

# Navigating the Complexities of Conscious Consumerism: The Moderating Effects of Age, Income, and Culture

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates how environmental, ethical, social and personal factors impact conscious consumer choices while studying how age groups, income levels, cultural backgrounds and gender intersections influence these relationships. The study addresses a core problem in understanding which components drive sustainable purchasing behaviors among consumers because this understanding serves both companies and policymakers in their efforts for sustainable consumption. The findings of the study demonstrate that conscious consumerism receives substantial influence from ethical along with environmental considerations along with personal attributes and social factors. Through the research it became evident that age and income distributed the strength of relations between environmental and ethical elements and conscious consumer choices. The impact from gender together with cultural values showed smaller influences than other determinants of these relations. The results suggest ethical and environmental issues drive conscious consumerism more strongly than demographic factors such as age and income levels influence these behaviors. Creating effective conscious consumerism initiatives demands a comprehensive strategy which evaluates both customer belief systems and their social characteristics alongside their values. The findings demonstrate that understanding diverse elements shaping conscious consumerism remains vital along with analyzing demographic traits to explain consumer choices. The research delivers crucial findings which help businesses match their sustainability-based approaches to increasing customer demands while assisting governmental agencies in building sustainable consumption standards.*

**Keywords:** *Kazakh, English, Latin, origin, experience, research.*

## Introduction

The trend towards conscious consumerism has become prominent throughout recent years because modern customers predominantly select products based on their compatibility with sustainability ethics and social justice requirements. People who choose products in line with preserving the environment alongside ethical production together with social fairness demonstrate conscious consumerism (Carrington et al., 2010). A fundamental change in customer purchasing patterns stems from enhanced global metric sensitivity toward climate change and resource exhaustion and social equality issues. Modern societal values have transformed people from traditional shoppers into active market participants who make purchases that drive social and environmental change. The research examines the key elements which steer consumers toward their conscious purchasing behaviors while analysing environmental, ethical, social and personal factors. Knowledge of such factors enables businesses to match their procedures to market demand which allows policymakers to develop sustainable consumption strategies. Conscious consumerism has become the order of the day due to the abundance of exploitation by business companies to increase impulsive buying among online buyers (Hussain, 2025).

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. How do environmental factors influence conscious consumer behavior?
2. What role do ethical considerations play in shaping conscious consumerism?
3. How do social factors, such as peer influence and cultural norms, impact consumer choices?
4. What personal factors, such as values and financial capacity, drive conscious consumerism?

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## Literature Review

### Conscious Consumerism

A conscious consumer lifestyle contains multiple elements which extend into environmental stewardship alongside ethical behavior and social responsibility. Through their purchase behaviors consumers can contribute to positive transformation (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Carrigan and Attalla (2001) revealed sustainable ethical choices serve as replacements for conventional buying patterns as people become more aware about corporate responsibilities and environmental concerns. The field of consumer research identifies a rising consumer demand for ecologically friendly products because people are ready to spend more on goods which match their ethical principles (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Research findings show that ethical purchasing decisions are mainly determined by labor rights and cruelty-free production standards (Auger et al., 2003). The combination of responsible marketing approaches with company transparency creates enhanced consumer trust which then leads to stronger ethical purchasing momentum (Harrison et al., 2005). The positive trends notwithstanding an attitude-behavior gap persists because consumers show support for ethical consumption yet their daily purchasing choices do not always match their favorable stance. Sustainable purchasing decisions remain limited because customers face economic barriers along with scorer shortages and distrust corporate greenwashing initiatives (Bray et al., 2011). To achieve lasting conscious consumerism we need stronger regulations together with corporate transparency and education programs that deliver actionable knowledge to consumers (White et al., 2019).

