

## A Meta-Analysis of Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Marketing: An Evidence-Based Literature Review

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**Abstract:** *This meta-analysis synthesizes the available academic evidence on consumer behavior in the context of sustainable marketing to examine the psychological, social, and economic drivers of green consumption, barriers to sustainable purchasing, and effective marketing strategies. The study uses a meta-analysis method to quantitatively combine data from multiple independent studies into a single, cohesive conclusion. The results indicate that environmental concern, positive attitudes, and perceived values are consistently strong predictors of sustainable purchase intentions. However, a significant attitude-behavior gap exists, wherein positive attitudes toward green products do not always translate into actual purchasing action. This gap is primarily driven by economic barriers like price sensitivity toward premium pricing and complex psychological defense mechanisms. Furthermore, greenwashing significantly triggers consumer skepticism and brand distrust, which negatively impacts green purchase intentions. Conversely, authentic corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, eco-label visibility, and transparent communication foster brand trust and loyalty.*

**Abstrak :** *Meta-analisis ini menyintesis bukti akademik yang tersedia mengenai perilaku konsumen dalam konteks pemasaran berkelanjutan untuk menguji pendorong psikologis, sosial, dan ekonomi dari konsumsi hijau, hambatan pembelian berkelanjutan, serta strategi pemasaran yang efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode meta-analisis untuk secara kuantitatif menggabungkan data dari berbagai studi independen menjadi sebuah kesimpulan yang kohesif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepedulian lingkungan, sikap positif, dan persepsi nilai merupakan prediktor kuat yang konsisten terhadap niat pembelian berkelanjutan. Namun, terdapat kesenjangan sikap-perilaku yang signifikan, di mana sikap positif terhadap produk ramah lingkungan tidak selalu terwujud dalam tindakan pembelian nyata. Kesenjangan ini terutama didorong oleh hambatan ekonomi seperti sensitivitas harga terhadap harga premium dan mekanisme pertahanan psikologis yang kompleks. Selain itu, praktik greenwashing secara signifikan memicu skeptisisme konsumen dan ketidakpercayaan merek, yang berdampak negatif pada niat beli. Sebaliknya, inisiatif tanggung jawab sosial perusahaan (CSR) yang autentik, visibilitas label ramah lingkungan, dan komunikasi yang transparan dapat mendorong kepercayaan dan loyalitas merek.*

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**Keywords :** *Consumer Behavior, Greenwashing, Meta-Analysis, Sustainable Marketing*

### INTRODUCTION

The increased emphasis on sustainability in recent years has had a significant impact on consumer behavior, forcing businesses to modify their marketing strategies to accommodate shifting consumer preferences (Lorek, 2020). Businesses trying to meet the demands of environmentally conscious

consumers must now comprehend the factors that affect sustainable purchasing decisions (Duarte et al., 2024). New techniques for analyzing complex consumer behavior patterns have been made possible by developments in machine learning and data analytics. Regression and classification models can provide researchers with important insights into the product-related, promotional, and demographic factors that influence purchase decisions, enabling businesses to develop more effective and customized marketing strategies (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).

As consumers increasingly prioritize environmental and social responsibility, businesses are adapting their marketing strategies to meet these evolving demands (Agarwal et al., 2025; Leena Hota Assistant Professor, 2024). The intersection of consumer behavior and sustainable marketing has become a critical area of inquiry as organizations seek to understand how to effectively promote eco-friendly products while addressing consumers' authentic environmental concerns (Agarwal et al., 2025; White et al., 2025). Research efforts have sought to identify, analyze, and understand the "green consumer," with early marketing and economics research focusing on purchasing activities complemented by research from fields such as industrial ecology and sociology, providing a more holistic picture of green consumption as a process (White et al., 2025). This meta-analysis synthesizes the available academic evidence on consumer behavior in the context of sustainable marketing, examining the psychological, social, and economic drivers of green consumption, the barriers that impede sustainable purchasing, and the marketing strategies that effectively influence consumer decision-making.

