

Assessing the Influence of Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Sustainable Products and Its Implications For Entrepreneurs. Evidence from Developing Countries

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Abstract:

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of consumer behavior towards sustainable products and its implications for entrepreneurs with focus on developing countries. The study is survey research sampling the opinion of 100 consumers and entrepreneurs from Nigeria and Indonesia by online questionnaire to gather data on consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable products, as well as entrepreneurs' experiences and challenges with sustainable business practices. The data obtained was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed that Entrepreneurs show moderate levels of motivation to adopt sustainable practices, driven potentially by regulatory compliance, customer demands, or ethical values. Also, Consumers often express concern for sustainability but don't consistently act on it, constrained by factors like price, convenience, or skepticism. Equally, consumers are increasingly demanding sustainable products, driven by environmental concerns, social responsibility, and personal values. However, entrepreneurs face challenges in implementing sustainable business practices, including higher costs, lack of expertise, and difficulty getting the materials needed. The study therefore among others recommended that Entrepreneurs in developing countries need to integrate sustainability into their core strategies to mitigate challenges and align with market demands. Also, Policymakers and industry advisors should focus on reducing entry barriers, such as offering financial incentives or technical support for measuring and implementing sustainability. They should also develop and implement policies that support sustainable business practices, provide education and training programs for businesses, and promote sustainability awareness and education among consumers and the society in line with United Nations SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and Production).

Keywords:

Consumer Behavior, Sustainable products and services, Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Business Practices.

I. Introduction

It has become very common to find consumers who express real concern for the environment, but their attitudes are not necessarily translated into their buying behaviour. Recently, Consumers' and entrepreneurs' interest in eco-friendly products has grown leading them to try incorporating eco-friendly products, such as "green products" into their daily lives' activities. Environmental concerns are influencing consumer behavior and business strategies more and more in the developing countries in recent time. By integrating environmental

considerations into their marketing strategies, businesses can differentiate themselves in the market, enhance brand reputation, and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers (Orji, Ahmad and Dangana, 2025). As problems like resource depletion and climate change worsen, consumers have a significant influence on how these issues are handled through their purchasing decisions. As a result of this trend, consumers are increasingly choosing sustainable and eco-friendly goods and services (Fernandes & Gabriel, 2025). The factors involved in buying green or sustainable products such as the motivation of consumers and the rationale behind their choices continue to be difficult to understand ((Oyenuga, Orji and Ahungwa, 2023; Nduji, Orji, Oyenuga and Oriaku 2023). Adoption of sustainable practices is more crucial than ever since sustainability has been recognized as a major global concern. Sustainability is everybody business, so Business Enterprises must operate in a way that is safe and ethical both to humanity and the environment. Sustainability is the ability to provide for present needs without compromising future ability (Orji, 2024).

Future generations will be affected in the long run by the decisions made today. So, in order to provide a healthy and livable future, sustainability guarantees that moral and responsible decisions are made. The adoption of sustainable practices benefits businesses that go "green" in addition to having a positive effect on the environment (Orji, Ahmad and Nduji, 2024). Since sustainability enhances a company's competitive advantage, reputation, and customer satisfaction, research has demonstrated a positive correlation between sustainable practices and firm performance (Jiang., Lee, Jin., & Kan (2025; Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, & Saaeidi, 2015; Nduji, Orji and Oriaku, 2024).

Consumer behavior and lifestyle are the most important and fundamental factors that contribute to sustainable consumption. In order to effectively improve the ecological quality of the earth and the living environment for future generations, it is imperative that consumers, particularly individual consumers, adopt sustainable consumption practices. Identifying the factors that affect people's intentions to practice sustainable consumption and offering initial solutions to these factors has therefore becomes very crucial. It is in the light of this that this study intends to assess the influence of consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable products and it's implications for entrepreneurs with emphasis on developing countries in Africa and Asia.

On the whole this study will provide answers to the following pertinent questions:

- a. What are the key factors driving the shift towards sustainable products among consumers, and how do these factors influence their purchasing decisions in developing Countries?
- b. What strategies can entrepreneurs use to effectively develop and market sustainable products and services in developing Countries?
- c. and what are the opportunities and challenges associated with the shift towards sustainability in developing Countries?

