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From Cognitive and Affective Drivers to Sustainable Consumer Behavior: A Systematic Literature Review of Behavioral Mechanisms Across Consumption Domains

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable consumer behavior is shaped by multiple psychological and contextual factors, yet the roles of cognitive and affective mechanisms and their translation into behavior remain fragmented across consumption domains. This systematic literature review synthesizes evidence on the cognitive and affective drivers of sustainable consumer behavior, their interaction in the intention–behavior process, and their variation across consumption contexts. Following a PRISMA-informed review process, records were identified through Google Scholar. After screening and full-text eligibility assessment, 48 articles published between 2020 and 2026 were included. Data were extracted and coded using a structured framework covering cognitive, affective, attitudinal, moral-normative, social, and situational factors, as well as behavioral outcomes and consumption domains. Cognitive factors appeared in 47 studies, compared with affective factors in 16. Social and situational factors were also prominent, each appearing in 28 and 47 studies, respectively. The outcome synthesis revealed substantial heterogeneity: 17 studies focused on intention or willingness, 14 on reported behavior, and 14 examined both. The reviewed literature therefore provides stronger and more frequent coverage of cognitive explanations than affective mechanisms, while also indicating that individual orientations operate within social and situational conditions. The distinction between intention and reported behavior remains essential, and the mechanisms identified may vary across purchasing, food, fashion, digital, household, and other consumption domains. The review offers an integrative, process-oriented synthesis and identifies priorities for more balanced, behaviorally grounded, and domain-sensitive research.

Keywords: sustainable consumer behavior; cognitive factors; affective factors; intention–behavior gap; systematic literature review

ABSTRAK

Perilaku konsumen berkelanjutan dibentuk oleh berbagai faktor psikologis dan kontekstual. Namun, peran mekanisme kognitif dan afektif serta proses penerjemahannya menjadi perilaku masih terfragmentasi dalam berbagai domain konsumsi. Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini menyintesis bukti mengenai faktor-faktor kognitif dan afektif yang mendorong perilaku konsumen berkelanjutan, interaksi keduanya dalam proses intensi–perilaku, serta variasinya dalam berbagai konteks konsumsi. Dengan mengikuti proses tinjauan yang mengacu pada PRISMA, artikel diidentifikasi melalui Google Scholar. Setelah melalui proses penyaringan dan penilaian kelayakan teks, 48 artikel yang diterbitkan pada periode 2020–2026 disertakan. Data diekstraksi dan dikodekan menggunakan kerangka terstruktur yang mencakup faktor kognitif, afektif, sikap, moral-normatif, sosial, dan situasional, serta luaran perilaku dan domain konsumsi. Faktor kognitif ditemukan dalam 47 studi, sedangkan faktor afektif ditemukan dalam 16 studi. Faktor sosial dan situasional juga cukup menonjol, masing-masing ditemukan dalam 28 dan 47 studi. Sintesis luaran menunjukkan heterogenitas yang cukup besar, 17

studi berfokus pada intensi atau kesediaan, 14 studi pada perilaku yang dilaporkan, dan 14 studi mengkaji keduanya. Dengan demikian, literatur yang ditinjau memberikan cakupan yang lebih kuat dan lebih sering terhadap penjelasan kognitif dibandingkan mekanisme afektif, sekaligus menunjukkan bahwa orientasi individu bekerja dalam kondisi sosial dan situasional. Pembedaan antara intensi dan perilaku yang dilaporkan tetap menjadi hal penting, sementara mekanisme yang teridentifikasi dapat bervariasi pada domain pembelian, pangan, fesyen, konsumsi digital, rumah tangga, dan domain konsumsi lainnya. Tinjauan ini menawarkan sintesis integratif yang berorientasi pada proses serta mengidentifikasi prioritas penelitian untuk pengembangan kajian yang lebih seimbang, berbasis perilaku, dan sensitif terhadap karakteristik masing-masing domain.

Kata kunci: perilaku konsumen berkelanjutan; faktor kognitif; faktor afektif; kesenjangan intensi–perilaku; tinjauan literatur sistematis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable consumer behavior has become an increasingly important area of inquiry as consumption-related decisions extend beyond the acquisition of products to include product use, reuse, waste reduction, recycling, and other everyday practices. Within the literature, however, sustainable consumer behavior is not represented by a single type of action. Studies have examined green purchasing and repurchase, sustainable apparel choices, food-waste reduction, environmentally supportive post-purchase practices, and the adoption of sustainable services and mobility options (Kumagai & Nagasawa, 2020; Byrd & Su, 2021; Jabr et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Huynh et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026). This breadth indicates that sustainable consumption should be understood as a set of related behaviors occurring across different stages and domains of consumption, rather than being reduced to green product purchasing alone.