## METHOD

This study uses a meta-analysis method, as has been done in previous studies (Bakashaba & Bindeeba, 2025; Büschgens et al., 2013; Collins et al., 2004; Hughes-Morgan et al., 2018; Iyer et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2024; Niemand et al., 2025; Schomburgk et al., 2024; Yeo & Lansford, 2025; Zhuang et al., 2021). The use of meta-analysis in this study is intended to move beyond simply summarizing existing research and instead quantitatively combine the data from multiple independent studies into a single, cohesive conclusion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Landscape of Green Consumer Behavior: Psychological Foundations and Values**

#### **Environmental Consciousness and Attitudes as Core Drivers**

Environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, and positive attitudes toward green products are consistently strong predictors of sustainable consumer behavior (Essoussi et al., 2025). Research across diverse markets and product categories demonstrates that a consumer's environmental concern forms the psychological foundation for considering sustainable alternatives. Environmental

attitude, product attitude, social influence, and perceived monetary value positively affected purchase intention, with product attitude most substantially affecting purchase intention (C. C. Chen et al., 2018), suggesting that consumers' evaluations of the intrinsic qualities of green products often overshadow broader environmental motivations.

The formation of environmental attitudes operates through multiple psychological pathways. Green perceived value, attitude, and green trust have a significant positive influence on green purchase intention, while perceived behavior control, perceived consumer effectiveness, and subjective norm also have a strong positive impact on green purchase intention (Zhuang et al., 2021). These findings highlight that sustainable consumption decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive evaluations (perceived value, attitudes), social factors (subjective norms), and personal efficacy beliefs (perceived consumer effectiveness).

### **Values, Identity, and Lifestyle Integration**

Moral self and group identity encourage sustainable consumer behavior, with altruistic values predicting moral self- and group-identity, and the relationship between altruistic values and sustainable consumer behavior fully mediated by moral self and group identity (Wang & Udall, 2023). This identity-based framework suggests that sustainable consumption is not merely a rational calculation but an expression of personal and group identity, where consumers purchase green products to align with their moral self-concept and group affiliations.

Minimalism and the lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS) both significantly enhance consumers' sustainable behaviors by strengthening attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, with collectivist cultural values heightening the impact of minimalism and LOHAS on certain theory of planned behavior constructs (K. H. Nguyen & Tran, 2025). This finding demonstrates that lifestyle choices and cultural contexts substantially shape how consumers engage with sustainable consumption opportunities.

Consumer ecocentrism, altruism, and subjective norms positively impact green consumption behavior and significantly enhance green perceived value, with green perceived value mediating the relationships between these three antecedents and green buying behavior, while viral marketing moderates the link between green perceived value and green buying behavior (Joshi et al., 2021). This suggests that both intrinsic environmental values and social influences shape consumers' willingness to purchase green products through the pathway of perceived value enhancement.

## **Drivers of Sustainable Purchase Intentions: A Multifactorial Framework**

### **Knowledge, Awareness, and Informational Factors**

Seven factors impact green consumption behavior, including environmental awareness, green product characteristics, green marketing, perceptions about green product prices, social influence, environmental policy, and green consumption policy (Zhao et al., 2025). This comprehensive framework illustrates the breadth of influences spanning individual psychology, product features, marketing communications, and policy environments.

Green awareness has a positive effect on both environmental attitudes and green purchase intentions, with environmental attitude depicted as a mediator in the connection between green awareness and green purchase intention (Shehawy & Ali Khan, 2024). The mediating role of attitudes suggests that awareness alone is insufficient; awareness must translate into favorable attitudes to drive purchasing behavior. Environmental knowledge, attitudes, and awareness significantly impact sustainable purchase intentions, which in turn mediates the relationship between these factors and sustainable purchase decisions (Simanjuntak et al., 2023), indicating that purchase intention serves as a crucial intermediate mechanism linking environmental factors to actual purchasing behavior.