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Consumer buying behaviour

Consumer is the one who ultimately utilizes the goods and services produced, while customer is a person, company or other entity which patronizes another person, company, or other entity regularly. A consumer may be a customer, while a customer may not be a consumer, because he/she may not be buying for his or her uses (Orji, Oyenuga and Ahungwa 2020). But in studying consumer buying behavior, customers are also generally

referred to as consumers, because whether they are the buyers or users, there is an exchange or transfer from one person to another for needs satisfaction.

Nizhum (2024) stated that Consumer buying behavior describes the steps that customers take before making a purchase of a good or service, both online and offline. Search engine research, participation in social media discussions, and a range of other activities could be part of this process.

Also, Ukpaka & Anetoh, (2025) stated that Consumer purchase behaviour refers to the decision-making processes and actions that individuals engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, or disposing of products and services

According to Orji (2017) Consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of the ultimate consumer, and many other factors and characteristics that influence the individual in what he is and, in his decision, making process, shopping habits, purchasing behaviors, the brands he buys or the retailers he patronizes. A purchase decision is the result of each and every one of these factors. Thus, consumer behaviour might be the mental, emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using and disposing of products and services so as to satisfy needs and desires. It has been observed that some organizations lose patronage and consumers because they fail to build a formidable marketing strategy that could help increase patronage in the industry. It has been observed that some organizations lose patronage and consumers because they fail to build a formidable marketing strategy that could help increase patronage in the industry by understanding the needs of consumers and what influences their behaviours. Hence there is a need to study what is influencing the consumption of sustainable products in developing countries like Nigeria and Indonesia. For instance, when consumers purchase a green household cleaner, they anticipate ingredients to be natural, safe, and genuine; the product to be gentle and harmless to children and the environment; and the manufacturing process to be responsible (Orji et al, 2025).

2.2 Sustainability

The United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as —meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future ‘. It is the balance between the environment, equity, and economy. According to Orji (2024), and Orji, Ahmad and Nduji (2024) Sustainable development is maintaining a delicate balance between the human need to improve the way of life, maintain and guarantee the continuity of a business and feeling of well-being on one hand, and preserving natural resources and ecosystems, on which we and future generations depend. The United Nations Agenda 2030 is a plan of action for people, the planet, and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in greater freedom. The United Nations recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda (Orji et al, 2025).

The world is currently dealing with serious environmental issues like deforestation, biodiversity loss, toxic waste disposal, overpopulation, and global warming (Singh, 2017). Environmental harm could be done now that cannot be undone (Deverell, 2020). There is a growing need for governments, businesses, and consumers to respond to the growing awareness of these environmental issues. As a result, businesses are finding it more and more crucial to make firm commitments to sustainability. According to WCED (1987), sustainability is "development that fits the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

generations to meet their own needs." Sustainability is intended to be a path rather than a definitive result.

Setting clear objectives is therefore crucial to creating a community that is both healthy and livable for coming generations. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were unveiled in 2015 as a global initiative to guarantee that everyone lives in peace and prosperity by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are: (1) No poverty, (2) zero hunger, (3) Good health and well-being, (4) High-quality education, (5) equality of gender, (6) Sanitation and clean water, (7) affordable and sustainable energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) infrastructure, industry, and innovation, (10) reduce inequalities, (11) Ecofriendly cities and communities, (12) responsible consumption and production, (13) Climate action; (14) life below water; (15) life on land; (16) justice, peace, and strong institutions; and (17) collaboration towards the objectives (United Nations, 2015; Orji, 2024).

These SDGs aim to increase awareness that in order to build a more sustainable world, both individuals and businesses must become sustainability change agents. (Orji, 2024). Businesses bear a great deal of responsibility for sustainability, and there is a great demand for sustainable solutions. Business sustainability requires firms to adhere to the principle of sustainable development and environmental accountability (Orji, et al 2024)). Furthermore, sustainability is a key concern for industries worldwide and an essential aspect of businesses' lives (Neumann, Martinez, & Martinez, 2021).

2.3 How consumer behavior is impacted by sustainable practices

The desire for more environmentally friendly goods and services is a new trend in consumer behavior. Consumers are willing to integrate their environmental concerns into their actions, such as recycling. Slowly but surely, consumers are starting to make more sustainable purchases. Consumers who are "having a lifestyle, that is, environment consciousness, selecting and recycling products and taking part in events to protect the environment" are said to exhibit sustainable purchasing behavior (Fraj-Andrés & Martinez, 2006). Prior studies have shown that customers are inclined to support businesses that have implemented sustainable practices (Neumann et al., 2021). Purchase intention, trust, and brand equity are the variables that were used in this study to ascertain the influence on consumer behavior. Khalufi et al (2025) stated that Products labeled with carbon footprint information often attract consumers who are ready to pay more for them, and that Consumers want sustainable packaging, which influences buying decisions and loyalty.

