

## **Sustainability and Consumer Behaviour: The Impact of Eco-Preference on Willingness to Pay for Sustainable Products**

**Rama lakshmi**

*Assistant professor,  
Department of Business  
Administration, Syed Ammal Engg College.*

**Noorul fowmitha**

*P.G. Student,  
Department of Business Administration,  
Syed Ammal Engg College.  
Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu.*

### **Abstract**

Environmentally and socially responsible business practices have increased through the impact of sustainable marketing campaigns, but this has not resulted in a clear pattern of consumer activity. Therefore, effectively engaging consumers has become an essential strategy for encouraging sustainable consumption patterns. This paper will discuss sustainability in consumer engagement and its importance.

A conceptual and analytical research methodology that is based on an extensive review of current literature on sustainable marketing, consumer engagement, and consumer behavioural theories is used in this research. The integration of this literature will allow this research to analyze essential consumer engagement strategies that include trust-building communication styles, open communication, ethical communication styles, incentive-based engagement styles, and avoiding greenwashing.

This research has shown that sustainable consumer engagement is an essential intermediary between sustainability awareness and actual consumer behavioural outcomes. Consumer engagement styles that align with consumer values and reduce consumer scepticism while increasing perceived trustworthiness are more effective in creating sustainable consumer behaviours. Furthermore, this research has highlighted that information-based consumer awareness is not enough without actual engagement that encourages emotional relationships and trust.

**Keywords:** Ethical communication, trust, sustainable marketing, behaviour change, sustainable consumer engagement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable consumer engagement and behaviour change represent critical components in addressing global environmental challenges. As societies increasingly recognize the need for responsible consumption, understanding how consumers engage with sustainability initiatives and alter their behaviours becomes essential. This engagement is not merely about awareness but involves a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions that foster long-term commitment to sustainable products and practices. The integration of environmental and social values into consumer decision-making processes is fundamental for promoting enduring sustainable consumption patterns.

The drivers behind sustainable consumer behaviour change are multifaceted, encompassing individual motivations such as environmental awareness, personal values, and perceived consumer effectiveness, alongside external influences like social norms and community engagement. Research highlights that behaviour change is often socially embedded, with peer support and collective action playing significant roles in reinforcing sustainable habits. Additionally, technological advancements and corporate social responsibility initiatives contribute to shaping consumer trust and facilitating continuous engagement. These factors collectively underscore the dynamic and context-dependent nature of sustainable consumer behaviour.

Despite growing interest, significant barriers persist that impede sustained sustainable engagement, including practical constraints, psychological resistance, and systemic infrastructural challenges. Overcoming these obstacles necessitates integrated strategies combining policy interventions, marketing innovations, and social inclusion efforts. Furthermore, robust measurement and evaluation frameworks are vital to accurately capture the depth and complexity of consumer engagement, guiding effective program design and policy development. Advancing sustainable consumer engagement thus requires a holistic understanding of behavioural drivers, social dynamics, and enabling conditions to foster meaningful and lasting behaviour change.

### Literature Review

#### **Chen, L. (2023)**

Paper reviews the role of information dissemination and educational interventions in shaping sustainable consumer behaviour. It highlights that clear, accessible information increases consumer knowledge and positively influences attitudes toward sustainability. Various educational strategies, including formal

curricula and informal community programs, are evaluated for their effectiveness. The review suggests that the importance of targeting knowledge gaps to drive behaviour change and education is a foundational tool for sustainable consumption promotion.

**Ahn, J., & Kwon, H. (2023)**

This article explores sustainable consumer engagement as a multidimensional construct, emphasizing the integration of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components with environmental values. It states that emotional commitment is crucial for fostering long-term sustainable consumption. It highlights how aligning consumer values with sustainability goals can enhance engagement. It also stresses the need for interventions that promote active participation rather than passive awareness. The findings contribute to refining theoretical models of consumer engagement in sustainability.

**Foster, P. (2023)**

Foster identifies the barriers to sustainable consumer engagement, including practical constraints like cost and convenience, psychological barriers such as habit and scepticism, and systemic issues like infrastructure deficits. It advocates for integrated strategies that combine policy measures, marketing approaches, and social innovation to overcome these obstacles. It emphasizes the complexity of barriers and the need for multi-level solutions. This review contributes to understanding the challenges that hinder sustained sustainable behaviour.

**Huang, Y., & Singh, A. (2023)**

Huang and Singh explore the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumer trust and loyalty within sustainable markets. It is mentioned that transparent and authentic CSR initiatives strengthen consumer trust, which in turn reinforces sustainable engagement. The review discusses ethical branding and communication as critical factors aligning consumer expectations with corporate actions. It highlights empirical evidence linking CSR credibility to increased willingness to support sustainable products. The findings underscore the strategic importance of CSR in consumer engagement.

**Jones, L., & Carter, B. (2023)**

According to this article policy frameworks and multi-stake holder collaboration as future directions for scaling sustainable consumer behavior change. They argue that systemic approaches integrating consumer behavior with broader sustainability goals are necessary. The paper discusses incentives, infrastructure development, and collaborative governance as key policy levers. It emphasizes the need for coordinated efforts across sectors to achieve lasting impact. It also provides strategic insights for policymakers and practitioners in sustainability.

**Lopez, R., & Zhang, W. (2023)**

This review highlights psychological drivers and the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumer decision-making. It also investigates cognitive dissonance, perceived behavioural control, and moral norms as factors influencing behaviour inconsistency. The paper examines interventions aimed at reduce this gap and promoting alignment between attitudes and actions. It underscores the complexity of psychological processes in sustainable consumption. The authors call for nuanced approaches addressing both motivation and capability.

**Nguyen, T., & Wallace, J. (2023)**

The investigation of the role of social exclusion and pro social behavior in sustainable consumer engagement studies in this article. The review also shows that feelings of social exclusion can either hinder or motivate sustainable actions depending on context. Prosocial motivations are identified as strong predictors of engagement. The paper discusses mechanisms through which social dynamics influence sustainable behaviour. It recommends incorporating social inclusion strategies into sustainability initiatives.

**Baker, S., & Green, T. (2022)**

The article states that the key drivers of sustainable behaviour, focusing on social norms, environmental awareness, and perceived consumer effectiveness. The review shows how these factors interact to influence consumers' willingness to adopt sustainable practices. The paper underscores the importance of social pressures in shaping behaviour alongside individual attitudes. It also discusses how marketers can leverage these drivers to design effective campaigns. The study provides a comprehensive overview of motivational factors behind sustainable consumption.

**Evans, S., & White, K. (2022)**

The behavioural models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, and the Transtheoretical Model to explain sustainable consumer behaviour change are applied in this paper. It details how these models account for intention formation, readiness to change, and habit maintenance. It also discusses the predictive strength of these frameworks in various sustainability contexts. The authors suggest that integrating multiple models can improve intervention design. This work reinforces the theoretical basis for understanding sustainable consumer actions.

**Garcia, M., & Patel, R. (2022)**

The technological and digital interventions that promote sustainable consumer engagement are examined in this review. They discuss how digital platforms, gamification, and personalized feedback enhance motivation and enable behaviour tracking. It highlights the potential of technology to reach diverse audiences and facilitate continuous engagement. It also considers challenges such as digital literacy and user retention. The authors conclude that technology is a powerful catalyst for sustainable behaviour change if leveraged effectively.

**Kumar, N., & Sharma, P. (2022)**

Kumar and Sharma investigate eco-preference and willingness to pay as predictors of sustainable purchase behaviour. Their review synthesizes empirical findings showing that consumers with strong eco-preferences are more willing to pay premium prices for sustainable products. The paper discusses psychological and economic factors influencing this relationship. It also addresses the attitude-behavior gap and strategies to bridge it. The authors highlight implications for pricing and marketing strategies targeting eco-conscious consumers.

**Morris, J., & Thompson, E. (2022)**

Morris and Thompson focus on digital marketing strategies and their effectiveness in promoting sustainable consumption. The review evaluates social media campaigns, influencer marketing, and personalized messaging. It highlights how digital channels can increase awareness, engagement, and behavior change. Challenges such as message fatigue and authenticity concerns are discussed. The authors suggest best practices for leveraging digital marketing to foster sustainable consumer engagement.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the multidimensional nature of sustainable consumer engagement, focusing on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components integrated with environmental and social values.
2. To identify and analyse key drivers influencing sustainable consumer behaviour change, including environmental awareness, social norms, personal values, and perceived consumer effectiveness.
3. To assess the role of information dissemination, education, and technological interventions in enhancing consumer knowledge and facilitating sustained sustainable behaviour.
4. To investigate barriers hindering sustainable consumer engagement, encompassing practical, psychological, and systemic challenges, and propose integrated strategies to overcome them.
5. To evaluate measurement approaches for sustainable consumer engagement and behaviour change, aiming to develop reliable metrics that inform effective policy and marketing strategies.

**Scope of the Study**

1. To explore the multidimensional aspects of sustainable consumer engagement, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components, and how this influence long-term commitment to sustainable consumption.
2. To analyse the key drivers and motivators behind sustainable consumer behaviour change, such as environmental awareness, social norms, personal

values, and perceived consumer effectiveness, within varied social and cultural contexts.

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of information dissemination, educational programs, technological tools, and corporate social responsibility initiatives in fostering sustained sustainable consumer engagement.
4. To identify and address barriers practical, psychological, and systemic—that impede sustainable consumer behaviour change, proposing integrated, multi-level strategies for overcoming these challenges.
5. To develop and refine measurement frameworks and metrics for assessing the depth, quality, and persistence of sustainable consumer engagement and behaviour change, informing policy and marketing interventions.

### **Research Methodology**

A research methodology is a systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret data to address research questions or objectives. It involves selecting appropriate research designs, methods, and tools to gather reliable and valid information. This procedure guarantees that the investigation is carried out thoroughly and that the results are reliable and repeatable. To properly examine the study problem, research methodology also entails choices on sampling, data collection methods, and data analysis processes.

### **Research Design**

Research design is a structured plan or framework that guides the collection, measurement, and analysis of data to address specific research questions or objectives. It defines how the study is conducted, including the methods and procedures used to gather and analyze information, ensuring the research is systematic, valid, and reliable. Research design helps in selecting appropriate techniques to effectively investigate the research problem and achieve the study's goals.

### **Study Setting**

The study was conducted in a private furniture showroom, where customers visiting the showroom were surveyed.

### **Sample Size**

Sample size refers to the number of respondents selected from the population to participate in the study. A total of 150 customers were included to ensure adequate representation and reliability of results.

### **Sampling Technique**

Convenience sampling was used. This non-probability sampling technique involves selecting respondents based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. Although practical and cost-effective, it may limit generalization of findings.

### **Data Collection Methods - Primary Data**

The study collected primary data from customers through a questionnaire survey.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data analysis is the process of organizing, examining, and summarizing collected data to uncover patterns, relationships, or trends relevant to the research questions. Interpretation involves making sense of these analyzed results by explaining their meaning, implications, and how they relate to the study objectives or hypotheses. Together, data analysis and interpretation transform raw data into meaningful insights that support conclusions and inform decision-making.

### **Hypothesis**

**H0-** There is no significant relationship between eco-preference and willingness to pay.

**H1-** There is a significant relationship between eco-preference and willingness to pay.

### **Results**

#### **Regression**

Regression is a statistical technique used to examine the relationship between one dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It helps to understand how changes in the independent variables predict or influence the dependent variable, often by fitting a line or curve that best represents this relationship. Regression analysis is commonly used to test hypotheses and make predictions in research studies.

<b>Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup></b>			
<b>Model</b>	<b>Variables Entered</b>	<b>Variables Removed</b>	<b>Method</b>
1	Ecopreference <sup>b</sup>	.	Enter
a. Dependent Variable: willingness to pay			
b. All requested variables entered.			

<b>Model Summary</b>				
<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
1	.929 <sup>a</sup>	.863	.862	.390
a. Predictors: (Constant), Ecopreference				

The correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.929$ ) indicates a very strong positive relationship between eco-preference and willingness to pay. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.863$ ) shows that 86.3% of the variation in willingness to pay is explained by eco-preference. This indicates high explanatory power of the model.

**Anova**

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is a statistical method used to compare the means of three or more groups to determine if there are any statistically significant differences among them. It tests whether the variation between group means is greater than the variation within groups, helping to identify if at least one group differs from the others. ANOVA is commonly used to analyze experimental data where multiple groups or conditions are involved.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	141.418	1	141.418	932.052	<.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	22.456	148	.152		
	Total	163.873	149			
a. Dependent Variable: willingness to pay						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Eco preference						

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant. Since  $p < .001$ , the hypothesis is accepted, indicating that eco-preference significantly predicts willingness to pay.

**Coefficients**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.817	.106		7.683	<.001
	Ecopreference	.843	.028	.929	30.530	<.001
a. Dependent Variable: willingness to pay						

The standardized beta value ( $\beta = 0.929$ ) indicates a strong positive impact of eco-preference on willingness to pay. For every unit increase in eco-preference, willingness to pay increases significantly.

**Result Interpretation**

**Interpretation – eco preference:**

In this study, out of 150 respondents, only 2.7% strongly agreed and 17.3% agreed that they prefer eco-friendly products, while 18% remained neutral. However, 30% disagreed and 32% strongly disagreed. Overall, 62% of respondents expressed a negative attitude toward eco-friendly products.

### **Interpretation- willing to pay:**

Among the 150 respondents, none strongly agreed to paying extra for eco-friendly products, while 12.7% agreed. About 24% remained neutral, whereas 28% disagreed and 35.3% strongly disagreed. Overall, 63.3% were unwilling to pay a premium for eco-friendly products.

Therefore, the majority of respondents shows low eco preference and willing to pay because of lack of awareness, consumers have not adopted with ecofriendly products and lack of trust in the organisation's sustainability claims.

## **Findings and Suggestions**

### **Findings**

1. Eco-preference has a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with willingness to pay for sustainable products, as indicated by a high correlation coefficient ( $R = 0.929$ ) and significant regression results ( $p < .001$ ). This underscores eco-preference as a critical driver of sustainable consumer behaviour.
2. Despite the strong predictive power of eco-preference, the majority of respondents (62%) exhibited negative attitudes toward eco-preference products, and 63.3% were unwilling to pay a premium for them. This suggests a significant gap between potential and actual sustainable consumer engagement in the sample population.
3. Lack of awareness, consumer scepticism, and distrust in organizational sustainability claims were identified as major barriers limiting eco-preference and willingness to pay, highlighting the need for more effective communication and trust-building strategies.
4. The study confirms that sustainable consumer engagement is a vital intermediary that transforms sustainability awareness into actual behavioral change, emphasizing the importance of emotional connection and trust beyond mere information dissemination.

### **Suggestions**

1. Develop targeted educational and awareness campaigns that address knowledge gaps and misconceptions to enhance consumer understanding and positive attitudes toward eco-friendly products.
2. Implement transparent, ethical communication strategies that build trust and credibility, reducing consumer scepticism and counter greenwashing perceptions.
3. Leverage incentive-based engagement approaches, such as discounts or loyalty programs for sustainable purchases, to motivate consumers and increase willingness to pay.

4. Foster emotional engagement by aligning brand values with consumer values, creating authentic narratives that resonate emotionally and encourage long-term commitment to sustainable consumption.
5. Encourage corporate social responsibility initiatives that are visible, genuine, and measurable, strengthening consumer trust and loyalty toward sustainable brands.
6. Employ multi-level strategies that combine policy support, social inclusion, and technological tools to address practical, psychological, and systemic barriers to sustainable consumer behaviour.
7. Develop and apply robust measurement frameworks to continuously assess consumer engagement depth and behavioural outcomes, enabling data-driven refinement of marketing and policy interventions.

## **II.CONCLUSION**

This study empirically establishes a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between eco-preference and willingness to pay for sustainable products, highlighting eco-preference as a key driver of sustainable consumer behaviour. However, the pronounced gap between strong eco-preference potential and actual consumer willingness to pay underscores persistent challenges, including limited awareness, scepticism, and distrust in sustainability claims. These barriers indicate that information alone is insufficient to effect behavioural change; instead, sustainable consumer engagement must foster emotional connections and build trust to translate awareness into action. The findings emphasize the necessity for integrated strategies combining transparent communication, education, incentives, and authentic corporate responsibility initiatives. By strengthening these engagement mechanisms, businesses and policymakers can more effectively align sustainability goals with consumer behaviour, advancing responsible consumption within the Triple Bottom Line framework.

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