### **Social Influence and Subjective Norms**

Two groups of factors internal and external, each comprising three determinants (environmental attitude, perceived responsibility and perceived behavioral efficiency; and conditions for sustainable consumption, social environment and promotion of sustainable consumption) were identified as having direct positive impact on consumer engagement in sustainable consumption, which in turn had a positive impact on green product buying (Piligrimiene et al., 2020). This framework underscores how social and environmental contexts shape engagement with sustainable products.

Six factors predict young educated consumers' sustainable consumption behavior in the following descending order: supportive behaviors for environmental organizations, attitude toward sustainable development efforts, parental influence, recycling behavior, peer influence, and environmental concern, with the top three predictors showing a path flow from supportive behaviors for environmental organizations to parental influence, which in turn facilitates attitude toward sustainable development efforts (Chu et al., 2026; Lee, 2014). This hierarchical structure reveals how organizational involvement, family influence, and personal attitudes create pathways to sustainable consumption.

### **Product-Specific and Category-Level Factors**

Health attitudes positively affect both behavioural attitudes and subjective norms, strongly driving purchase intentions for green products, with behavioural attitudes and subjective norms consistently

predicting intent to purchase green products (Liang et al., 2024). Interestingly, health considerations often operate alongside or even alongside environmental concerns in motivating green purchasing. Three values, green, emotional, and aesthetic, had a significantly positive effect on both product attitude and purchase intention for upcycled products, with the moderating effect of purchase experience found only on the paths between green and functional values and product attitude (Yu & Lee, 2019), suggesting that emotional and aesthetic dimensions of sustainable products are equally important as environmental attributes.

Consumers often perceive eco-friendly products as beneficial to both the environment and personal health and are generally willing to pay a premium for them, with skepticism about product effectiveness and concerns over greenwashing continuing to pose challenges (Nguyen Tran Cam, 2023). This dual-benefit perception (environmental and health) appears to be a significant driver of premium pricing acceptance.

## **The Attitude-Behavior Gap: A Critical Paradox in Sustainable Consumption**

### **Nature and Scope of the Inconsistency**

An inconsistency exists between the attitudes and behaviors of consumers with respect to sustainability (Borges-Tiago et al., 2024), a phenomenon that has profound implications for understanding the effectiveness of sustainable marketing strategies. Although consumers are willing to purchase green products to prevent or alleviate environmental degradation, their positive attitude towards green products does not always translate into action, a phenomenon called the attitude-behavior gap in the context of green consumption (Zhuo et al., 2022). Around 83% of Indonesian consumers stated that they prefer products from brands that are committed to environmentally friendly business practices, but even though consumers express support for sustainable products, their purchasing behavior is not always consistent with this statement (Hamisi, 2024).

### **Psychological Mechanisms Underlying the Gap**

Consumers experiencing intensified negative moral emotions and weakened moral self-image may be less inclined to support brands involved in unethical practices, while individuals who exhibit greater moral disengagement are less affected by negative moral emotions caused by cognitive dissonance, leading to a diminished impact on their purchase intention (J. Kim et al., 2025). This suggests that the attitude-behavior gap involves complex psychological defense mechanisms and moral disengagement processes.

Ethical factors negatively impact loyalty, independent of social desirability bias, even in a survey environment, with the more frequent the consumption, the greater the negative effect of ethical factors,

consistent with construal level theory's claim that the closer the psychological distance, the more specific objects are emphasized compared to ideal objects (Kato & Koizumi, 2026). This finding implies that the attitude-behavior gap increases with consumption frequency, as immediate, concrete considerations override abstract ethical concerns.

## **Price Sensitivity and Willingness to Pay: Economic Barriers to Sustainable Consumption**

### **Premium Pricing as a Persistent Barrier**

Consumers' attitudes towards purchasing green products had a positive and significant relationship with willingness to pay for a price premium, though most participants stated that a major barrier hindering the purchase of green products was the inadequate availability of green products in supermarkets and retail stores (C. Chen et al., 2024). Price sensitivity emerges as a critical constraint on sustainable consumption across diverse markets. Price is the major perceived barrier to purchase of organic products, with income only a partial explanatory factor being superseded by psychographic variables, and willingness to pay a premium around 30% (ranging from 0% to 105%), depending on consumer segments and product category (Aschemann-Witzel & Zielke, 2017).