A substantial part of the research explains sustainable consumer behavior through consumers' cognitive evaluations and beliefs. Environmental knowledge and awareness, perceived green value, environmental concern, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and trust appear in studies of green purchase intention and sustainable consumption behavior (Hoang & Tung, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Cuandra et al., 2026; Shetu & Maisha, 2026; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026). The Theory of Planned Behavior and its extensions are frequently used to explain how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control relate to intentions and, in some studies, reported behavior (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Weng, 2026). Other studies draw on value-belief-norm perspectives, health beliefs, or self-expansion to examine the roles of personal values, perceived consequences, and connectedness with nature (Küçükyörük & Kurtuldu, 2022; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Sun & Wu, 2024). Collectively, these studies show that cognitive explanations are diverse and operate through different psychological pathways.

Nevertheless, sustainable consumption is not exclusively a matter of information processing or rational evaluation. Affective experiences and emotional processes have also been incorporated into explanations of consumer responses. For example, eco-guilt has been examined as a condition shaping the effects of perceived value and intention on food-waste reduction, while green brand love has been studied as a mechanism through which greenwashing may influence purchase intention (Huynh et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026). Research on consumer engagement further distinguishes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, while work on emotional intelligence considers consumers' capacity to understand and manage emotion in sustainable consumption contexts (Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026). These constructs should not automatically be treated as interchangeable: environmental concern, attitude, mindfulness, emotional competence, and discrete emotional states represent conceptually different phenomena. A synthesis that groups all psychological variables together risks obscuring the distinct roles of cognitive appraisal, affective response, evaluative judgment, and moral or social orientation.

Another persistent issue concerns the translation of favorable orientations and behavioral intentions into enacted behavior. Several studies distinguish purchase intention from purchase behavior and identify intention as a mediator between psychological antecedents

and behavior (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Cuandra et al., 2026; Weng, 2026). Other work suggests that this translation is conditioned by perceived control, self-efficacy, responsibility, policy effectiveness, and the availability of sustainable products or retailing practices (Wang, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026). Social and communication-related conditions may also shape the process: subjective and normative social influence, electronic word of mouth, influencer messaging, and digital engagement have been examined as predictors, mediators, or moderators of sustainable consumption-related responses (Nga & Khoi, 2024; Sarıoğlu, 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Shetu & Maisha, 2026). These findings suggest that psychological readiness alone may not fully explain behavioral enactment; consumers' social environments and material opportunities also matter.

The mechanisms may further vary across consumption domains. Green purchasing studies commonly examine product evaluations, perceived value, trust, marketing cues, and purchase intention (Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Abdulwase et al., 2026). In contrast, research on food waste incorporates perceived value and eco-guilt, while sustainable fashion studies consider anti-consumption, ethical concern, second-hand purchasing, and the practical accessibility of alternatives (Huynh et al., 2026; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026). Studies of household products, hospitality, events, e-commerce, and electric vehicles introduce additional conditions such as repurchase evaluation, consumer awareness, facility quality, digital platform engagement, and green identity (Sharma et al., 2023; Sun & Wu, 2024; Nguyen, 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026). It is therefore important to examine both the psychological mechanisms that recur across studies and the contextual conditions that may be specific to particular consumption activities.

Despite this growing and varied body of research, the evidence remains dispersed across theoretical perspectives, psychological constructs, behavioral outcomes, and consumption domains. Studies often focus on selected predictors or a particular outcome, while the relationships among cognitive and affective mechanisms, supporting attitudinal and moral orientations, social influences, and situational conditions are not always considered together. In addition, the outcome measures are not uniform: some studies assess intention or willingness to pay, whereas others examine reported purchasing or broader sustainable practices. Treating these outcomes as equivalent would overstate the extent to which the literature explains actual behavioral enactment. The diversity of constructs and outcomes therefore calls for a systematic synthesis that differentiates psychological mechanisms and carefully separates intention from behavior.

To address this need, this systematic literature review synthesizes 48 eligible journal articles published within the 2020–2026 review period. It develops a process-oriented account of sustainable consumer behavior by examining cognitive and affective drivers, the ways these mechanisms relate to intentions and reported behaviors, and the contextual variation across consumption domains. Rather than assuming that all studies test the same causal model, the review compares the mechanisms and relationships reported in the included literature and identifies areas where evidence remains limited. Specifically, the review addresses four research questions:

RQ1. What cognitive and affective factors have been identified as drivers of sustainable consumer behavior?

RQ2. How do cognitive and affective mechanisms interact in translating sustainable orientations and behavioral intentions into actual consumer behavior?

RQ3. How do these psychological mechanisms vary across different sustainable consumption domains, including purchasing, food consumption, fashion, digital consumption, product use, waste reduction, mobility, and other consumption-related practices?

RQ4. What theoretical, contextual, and methodological gaps remain?

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to synthesize empirical research on cognitive and affective drivers of sustainable consumer behavior. The review focused on the psychological factors associated with sustainable consumption, the mechanisms through which orientations and intentions may translate into behavior, and variations across consumption domains. The review process was documented using the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework (Page et al., 2021). The unit of

analysis was the published journal article; individual consumers or survey respondents reported in the included studies were not treated as units of analysis in this review.

