



Prifysgol Cymru

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

University of Wales

Trinity Saint David

Student name:

Arjan lakhubhai karavadara

Student ID:

2436856

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Supervisor's Name:

Balendran kandasamy

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PROPOSAL
ON
ANALYSING REASONS BEHIND CONSUMERS
PREFERRING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS BUT OPTING
FOR CHEAPER, AND NON-SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVES

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Increased awareness of climate change and environmental degradation has resulted in environmental sustainability becoming a big issue in consumer markets. Enterprises and policy makers are promoting green consumption, inviting environmentally friendly goods like recyclable materials, organic foodstuff and green attires. These products have gotten consumers interested, and most people have shown positive intentions towards sustainable consumption products. According to Narassima et al. (2025), green purchasing behaviour promotes sustainable consumption and production. Nevertheless, the attitudes towards the environment are not usually similar to consumer behaviour. According to Muller et al. (25), a significant number of consumers express a high level of environmental concern, yet do not convert it into consistent purchasing behaviour, mostly because of price sensitivity and higher perceived costs of eco-friendly products.

1.2 Research Problem

Despite the recent growth in environmental consciousness, a good number of consumers continue to buy unsustainable products even though they support environmentally friendly products. This shows that there is a good disconnect between the intentions and the actual behaviour of the consumers. Approximately 65% of customers state that they would like to shop with sustainable companies, but a small percentage of 26% always buy environmentally friendly products (HBR, 2025). This indicates how difficult it is to translate environmental awareness into actual purchasing behaviour. Also, more than 70% of shoppers indicate they are concerned about the environment, yet a smaller proportion has increasingly opted to use green options because of cost and convenience considerations (Uswitch, 2025). According to Teerakapibal and Schlegelmilch (2025), consumers acknowledge the environmental issues associated with fast fashion, but still, they choose more affordable and convenient products. As well, it has been researched that the economic factors are very powerful in buying decisions (NCBI, 2025). The causes of this behavioural gap include price sensitivity, perceived quality of product and trust in sustainability claims.

1.3 Research Aim

This study intends to examine why consumers shift in their buying behaviour towards giving preference to green products and use less cost-effective but non-sustainable alternatives.

1.4 Research Objectives

- To investigate the consumer attitude toward green and environmentally friendly products.
- To determine factors that affect the behaviour of the consumer to buy cheaper non-sustainable alternatives.
- To determine the sensitivity of prices on sustainable buying behaviour.
- To examine the difference between environmental consciousness and real buying decision-making.

1.5 Research Questions

- Which aspects contribute to consumers embracing the eco-friendly products?
- Why do consumers buy low pricing non sustainable products whilst being environmentally sensitive?
- What is the effect of the price sensitivity on sustainable purchasing behaviour?
- Why is there a difference between the attitudes on the environment and real purchasing decisions?

1.6 Structure of the Study

This dissertation proposal is divided into a number of sections. The introduction provides the background of the research, problem, aims and research questions. The literature review is a critical analysis of the research available in the field of sustainable consumption, consumer attitudes, and the attitude- behaviour gap. The methodology section describes the research methodology, data collection procedures, and data analysis. It is also proposed that appropriate findings will be made, some limitations of the research and a summative conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Consumption and Eco-Friendly Products

Sustainable consumption is about buying and consuming products that have minimal effects on the environment and which facilitate responsible production methods. Companies are increasingly marketing green products in their efforts to curb environmental issues and meet increasing customer needs towards green products. According to Narassima et al. (2025), responsible consumer decision-making is one of the factors that play a role in making manufacturing and supply chains environmentally friendly. The purchasing of sustainable

products by consumers helps to minimize wastes and save on resources. Nevertheless, environmental consciousness, moral principles and the utility are some of the factors that have impacts on sustainable consumption. Kaluvilla et al. (2025) point out that to persuade people into sustainable buying behaviour, it is imperative to comprehend the consumer behaviour.