### Environmental Factors

Factors from the environment strongly influence how people consume with mindfulness towards their behavior. Peattie and Crane (2005) has argued that environmental factors including climate change and pollution directly affect purchase choices among consumers. People focused on environmental issues tend to pick sustainable products and back firms with environmentally sound practices (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Research shows perceived consumer effectiveness functions as a significant driving force for sustainable consumption because people with such beliefs understand their individual choices affect environmental preservation. Scientific research finds that meaningful perceived consumer impact on product choice makes people choose environmentally beneficial products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). When companies display transparent business practices alongside ethical branding they build consumer trust which drives sustainability product adoption (Wang et al., 2020).

Environmental behavior that manifests into an eco-conscious approach finds itself greatly influenced by cultural conditions. UserData Analyzed with Hofstede's cultural dimensions demonstrated collectivist cultures display superior environmentally responsive purchasing behaviors compared to individualistic cultures (Nguyen et al., 2019). Public awareness and positive attitudes toward sustainability have increased yet many people continue to face challenges in closing the gap between their sustainable ideas and real-life behaviors. According to Johnstone and Lindh (2018) members of Generation Z choose ethical sustainable products while continuing to buy fast fashion which damages the environment.

### Ethical Factors

The ethical concerns about fair trade as well as labor rights and animal welfare develop consumer behavior patterns. Customers today carefully choose their purchases because they recognize their purchasing power's connections to social responsibility along with environmental impact and they purchase brands compatible with their beliefs. Ethical consumerism emerges from personal moral duty because consumers need to back businesses which practice fair trade and maintain labor rights and apply strict animal welfare standards (Harrison et al., 2005). Frequent research demonstrates a growing consumer preference to refuse purchasing products which connect to unethical behavior and practices including child labor alongside unfair wages and animal cruelty. Businesses that do not tackle their ethical issues will lose customer trust because their brand value erodes. Businesses integrate ethical considerations throughout their supply chains as well as their marketing activities and Corporate Social Responsibility programs because they need conscious consumers as part of their target market. More consumers focus on ethical purchasing decisions

thanks to greater digital visibility together with social media driven activism. Through modern information resources consumers obtain detailed insight into corporate ethical positions before selecting companies and products (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Unethical business practices that go public through social media create instant global backlash from consumers who engage in large-scale product avoidance campaigns. The strategic requirement for businesses to consider ethics in the present market exists parallel to their moral duty to be ethical.

### **Social Factors**

Consumers' buying choices experience substantial influence from social factors including peer behaviors and cultural norms and social media relations. Subjective norms together with social pressures provide structure to how individuals behave according to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The adoption of sustainable behaviors increases among consumers following personal beliefs that these practices benefit society alongside social media support for ethical consumption (White et al., 2019).

This buying process primarily relies on peer influence because people continuously adopt preferences and conduct from their social networks (Goldsmith & Clark, 2012). Proof from research reveals that platform reviews alongside social recommendations strongly affect consumer confidence levels and brand image understanding particularly with sustainable and ethical goods (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Sustainability attitudes in eco-friendly consumption patterns are shaped by social norms which vary across collective and individualistic cultures (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Consumers' online interactions through social media platforms now greatly intensify how others influence their purchasing choices. Through platforms including Instagram, TikTok and Twitter sustainability trends and ethical consumerism movements spread quickly (Ewers, 2017). Consumer behavior toward conscious consumption successfully spreads through influencer marketing because consumers tend to adopt the preferences and actions of their favorite influencers (Ki et al., 2020). Digital marketing faces pressure to demonstrate clear information because greenwashing and untruthful sustainability messaging exists alongside concerns that need better transparency rules (Szabo & Webster, 2021).

### **Personal Factors**

The adoption of conscious consumer choices depends heavily on personal factors that include individual belief systems and monetary capacity together with core values. People who possess powerful environmental and ethical values tend to practice sustainable consumption because their personal beliefs guide their purchasing choices (Stern, 2000). Consumers dedicated to sustainability demonstrate elevated environmental concern combined with stronger moral duty thereby driving their choice to purchase ethically (Schwartz, 1977).

Choice sustainability depends on economic resources for some consumers because limited budgets restrict their opportunities to be ethical. The higher prices of sustainable products create purchasing challenges for consumers with limited financial resources based on research by Gleim et al. (2013). The divide in affordability demands that businesses work with policymakers to provide economic support for sustainable products through favorable incentive programs and affordable approaches (White et al., 2019). The extent to which consumers adopt sustainable behaviors depends on both psychological factors related to habit satisfaction and ease of use despite their sense of ethics even if they strongly believe in them (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Consumers engage differently with ethical consumption based on both their age level and educational attainment. New research confirms that Millennials along with Gen Z participants demonstrate stronger interest in sustainability and social responsibility than elderly adults (Kim et al., 2021). Knowledge gained through education produces informed consumers who both discover the long-term advantages of ethical consumption and show improved adoption of sustainable practices (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

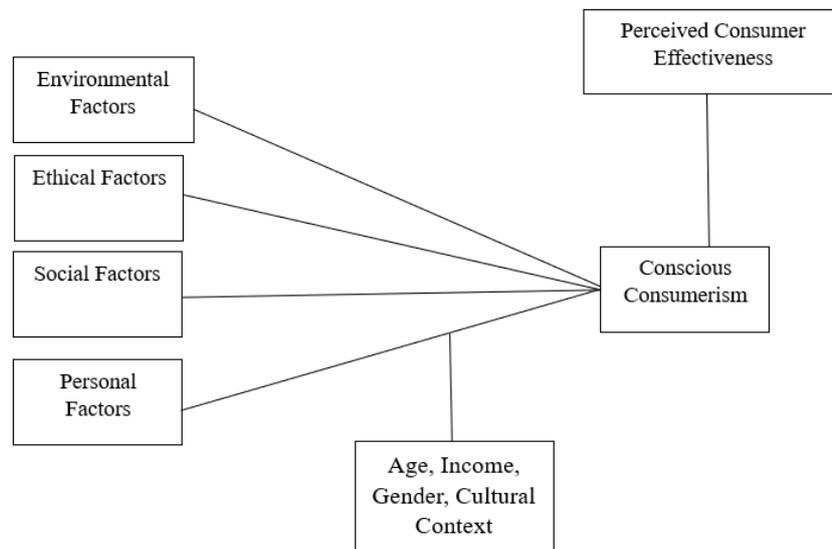


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

## Methodology

The research has used quantitative approach that utilizes snowball sampling techniques to study conscious consumerism. Three hundred participants completed a structured survey questionnaire that started with online recruitment followed by network recommendation. A Likert-scale survey evaluated trust and ethical pondering along with environmental awareness and personal values and social influences on consumer purchase decisions. SmartPLS with PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) evaluated relationships between variables by analyzing the data.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The research included 300 participants whose gender equally matched female and male (52% vs. 48%) and whose age segments split into three groups (30% age 18–30, 40% age 31–45, and 30% age 46–60). Results show that 65% of respondents demonstrated moderate to high environmental awareness along with a 70% interest in paying premiums for sustainable products.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Participants

Variable	Categories	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n)
Gender	Female	52%	156
	Male	48%	144
Age Group (years)	18–30	30%	90
	31–45	40%	120
	46–60	30%	90
Environmental Awareness	Moderate to High	65%	195
Interest in Sustainable Products	Willing to Pay Premiums	70%	210

### Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity. Table 2 shows the results of the reliability and validity tests.

**Table 2: Reliability and Validity of Constructs**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Environmental Factors	0.89	0.91	0.68
Ethical Factors	0.87	0.90	0.65
Social Factors	0.85	0.88	0.62
Personal Factors	0.88	0.89	0.67
Conscious Consumerism	0.90	0.92	0.70