Fernandes & Gabriel (2025) stated that Consumption is a cornerstone of sustainability alongside post-consumption behavior, even with a need for a shared understanding of what sustainable consumption means in marketing and consumer research. Usually, sustainable consumption is treated as the purchase and use of environmentally friendly products. However, this notion is too narrow, as consumer consumption sustainability involves various forms of manifestation, including purchases of environmentally friendly products, fair trade products, orientation towards shared consumption of products, as well as following a more modest and less materialistic consumption lifestyle considering donation and renting behavior.

Jiang, Lee, Jin., & Kan (2025) stated that Consumer responses to upcycled products demonstrate a complex interplay of positive and negative perceptions. Upcycled products generally garner superior consumer satisfaction regarding aesthetic appeal compared to recycled alternatives. While recycled products may achieve aesthetic value in specific contexts, such as luxury or vintage apparel, aesthetic appreciation constitutes a fundamental aspect of consumer perception toward upcycled products. Additionally, consumers derive satisfaction

from the creative transformation inherent in upcycling, which generates new functional items with enhanced value from end-of-life products. Also, they identified Ethical consumption, which involves consumption practices that consciously consider societal and environmental consequences. The expansion of ethical consumption practices has been enabled by market globalization, civic organization growth, technological advancement, and effective market campaigns (Jiang et al, 2025).

The contemporary manifestation of ethical consumption extends beyond simple purchase decisions to encompass a holistic approach to consumer behavior that includes pre-purchase consideration, usage patterns, and post-consumption disposal practices. This evolution reflects a growing awareness of consumption's broader implications for social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic equity (Jiang et al, 2025). Equally, sustainable consumption entails educating consumers about sustainability while also greening the entire supply chain, from the input material supplier to production and distribution to the final market

2.4 Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on the Consumption value theory. The consumption value theory was developed by Sheth et al (1991). It identifies five consumption values that influence the decision-making behaviour of consumers and provides a framework for understanding how these values work. They are valuable in terms of function, social contact, feeling, knowledge, and condition. They are also valuable in terms of condition. According to Mason et al (2023) and Orji et al (2025) the Theory of Consumption Value (TVC) provides an understanding of the fundamental drivers behind an individual's choices via the lens of consumption values. These values are consumers' perceived utility of a product or service in terms of its performance, association with a social group, capacity to arouse emotions or curiosity, novelty and compatibility in different circumstances. Sheth et al. (1991) noted that the unidimensional conceptualization of value rarely explains the multidimensional nature of consumer behavior: consumers' judgments depend on numerous functional and non functional components. Hence, Sheth and colleagues proposed the TCV by including five core values: functional, emotional, social, epistemic and conditional. Accordingly, TCV is well recognized for explaining consumers' inherent reasons for buying (vs. not buying) a product or service. The TCV has three fundamental propositions: (1) consumer behavior is a function of five consumption values, (2) all five consumption values are independent of each other and perceived at an individual level and (3) they have different contributions in different purchase situations. This implies that one individual may purchase a specific electronic television to conform with other individuals within its reference group (i.e. social value), while another may buy it for its long battery time (i.e. functional value), as explained further by Mason et al (2023). Orji et al (2025) stated that a product's actual performance or how useful consumers believe it to be are two examples of its functional value. The term "social value" refers to the perceived benefit that a product is supposed to bring by being associated to one or more distinct social groupings. The perceived benefit gained by a different propensity to elicit affective states or feelings is referred to as the "emotional value." An alternative's epistemic value is the perceived benefit that results from its capacity to generate interest, give novelty, and/or satisfy a demand for knowledge. This value can also be referred to as an informational value. The decision-maker is presented with a particular scenario or set of circumstances, and the conditional value is the perceived benefit that is acquired as a result of that specific situation or combination of circumstances. One, several, or perhaps all five of the levels of consumption could have a role in determining the outcome of a decision (Orji et al, 2025). This theory is pertinent to this study since sustainable product entrepreneurs makes use of consumption values such as functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values in

order to influence the decision-making and behaviour of consumers who desire environmentally friendly products in many developing countries.