2.2 Consumer Attitudes toward Sustainability

Attitudes of consumers toward sustainability are usually positive as a significant number of people show concern about environmental problems and sustainability product. Sustainability marketing and campaigns of environmental awareness have made more people aware of the issue of climate change and the necessity to take responsibility for the environment. Indeed, Despoudi et al. (2025) note that consumers tend to exhibit positive behaviours towards environmentally responsible consumption and sustainable food supply chains. It means that the values of sustainability gain more significance in the process of decision-making among consumers. Good attitudes, however, do not necessarily result in consistent, sustainable behaviour. Consumer attitudes can be influenced by social norms, personal values and even by cultural influences, yet these elements may not necessarily manifest themselves in the actual purchase choice. According to Madinga et al. (2025), despite the fact that some consumers say they strongly support sustainable fashion, they still buy fast fashion products simply because of convenience and affordability.

2.3 The Attitude–Behaviour Gap

The difference in the attitudes of consumers towards the environment and the purchasing behaviour is referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap. This comes at a time when people contribute to sustainability and do not commit the same to their buying habits. As Muller et al. (2025) explain, behaviours can make the difference between attitudes and actual behaviour based on demographic and behavioural factors. Sustainability might be appreciated by consumers without them focusing on convenience or cost. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is one of the behavioural theories that implies that attitudes do not predict behaviour. According to Esfandiar and Hadinejad (2025), decisions are made under the influence of external constraints and perceived behavioural control. Sinha and Annamdevula (2025) also add that consumers can learn about environmental issues, but cannot translate their knowledge into consistent sustainable purchasing behaviour.

2.4 Price Sensitivity and Consumer Behaviour

It is an open secret that price sensitivity is one of the critical implications that has impacted consumer buying decisions. Sustainable products have a higher cost than traditional ones because they are ethically sourced, with environmentally friendly materials, and responsible production methods. Studies have shown that consumers tend to weigh the environmental values against likes against the economic factors. According to Teerakapibal and Schlegelmilch (2025), consumers can be willing to use sustainable fashion but still buy less expensive fast fashion items due to financial limitations. Economic factors are thus the significant ones that influence consumer behaviour. Even greener consumers would be likely to place a premium on pricing in case of a price discrepancy between viable and standard products.

2.5 Other Influencing Factors

The purchasing behaviour that can be regarded as sustainable due to several factors other than price is social influence, marketing communication and behavioural interventions. Prashar and Kaushal (2025) demonstrate that sustainable fashion attitudes among younger buyers can be stimulated with the aid of the behavioural nudges that promote moral and social standards. Sustainability also is influenced by household practices which mean that behavioural interventions can be applied to decrease food waste by building awareness of economic and environmental implications (Jobson et al., 2025). Someone, brand perception is also significant. According to Chan (2025), intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products can be reinforced by the successful development of the green brand positioning and following the self-image of the consumers.

2.6 Research Gap

The literature available on the subject offers substantial details about sustainable consumption and environmental attitude, yet there is a small amount of empirical data on why people are interested in brands that are more environmentally friendly, but are ready to buy less sustainable options that are cheaper. As stated by Maltagliati et al. (2025), behavioural gaps are those that take place when intentions are shaped by other motivational factors and constraints of the situation. Likewise, Theuwis et al. (2025) indicate behavioural outcomes to be influenced by larger contextual and psychological conditions as opposed to

attitudes only. Hence, more empirical studies are required to know what led to the difference between environmental attitude and real purchasing behaviour.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study will follow a quantitative research design to examine consumer attitudes and buying behaviour of eco-friendly products. Quantitative research also allows gathering numerical data, which may be statistically analysed to detect the patterns and correlations between the variables. Bisaria et al. (2026) elaborate that the quantitative approach is very helpful in the measurement of trends in behaviour and even when exploring the connection between various variables affecting decision-making. The method enables scholars to falsify hypotheses and point to statistically significant effects on consumer behaviour.

3.2 Research Design

The research will utilize survey research design in order to gather the primary data comprising consumers. The surveys are very popular instruments in the study of consumer behaviour since they enable the researcher to obtain data from a broad range of respondents effectively. According to Tusquellas et al. (2025), structured research designs offer systematic ways of studying behavioural patterns and measuring the relationship between research variables. The questionnaire to be used will therefore be developed as a structured questionnaire in order to measure consumer attitude, buying behaviour and price sensitivity.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The online questionnaire that will be distributed to the consumers will be used to collect primary information. The survey will be based on structured questions that will be used to assess environmental awareness, attitude towards sustainable products, and purchasing behaviour. The questionnaire shall contain Likert-scale questions enabling the respondents to respond in relation to the extent of their sincerity with statements touching upon sustainability, and the purchasing choices. There will be multiple-choice questions as well to derive demographic data and buying preferences. An online survey offers an effective and cost-efficient way of gathering information among the various consumer groups.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