Information Sources and Search Strategy

Literature searches were conducted using Google Scholar. The search period was restricted to publications dated from 2020 to 2026, and the review considered English-language journal articles. Google Scholar searches were organized into four query groups covering (1) broad sustainable and green consumer behavior, (2) psychological antecedents such as environmental knowledge, awareness, concern, values, self-identity, and attitudes, (3) purchase and behavioral intentions and the intention–behavior gap, and (4) consumption activities including purchasing, sustainable mobility, and waste reduction. Search strings included combinations such as "sustainable consumer behavior," "sustainable consumption AND environmental knowledge," "green purchase intention AND green purchase behavior," and "sustainable consumption AND sustainable mobility." The search log recorded 29 planned search strings: 19 yielded exportable records and 10 yielded no results. The exported Google Scholar records totaled 251 before deduplication.

Eligibility Criteria

Studies were considered eligible when they addressed sustainable or green consumer behavior in a consumer or consumption context and examined at least one relevant psychological factor, behavioral mechanism, or consumption domain. The review focused on cognitive and affective drivers while also recording attitudinal/evaluative, moral-normative/value, social, and situational/contextual factors where these were relevant to the explanation of behavior. Eligible domains included purchasing, product use, mobility, recycling, and waste-related practices. Studies were excluded when they focused primarily on technical or engineering processes, production or supply-chain issues without a consumer behavior outcome, macro-level policy without an individual or consumer behavior focus, or pro-environmental behavior that could not be established as consumption-related. Studies in which sustainable consumption behavior was only an antecedent or mediator, rather than a relevant behavioral outcome, were also excluded when the final outcome did not represent consumer behavior. Intention, willingness, self-reported practice, and behavior outcomes were distinguished during extraction; intention was not treated as evidence of actual behavior.

Study Selection

The search process identified 251 records from Google Scholar. After removing 55 duplicate records, 196 unique records remained for title screening. Fifty-eight records were excluded at title screening, leaving 138 records for abstract screening and full-text retrieval. Full texts were sought for all 138 records; 74 reports could not be retrieved, while 64 PDF files were obtained. Reconciliation identified two duplicate report copies among the retrieved PDFs, leaving 62 unique reports for full-text eligibility assessment. Fourteen reports were excluded at this stage: 12 had been excluded in the initial full-text screening, and two additional articles were excluded during the final eligibility validation. The final synthesis therefore comprised 48 eligible articles (62 assessed = 14 excluded + 48 included).

Data Extraction and Coding

Data were extracted into a structured spreadsheet covering bibliographic information, consumption context or domain, study purpose, theoretical or conceptual framework, research design and sample, analytical technique, cognitive factors, affective factors, social and situational factors, behavioral mechanisms, behavioral outcomes, principal findings, stated contributions and limitations, relevance to the research questions, and verification notes. The 48 eligible articles were then organized in a master coding matrix. Coding was conducted at the article level and allowed multiple factor categories to be recorded for a single study. Cognitive factors included knowledge, awareness, perceived control, and cognitive-attentional processes where supported by the study's constructs. Affective factors were reserved for explicitly emotional or affective constructs; attitudes were coded as evaluative rather than automatically classified as affective. Moral values and personal norms, social influence, and situational conditions were recorded as separate supporting categories. The role of sustainable consumer behavior was also checked to distinguish antecedents, mediators, intentions, and final behavioral outcomes.

