

# Embedding SDG 12 in consumer behaviour.

## A survey of knowledge, attitude and perception for sustainable consumption

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**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); consumer behaviour; sustainable consumption; knowledge, attitude and perception.

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**Abstract.** *The notion of sustainable development has led to a growing awareness of environmental issues related to human consumption. Consumer behaviour has a direct influence on the environment, regardless of whether the consumer is concerned about the environment or not. One strategy to address this issue is to continue to educate and propagate sustainable practices, particularly among younger generations. In this respect, it is necessary to*

*study young people's knowledge, attitudes and perceptions. A questionnaire was used to collect the responses of 348 respondents. A random and convenient sampling method was used for data collection. For data analysis, significant statistical tools of factor analysis, correlation, and t-test were used to obtain results. The current study used the KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, and Practise) survey to explore how aims such as those contained in Sustainable Development Goal 12 can be incorporated into consumer behaviour, by assessing what the respondents "know," "feel," and "do" about the issues. While most people are aware of the existence of sustainable products, the main obstacle to sustainable consumption seems to be the lack of sustainable alternatives. It was found that awareness of consequences perceived environmental responsibility, and environmental criteria considered while making a purchase decision are important variables in influencing consumers for sustainable consumption.*

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## **1. Introduction**

Human consumption has received increasing attention as a significant environmental harm factor. Climate change is a symptom of overconsumption, which requires greater natural resource extraction, commodity manufacture, and services offered in modern society. Notions such as sustainable growth and development imply minimizing the use of natural resources and harmful materials, as well as the generation of waste and pollutants throughout all stages of production and consumption. Sustainability Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) is designed to promote more environmentally friendly consumption and production practices through a variety of measures, including particular regulations and global accords on the control of environmentally hazardous products. Individuals may play a vital role in fulfilling the sustainable development goals for sustainable consumption by buying eco-friendly products. This study tries to identify many factors that influence consumers' decisions to engage in sustainable purchasing and embed SDG 12 in consumer behaviour. The research focuses on several factors related to knowledge, attitude and practice, such as environmental issues in mass media, environment knowledge, health consciousness, awareness of consequences, perceived environmental responsibility, concern for self-image, care for green products, perceived

seriousness of environmental problems, readiness to pay higher prices for green products, environmental criteria while making a purchase decision, preference for green products and social influence. A literature review was first conducted to identify recent contributions related to such factors. Subsequently t-test, factor analysis, and correlation supported by SPSS were utilized to assess the empirical validity of a number of proposed hypotheses. The study's aims to shed light on how SDG 12 might be incorporated into consumer behaviour and strategies to promote sustainable consumption, particularly in the context of the young adult market. This may help government, corporations or businesses to understand citizens and their attitudes toward environmental issues.

## 2. Literature review

Young (2010) investigated the purchasing process for green consumers in relation to consumer technology products in the UK. The paper concluded that incentives and single-issue labels (like the current energy rating label) would help consumers concentrate their limited efforts. Akenji & Bengtsson (2014) addressed the issue of how unsustainable production and consumption habits have been mostly responsible for environmental degradation, and proposed "decoupling" economic growth from resource use and environmental harm. Borch et al. (2015) examined the role of the Attitude-Behaviour-Choice (ABC) paradigm in shaping society's shift toward sustainability. Simões (2016) argued that Behavioural Sciences can offer important lessons and help in designing new strategies for spreading awareness about environmental harm and can help in reducing its negative impact. Khalina et al. (2017) aimed to determine customer segments in Russia based on sustainability values and barriers that can prevent Russians from choosing sustainable modes of behaviour and show the specific features of the sustainable behaviour of Russians compared to the sustainable consumption patterns described in previous research on European respondents. Jastrzębska (2017) reviewed the concept of responsible consumer and found that responsible consumers are beginning to combine two opposing roles – that of consumer, focusing on the individual needs and own benefits, and citizen, taking heed of the needs of the community (Rachocka, 2007). As citizen consumers they also support the circular economy, thereby not wasting resources, valuing such things as exchange, sharing, or other practices that build inter-personal relations, and thus social capital, a key factor in socio-economic development. Witek (2017) investigated consumers' attitudes towards sustainable labels and found that their attitudes toward sustainable labels are highly correlated but have overall and partial knowledge of them. Okur & Canan (2019) discussed

consumers' attitudes toward sustainable products and their behaviour toward understanding environmental responsibility. Shiel et al. (2020) examined the various components of sustainable development and found that the concept of generativity is the main component of green consumption. The results showed a positive correlation between generativity and green consumption values, as well as between generativity and buying behavior, and generativity and prosocial attitude. Piligrimienė et al. (2020) revealed an important mediating role of the consumer engagement concept, suggesting that the application of the engagement concept in the context of sustainable consumption would allow a deepening understanding of actual consumer behaviour related to different contexts of sustainable consumption. Mainardes et al. (2021) revealed that green behaviour affects environmentally-conscious consumer behaviour (ECCB) more in the non-impacted regions and consumers are more concerned about sustainable consumption after having an environmental tragedy.