The target consumers in the study will be those daily consumers of such common products as clothes, food, and other things used at home. The participants will be recruited using a

convenience sampling method because of time and accessibility issues. Convenience sampling enables researchers to collect information from participants who present themselves as very easy to reach and are interested in filling out the survey. The research will gather answers from around 51 participants to use the required number of answers to make statistical revelations.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

Statistical methods will be employed in analysing the collected data in order to find patterns and relationships between variables. The frequencies and the mean values will be summarised as a means of Descriptive statistics to summarise the respondents' attitude and purchasing behaviour. The correlation analysis can also be carried out to study the correlation between the environmental attitudes, price sensitivity and purchasing behaviour. These analytical tools will aid in establishing the level at which economic factors will play when making judgments on the decisions with regard to sustainable products.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Research that involves human participants needs to consider ethical issues. Before the survey is filled in, the participants will be informed regarding the purpose of the study and that they are taking part in the study voluntarily. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents will be upheld during the process of conducting the research. No personal information will be gathered, and all data shall be utilised to conduct academic research. It will also be a right for the participants to opt out of the study at any time they wish not to participate in it.

4. Expected Findings

The research will indicate that a significant number of consumers are highly conscious of the environment and willing to consume environmentally friendly products. Nevertheless, economic aspects are likely to play a huge role in the real buying behaviour. The issue of price sensitivity can become one of the obstacles to frequent sustainable purchases. Consumers will be able to be sustainability but affordability-focused. Other elements that could cause attitude-behaviour gap include convenience, availability of the product and trust in sustainability claims. Such insights can be used by businesspeople and policymakers to ensure that sustainable consumption is encouraged.

5. Limitations

This research is limited in a number of ways. Self-reporting survey data can lead to bias in responses where the respondents can provide answers they deem socially desirable. The convenience sampling can be low in terms of representativeness, and a small sample can also constrain the in-depth statistical examination. The research also scrutinises perceptions as opposed to real purchasing behaviour, but it still presents useful information.

6. Timeframe

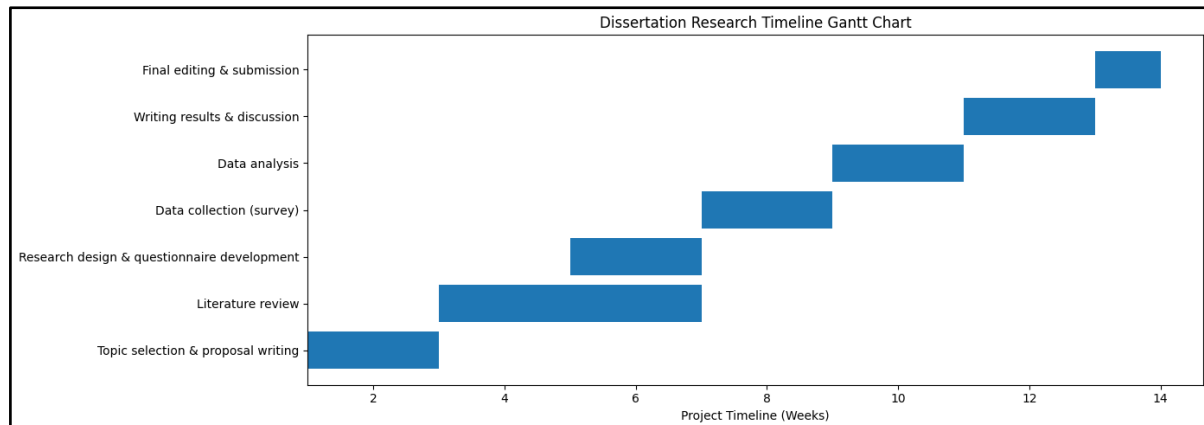


Figure 1: Research Timeline

(Source: Self-Developed)

7. Conclusion

This research proposal aims to find the answer to the question of the reasons why consumers simply choose the products that are environmentally friendly, and just buy less expensive non-sustainable ones. It will concentrate on the difference between the environmental intentions and the actual buying behaviour. Through a quantitative survey, the research will examine the consumer attitudes and buying behaviour to find factors that are preventing sustained consumption.

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