth in emerging economies—can bridge the gap between sustainable attitudes and actual behavior. Together, these insights extend our understanding of how cultural, psychological, and demographic factors interplay in shaping ethical consumption choices.

Additionally, regardless of the impact of gender, consumer innovativeness significantly influences consumers' adoption of green products, particularly when we focus on personal innovativeness, suggesting that innovative individuals are more open to sustainable consumption practices. Wu and Chen (2014) explored the relationship between consumer awareness of green marketing, perceived innovation, and purchase intention for green products in the case of Taiwan. The authors focused on understanding how these factors influence consumer behavior in the context of green products, specifically energy-saving lamps and environmental cleansers. The study presents several significant findings regarding the impact of green marketing and perceived innovation on purchase intention for green products, specifically energy-saving lamps and environmental cleansers. It reveals that consumers' awareness of green marketing significantly affects their perceived quality and perceived value, which in turn influences their purchase intention. Notably, the impact of green marketing awareness is greater than that of perceived innovation. For energy-saving lamps, perceived innovation affects perceived quality, price, and value. While for environmental cleansers, it mainly influences perceived quality and value, with green marketing awareness having a greater effect on purchase intention than perceived innovation. These findings suggest a consistent pattern in consumer behavior across different green products, highlighting the importance of effective green marketing strategies for business. The results reveal that consumer awareness of green marketing significantly influences perceived quality and perceived value, which in turn affects purchase intention. The study establishes a valid relationship model that can guide future research and marketing practices, ultimately enhance consumer engagement and drive sales in the green product market. The findings provide insights into the dynamics of consumer behavior regarding green products in the case of Taiwan, while limitations of the study were not explicitly mentioned, which is an important aspect to consider in evaluating the overall research quality. Nevertheless, the study contributes to the broader literature by empirically validating the link between green marketing awareness and consumer purchase behavior, reinforcing the theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of perceived quality and value in shaping consumer intentions.

Wu and Chen's (2014) study essentially supports a conceptual model where marketing efforts directly shape perceptions, which in turn drive behavior, aligning with theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value-Belief-Norm Theory in environmental psychology. Theoretically, the study proposes a robust model for understanding consumer decision-making regarding green products, which can serve as a foundation for future academic inquiries into similar markets or product types. Practically, marketers and product developers can apply these insights by emphasizing green attributes more prominently in advertising and product labeling to boost perceived quality and value—especially for products like environmental cleansers where perceived innovation plays a lesser role. In summary, the paper effectively addresses its objectives through a well-structured methodology, yielding significant findings of how consumer awareness of green marketing has a stronger and more consistent influence on purchase intention than perceived innovation, as it significantly enhances perceived quality and value across different product types, which enhance understanding of consumer purchase intentions in the context of green marketing. This underscores the importance of targeted and transparent green marketing campaigns in driving consumer engagement and purchase behavior in the green product market.

Looking at the case of another country's context, Nguyen, Nguyen and Nguyen (2018) investigated the factors influencing young Vietnamese consumers' intentions to purchase green apparel, focusing on the role of materialism. Their study employed a conceptual framework integrating the theory of planned behavior (TPB) with materialistic values. A survey of 245 young adults in Hanoi was conducted to test the proposed model and hypotheses, revealing significant relationships between materialism and green purchase intentions. The study assessed three key components of materialism—'success', 'centrality', and 'happiness'—with the latter showing no significant effect on attitudes toward green apparel purchases. Specifically, the 'success' component had a positive impact, suggesting that individuals who equate success with material possessions are more inclined to purchase green apparel. Their research is seconding Rahman, Fung and Chen's (2020) study in addressing a gap in understanding young consumer behavior in an emerging market context. Conversely, the 'centrality' component had a negative impact, indicating that those who place central importance on possessions in their lives may be less inclined toward green purchases, while the 'happiness' component did not show a significant effect on attitudes toward green apparel purchases. The findings highlight the significant impact of materialism on green purchase intentions. Individuals who associate material success with social status and achievements are more likely to purchase green apparel. This suggests that sustainable products may be perceived as status symbols among young Vietnamese consumers. The study's conclusions contribute to the broader theoretical development on consumer behavior and environmental sustainability as this study extends the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by incorporating materialism as a key factor influencing green purchase

intentions. It provides insights into how personal values and societal influences shape sustainable consumption behavior, particularly in emerging economies, highlighting the need for further research in this area. While the paper does not explicitly detail limitations in the provided context, it is common in research to acknowledge potential biases in sampling or generalizability of findings. For example, the study surveyed 245 young adults in Hanoi, which may not be representative of the broader Vietnamese population. Hanoi is an urban area where consumers may have greater exposure to sustainability initiatives and different purchasing behaviors compared to those in rural regions. Additionally, the study focused on young consumers, which means the findings may not be generalizable to older age groups or different income levels. Older consumers may have different motivations and constraints when it comes to purchasing sustainable products.

Moving to a more recent study by Hasbullah, Sulaiman, Mas'od and Sugiran (2022), the factors influencing Malaysian millennials' intentions to purchase sustainable apparel have been researched. Their study employed an extended model of the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Theory and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to analyze data collected from 324 respondents across major urban areas in Malaysia. The findings indicate that motivation, opportunity, and ability positively affect purchase intentions. Consumers who are intrinsically motivated (for example, by environmental awareness, ethical concerns, or personal values) are more likely to purchase sustainable apparel. External factors, such as the availability of sustainable products, price accessibility, and marketing efforts, play a crucial role in shaping purchase intentions, with fashion consciousness moderating these relationships. The research aims to support sustainable consumption aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically, SDG 12. SDG 12 focuses on promoting sustainable consumption patterns, reducing waste, and encouraging businesses and consumers to adopt environmentally friendly practices. The study contributes to this goal by identifying key factors—motivation, opportunity, and ability—that influence sustainable apparel purchases, offering insights into how consumer behavior can be shifted towards more responsible fashion choices. The results demonstrated significant relationships between the identified factors of motivation, opportunity, and ability and purchase intentions while providing insights into sustainable consumer behavior (such as the moderating role of fashion consciousness, where trend-sensitive consumers are more receptive to sustainable products if they align with style preferences). The conclusions contribute to the broader discussion on sustainable consumption, particularly in the context of developing countries, aligning with existing literature, while it points towards a gap in literature regarding sustainable fashion in non-Western contexts. The findings support previous studies suggesting that limited availability and higher prices of sustainable apparel are barriers to widespread adoption in emerging economies. This aligns with research in sustainable fashion markets, which

emphasizes the role of government policies, corporate responsibility, and consumer education in improving accessibility (Hasbullah et al., 2022).

In the same year Haider, Shannon and Moschis (2022) published a paper that reviews the literature on sustainable consumption research (SCR) between 1976 to 2021, using bibliometric and integrative review methods to synthesize knowledge and identify future marketing avenues. The review highlights a significant increase in SCR interest since 2015 and proposes a mindfulness mindset-based model for sustainable consumption, emphasizing consumer well-being and pro-social marketing practices. The particular study aims to synthesize existing literature and explore marketing's role in SCR in order to propose future directions for marketing. An important aspect of this study is that it is emphasising on the need for a theoretical understanding of SCR and marketing's contribution to sustainability. An interesting element identified in the results of this study, the categorisation of the four major schools of thought within the specific literature. The Rational School focuses on cognitive decision-making theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), to explain how consumers make rational choices based on ethical motivators. It emphasizes the role of attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control in driving sustainable consumption. The Ethical School, while similar to the Rational School, places a stronger emphasis on moral and ethical considerations in decision-making. It explores how values, personal beliefs, and ethical concerns influence sustainable purchasing behavior. The Social School highlights the impact of social norms, peer influence, and cultural factors on sustainable consumption. It argues that collective behaviors, community engagement, and societal expectations significantly shape consumer choices. And lastly the Transformative School advocates for consumer mindset shifts through transformative marketing. It promotes non-materialistic values, well-being, and long-term sustainability by encouraging businesses to integrate pro-social and eco-friendly messaging into their marketing strategies.

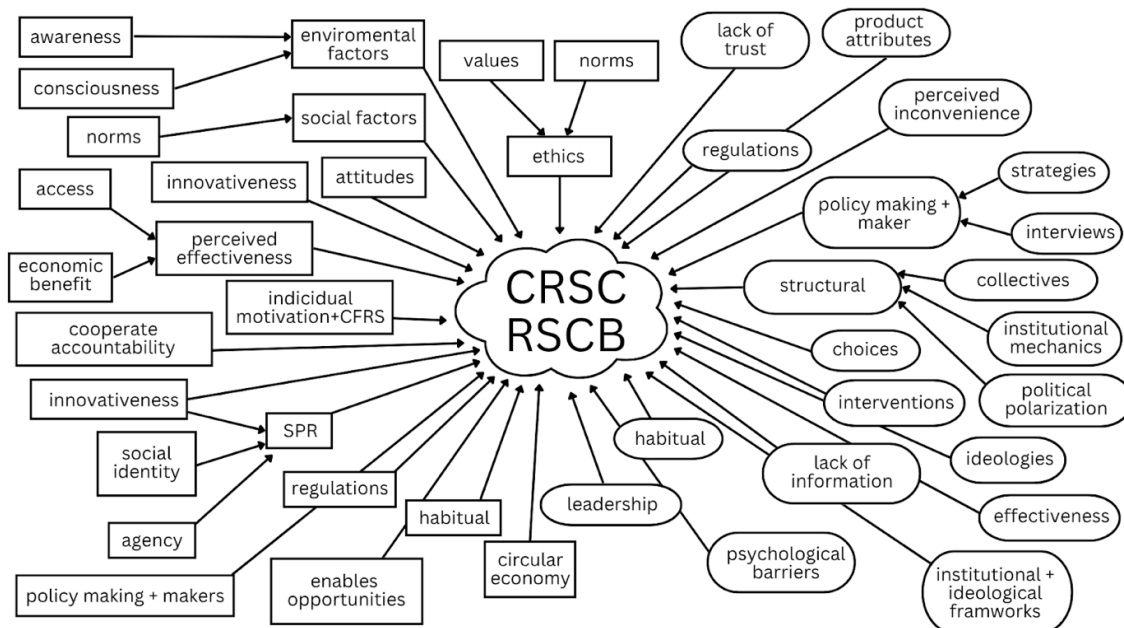
The identified aforementioned schools are important as they offer a multi-dimensional approach to analyzing sustainable consumption from individual, ethical, social, and transformative perspectives (Haider, Shannon and Moschis, 2022). By acknowledging and considering these dimensions in understanding and exploring sustainable consumption helps marketers, businesses, and policymakers develop targeted interventions to promote sustainability while acknowledging the complexity of the behavior and the dynamics that are involved. By integrating these perspectives, stakeholders can design more effective and holistic sustainability strategies that go beyond individual behavior and consider broader systemic influences. Lastly, the study's conclusions are connected to broader debates in literature, suggesting that marketing should focus on consumer well-being and sustainability.

#### **4. Conceptualisations and a holistic approach to sustainable consumption**

---

The literature emphasizes the importance of a multifaceted and integrated approach to promoting sustainable consumer behavior, recognizing that both macro- and micro-level factors must be addressed in tandem. A combined approach is necessary—one that not only considers individual motivations and values but also accounts for broader systemic influences such as institutional structures and cultural norms. Effective green marketing strategies play a pivotal role, with targeted and transparent campaigns, product labeling, and advertising contributing to greater consumer engagement and, ultimately, driving sales of sustainable products. However, marketing must navigate consumer perceptions carefully: while the 'success' component of a brand or lifestyle tends to positively influence attitudes, the 'centrality' of materialism can have a negative effect, and the 'happiness' component often shows no significant impact. Products perceived as status symbols can further complicate messaging, suggesting that holistic consumer education and awareness initiatives are essential to shift underlying values and expectations. In this way, a successful strategy must combine education, marketing, and structural reform to create meaningful and lasting behavioral change. Figure 2 shows how this can be accomplished, given on where the emphasis lies and where needs to be made.