Synthesis Approach

A descriptive and thematic synthesis was used. Descriptive analysis summarized

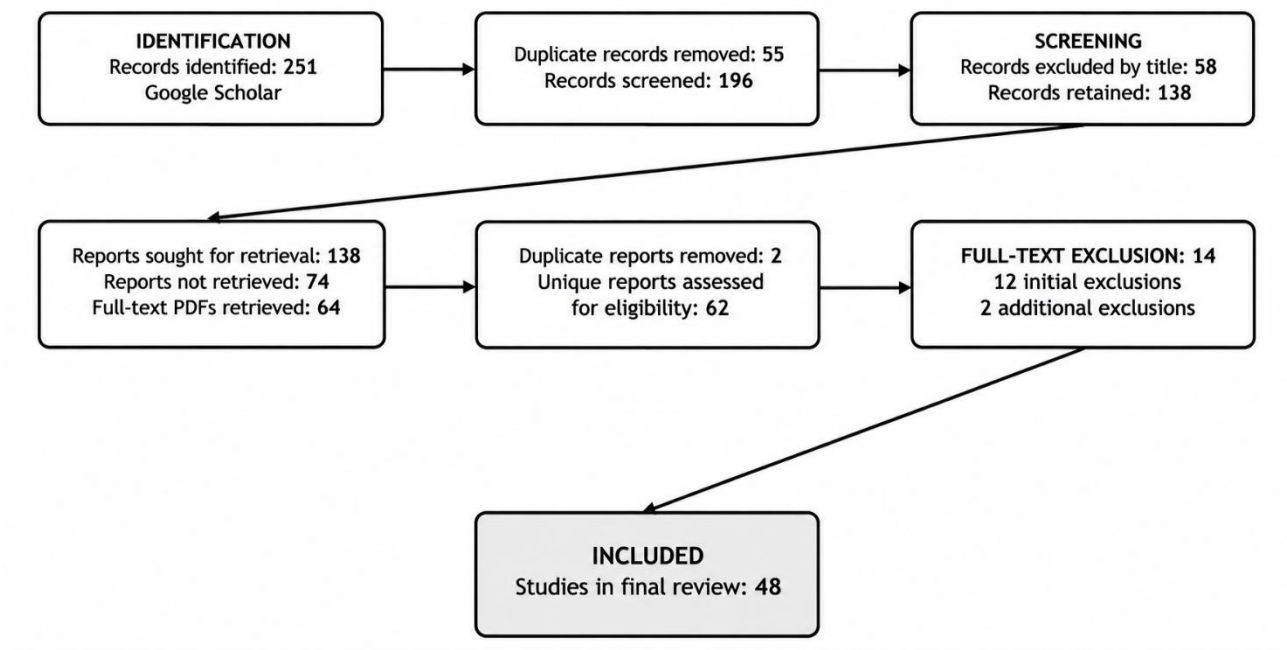


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

publication characteristics, methodological profiles, factor categories, behavioral outcome types, and consumption domains. Thematic synthesis compared how cognitive and affective factors were positioned in the proposed or tested relationships where reported by the primary studies. The analysis also compared patterns across purchasing, product use, mobility, recycling, and waste-related domains. Because the included studies differed in constructs, measures, samples, contexts, and outcome operationalizations, findings were synthesized narratively rather than statistically pooled. Frequencies of coded categories indicate their presence across studies and should not be interpreted as effect sizes, relative causal strength, or evidence of statistical significance, behavioral mechanisms, including direct, indirect, mediating, moderating, and contextual.

Methodological Appraisal and Review Limitations

The full-text eligibility assessment evaluated relevance to the review questions and the operational fit of the consumer behavior outcome. It was not a formal risk-of-bias or methodological quality appraisal. The evidence base is therefore interpreted with attention to differences in research design and outcome measurement, including the distinction between self-reported behavior and independently observed behavior. The search was limited to Google Scholar, English-language publications, and the 2020–2026 period; relevant studies indexed only in other databases may consequently have been missed. In addition, the synthesis and coding depend on the information available in the extracted full-text records, and incomplete reporting in individual articles may constrain comparisons.

3. RESULTS

Overview of the Included Studies

The final eligible corpus comprised 48 articles after the exclusion of two records during the final eligibility review. Article 34 was excluded because its focus was general pro-environmental behavior and the available extraction did not establish a consumer- or consumption-specific behavioral outcome. Article 45 was excluded because sustainable consumption behavior was positioned as a mediator, whereas the final outcome was attitude toward sustainable development. These decisions were made to maintain alignment between the review's scope and its focus on sustainable consumer behavior.

Table 1. Publication-Year Distribution

Publication year	Studies (n)
2020	3
2021	1
2022	2
2023	3
2024	5
2025	5
2026	29

The included articles covered publication years from 2020 to 2026. The largest group was published in 2026 (29 studies), followed by 2024 and 2025 (5 studies), 2020 (3 studies), 2023 (3 studies) and 2022 (2 studies), and 2021 (1 studies). These counts are based on the author/year information in the extraction matrix; online-first and issue-publication dates should be reconciled with publisher metadata before submission.

The extracted methodological descriptions indicate a predominance of quantitative or survey-based research. A preliminary classification identified 45 quantitative/survey-based studies, two qualitative/interview-based studies, and one study for which the method was not sufficiently clear in the extraction record. This classification is provisional and should be checked against the Methods sections of the original articles.

Table 2. Broad Methodological Profile

Study Design (Broad Coding)	Studies (n)
Quantitative / survey-based	45
Qualitative / interview-based	2
Method not clear from extracted record	1

Distribution of Cognitive and Affective Factors

The coding results show that cognitive factors are more frequently represented than affective factors. Cognitive factors were identified in 47 of the 48 eligible articles, whereas affective factors were identified in 16 articles. The categories are non-exclusive, meaning that an article may contribute to more than one explanatory category.

Table 3. Presence of Coded Explanatory Categories

Category	Studies (n)
Cognitive factors	47
Affective factors	16
Attitudinal/evaluative factors	25
Moral-normative/value factors	18
Social factors	28
Situational/contextual factors	47

Cognitive factors include environmental knowledge and awareness, perceived value, perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, trust, perceived risk, mindfulness, and related beliefs or evaluations. Affective factors include emotional value, eco-guilt, emotional engagement, satisfaction, green brand love, and other affective constructs identified in the extraction. The supporting categories include attitudinal/evaluative factors (25 studies), moral-normative/value factors (18), social factors (28), and situational/contextual factors (47). The high occurrence of situational factors indicates that sustainable consumer behavior is examined not only through individual psychological characteristics but also through conditions such as price, availability, packaging, retail practices, marketing, digital platforms, infrastructure, and institutional context.