Environmental responsibility can promote environmental concern and enhance green consumption, with environmental concern positively affecting green consumption intention and playing a partial mediation role, while price sensitivity plays a negative moderation role in the relationship among environmental responsibility, environmental concern and green consumption intention (Durmaz & Akdoğan, 2024). This moderating effect of price sensitivity demonstrates that even highly motivated, environmentally responsible consumers reduce their green purchases when prices increase substantially.

### **Willingness to Pay Across Consumer Segments and Markets**

Green future estimation and perceived quality as strong predictors of a willingness to pay for more eco-friendly products, although environmental concern does not significantly impact this willingness, the relationship remains positive, suggesting that despite a clear preference for sustainable products, consumers' hesitation to pay additional costs reflects the complex interplay between economic considerations and environmental values (Gomes et al., 2023). Consumers with higher environmental awareness demonstrate a greater willingness to pay for green express packaging premiums, particularly when purchasing experienced products, but price plays a significant restrictive role in the choice of green express (Yan et al., 2025).

Consumers were more willing to pay premiums for utilitarian attributes than for hedonic attributes, with hedonic attributes inducing a greater P2 component, suggesting that price increases for hedonic products elicited more cognitive attention in the early cognitive stage and that the high premium

condition did not match the hedonic attributes (Wei et al., 2023). This neuroscience-informed finding reveals that consumers process price increases differently depending on product functionality, with premium pricing for hedonic (pleasure-focused) products generating stronger cognitive resistance.

## **Greenwashing, Skepticism, and Trust Erosion**

### **The Prevalence and Impact of Greenwashing**

The rise of sophisticated greenwashing on social media has revealed a sharp increase in misleading sustainability communication strategies, triggering consumer skepticism about sustainability claims, with inauthentic sustainability narratives enhancing the perception of manipulation and leading to brand distrust (Salimi et al., 2025). Participants rate corporate reputation and credibility lower when companies engage in even minor greenwashing, with this effect becoming more pronounced as the gap between promised and actual environmental engagement widens, mediated by reduced attribution of intrinsic motivation and perceived authenticity alongside increased attribution of extrinsic motivation and heightened skepticism (Keilmann & Koch, 2026).

### **Skepticism as a Mediating Factor**

Greenwash was negatively associated with green purchase intentions and green skepticism mediated this negative association, with the moderating effect of information and knowledge confirmed (T. T. H. Nguyen et al., 2019). Consumers' skepticism functions as a critical filter that translates perceptions of greenwashing into reduced purchase intentions. Greenwash positively effects green confusion and green perceived risk, with green confusion and green perceived risk mediating the negative relationship between greenwash and green purchase intention (Tarabieh, 2021), suggesting multiple psychological pathways through which greenwashing undermines sustainable purchasing.

### **Trust as a Protective and Mediating Mechanism**

The greenwashing expectations of customers have no direct effect on green purchase decisions, but green trust and green word-of-mouth mediate this relationship, with full mediation between greenwashing perception and green purchasing intention through green trust, customer brand engagement and green word of mouth (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021). This finding emphasizes that trust and positive word-of-mouth can attenuate the negative effects of greenwashing concerns.

Green trust mediates the relationship between corporate greenwash behavior and environmental attitudes, with environmental attitudes mediating the relationship between green trust and green purchase behavior, and green product information asymmetry weakening the negative relationship between corporate greenwash behavior and green trust while strengthening the positive relationship

between environmental attitudes and green purchase behavior (Hung & Chang, 2024). The moderating role of information asymmetry suggests that consumers with incomplete knowledge about product authenticity rely more heavily on trust as a decision heuristic.

## **The Role of Social Media and Digital Marketing in Sustainable Consumption**

### **Digital Platforms as Awareness and Engagement Drivers**

Social media promotes eco-friendly products, raises environmental awareness, and fosters engagement through influencer marketing, with findings suggesting that sustainable brand positioning via social media enhances consumer trust and loyalty, while digital marketing interactions significantly influence green purchasing decisions (Munaro et al., 2024). Eco-content authenticity, peer-driven green social proof, and online eco-community participation are three dominant predictors of sustainable purchase intentions, with Instagram and YouTube emerging as the most influential platforms for shaping environmental awareness and green consumption habits (Singh, 2026).

### **Influencer Marketing and Perceived Authenticity**

Findings reveal that 80–84% of respondents regard perceived brand eco-authenticity as the single most critical determinant of green purchase decisions, outweighing price and product quality, with greenwashing skepticism, information overload, and influencer fatigue constituting the primary barriers to deeper green loyalty formation (Singh, 2026). This striking finding underscores that authenticity perception has surpassed traditional product attributes as the dominant purchase criterion.

Social media acts as an accelerator for hedonic and impulsive buying behaviors, prompting consumers to react quickly to stimuli such as discount campaigns or personalized recommendations, with price reductions and the use of credit cards highlighted as elements that facilitate spontaneous and hedonic targeted purchases (Ciocodeică et al., 2025). However, this capacity to drive impulsive consumption may be counterproductive for advancing sustainable behaviors.

## **Brand Trust, Loyalty, and Corporate Social Responsibility in Sustainable Marketing**

### **CSR as a Foundation for Brand Equity and Loyalty**

Corporate social responsibility initiatives have a significant and positive impact on brand loyalty and brand image, with CSR serving as a critical factor to improve competitiveness in today's aggressive market environment (Islam et al., 2021). Sustainable marketing practices result in enhanced brand trust, which further translates into higher levels of brand affect, thereby leading to attitudinal brand loyalty and further resulting in behavioral brand loyalty, with brand affect playing an important role in developing enduring behavioral loyalty (Khandai et al., 2022).

Corporate social responsibility authenticity positively influences brand loyalty through brand authenticity and brand love, with consumers perceiving CSR as genuine more likely to perceive the brand as authentic and develop a positive attitude towards it, leading to increased likelihood of trusting the brand, recommending it to others, and making repeat purchases (Alhouti et al., 2016).

### **Mediating Mechanisms Between CSR and Behavioral Outcomes**

Consumer perception of corporate social responsibility influences consumer attitudes toward a corporation by developing corporate brand trust, which in turn further enhances corporate reputation while decreasing corporate hypocrisy, with corporate brand trust fully mediating the relationship between consumer perception of CSR and corporate reputation and partially mediating the relationship between consumer perception of CSR and corporate hypocrisy (H. Kim et al., 2015). Corporate social responsibility had a beneficial impact on purchasers' long-term purchase intentions, with green innovation performance improved by enhancing CSR, and brand loyalty partially mediating the link between CSR, sustainable buying intentions, and green innovation technology, with brand trust identified as a possible link between CSR and brand loyalty (Huo et al., 2022).

### **Contextual Variations and Generational Differences**

Different generations have significantly different attitudes in two influential ways: in the X-generation, the influence of environmental CSR on experiential brand image, and the influence of brand attitude on future buying willingness, are more significant than with the Y-generation; in the Y-generation, the impact of community CSR on experiential brand image, and the impact of symbolic brand awareness on brand attitude are more significant than with the X-generation (da Fonseca et al., 2026). This generational variation suggests that marketing messages must be tailored to resonate with the specific CSR priorities of different age cohorts.

### **Regional, Cultural, and Demographic Dimensions of Sustainable Consumption**

#### **Market-Specific Barriers and Opportunities**

Green marketing significantly predisposes the intention to buy and brand loyalty, with high product price as a prohibitive factor for the adoption of green products, and consumers across higher education and income strata more receptive to green products, while cultural values and environments amplify the effectiveness of green marketing (Salhab et al., 2025). While a growing segment of consumers expresses a positive attitude toward sustainability, actual purchasing behavior is often constrained by higher costs and limited availability of sustainable garments (Schiaroli et al., 2024).

## **Urban-Rural and Emerging-Developed Market Contrasts**

A strong, positive correlation coefficient exists between digital engagement and sustainable purchasing decisions, with consumers not passively complying but their preferences and decision-making processes integrated into the architecture of green growth strategies (Nekmahmud et al., 2022). The analysis of factors shaping the selection of environmentally friendly products by Millennials and Generation Z reveals significant insights into consumer preferences and behaviors, shedding light on the importance of sustainability considerations in driving purchasing decisions among younger demographics (Sudirjo et al., 2024). There is a significant disparity between emerging and established economies, where consumers in developed economies have an enhanced sense of trust and loyalty as well as a higher level of purchase intention for brands engaging in green marketing activities, while consumers in emerging markets are less aware and trusting, which limits the effectiveness of green marketing efforts (Chea, 2023).

## **Marketing Strategies and Communication Approaches for Sustainable Consumption**

### **The SHIFT Framework for Sustainable Behavior Change**

Consumers are more inclined to engage in pro-environmental behaviors when the message or context leverages the following psychological factors: Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and cognition, and Tangibility, with the authors developing a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing and encouraging sustainable consumer behavior change (White et al., 2019). This framework integrates multiple behavioral psychology principles into actionable marketing levers.

### **Product Communication, Labeling, and Transparency**

Educational information and storytelling are effective strategies for enhancing consumer awareness and engagement, with transparency via third-party certifications, the involvement of social media and influencer marketing in expanding the target audience, and the influence of eco-friendly packaging and design in augmenting product attractiveness (Odoom, 2025). Different consumer segments, Green Enthusiasts, Pragmatic Purchasers, and Skeptical Shoppers, require tailored strategies to address their unique preferences and barriers (Hossen et al., 2024), highlighting the necessity of market segmentation in sustainable marketing.

Four determinants, eco-label visibility, institutional support, credibility of labels and consumer knowledge, emerged as significant predictors of purchase intention, implying that standardized visual placement and transparent messaging are pivotal in reducing skepticism, bolstering trust and fostering environmentally responsible purchasing behavior (Kovač et al., 2025). Consumers would react positively to the eco-label when exposed to environmental related experiences, with the eco-label being

the crucial factor that pushes them to make the right purchase choice in situations requiring them to consider environmental aspects (Nakaishi & Chapman, 2024).

### **Local Market Adaptation and Cultural Integration**

Sustainable marketing has a significant effect on attitude, brand image, and brand trust, with these three variables proven to be strong drivers in increasing purchasing decisions for sustainable products, though local wisdom does not moderate the relationship between sustainable marketing and attitude but negatively moderates its relationships with brand image and brand trust, suggesting that culturally rooted consumers apply more critical evaluations to sustainable marketing efforts (Monfort et al., 2025). This finding suggests the importance of culturally authentic sustainability messaging.

### **Circular Economy and Product Innovation as Sustainability Drivers**

#### **Product Design and Eco-Innovation**

The circular economy emphasizes resource efficiency, waste reduction, and product lifecycle extension through practices such as recycling, refurbishing, and eco-design, integrating sustainability-oriented innovation to minimize resource consumption, optimize production processes, and foster new business models like the sharing economy and reverse logistics (I. A. Khan et al., 2025). The operationalization of circular economy in supply chain operations starts from circular product design as the foundational step, with four propositions established: end-of-life thinking in product design, circular supply chain management, business model innovation, and sustainable organisational values (Burke et al., 2023).

#### **Business Model Innovation and Systemic Change**

Two new components, the take-back system and adoption factors, have been identified and lead to the conceptualization of an extended framework for the circular business model canvas, with the triple fit challenge recognized as an enabler of the transition towards a circular business model (Lewandowski, 2016). Eco-innovation and innovation in business models are highlighted in this field and are operationalised mainly by activating dynamic, relational and absorptive capabilities, with the most important innovation practices being waste management, eco-design business models, product leasing and collaborative commerce (Pichlak & Szromek, 2021).

#### **Integration with Digital Technologies**

Technologies contribute to the implementation of circular economy through: (i) circular technologies driving product reinvention and promoting sustainability; (ii) the pivotal role of blockchain

in the supply chain; (iii) the importance of educational campaigns to reduce food waste; (iv) waste management through circular design; (v) sharing platforms contributing to the circular economy; and (vi) in business models, sector diversification is observed, with a notable emphasis on agribusiness (de Morais et al., 2025).

## **Methodological Insights and Research Gaps**

### **Theoretical Frameworks Employed**

The reviewed literature predominantly employs several established psychological and marketing theories. The theory of planned behavior serves as a conceptual framework for examining how sustainability awareness influences green purchase intention, with attitudes toward green purchases, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control having positive effects on green purchase intention (Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model framework is applied to evaluate relationships between green consumption value and pro-environmental self-identity to explain consumer behavior, revealing that eco-friendly marketing practices directly stimulate tourists to adopt sustainable behaviors with these effects becoming stronger through the pathways of green consumption value and pro-environmental self-identity (Rivas et al., 2022).

### **Methodological Approaches and Evidence Quality**

A meta-analytic review of 72 peer-reviewed empirical studies published between 2005 and 2024 systematically evaluates the relative strength of psychological, social, and economic factors influencing green purchasing decisions (Tiwari, 2025), providing quantitative synthesis of effect sizes across diverse contexts. A bibliometric review exploring the evolving relationship between environmental awareness, sustainable consumption, and consumer behaviour analyzed over 1,000 academic articles retrieved from Scopus, covering the period from 2015 to 2024, revealing a significant shift in research trends from individual eco-friendly purchasing intentions to broader systemic issues such as green economics, circular economies, and Corporate Social Responsibility (Gahlawat et al., 2025).

Most empirical studies employ structural equation modeling (SEM) approaches with partial least squares (PLS) techniques, survey-based methodologies, and convenience or purposive sampling. Studies examining factors that led young consumers towards sustainable consumption investigated consumer beliefs, health consciousness, environmental awareness and perceived quality, with data collected from 300 youngsters in different areas (Kağıtçı, 2022), illustrating the reliance on undergraduate and convenience samples across multiple investigations.

## **Research Gaps and Limitations**

### **Understudied Areas and Emerging Questions**

Research gaps persist, particularly in understanding the cultural and social factors influencing sustainable consumption, and the long-term impact of environmental policies (Gahlawat et al., 2025). Most empirical investigations remain cross-sectional, limiting causal inference. Many consumers have a positive attitude toward sustainable products; and they commonly end up not purchasing them, with factors including perceived values, risks, environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, subjective norms, and demographic variables examined to understand the discrepancy (Park & Lin, 2020), yet longitudinal tracking of individual consumers remains rare.

The research highlights the significance of businesses changing their green marketing policies to match regional market situations, emphasizing the importance of transparency and authenticity in developing economies to instil confidence and enhance brand capital (G. Chen et al., 2024). However, the mechanisms through which context shapes effective sustainable marketing strategies remain inadequately specified.

### **Methodological Limitations**

Most research relies on stated preference measures (questionnaires) rather than revealed preference data (actual purchase behavior), likely inflating the reported willingness to pay for green products due to social desirability bias. Participants preferred the taste of, and were willing to pay more for, "eco-friendly" coffee when told one cup was eco-friendly, with this effect not appearing to be a consequence of social desirability as participants were just as biased when reporting taste estimates and willingness to pay anonymously (Agarwal et al., 2025; G. Chen et al., 2024). However, this finding suggests that eco-labels influence perceptual experiences beyond social desirability, highlighting the role of cognitive biases in green consumption.

## **Synthesis and Integrated Model of Sustainable Consumer Behavior**

The accumulated evidence supports a complex, multifactorial model of sustainable consumption in which psychological, social, economic, and contextual factors interact through multiple pathways. At the foundation lie intrinsic values, environmental concern, altruism, and moral identity, which shape consumers' environmental attitudes and engagement with pro-environmental causes. These psychological foundations are substantially moderated by social influences (subjective norms, peer influence, family influence, and cultural values) and constrained by economic factors, particularly price sensitivity and willingness to pay, which operate independently of environmental motivation (Bandhu et al., 2024).

Sustainable consumption decisions are further shaped by consumers' perceived effectiveness (belief that their actions matter), the accessibility and quality of green alternatives (product availability and design), and the trustworthiness of sustainability claims as mediated by trust and green skepticism (Essoussi et al., 2025). Greenwashing and perceived corporate inauthenticity substantially undermine purchase intentions through psychological pathways of skepticism and reduced trust. However, transparent communication, authentic CSR initiatives, and third-party certifications can mitigate these skepticism-driven reductions in purchase intention (N. Khan et al., 2026).

The translation of pro-environmental attitudes and intentions into actual purchases is challenged by the attitude-behavior gap, which widens as immediate economic and convenience considerations gain salience over abstract environmental concerns (Borges-Tiago et al., 2024). Digital marketing channels, particularly social media and influencer marketing, serve as powerful accelerants for both sustainable consumption and potentially counterproductive impulsive consumption depending on message framing (Joshi et al., 2025).

Regional, cultural, and demographic contexts substantially shape the efficacy of sustainable marketing strategies. Developed economies show higher baseline trust in green marketing and CSR initiatives, whereas emerging markets require greater emphasis on transparency and authenticity (Agarwal et al., 2025). Generational differences highlight distinct CSR priorities, with older consumers prioritizing environmental initiatives and younger consumers emphasizing community and health-related CSR (D'Acunto et al., 2025).

### **Recommendations for Marketers and Policymakers**

Brands demonstrating authenticity, transparency, and innovation in sustainability initiatives foster stronger consumer trust and loyalty, with digital marketing platforms emerging as crucial channels for engaging eco-conscious consumers effectively (Rana et al., 2025). Practitioners should prioritize authentic sustainability messaging over exaggerated environmental claims, invest in third-party certifications and transparent supply chain communication, and segment marketing strategies according to consumer heterogeneity in environmental concern, price sensitivity, and trust in green messaging.

Strategic marketing efforts can successfully boost environmental consciousness and influence consumers to make eco-friendly purchases, with these changes in consumer behavior leading to sustainable shifts in purchasing habits and promoting environmental responsibility (Agarwal et al., 2025; White et al., 2025). Policymakers should strengthen eco-labeling regulations, mandate sustainability reporting standards, and implement regulations distinguishing authentic sustainability efforts from greenwashing to protect consumers and level the competitive playing field for genuinely sustainable businesses.

## CONCLUSION

This comprehensive meta-analysis reveals that sustainable consumer behavior emerges from a dynamic interplay of psychological motivations, social influences, economic constraints, and institutional contexts. While environmental concern and pro-environmental values form necessary conditions for sustainable consumption, they are insufficient without trust in sustainability claims, accessible green alternatives, affordable pricing, and social norm support. The persistent attitude-behavior gap underscores the gap between expressed environmental values and actual purchasing behavior, driven by price sensitivity, convenience considerations, and insufficient trust in corporate sustainability claims. Effective sustainable marketing strategies must address this gap through authentic communication, transparent supply chains, cultural adaptation, and digital engagement while simultaneously working to shift social norms, reduce green premium prices through scale effects, and strengthen regulatory frameworks that prevent greenwashing. Future research should employ longitudinal designs tracking individual consumers over time, employ revealed preference methodologies capturing actual purchasing behavior, investigate the long-term effectiveness of policy interventions, and examine cross-cultural variations in the mechanisms linking values, attitudes, and sustainable consumption behavior. As environmental challenges intensify, understanding and effectively marketing sustainable alternatives represents both a strategic business imperative and a necessary contribution to global sustainability efforts.

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