**Figure 2: A Holistic Approach to Consumer Responsibility for Sustainable Consumer Behaviour**

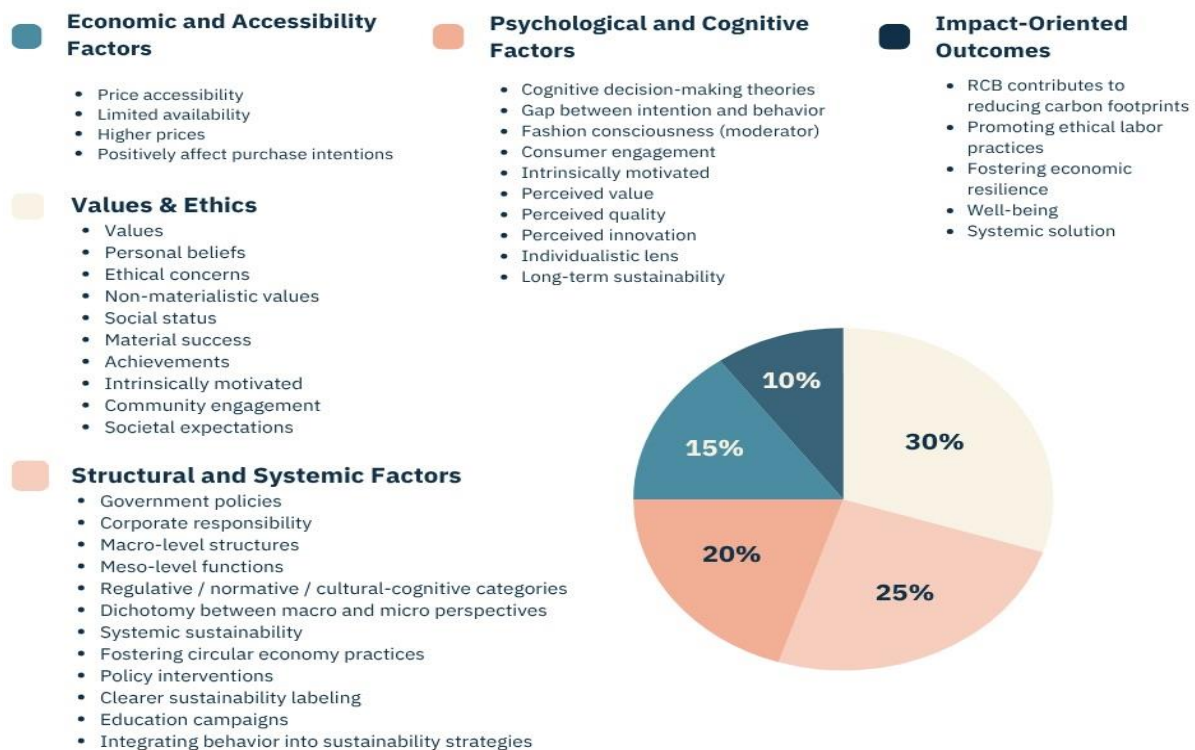


Where the square boxes outline the enabling components for fostering sustainable consumption and providing further opportunities for it, and the oval boxes outline the constraints for sustainable consumption that act as barriers for further growth. Figure 2 visually maps out the

enabling and constraining factors surrounding CRSC and RSCB, illustrating the complex interplay between individual agency and systemic conditions. The square boxes denote enabling components—such as awareness, agency, social identity, leadership, and the circular economy—which highlight areas where intervention or support can foster more sustainable behaviors. In contrast, the oval boxes represent barriers, ranging from psychological constraints (e.g., lack of trust, habitual behavior) to structural limitations (e.g., political polarization, lack of clear information, perceived inconvenience). This dual representation reinforces the need for a dual-lens approach: empowering individuals while simultaneously addressing institutional and regulatory shortcomings. The central position of CRSC/RSCB in the map further underscores the idea that change must occur through the integration of micro-level behavior and macro-level systems, requiring both top-down and bottom-up strategies to overcome inertia and unlock scalable sustainable solutions.

In addition, when looking at sustainable consumption from a holistic perspective through the aforementioned review of the literature, we have identified the following map. Figure 3 presents a categorized and weighted breakdown of the various determinants shaping responsible and sustainable consumer behavior (RSCB).

**Figure 3: An integrated view on the factors that affect sustainable consumption**



The largest segment, "Values & Ethics" (30%), underscores the fundamental role of intrinsic motivations, personal beliefs, and ethical concerns in shaping long-term sustainable consumption patterns. Closely following are "Psychological and Cognitive Factors" (25%), which reflect how individual decision-making processes, perceived value, and personal identity influence consumer engagement with sustainability. Structural and systemic factors (20%) highlight the importance of broader institutional frameworks, such as government policy, corporate responsibility, and socio-cultural norms, in enabling or constraining individual action. Economic and accessibility factors (15%) serve as more immediate and tangible considerations that can either facilitate or hinder behavioral change, while the smallest category, impact-oriented outcomes (10%), emphasizes the downstream benefits of sustainable choices. This distribution illustrates the multifaceted nature of sustainable consumption, where both internal motivations and external structures must be considered in parallel.

While the specific percentages presented here are illustrative rather than empirically derived, their relative distribution aligns with broader trends identified in the literature on sustainable consumption. Numerous studies highlight that values, ethics, and intrinsic motivations are among the most significant predictors of sustainable behavior, consistent with allocating the largest share to this category. Similarly, psychological and cognitive factors such as attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and personal identity are repeatedly shown to play a central role in shaping green purchase intentions. Structural and systemic influences, while slightly less prominent in direct behavioral models, are widely acknowledged as essential enablers or barriers, supporting their mid-range allocation. Economic and accessibility considerations are often treated as pragmatic constraints that can limit adoption despite pro-environmental attitudes, justifying their smaller share. Finally, impact-oriented outcomes are generally positioned in the literature as consequences rather than primary drivers of consumer decisions, which aligns with their comparatively modest weighting. Thus, although the exact numerical breakdown is interpretive, its hierarchy closely reflects the relative importance of factors commonly reported across sustainable consumption research.

## **Conclusion**

This review has explored the multifaceted drivers shaping sustainable fashion consumption in emerging markets, with a focus on Vietnam, Malaysia, and China. By synthesizing psychological theories, emotional triggers, cultural premises, and systemic influences, the paper highlights how sustainable consumer behavior cannot be reduced to individual intent alone. Rather, it is the result of a complex interplay between personal values, anticipated emotions such as guilt and pride, consumer knowledge, and structural factors such as accessibility, affordability, and marketing strategies. The integration of frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior, Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Theory, and Self-Determination Theory has provided a deeper

understanding of how intrinsic motivations and extrinsic pressures interact to influence green purchase intentions.

Importantly, this paper contributes to the literature by shifting the focus from predominantly Western perspectives to emerging economies where cultural norms, collectivist values, and varying levels of consumer awareness create distinct challenges and opportunities for sustainable fashion. It also emphasizes the importance of adopting a holistic, multi-level approach—spanning micro (individual), meso (organizational), and macro (societal) dimensions—to fully grasp the drivers and barriers to responsible and sustainable consumer behavior (RSCB). The literature demonstrates that while ethical and environmental concerns are growing among consumers, structural barriers such as price, limited access, and greenwashing continue to impede sustainable choices.

The findings suggest that effective change will require more than just awareness campaigns; it demands integrated strategies that combine transparent and culturally relevant green marketing, supportive policies, and consumer education. Future research should focus on how digitalization, social media influence, and policy design can interact with emotional and psychological factors to encourage sustainable behavior at scale. Ultimately, fostering sustainable consumption in fashion requires a transformative approach that aligns consumer aspirations with systemic support, contributing meaningfully to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This paper calls for further research into the interplay between marketing strategies, policy interventions, and cultural influences in non-Western markets.

## **References**

- Antonetti, P., & Maklan, S. (2014). Feelings that make a difference: How guilt and pride convince consumers of the effectiveness of sustainable consumption choices. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 124(1), 117–134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1841-9>
- Antonides, G. (2017). Sustainable consumer behaviour: A collection of empirical studies. *Sustainability*, 9(10), 1686. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9101686>
- Fröhlich, G., Sellmann, D., & Bogner, F. X. (2012). The influence of situational emotions on the intention for sustainable consumer behaviour in a student-centred intervention. *Environmental Education Research*, 19(6), 747–764. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2012.749979>
- Haanpää, L. (2007). Structures and mechanisms in sustainable consumption research. *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development*, 6(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJESD.2007.012434>

Haanpää, L. (2007). Structures and mechanisms in sustainable consumption research. *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development*, 6(1), 53–66.

Haider, M., Shannon, R., & Moschis, G. P. (2022). Sustainable consumption research and the role of marketing: A review of the literature (1976–2021). *Sustainability*, 14(7), 3999. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14073999>

Hasbullah, N. N., Sulaiman, Z., Mas'od, A., & Ahmad Sugiran, H. S. (2022). Drivers of sustainable apparel purchase intention: An empirical study of Malaysian millennial consumers. *Sustainability*, 14(3), 1645. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031645>

Hobson, K. (2004). Sustainable consumption in the United Kingdom: The “responsible” consumer and government at “arm’s length.” *Journal of Environment and Development*, 13(2), 121–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1070496504265570>

Hosta, M., & Žabkar, V. (2016). Consumer sustainability and responsibility: Beyond green and ethical consumption. *Market-Tržište*, 28(2), 143–157. <https://doi.org/10.22598/mt/2016.28.2.143>

Joshi, Y., Yadav, R., & Shankar, A. (2025). The interplay of emotional value, trend affinity and past practices in sustainable consumption: An application of theory of reciprocal determinism. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 434, 140123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.140123>

Kulkarni, S. D., Kaur, S., Ray, A., & Mishra, V. (2025). Does values impact intention to use sustainable mobility? An evidence from metropolitan cities of India. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 102, 105234. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2024.105234>

Lavuri, R., Roubaud, D., & Grebinevych, O. (2023). Sustainable consumption behaviour: Mediating role of pro-environment self-identity, attitude, and moderation role of environmental protection emotion. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 347, 119141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2023.119141>

Luchs, M. G., & Miller, R. (2014). Consumer responsibility for sustainable consumption. In R. W. Belk & R. L. Price (Eds.), *Consumer culture theory* (pp. 245–262). Emerald Group Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0885-211120140000016013>

Luchs, M. G., Phipps, M., & Hill, R. P. (2015). Exploring consumer responsibility for sustainable consumption. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(9–10), 966–982. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1011208>

Nangia, M., Bansal, S., & Thaichon, P. (2023). Doing more with less: An integrative literature review on responsible consumption behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 22(5), 1132–1150. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.2190>

Nguyen, M. T. T., Nguyen, L. H., & Nguyen, H. V. (2018). Materialistic values and green apparel purchase intention among young Vietnamese consumers. *Young Consumers*, 20(4), 246–263. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-10-2018-00860>

Norwegian Ministry of Environment & United Nations Environment Programme. (1994). Report of the Oslo Symposium on Sustainable Consumption. Oslo, Norway: Author.

Rahman, O., Fung, B. C. M., & Chen, Z. (2020). Young Chinese consumers' choice between product-related and sustainable cues—The effects of gender differences and consumer innovativeness. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3818. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12093818>

Santos-Corrada, M., Méndez-Tejeda, R., Flecha-Ortiz, J., & Lopez, E. (2023). An analysis of sustainable consumption practices through the role of the consumer behavior in the circular economy. *Sustainability*, 15(10), 8086. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15108086>

Sun, J., Sarfraz, M., & Ozturk, I. (2023). Eco-consciousness to eco-consumption: Unraveling the drivers of sustainable consumption behavior under the mediated-moderated model. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 26(7), 17445–17467. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-023-03245-7>

Syeda, S., Acquaye, A., Khalfan, M., & Obuobisa-Darko, T., & Yamoah, F. (2024). Decoding sustainable consumption behavior: A systematic review of theories and models and provision of a guidance framework. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 448, 141678. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.141678>

Vargas-Merino, J. A., Rios-Lama, C. A., & Panez-Bendezú, M. H. (2023). Sustainable consumption: Conceptualization and characterization of the complexity of “being” a sustainable consumer—A systematic review of the scientific literature. *Sustainability*, 15(8), 6841. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15086841>

Verkuil, A. H., Milow, U., Hinz, A., & Al-Kilani, M. (Eds.). (2024). Core values and decision-making for sustainable business: An international perspective. OAPEN. <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/97018>

Wang, J., & Wu, L. (2016). The impact of emotions on the intention of sustainable consumption choices: Evidence from a big city in an emerging country. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 112(4), 3251–3260. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.10.119>