Behavioral Outcomes Examined in the Reviewed Studies

The reviewed studies examined outcomes ranging from behavioral intentions and willingness to reported consumption practices. Seventeen studies focused on intention or willingness-related outcomes, including green purchase intention, repurchase intention, willingness to buy, and willingness to pay. Fourteen studies were classified as examining reported behavior or consumption practices, and another 14 combined intention-related outcomes with reported behavioral outcomes.

Table 4. Outcome Types Across The Reviewed Studies

Outcome Grouping	Studies (n)
Intention / willingness only	17
Reported behavior / practice (measurement verification needed)	14
Mixed intention and reported behavior	14
Evaluative outcome / mediator; not final behavioral outcome	1
Perceptual/evaluative response; actual behavior not established	1
Unclassified; source verification required	1

One study examined an evaluative outcome or positioned sustainable consumption behavior as a mediator rather than as the final behavioral outcome. One study examined a perceptual or evaluative response without establishing actual purchasing behavior, while one record remained unclassified pending outcome-level verification. Importantly,

reported behavior should not be interpreted as independently observed behavior unless the original study provides objective behavioral measures.

Consumption Domains Represented in the Literature

The reviewed articles cover diverse consumption domains. Nineteen studies were classified as general or cross-domain sustainable consumption, while eight addressed general green purchasing. Food consumption and food-waste-related research accounted for five studies, followed by fashion/apparel and digital/online consumption contexts with four studies each. Household and everyday products accounted for three studies. The remaining studies addressed events or sport contexts, use/reuse/waste/disposal, hospitality services, cosmetics and personal care, and sustainable mobility.

This distribution indicates that purchasing-related contexts are prominent, although the corpus also includes studies on post-purchase practices, food-waste reduction, fashion-related anti-consumption, and sustainable mobility. Each article was assigned to one dominant domain for descriptive purposes, even though some studies cover more than one consumption activity.

Table 5. Consumption Domains Represented in The Reviewed Studies

Consumption Domain	Studies (n)
General / cross-domain sustainable consumption	19
General green purchasing	8
Food consumption / food waste	5
Fashion / apparel	4
Digital / online consumption context	4
Household / everyday products	3
Use, reuse, waste / disposal	1
Hospitality / services	1
Cosmetics / personal care	1
Events / sport context	1
Sustainable mobility	1

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from the 48 eligible articles suggest that sustainable consumer behavior (SCB) is best understood as a multidimensional process rather than as a direct consequence of environmental knowledge or favorable attitudes. The reviewed studies identify cognitive and affective factors alongside attitudinal, moral-normative, social, and situational influences. These factors operate at different points in the consumption process: they shape how consumers understand and evaluate sustainable alternatives, influence their intentions, and condition whether intentions can be translated into consumption practices. This section interprets the findings in relation to the four research questions and discusses the theoretical contribution of the review. (Yigit, 2020; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Hermalia et al., 2025; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

Cognitive and Affective Drivers of Sustainable Consumer Behavior (RQ1)

The first research question concerns the cognitive and affective factors identified as drivers of SCB. The synthesis shows a clear imbalance in the way these two dimensions are represented. Cognitive factors were coded in 47 of the 48 eligible articles, whereas affective factors were identified in 16 articles. This pattern indicates that the reviewed literature predominantly explains sustainable consumption through consumers' knowledge, awareness, beliefs, perceived value, perceived control, trust, and evaluative judgments. Affective mechanisms are present, but they are less consistently incorporated as distinct explanatory constructs. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

The prominence of cognitive factors is consistent with the strong presence of established behavioral frameworks in the corpus, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) framework, and models integrating perceived value, environmental awareness, and behavioral control. Within these approaches, consumers are treated as decision-makers who evaluate environmental information, assess the benefits and costs of sustainable alternatives, and consider whether they have the ability and

resources to act. Environmental knowledge and awareness may provide the informational basis for such decisions, while perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy concern the perceived feasibility of performing the behavior. Perceived value, trust, and risk assessments further shape whether sustainable products and practices are considered worthwhile and credible. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

However, the findings also indicate that cognitive factors should not be treated as a single undifferentiated category. Environmental knowledge concerns what consumers know; environmental awareness concerns recognition or salience of environmental issues; perceived value concerns an assessment of benefits and sacrifices; and perceived behavioral control concerns perceived capacity or ease of action. These constructs represent different psychological functions and may therefore influence different stages of the consumption process. Their effects should not be assumed to be interchangeable. (Yigit, 2020; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