This study's implemented constructs demonstrate both reliability and validity as indicated by table-generated data. All construct reliability measurements reveal good internal consistency based on Cronbach's Alpha scoring above 0.8 while higher values nearing 1.0 show superior reliability. Specifically, Environmental Factors (0.89), Ethical Factors (0.87), Social Factors (0.85), Personal Factors (0.88), and Conscious Consumerism (0.90) all show excellent consistency. The Composite Reliability (CR) values for these constructs are also above 0.8 (Environmental Factors: 0.91, Ethical Factors: 0.90, Social Factors: 0.88, Personal Factors: 0.89, and Conscious Consumerism: 0.92). A minimum threshold of 0.5 for Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is exceeded by all constructs as Environmental Factors (0.68) alongside Ethical Factors (0.65) and Social Factors (0.62) and Personal Factors (0.67) and Conscious Consumerism (0.70) sustain robust convergent validity. The measurement results show that the study's constructs exhibit strong internal consistency while concurrently capturing significant variations in conscious consumerism factors which substantiate the model's validation and robustness.

### Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Table 3 shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct (diagonal values) is greater than the correlations with other constructs, confirming discriminant validity.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)**

Construct	Environmental	Ethical	Social	Personal	Conscious Consumerism
Environmental Factors	<b>0.82</b>	0.45	0.38	0.40	0.52
Ethical Factors	0.45	<b>0.81</b>	0.42	0.44	0.58
Social Factors	0.38	0.42	<b>0.79</b>	0.39	0.47
Personal Factors	0.40	0.44	0.39	<b>0.82</b>	0.55
Conscious Consumerism	0.52	0.58	0.47	0.55	<b>0.84</b>

The Fornell-Larcker criterion results help verify that study constructs remain unique from one another thus demonstrating separate concept measurements. Each construct contains an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value whose square root exceeds the value for outside construct correlations. The computed AVE value of 0.82 from Environmental Factors exceeds their correlations with the other constructs at 0.45 for Ethical along with 0.38 for Social and 0.40 for Personal and 0.52 for Conscious Consumerism. The other four measurement constructs including Ethical, Social and Personal and Conscious Consumerism demonstrate matching results reinforcing their unique conceptual independency. The established constructs demonstrate validity because their variables distinctively measure independent elements in the study.

## Structural Model Assessment

Testing of hypothesized relationships used PLS-SEM to analyze the structural model. PLS-SEM utilized bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to determine the important levels of path coefficients importance. The results from hypothesis testing appear in Table 4.

**Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results**

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Environmental Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.32	5.12	<0.001	Supported
H2	Ethical Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.38	6.45	<0.001	Supported
H3	Social Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.18	3.21	0.001	Supported
H4	Personal Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.25	4.56	<0.001	Supported

Hypothesis testing demonstrates that the statistical relationships between all measured factors and conscious consumerism show strong support at a significant level. Environmental factors benefit conscious consumerism significantly with a ( $\beta = 0.32$ ) path coefficient and t-value of 5.12 and  $p < .001$ . Ethical factors strongly impact conscious consumerism according to research findings because Hypothesis H2 receives support with a path coefficient of 0.38 and significant t-value of 6.45 and very low p-value of less than 0.001. Social factors positively affect conscious consumerism through a path coefficient of 0.18 as well as a t-value of 3.21 and a p-value of 0.001. Evidence shows personal factors positively influence conscious consumerism through Hypothesis H4 while demonstrating path coefficient of 0.25 and t-value of 4.56 and a p-value below 0.001. Environmental and ethical concerns exert the strongest influence on conscious consumerism, yet all four factors identified in the study positively contribute to this behavior.

## Model Fit and Predictive Power

Analysis results indicated both acceptable fit and strong predictive capabilities. The model established 62% success rate at predicting conscious consumerism behavior based on independent variables. The Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  value of 0.45 validated the predictive capacity of the model.

**Table 5: Model Fit Indices**

Index	Value	Threshold
$R^2$ (Conscious Consumerism)	0.62	>0.25 (Moderate)
$Q^2$ (Stone-Geisser)	0.45	>0.35 (High)
SRMR	0.06	<0.08 (Good)

Evaluation tests from Table 5 indicate that the model conforms well to acceptable parameters for data fit. The model successfully explains 62% of conscious consumerism behaviors based on the established threshold of 0.25  $R^2$ . The statistical model shows a strong capability to explain conscious consumerism behavior variation. The predictive power of the model regarding conscious consumerism is considered high based on the  $Q^2$  value exceeding 0.35. Moreover the 0.45 value indicates accurate prediction abilities for conscious consumerism. The model exhibits a superior fit because the below-0.08 SRMR value indicates well-placed predicted data relative to actual observations. These indices validate the model works well for both conscious consumerism explanation and prediction capability.

## Moderating Effects

The moderating effects of demographics (age, gender, income) and cultural context were tested using multi-group analysis. Table 6 shows the results.

**Table 6: Moderating Effects**

Moderator	Relationship	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	p-value	Result
Age	Environmental Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.12	2.34	0.019	Significant
Income	Ethical Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.15	2.89	0.004	Significant
Gender	Social Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.08	1.45	0.147	Not Significant
Cultural Context	Personal Factors → Conscious Consumerism	0.10	2.01	0.045	Significant

Results in Table 6 demonstrate how different elements influence the connections between diverse constructs and conscious consumerism behavior. Age serves as a significant moderating factor between environmental factors and conscious consumerism based on a path coefficient of 0.12 and both a t-value of 2.34 and p-value of 0.019. Our analysis demonstrates that income exerts substantial influence on the link between ethical factors and conscious consumerism through a path coefficient of 0.15 together with a t-value of 2.89 while the p-value reaches 0.004. The relationship between social factors and conscious consumerism does not receive moderation from gender since its path coefficient of 0.08 falls short of significance at a t-value of 1.45 and p-value of 0.147. Descriptive elements yield a path coefficient of 0.10 for cultural context during its interaction with conscious consumerism assessment tests ( $T = 2.01$  with  $P = 0.045$ ). Several moderator variables such as age economy standards and cultural setting show significant effects on the relationships between factors and conscious consumerism, yet gender remains non-significant.

## Discussion of Results

The analysis of result findings shows how environmental, ethical, social and personal drivers intersect with conscious consumption while revealing the influence of age, income, gender and cultural background on these relationships. The analysis of significant relationships established through the hypotheses demonstrated positive effects of environmental ethics social and personal components on conscious consumption behaviors. The research confirms that environmental awareness combined with personal ethics influences through social networks and upheld personal beliefs determine how consumers choose sustainable purchases.

These moderating effects extend our understanding of the key relationships examined. Research indicated that age served as a meaningful factor affecting how environmental elements relate to conscious consumerism behaviors among different age groups since older consumers showed higher sensitivity to environmental concerns during purchase decisions. Income levels demonstrated a substantial influence on how people combine ethical elements with conscious buying habits because individuals with greater earnings display stronger preference for ethical purchasing choices likely because they can afford premium ethical products.

The relationship between personal variables and conscious consumerism is moderated through cultural background considerations. Consumers form their buying decisions through personal factors yet these factors show variations based on the cultural values and norms established in their communities. Research finds gender does not significantly impact how social elements affect conscious consumerism during this investigation despite establishing their reported influence. Research demonstrates that three key factors influence conscious shopping choices while personal values and ethical concerns act as principal drivers.

Policymakers and businesses who target sustainable consumption practices benefit from understanding how moderating variables including age and income level and cultural context modify the effects between key consumer behavior-influencing factors.

## Conclusion

Data from this investigation confirms how environmental components alongside ethical social elements as well as personal factors strongly shape conscious consumer behavior. All four affecting factors produced positive outcomes demonstrating that shoppers now base their purchasing choices on sustainable practices combined with ethical beliefs and social influences alongside personal standards. These relationships prove to be shaped by age demographics and income levels within specific cultural environments according to the study's results. Data demonstrated that age and income function as major moderators between environmental and ethical components yet cultural reference points impact personal value influences on responsible consumerism. The study found few factors associated with the gender differences affecting the relationship between social elements and conscious consumerism. These study results show vital information to businesses and marketers alongside policymakers about what targeting niche demographic profiles demands customized market approaches. Research into conscious consumer factors along with their personal and contextual influences will make efforts to support sustainable and ethical purchasing more powerful.

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