III. Research Methods

Based on the nature of this research, the survey research method was adopted. It involves the systematic gathering of facts. Also, purposive/judgmental sampling were adopted to select respondents consisting of 50 consumers and 50 entrepreneurs/business owners in developing countries across Africa and Asia. Thus, 100 Samples were arrived at based on value judgment that respondents are very knowledgeable in the subject matter as opined by Orji et al (2021) and Orji (2022). Data was collected through an online survey questionnaire, which includes: Demographic information (organization name, location, year established), The target population consisted of consumers who have purchased sustainable products in the past, as well as entrepreneurs and business owners who have adopted sustainable business practices. The data collection procedure involved the following steps: 1.the questionnaire was uploaded to an online survey platform (Google Forms). 2. The link to the questionnaire was shared on social media, emails, online forums, and professional networks. 3. Participants were invited to complete the questionnaire, and their responses were collected anonymously.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This includes the mean, standard deviation, multiple regression and range of scores. Thereby providing answers to the pertinent questions earlier raised.

IV. Results and Discussions

4.1 Analysis and Findings

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of Consumer attitudes and Behaviors towards Sustainable Products

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
How important is sustainability to you when making purchasing decisions?	2.41	.726	100
Which of the following sustainable products have you purchased in the past? (Select all that apply)	3.07	1.225	100
How often do you check the environmental impact of a product before buying it?	2.82	.989	100

Source; field survey 2025

The question on ‘How important is sustainability when making purchasing decisions? Show a

Mean = 2.41, Std. Deviation = 0.726. Respondents on average rate sustainability as somewhat important, but there is some variability in opinions (moderate standard deviation). The question on Which of the following sustainable products have you purchased in the past? Has a Mean = 3.07, Std. Deviation = 1.225. This measure seems categorical or ordinal (likely counting product types purchased). The higher variability suggests diverse purchasing patterns among respondents. On the question ‘How often do you check the environmental impact of a product before buying it? Show the Mean = 2.82, Std. Deviation = 0.989. meaning that

Respondents moderately check environmental impacts, with considerable variation in the frequency.

Table 2. Correlations

	How important is sustainability when making buying decisions?	Which of the following sustainable products have you purchased in the past? (Select all that apply)	How often do you check the environmental impact of a product before purchasing it?
How important is sustainability when making buying decisions?	1	-.135	.118
Which of the following sustainable products have you purchased in the past? (Select all that apply)	-.181	1	.243
How often do you check the environmental impact of a product before purchasing it?	.118	-.365**	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

On the Importance of sustainability vs. sustainable product purchase behavior: Pearson Correlation show= -0.135, $p = 0.181$ (not significant). There is a weak, negative, and non-significant relationship, indicating little to no consistent trend between how important consumers view sustainability and their purchasing behavior. On Sustainable product purchases vs. checking environmental impact: Pearson Correlation show = -0.365**, $p < 0.01$. A moderate, negative, and significant correlation suggests that individuals who frequently purchase sustainable products might do so without consistently checking the environmental impact or vice versa. Pearson Correlation = 0.118, $p = 0.243$ (not significant). Show a weak, positive, and non-significant correlation indicates no strong relationship between valuing sustainability and checking environmental impact. This revealed that while sustainability is somewhat important, it does not strongly translate into frequent or deliberate checking of environmental impacts. There is variability in buying behavior, suggesting that not all consumers prioritize sustainability consistently. Based on this Entrepreneurs can focus on educating consumers about the environmental impact of their products. Labels or certifications could help bridge the gap: The variability in sustainable product purchases suggests room for expanding options tailored to different consumer segments. The weak correlation between sustainability importance and behavior might indicate skepticism or lack

of awareness about sustainable products' claims. Consumers often express concern for sustainability but don't consistently act on it, constrained by factors like price, convenience, or skepticism. Trudel (2019) has highlighted that a lack of understanding of sustainability metrics (like environmental impact labels) often inhibits meaningful behavior changes, similar to the weak correlation found regarding checking environmental impacts. Studies on generational differences (e.g., Casalegno & Candelo, 2020) stated that younger consumers are more engaged with sustainability, though their behavior still depends heavily on clear and accessible product labeling.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Entrepreneur Experiences and Challenges with Sustainable Business Practices

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
What motivated you to adopt sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply)	2.61	1.091	100
What challenges have you faced in implementing sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply)	3.89	1.693	100
How do you currently measure the environmental impact of your business operations?	3.81	.720	100

On the issue of 'Motivations for adopting sustainable business practices; the result shows a Mean = 2.61, Std. Deviation = 1.091. That means Respondents exhibit a moderate level of motivation for adopting sustainable business practices, with noticeable variation in the factors driving their decisions. Also on the issue of 'Challenges in implementing sustainable practices; It show a Mean of = 3.89, Std. Deviation = 1.693. Meaning that Entrepreneurs face significant challenges, as evidenced by the high mean. The high standard deviation indicates variability in the types of challenges encountered. Based on Methods for measuring environmental impact' it show a mean of = 3.81, Std. Deviation = 0.720. Meaning that most entrepreneurs have adopted some form of environmental impact measurement, though the relatively low variability suggests consistency in these methods.

Table 4. Correlations

	What motivated you to adopt sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply)	What challenges have you faced in implementing sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply)	How do you currently measure the environmental impact of your business operations?
What motivated you to adopt sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply) ^N	1 100	-.368** .000 100	-.391** .000 100
What challenges have you faced in implementing sustainable business practices in your company? (Select all that apply) ^N	-.368** .000 100	1 .000 100	.181 .071 100
How do you currently measure the environmental impact of your business operations? ^N	-.391** .000 100	.181 .071 100	1 100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

On the Motivations and challenges: Pearson Correlation show = -0.368**, $p < 0.01$. which means moderate, negative, and significant correlation indicating that entrepreneurs with stronger motivations may perceive fewer challenges or have systems in place to mitigate them. On the Motivations and environmental impact measurement: Pearson Correlation shows = -0.391**, $p < 0.01$. A similar moderate, negative, and significant correlation suggests that more motivated entrepreneurs may already have environmental measurement systems, thus perceiving less need to improve or expand these tools. Also, on the Challenges and environmental impact measurement: Pearson Correlation of = 0.181, $p = 0.071$. revealed a weak, positive, and non-significant correlation indicating no substantial relationship between perceived challenges and how entrepreneurs measure environmental impacts.

V. Conclusion

The study revealed that Entrepreneurs show moderate levels of motivation to adopt sustainable practices, driven potentially by regulatory compliance, customer demands, or ethical values. The negative correlation with challenges suggests that highly motivated entrepreneurs may proactively address or mitigate obstacles, aligning with proactive business strategies.

The challenges faced by businesses are varied and significant, possibly including high costs, lack of expertise, or difficulties in measuring return on investment (ROI). Despite these challenges, most businesses have adopted systems for measuring environmental impact, indicating progress in operationalizing sustainability. Businesses with more established sustainability goals may feel less pressured to improve their current measurement tools, reflected in the negative correlation with motivations. Entrepreneurs showed moderate motivation (Mean = 2.61), reflecting diverse drivers such as consumer demand, regulatory requirements, or corporate values. A significant negative correlation between motivations and challenges suggests that entrepreneurs with strong motivations may develop strategies to address potential hurdles effectively. Challenges scored high (Mean = 3.89), indicating widespread difficulties, such as financial constraints, lack of expertise, or time limitations. The variability in responses (Std. Deviation = 1.693) highlights that challenges differ based on industry type, resource availability, and business maturity. Also high mean (3.81) for environmental measurement indicates that many entrepreneurs are aware of the importance of monitoring sustainability efforts, though there remains room for improvement in standardizing these methods. This highlight the role of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in adopting green practices. For instance, consumer expectations and brand reputation are pivotal, as consumers increasingly prioritize sustainability in their purchasing decisions. This aligns with findings by Kumar et al. (2021) and Khuong et al. (2021), emphasizing that businesses adopting transparent sustainability measures often enjoy enhanced loyalty and trust. Equally financial and time constraints are major hurdles, especially for startups and SMEs. Palmer (2000) noted that resource limitations can delay or prevent the integration of sustainable practices. This is consistent with the findings, where challenges ranked highly, indicating their significance during the adoption phase. Measuring sustainability efforts is increasingly viewed as essential for long-term business strategy. While most firms recognize its importance, gaps in standard practices remain, especially among SMEs. Entrepreneurs motivated by sustainability often adopt comprehensive frameworks, reducing their perceived barriers, as reflected in the correlation results. The study recommend that Entrepreneurs in developing countries need to integrate sustainability into their core strategies to mitigate challenges and align with market demands. Also Policymakers and industry advisors should focus on reducing entry barriers, such as offering financial incentives or technical support for measuring and implementing sustainability. Equally, Businesses should leverage transparent communication to enhance consumer trust and loyalty, which has been shown to improve brand equity significantly.

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