### 3. Research methodology

As yet, little is known about what drives young people's pro-environmental behaviour. From the literature review, it emerges that people's biospheric values and environmental self-identity evoke personal standards to act in an ecologically friendly manner, which can lead to a wide range of pro-environmental actions. Although previous studies have examined sustainable consumption, there has been little research using the KAP model for sustainable consumption in youth. Our research identifies Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV), Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV), and Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV) as the basic categories used for understanding sustainable consumer behavior.

The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, based on primary data using a questionnaire to collect the responses of 348 people. For the chosen sample size, a random and convenient sampling procedure was applied. The target population was young people in the age range 18-35 years. Significant findings were obtained using factor analysis, and correlation, and t-test were used to bring out substantial results. Cronbach's alpha test was used to judge the reliability of collected data. Table 1 shows the outcome of the reliability analysis conducted.

The research has the following objectives:

- To identify and analyse knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of young people for Sustainable Consumption.

- To explore the ways in which SDGs can be embedded in consumer behaviour.
- To provide information on needs, issues, and barriers related to SDG 12 in consumer behaviour.
- To make recommendations on how to encourage young people to adopt more sustainable behaviour.

Sustainable Factors	Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV)</b>	Environmental issues in the mass media (SKV 1)	0.985
	Environment knowledge (SKV 2)	
	Health consciousness (SKV 3)	
	Awareness of consequences (SKV 4)	
<b>Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV)</b>	Perceived environmental responsibility (SAV 1)	0.983
	Concern for self-image (SAV 2)	
	Care for green products (SAV 3)	
	Perceived seriousness of environmental problems (SAV 4)	
<b>Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV)</b>	Readiness to pay higher prices for green products (SPV 1)	0.973
	Environmental criteria while making a purchase decision (SPV 2)	
	Prefer green products (SPV 3)	
	Social influence (SPV 4)	

**Table 1.** Reliability Analysis

The study seeks answers to the following questions:

Q1: Is there significant variation in the desire for sustainable products regarding young people's educational level?

Q2: Is there a significant relation between awareness and making purchase decisions for sustainable products?

Q3: Is there a significant difference in factors affecting sustainable buying behavior?

#### 4. Results

Q1: People may vary in their desire for sustainable products regarding their educational status. In this respect, the t-test calculated value (12.28155) is greater than the table value (6.388233) shown in Table 2. Thus it can be seen there is significant variation in the desire for sustainable products regarding their educational level.

	Favour for Sustainable Products	Against Sustainable Products
Mean	54.1488	15.4512
Variance	2887.689	235.1241
Observations	5	5
df	4	4
F	12.28155	
P(F<=f) one-tail	0.016153	
F Critical one-tail	6.388233	

**Table 2.** t-Test: Paired two sample for means.

Q2: The buying behaviour of consumers may be affected by the awareness level of respondents. Table 3 displays a summary of the correlations. In this respect, it was found that awareness level has a positive high degree impact (+0.957185) on the purchase decisions for sustainable products.

	<i>Awareness of Sustainable Product</i>	<i>Frequency of Buying</i>
<b>Awareness of Sustainable Product</b>	1	
<b>Frequency of Buying</b>	+0.957185	1

**Table 3.** Correlation summary

Q3: As regards significant differences in factors affecting sustainable buying behaviour, The Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV) and their implications on sustainable purchasing behavior are summarised in Tables 4, 5, and 6. It reveals that Awareness of Consequences (0.997) can be considered the most

important knowledge factor that influences the buying behavior for sustainable products followed by environmental knowledge (.992).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		<b>.701</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	22.126
	df	6
	Sig.	.001

**Table 4.** Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV) KMO and Bartlett's Test

Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV)	Initial	Extraction
SKV 1	1	0.942
SKV 2	1	0.992
SKV 3	1	0.943
SKV 4	1	0.997

**Table 5.** Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV) Communalities

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
SKV 1	3.874	96.850	96.850	3.874	96.850	96.850
SKV 2	.113	2.813	99.663			
SKV 3	.012	.311	99.974			
SKV 4	.001	.026	100.000			

**Table 6.** Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV). Total variance explained. Extraction method: principal component analysis

Tables 7, 8, and 9 demonstrate Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV), and it was found that Perceived Environmental Responsibility (0.995) can be considered the most significant attitude factor that influences the buying behaviour for sustainable products followed by the Perceived Seriousness of Environmental Problems (.990).

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		<b>.785</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	20.933
	df	6
	Sig.	.002

**Table 7.** Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV) KMO and Bartlett's Test

Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV)	Initial	Extraction
SAV 1	1.000	.995
SAV 2	1.000	.962
SAV 3	1.000	.905
SAV 4	1.000	.990

**Table 8:** Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV) Communalities. Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
SAV 1	3.853	96.331	96.331	3.853	96.331	96.331
SAV 2	.133	3.336	99.667			
SAV 3	.011	.287	99.953			
SAV 4	.002	.047	100.000			

**Table 9.** Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV). Total Variance Explained

Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV) are listed in tables 10, 11, and 12 list. Environmental criteria while making a purchase decision (.996), Social influence (.993), and preferring green Products (.893) are important practice-related factors that motivate buyers to buy more sustainable products and Ready to pay higher prices for green products (.889) may be ignored for sustainable food.



Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		<b>.715</b>
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	19.988
	df	6
	Sig.	.003

**Table 10.** Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV). KMO and Bartlett's Test

Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV)	Initial	Extraction
SPV 1	1.000	.889
SPV 2	1.000	.996
SPV 3	1.000	.893
SPV 4	1.000	.993

**Table 11.** Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV). Communalities Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
SPV 1	3.772	94.305	94.305	3.772	94.305	94.305
SPV 2	.209	5.213	99.518			
SPV 3	.018	.449	99.967			
SPV 4	.001	.033	100.000			

**Table 12.** Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV). Total Variance Explained. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of our study can be summarized as follows:

- The majority of respondents (61.5%) fall under the category of below 20,000 family income and 82.1% of respondents are between the 18-35 age group.
- It was found that lack of awareness and training (22.2), lack of assistance (11.8), reluctance to pay high prices (12.9), unsustainable thinking (19.7), and lack of sustainable alternatives to products and services (33.4) are the major barriers to sustainable consumption.
- It was found that there is a significant variation in the desire for sustainable products regarding their educational level and awareness level has a positive high degree impact (+0.957185) on the purchase decisions for sustainable products.
- Awareness of Consequences (0.997) is considered the most important Sustainable Knowledge Variable (SKV) that influences the buying behaviour for sustainable products followed by environmental knowledge (.992).
- Perceived Environmental Responsibility (0.995) is considered the most significant Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV) that influences the buying behaviour for sustainable products followed by the Perceived Seriousness of Environmental Problems (.990).
- Environmental criteria while making a purchase decision (.996), Social influence (.993), and preferring green Products (.893) are important Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV) that motivate buyers to buy more sustainable products and Ready to pay higher prices for green products (.889) may be ignored for sustainable food.

On the basis of these findings, we believe that the following options or recommendations can be made for incorporating SDGs into consumer behaviour.

- *Lack of sustainable alternatives to products and services* - A key obstacle to sustainable consumption is a lack of sustainable alternatives to products and services. New startups for environmentally friendly products and services are needed to get started and work on sustainable alternatives. Companies must practice Green Marketing, particularly with regard to product labelling and packaging, in order to raise customer knowledge.

- *Awareness Programs* - It was discovered that awareness levels had a favourably high degree of influence on purchasing decisions for sustainable items. Many awareness programs may be launched at the educational level, such as at schools and universities.
- *Use zero-waste items* - It is advised that companies should use zero-waste items to improve the quality of products by investing in reusable mesh filters or reusable containers rather than plastic or paper.
- *Influential factors* - Awareness of Consequences, Perceived Environmental Responsibility, and Environmental criteria while making a purchase decision are regarded as the most significant components influencing purchasing behaviour for sustainable items. More initiatives to educate people about the implications of environmental degradation are recommended.
- *Bulk Purchasing* - Grocery stores with bulk bins reduce the need for fancy packaging and single-use plastics. If consumers prefer to purchase online, these online bulk businesses may be beneficial to sustainable behaviour.
- *Shop at zero-waste establishments* - These provide low-waste and biodegradable packaging for food, cosmetics, and cleaning items. There are other zero-waste online purchasing possibilities, similar to bulk shops.
- *Online shopping* - The conventional shopper emits almost twice carbon units in comparison to the online shopper. Ethical internet shopping will help in reducing carbon emissions, hasty delivery can negate the benefits of purchasing online by requiring additional delivery vehicles and packing.

## 6. Conclusions

Many consumers are not aware of what constitutes sustainable consumption and its future consequences. This study tried to identify Sustainable Knowledge Variables (SKV), Sustainable Attitudinal Variables (SAV), and Sustainable Practice Variables (SPV) that influence consumers' decisions in sustainable purchasing and identify suggestions necessary for encouraging sustainable consumption like zero waste, online shopping, bulk purchasing, awareness programs, and zero waste establishment. We believe that our research provides new methods for increasing public awareness of environmental harm and helps to lessen its negative effects so that people may comprehend environmental responsibility. We recommend the promotion of new startups for environmentally friendly products and that these companies must practice Green Marketing, particularly with regard to product labelling and packaging to increase

customer knowledge. Moreover, a strong and sustainable waste control system must be developed in order to control environment-degrading consumer practices.

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