The smaller but meaningful presence of affective constructs points to a complementary explanation. Emotional value, eco-guilt, green brand love, emotional engagement, and satisfaction indicate that sustainable consumption may also be shaped by emotional responses to products, brands, environmental consequences, and consumption experiences. For example, eco-guilt may make the environmental consequences of consumption personally salient, while green brand love represents an emotional bond that can influence brand-related intentions. Emotional value may make sustainable alternatives attractive beyond their functional or economic benefits. (Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

An important conceptual implication is that constructs such as environmental concern, attitude, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and green self-identity should not automatically be classified as affective. Environmental concern may represent a relatively enduring environmental orientation; attitude is generally an evaluative judgment; mindfulness is associated with attentional awareness and self-regulation; emotional intelligence refers to emotional competence; and green self-identity concerns the self-concept. Their classification depends on their conceptual definition and operational measurement in each study. Maintaining these distinctions prevents the affective category from becoming overly broad and improves the conceptual precision of research on sustainable consumer behavior. (Yigit, 2020; Guo et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Taken together, the answer to RQ1 is that cognitive drivers are more widely represented and differentiated in the reviewed literature, while affective drivers provide additional explanatory pathways that remain comparatively underdeveloped. The evidence therefore supports an integrated cognitive-affective perspective, but it does not justify treating cognitive and affective factors as equally represented or assuming that affective mechanisms operate uniformly across contexts. (Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Cuandra et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

Interaction of Cognitive and Affective Mechanisms in the Translation of Orientations into Behavior (RQ2)

The second research question addresses how cognitive and affective mechanisms interact in translating sustainable orientations and intentions into behavior. The synthesis suggests that this translation is better represented as a sequence of related processes than as a simple direct relationship between an environmental orientation and a behavioral outcome. (Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

At the initial stage, cognitive orientations such as environmental knowledge, awareness, perceived value, trust, and perceived behavioral control provide a basis for evaluating

sustainable alternatives. Attitudes and other evaluative responses may then translate these orientations into more specific preferences or intentions. This pattern is visible in studies drawing on TPB and related frameworks, in which attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are positioned as proximal determinants of intention. VBN-oriented studies add a moral-normative pathway by connecting environmental values and awareness of consequences with responsibility attribution and personal norms. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Affective mechanisms can complement these processes by adding emotional significance to cognitive evaluations. Emotional value may enhance the perceived attractiveness of sustainable products; eco-guilt may make the consequences of unsustainable consumption more salient; and green brand love may connect brand-related evaluations with purchase intention. These examples suggest that cognitive and affective processes can operate together, although the reviewed evidence does not establish a single universal sequence or demonstrate that affective mechanisms consistently mediate cognitive effects across all domains. (Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

The most consequential finding for RQ2 concerns the transition from intention to behavior. The outcome classification shows that 17 studies focused on intention or willingness only, 14 examined reported behavior or practices, and 14 combined intention-related and reported behavioral outcomes. This distribution demonstrates why intention and behavior must be kept conceptually separate. Purchase intention, willingness to buy, willingness to pay, and repurchase intention indicate readiness or motivation, but they do not establish that a purchase or sustainable practice has occurred. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

The reviewed studies also identify conditions that may facilitate or constrain the translation of intention into behavior. Perceived behavioral control and self-efficacy relate to consumers' perceived capacity to act. Responsibility and personal norms may provide motivational commitment, while subjective norms, social influence, herding, and eWOM can shape social validation and decision-making. Situational conditions such as price, availability, packaging, convenience, retail practices, digital platform features, and institutional infrastructure may determine whether sustainable alternatives are practically accessible. (Akgün, 2026; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Reyna, 2025; Danish et al., 2026; Ali et al., 2022; Sarıoğlu, 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

This interpretation suggests that the intention-behavior relationship is conditional. Consumers may express strong sustainable intentions but fail to enact them when sustainable alternatives are unavailable, costly, inconvenient, or difficult to access. Conversely, supportive infrastructures and accessible alternatives may enable consumers to act on existing orientations. However, because many behavioral outcomes in the extraction are self-reported or require further operational verification, the review cannot claim that the corpus provides consistent evidence based on objectively observed behavior. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026).

Thus, the answer to RQ2 is that cognitive and affective mechanisms contribute to the formation of evaluations and intentions, while behavioral enactment depends on additional motivational, social, and situational conditions. The intention-behavior gap should therefore be treated as a central explanatory problem rather than as a minor inconsistency in consumer decision-making. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026).

Variation of Psychological Mechanisms Across Consumption Domains (RQ3)

The third research question examines how psychological mechanisms vary across consumption domains. The 48 eligible articles cover general sustainable consumption, green purchasing, food consumption and food-waste reduction, fashion and apparel, digital consumption, household products, events, product use and disposal, hospitality, cosmetics, and sustainable mobility. The distribution indicates that general sustainable consumption and purchasing contexts are prominent, while several post-purchase and practice-oriented domains are represented by fewer studies. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Danish et al., 2026; Yigit, 2020; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Kumagai et al., 2020; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

In purchasing contexts, the dominant mechanisms concern product evaluation and decision readiness. Perceived value, environmental knowledge, trust, perceived behavioral control, attitudes, and purchase intentions are frequently relevant to decisions involving green products, cosmetics, food, apparel, household products, energy-efficient appliances, and electric vehicles. Social and situational cues, including subjective norms, eWOM, green marketing, packaging, price, and product availability, provide additional influences. Because many studies in these contexts measure intention or willingness, the evidence is stronger for explaining purchase decision formation than for establishing completed sustainable purchases. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Waqas et al., 2020; Reyna, 2025; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Kumagai et al., 2020; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Food consumption and food-waste studies illustrate a broader combination of cognitive and moral-normative mechanisms. Environmental awareness, perceived value, perceived behavioral control, and product evaluations can shape sustainable food choices. Personal norms, responsibility attribution, ethical values, and religious or value-based considerations may also be relevant, particularly when the outcome concerns reducing food waste rather than simply choosing a product. This suggests that the moral significance of the behavior may become more salient when consumers are asked to avoid waste or take responsibility for the consequences of consumption. (Danish et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Rani et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026).

Fashion and apparel studies include both sustainable purchasing and forms of anti-consumption, such as reducing new-clothing purchases or choosing second-hand and ethical alternatives. These contexts involve environmental and ethical orientations, product and brand evaluations, and social or digital influences. At the same time, the convenience and accessibility of conventional fast fashion may compete with sustainable intentions. Fashion therefore illustrates that sustainable consumer behavior can involve both adopting alternatives and reducing or avoiding conventional consumption. (Faludi & Füller, 2025; Byrd & Su, 2021; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026).

Studies addressing product use, reuse, and disposal draw attention to behaviors that occur after acquisition. These practices depend not only on consumers' initial purchase decisions but also on awareness, habits, convenience, self-regulation, and access to supporting facilities. Similarly, sustainable mobility research emphasizes perceived control, attitudes, subjective norms, and identity-related factors in relation to electric vehicle purchase intentions. However, intention to adopt electric vehicles should not be interpreted as evidence of actual adoption or sustained mobility change. (Jabr et al., 2023; Yigit, 2020; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Wang, 2026).

Digital and online contexts introduce another set of conditions. Social media, eWOM, influencer communication, eco-labels, eco-branding, and platform features can function as information sources, social cues, or situational stimuli. Their effects depend on how consumers process information, assess credibility, and respond to social validation. These mechanisms are relevant across domains, but their specific functions should be distinguished rather than grouped under a single broad category of digital influence. (Nga & Khoi, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Huynh et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

The answer to RQ3 is that cognitive mechanisms recur across domains, but the relevant supporting mechanisms and behavioral outcomes vary with the consumption activity. Purchasing emphasizes evaluation and intention; food-waste reduction highlights responsibility and norms; fashion includes ethical choice and anti-consumption; product use and disposal depend on habits and practical facilities; and mobility emphasizes perceived control and adoption readiness. This domain sensitivity limits the usefulness of a one-size-fits-all explanation of sustainable consumer behavior. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Yigit, 2020; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Theoretical, Contextual, and Methodological Gaps (RQ4)

The fourth research question concerns the remaining gaps in the literature. The synthesis identifies theoretical fragmentation, uneven contextual coverage, and methodological limitations that constrain the cumulative explanation of sustainable consumer behavior. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

Theoretical gaps

First, the literature is more developed in its treatment of cognitive and attitudinal determinants than in its integration of affective mechanisms. Although several studies examine emotional value, eco-guilt, green brand love, or emotional engagement, these constructs are not consistently integrated with knowledge, perceived control, values, and attitudes in a common explanatory framework. Future theory development should specify when affective responses complement cognitive evaluations, when they mediate their effects, and when they independently predict sustainable practices. (Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

Second, theoretical models often focus on selected stages of the consumption process. TPB-based studies commonly explain attitudes, norms, perceived control, and intentions; VBN-oriented studies emphasize values, beliefs, responsibility, and personal norms; S-O-R studies examine stimulus and organismic responses; and value-based approaches explain consumers' assessments of product benefits. These frameworks offer complementary insights, but the reviewed corpus does not yet provide a sufficiently integrated account of how they connect psychological orientations, affective responses, intentions, and behavioral enactment. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Third, the intention-behavior gap remains insufficiently resolved. The frequency of intention-only outcomes and the reliance on reported behavior in other studies indicate a need for theories that explicitly distinguish intention formation from action, repetition, and maintenance. Such theories should incorporate perceived control and situational opportunities rather than assuming that favorable intentions will necessarily lead to behavior. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Cuandra et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026).

Contextual gaps

The reviewed studies span different countries, consumer populations, and product categories. However, the variety of contexts also makes direct comparison difficult. Further research should examine whether the same cognitive and affective mechanisms operate

similarly across different institutional environments, market conditions, and cultural settings. (Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Danish et al., 2026; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Basri et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

The domain distribution also suggests an opportunity to expand research beyond purchasing. Product use, reuse, repair, disposal, and the maintenance of sustainable practices receive less focused attention than green purchasing and general sustainable consumption. Research on these stages would help clarify how sustainable consumer behavior develops across the full consumption cycle. (Jabr et al., 2023; Yigit, 2020; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Hermalia et al., 2025; Wang, 2026).

Digital environments also require more systematic theorization. Digital platforms, eWOM, influencer communication, and sustainability information can act as information channels, social mechanisms, or contextual stimuli. Future studies should specify these functions and examine how digital information credibility and social interaction influence both psychological responses and subsequent practices. (Nga & Khoi, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Huynh et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

Methodological gaps

The predominance of quantitative survey-based studies provides a substantial body of evidence about associations among psychological constructs, but it also raises questions about causal interpretation and behavioral measurement. Cross-sectional self-report designs may be limited in their ability to establish temporal order or demonstrate that stated intentions lead to subsequent behavior. Longitudinal, experimental, and mixed-method designs could strengthen understanding of behavioral change and the conditions that sustain it. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Behavioral outcomes also require more consistent operationalization. Studies should distinguish purchase intention, willingness to pay, self-reported purchase behavior, observed transactions, product-use practices, and repeated sustainable behavior. Where feasible, behavioral records, follow-up observations, or other independent measures would help reduce reliance on stated intentions and retrospective self-reports. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026).

Finally, construct definitions and measurement should be more transparent. Environmental concern, attitude, satisfaction, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and identity should not be treated as interchangeable indicators of affect. Clearer reporting of measurement items, mediation paths, moderation effects, and behavioral indicators would improve comparability and reproducibility. (Yigit, 2020; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Accordingly, the answer to RQ4 is that the main gaps concern the limited integration of cognitive and affective processes, insufficient explanation of intention-to-behavior translation, uneven coverage of consumption stages and contexts, and methodological dependence on cross-sectional and self-reported measures. (Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

Theoretical Contributions

This review makes four related theoretical contributions to the sustainable consumer behavior literature. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

A Differentiated Cognitive-Affective Perspective

First, the review advances a differentiated account of cognitive and affective drivers. Rather than treating all internal

psychological variables as equivalent, it distinguishes knowledge, awareness, perceived value, control beliefs, and trust from emotional value, eco-guilt, brand love, and emotional engagement. It also retains attitude, moral-normative orientations, and identity-related constructs as conceptually distinct supporting mechanisms where their measurement does not justify classifying them as affective states. This differentiation helps clarify the psychological functions through which consumers respond to sustainability-related information and choices. (Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Yigit, 2020; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Weng, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026).

A Process-Oriented Explanation of Sustainable Consumer Behavior

Second, the review shifts the explanatory focus from isolated predictors toward a process connecting psychological orientations, evaluations, intentions, and behavioral enactment. This process-oriented perspective emphasizes that knowledge or favorable attitudes are not equivalent to behavior. It also highlights the roles of perceived control, responsibility, social influence, and situational opportunities in determining whether intentions can be translated into sustainable practices. (Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Ali et al., 2022; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Mendoza et al., 2026; Wang, 2026).

Integration of Psychological and Contextual Conditions

Third, the review positions social and situational factors as substantive components of behavioral explanation rather than as peripheral background variables. Subjective norms, social influence, eWOM, price, availability, packaging, retail practices, digital platforms, and infrastructure can shape different stages of the process. This contribution encourages theoretical models to connect individual-level psychological mechanisms with the social and material conditions in which consumption occurs. (Akgün, 2026; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Danish et al., 2026; Ali et al., 2022; Sarıoğlu, 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026).

A Domain-Sensitive Perspective

Fourth, the review demonstrates the importance of distinguishing consumption domains and stages. Mechanisms relevant to green purchasing may not fully explain food-waste reduction, product reuse, fashion anti-consumption, or sustainable mobility. By comparing these contexts, the review proposes that sustainable consumer behavior should be theorized as a domain-sensitive process in which common psychological mechanisms interact with activity-specific constraints and opportunities. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Danish et al., 2026; Yigit, 2020; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

Taken together, these contributions provide an integrative conceptual direction: sustainable consumer behavior emerges through the interaction of differentiated cognitive and affective mechanisms, supporting attitudinal and moral-normative orientations, social influences, and situational conditions. The framework is a synthesis of recurring patterns across the 48 eligible articles; it should not be interpreted as a single causal model empirically tested by all included studies. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Danish et al., 2026; Yigit, 2020; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Cuandra et al., 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Huynh et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe

et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

Limitations of the Review

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the review used Google Scholar as its search sources because access to other bibliographic databases was not available. Consequently, the corpus may not capture all relevant publications indexed in other databases. Second, the review focused on English-language journal articles published within the selected 2020–2026 period, which may have excluded relevant studies published in other languages or outside this period. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Anwar et al., 2026; