

Factors Impacting Sustainable Consumption Behaviour- A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The present study is aimed at identifying (1) the determinants of sustainable consumer behaviour, (2) the factors affecting consumer behaviour, and (3) the gaps identified in the relevant extant body of work. This research utilises the systematic literature review of papers on sustainable consumption behaviour. The study shows that consumer behaviour towards sustainable consumption has gained momentum over the past decade. This systematic review provides a theoretical framework for future researchers regarding the factors affecting sustainable consumption behaviour. Variables predicting sustainable consumption behaviour may not predict alike in all contexts. It examines 124 peer-reviewed scholarly articles within three databases during the past 25 years.

The theories and statistical techniques used in past studies and the personal, social, and psychological factors affecting sustainable consumption behaviour are presented. Finally, the current review helps the researchers identify probable future study directions. Only the scholarly articles in the English language were taken into consideration. The findings show that although much research has been done in this domain, the gaps still give way to the future scope of the study. Marketers and policymakers can analyse the interaction of factors in a particular context for marketing implications to encourage sustainability. The review is expected to give quick insights into what factors have been found to affect sustainable behaviour.

Keywords: Sustainable consumption, Green consumption, Responsible consumption, Pro-environmental consumption

INTRODUCTION

With the increase in population, the demand for goods and services also increases. To meet the demand, different types of natural resources are utilised. However, the resources must be utilised considering the actual requirement and with the minimum wastage possible, initiating the step towards sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption means effectively using the earth's resources to meet the present and future demands. The concept originates from the Earth Summit hosted in Rio in 1992. In the Oslo Symposium (1994), sustainable consumption was defined as "the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of further generations" (Sustainable Development Goals, 2021).

Green consumption, responsible consumption, sustainable consumption, and pro-environmental behaviour have emerged as the global concept towards protecting the environment with human efforts. In this paper, these words are used interchangeably. The way the consumer behaves directly impacts the environment and growth of the nation both in economic and social terms. It is essential to understand consumers' lifestyles (Tang et al., 2020) and habits (Ghazali et al., 2018) varying in religious and cultural values to live healthier lives. Consumers, being the king of the market, can significantly contribute to protecting the environment wherever possible. People should reduce, reuse, and recycle goods through innovative ideas like making plans before purchasing anything to avoid wastage, minimising the misuse of energy by switching off appliances when not in use (Sharma et al., 2019), and using energy-efficient appliances and the biodegradable products.

Sustainable consumption behaviour is categorised and divided into low, medium, and high classes according to the level of impact (Sharma & Jha, 2017). Studies have explored the consumers' intention/behaviour towards sustainable consumption in the areas of food (Alam et al., 2020; Hoffmann et al., 2019), apparel (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018), energy (Ansu-Mensah & Bein, 2019), transport (Rezvani et al., 2018; Yang et al., 2020), tourism (Choe et al., 2020), and waste (Sung et al., 2019). The Higher the awareness of green benefits among consumers, the higher the intentions to purchase sustainable products (De Silva et al., 2021). Individuals with positive attitudes and low materialism have higher chances of purchasing environmentally sustainable products (Mandliya et al., 2020). Motivational factors such as hedonic, gain and normative (Rezvani et al., 2018) significantly contribute to buying intentions and reducing food wastage. Instrumental and terminal values influence consumers' sustainability consciousness (Kautish et al., 2020). Additionally, economic and practical values affect negatively, whereas recreational, social, benefits, protestor and generative values positively impact green consumption values (Tan et al., 2022). Prior research has shown consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption (Zhang et al., 2019).

Objective

The study investigates the determinants of sustainable consumer behaviour and its affecting factors. It focuses on the following objectives:

- 1) To provide a literature review on the behaviour of consumers towards sustainable consumption
- 2) To identify the predictors of sustainable consumption
- 3) To derive an integrated theoretical model of sustainable consumption behaviour
- 4) To identify the significant research gaps in the domain

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The guidelines given by prior researchers (Rowley & Slack, 2004; Torraco, 2016; Webster & Watson, 2002) were adopted to analyse the extant literature critically. The review consists of a search of research articles from databases - Scopus, Web of Sciences and Google Scholar. Articles published only in English were taken into consideration. The string used to search the articles consisted of keywords "sustainable" OR "responsible" OR "green" OR "pro-environmental" AND "consumption" OR "purchase". A total of 124 research papers that were published between 1999 and 2023 were reviewed. Duplicate articles and conference papers were excluded while filtering.

Table 1. Country and articles published

Country	Articles	Percentage
Multi-country	21	16.935
China	17	13.709
USA	13	10.484
India	12	9.677
Germany	6	4.839
Malaysia	6	4.839
Pakistan	5	4.033
Lithuania	4	3.226
UK	4	3.226
Italy	3	2.419
Nigeria	3	2.419
Korea	3	2.419
Australia	2	1.613
Bangladesh	2	1.613
Brazil	2	1.613
Taiwan	2	1.613
Thailand	2	1.613
Turkey	2	1.613
Belgium	1	0.806

Cyprus	1	0.806
Denmark	1	0.806
Egypt	1	0.806
France	1	0.806
New Zealand	1	0.806
Norway	1	0.806
Poland	1	0.806
Saudi Arabia	1	0.806
Singapore	1	0.806
South Africa	1	0.806
Spain	1	0.806
Sweden	1	0.806
Switzerland	1	0.806
Vietnam	1	0.806
Total	124	100

Source: Authors' calculations

Table 1 shows that the study has been conducted around the globe. Out of a total of 124 papers reviewed, 21 were cross-country studies. Most studies were done in China (17), followed by the USA (13), India (12), Germany (6), Malaysia (6), Pakistan, Lithuania, Italy, Korea, Nigeria, Spain etc.

Table 2. Statistical analysis and articles

Analysis	Articles	Percentage
Structural equation modelling (SEM)	75	60.484
Factor Analysis, Regression Analysis	19	15.323
MANOVA, Structural equation modelling (SEM)	3	2.419
Interview	2	1.613
MANOVA	2	1.613
One Way ANOVA	2	1.613
Review	2	1.613
ANOVA, Cluster Analysis	1	0.806
Chi-Square, ANOVA, Structural equation modelling (SEM)	1	0.806
Correlation	1	0.806
Focus Group Discussion	1	0.806
MANCOVA	1	0.806
MANOVA, Regression	1	0.806
Mix Method	1	0.806
Non-Parametric Test, Factor Analysis, Regression	1	0.806
One Way ANOVA, Structural equation modelling (SEM)	1	0.806

Paired Samples T-tests, Regression	1	0.806
Pearson’s Chi-Square Test	1	0.806
T Test, Structural equation modelling (SEM)	1	0.806
T Test	1	0.806
T Test, Factor Analysis, ANOVA	1	0.806
T Test, Regression	1	0.806
The Spearman Correlation Coefficient	1	0.806
Two Sample T Test, Structural equation modelling (SEM)	1	0.806
Two Way ANCOVA	1	0.806
Conceptual Framework	1	0.806
Total	124	100

Source: Authors’ calculations

Table 2 presents that most of the studies analysed data using structured equation modelling (75) followed by factor and regression analysis (19). A few have analysed it with the help of one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA, MANOVA, MANCOVA, chi-square test, pre and post-test, independent t-test and interviews.

Studies have proposed exploring the role of personal factors. Studies have shown the impact of education, gender (Chekima et al., 2016), and personal norms (Ansu-Mensah & Bein, 2019) on sustainable consumption buying behaviour. There is a mixed effect of income, age, and materialism (Helm & Subramaniam, 2019) on sustainable consumption buying behaviour. Consumers embracing minimal materialism while maintaining a positive attitude to supporting environmental sustainability show more intention towards purchasing sustainable products (Mandliya et al., 2020). Researchers have found that young consumers comprising males (Gandhi & Kaushik, 2016) and females of high-income groups (Lim et al., 2019) are more responsible for their consumption. Haron et al. (2005) suggest that sustainable consumption behaviour increases when people’s environmental knowledge is improved.

Environmental psychologists have found the psychological factors impacting behaviour towards sustainable consumption. Researchers show that consumers have intentions to engage in sustainable behaviours such as purchasing (Ghazali et al., 2018), second-hand goods (Borusiak et al., 2020), consuming sustainable food (Alam et al., 2020), upcycling (Sung et al., 2019), and opting for organic products. Additionally, perceived behavioural control (Zhang et al., 2019), responsibility, efficiency (Piligrimienè et al., 2020), and effectiveness (Sharma & Jha, 2017), coupled with perceived value (Alam et al., 2020), economic benefits, and knowledge (Joshi & Rahman, 2019), motivate individuals towards embracing sustainable consumption practices.

It shows the significant positive impact of attitude (Joshi & Rahman, 2019) towards the environment (Sharma & Jha, 2017), green purchase (Joshi & Srivastava, 2019), moral intensity (Rex et al., 2015), lifestyle (Tang et al., 2020), perceived lack of climate change knowledge (Dermody et al., 2018), market influence (Joshi & Rahman, 2017, 2019), risk (Yang et al., 2020), concern for environmental self-image, hedonic goal (Tang et al., 2020), pro-environmental self-identity (Dermody et al., 2015, 2018; Lavuri et al., 2023), emotional intelligence (Kadic-Maglajlic et al., 2019), green purchase conspicuous behaviours, price perception (Ukenna & Nkamnebe, 2017), negative emotion (Ansu-Mensah & Bein, 2019) have significant effect. Various motivational factors such as gain, hedonic goals, normative motivations (Rezvani et al., 2018), enjoyment (Ahn et al., 2020), status (Ali et al., 2019), and perceived benefits contribute positively to sustainable consumption, while there is significant negative impact of positive emotion (excited and happy) (Ansu-Mensah & Bein, 2019).

Sustainable consumption is intricately entwined with social dynamics, where various factors within social spheres exert considerable influence on individuals’ purchasing behaviour. Studies have found a significant positive impact of government actions, social and environmental influence (Figueroa-García et al., 2018), including internal ethics (Rex et al., 2015) and social consumption motivation (Dermody et al., 2015, 2018; Lavuri et al., 2023). Individuals influenced by religious values (Minton et al., 2015) or associated with religious or social groups are more inclined towards making

sustainable purchasing decisions driven by moral (Nguyen et al., 2016) and ethical considerations (Ukenna&Nkamnebe, 2017).

Moreover, descriptive, injunctive norms (Ahn et al., 2020), normative goals (Tang et al., 2020), market conditions and information concerning sustainability (Figuroa-García et al., 2018) positively impact sustainable consumption purchasing behaviour. A mixed impact of subjective/ social norms (Kumar et al., 2021) has been found on sustainable consumption buying behaviour. Tsarenko et al. (2013) found that individuals often align their sustainable consumption behaviour with their social circles' perceived norms, practices, and retail environments.

Studies have found the significant positive impact of environmental responsibility (Joshi & Rahman, 2019), environmental sensitivity (Wang et al., 2014), environmental concern (Zhang et al., 2019), environmental consciousness (Kumar et al., 2021), social and environmental accountability (Mandliya et al., 2020), eco label, environmental advertising (Chekima et al., 2016), confidence, convenience, past behaviour (Vassallo et al., 2016), country (Ali et al., 2019; Minton et al., 2015), green trust, understanding, cash discounts, eco-friendly substitutes (Ting et al., 2019), value for money, contextual factor, consumer innovativeness, usage of social network technology (Biswas & Roy, 2015), social environment (Pilgrimienè et al., 2020), government regulations (Ukenna&Nkamnebe, 2017), brand experience, customer engagement (Joshi & Srivastava, 2019), engagement (Kadic-Maglajlic et al., 2019), availability risk, economic risk (Park & Lin, 2020), conditional value, health consciousness (Qasim et al., 2019), frugality, e-mavenism (Awais et al., 2020), willingness to pay (Kumar et al., 2021), response efficacy (Wang et al., 2014), non-technological innovations (Kamboj & Rahman, 2017), uniqueness (Ali et al., 2019), informational publicity, ecological affect (Nguyen et al., 2016), implicit evaluation (Hoffmann et al., 2019) on the sustainable consumption buying behaviour.

Certain factors exhibit negative impacts on sustainable consumption behaviour. Atmosphere and hunger have been observed to hinder sustainable choices. Moreover, explicit evaluation, faith in technology (Hoffmann et al., 2019), and environmental assessments sometimes discourage individuals from engaging in sustainable consumption practices. A mixed impact of the importance of price has been found on sustainable consumption buying behaviour.

Lim et al. (2019) found that consumers' comprehension of sustainable consumption involves various dimensions such as consumer citizenship, purchasing eco-labelled products, environmentally-friendly usage and disposal habits, energy/resource conservation, acknowledgement of sustainability policies, eco-friendly driving practices, and using environmentally-conscious packaging. Minton and Rose (1997) found a significant effect of environmental concern on behavioural intention, whereas Young et al. (2010) suggest that effort and time are significant barriers.

Individual values influence sustainable consumption (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). Values are integral determinants that shape individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, including their approach to sustainable consumption. Studies have highlighted the positive impact of different value dimensions such as biospheric/altruistic, egoistic (Dermody et al., 2018; Lavuri et al., 2023), environmental (Wang et al., 2014), emotional (Awuni& Du, 2016; Qasim et al., 2019), functional (Biswas, 2017), epistemic (Qasim et al., 2019), social (Awuni& Du, 2016), instrumental, and terminal values (Kautish et al., 2020) on encouraging sustainable consumption behaviour.

Values centred around self-transcendence (Jacobs et al., 2018), self-enhancement, openness to change (Minton et al., 2022), and conservation, emphasising universalism, compassion, acceptance (Sharma & Jha, 2017), and concern for nature have exhibited a significant positive impact on encouraging sustainable consumption. Studies have found a significant positive impact of man-nature orientation (Chekima et al., 2016), long-term orientation (Chekima et al., 2016), conditional value (Qasim et al., 2019), planning, collectivism (Halder et al., 2020), religious values (Ghazali et al., 2018), horizontal-collectivism, vertical-collectivism, horizontal-individualism, vertical-individualism (Ali et al., 2019) on the sustainable consumption buying behaviour.

Contrarily, values associated with benevolence (Sharma & Jha, 2017), self-direction (Sharma & Jha, 2017), and adherence to tradition (Sharma & Jha, 2017) have shown a negative impact on sustainable buying behaviour. However, the influence of cultural values on sustainable consumption/ buying behaviours has revealed mixed outcomes (Minton et al., 2022; Sharma & Jha, 2017). McCarty and Shrum (2001) found that economic status has a positive impact, while inconvenience significantly negatively impacts recycling behaviour. Sener and Hazer (2008) found a significant positive relationship between universalism, benevolence, and power and sustainable consumption behaviour.

Many studies are based on confusion values, utilising: -

- Rokeach (1973) Value System (RVS) - 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values;

- Kahle (1983) List of Values (LOV) - self-respect, sense of Accomplishment, warm relationships with others, being well-respected, security, fun and enjoyment in life, sense of belonging, self-fulfilment and excitement;
- Mitchell (1983) Values and Lifestyle System (VALS),
- Schwartz (1992, 1994) Value inventory –conservation: tradition, conformity and security, openness to change: hedonism, stimulation and self-direction; self-enhancement: power, achievement and hedonism; self-transcendence: benevolence and universalism;
- Hofstede (2010) Six cultural dimensions - indulgence versus restraint, masculinity versus femininity, power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, long- versus short-term orientation, and uncertainty avoidance index.

Sharma and Jha (2017) conducted a study in India, utilising the Holistic Values Scale (Sharma, 2021) and found that Indian values (compassion, self-evolution, uprightness, self-enrichment) influenced sustainable consumption.

Determinants of Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

The research objective was to investigate the predictors of sustainable consumption behaviour and derive a model that might serve as an academic lens for future research. The review determines the sustainable consumption behaviour which includes factors such as personal, social, psychological, values, and sustainable consumption (Fig.1). Studies elucidate that there is a direct impact of materialism (Dermody et al., 2015), values (Sharma & Jha, 2017), e-mavenism, frugality (Awais et al., 2020), hunger, implicit association, explicit evaluation (Hoffmann et al., 2019) on sustainable consumption behaviour. Even variables supporting the behaviour of environmental organisations, such as environmental concern, perceived marketplace influence, subjective norms, attitude, and perceived knowledge regarding sustainability issues, are determinants of sustainable purchasing behaviour (Joshi & Rahman, 2017). Hungry consumers choose less sustainable food consumption in comparison to when they are satisfied (Hoffmann et al., 2019).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE / GAPS OF STUDY

Despite much research on sustainable consumption behaviour, the topic requires more exploration. We believe our study will contribute to the field of literature in further exploring new research areas as diverse cultures exist worldwide. The study has some limitations. First, the study review includes articles between 1999 and 2023. Future studies can increase this period and analyse more articles on the subject. Second, articles written only in English were considered.

Relevant and effective articles published in other languages could be included in the domain of the study for a broader view. Third, concepts like shared or collaborative and ethical consumption were not included. Future studies can consider longitudinal research design to explore consumer sustainable behaviour. Environmental values (Young et al., 2010) and cultural values must be measured to know their impact on sustainable consumption behaviour.

Gandhiji said, "There is enough on earth for everybody's needs, but not enough for everybody's greed". The influence of Gandhian values, namely, continuous learning, renunciation, non-violence, punctuality, truth, equanimity, humility, service, and creativity (Bansal & Bajpai, 2011) on sustainable consumption can be studied. Future studies can explore sustainable consumption behaviour by inter- and intra-cultural studies (Awais et al., 2020).

People of different age groups and genders respond differently so that future research can use multiple group analyses. Research suggests that there is a difference between the intention and the actual behaviour of consumers; therefore, studying consumers' actions will enable future research to concentrate on the real-life behaviours exhibited by consumers (Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018). Understanding the factors behind sustainable food consumption and pro-environmental behaviours remains limited.

This includes motivations for pro-environmental self-identity and the role of emotions in sustainable consumption. Investigating moral identity's impact on ethical consumer behaviour is crucial due to consumers' significant role in environmental damage. More research is needed to explore additional factors affecting pro-environmental behaviours, including emotions, institutional influences, and the impact of social media. Factors like gender, pricing, marketing strategies, green labelling, and product quality should also be considered to better understand their influence on sustainable consumption behaviour.

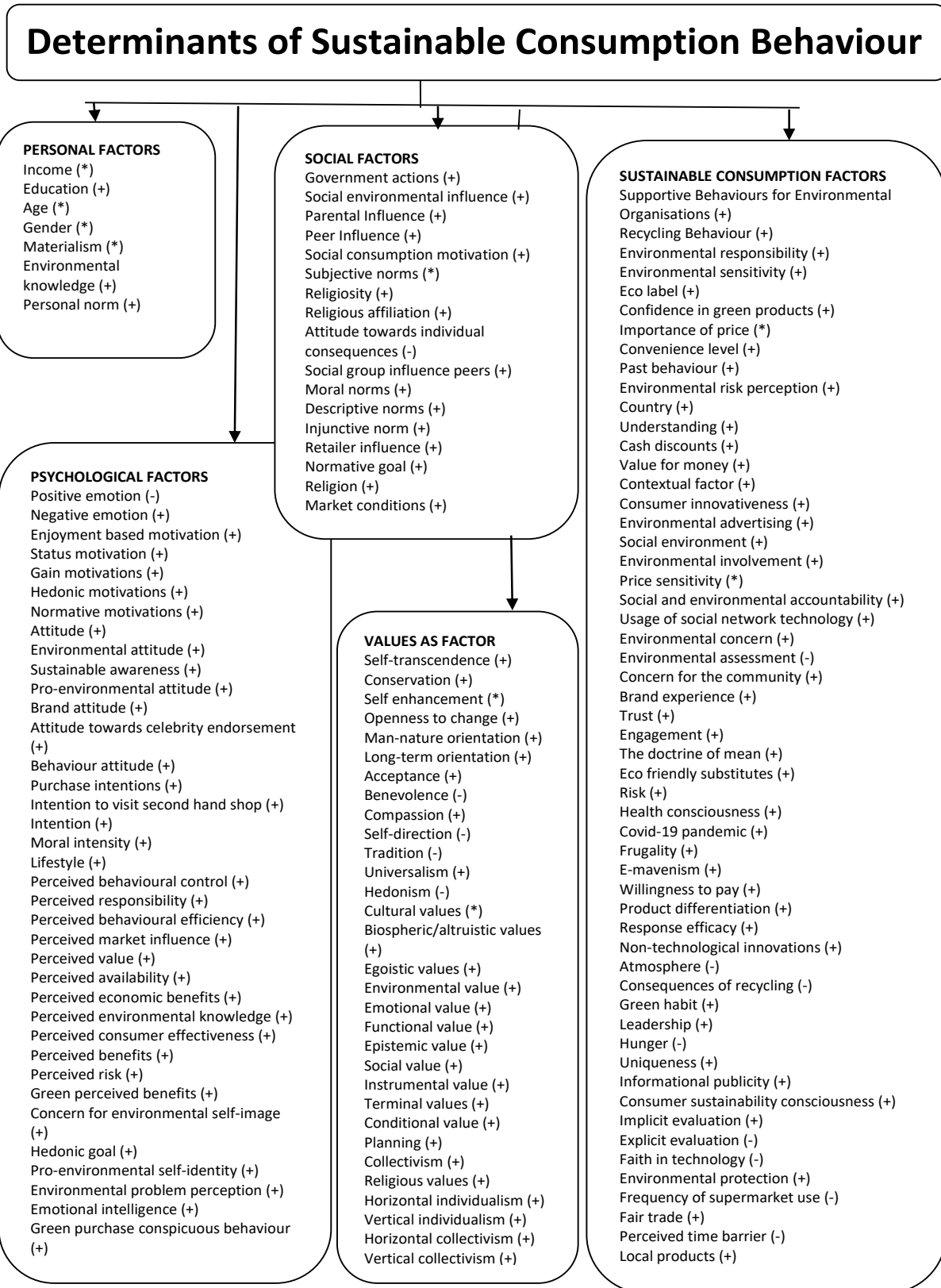


Fig.1. Determinants of sustainable consumption behaviour

Source: Authors' compilation

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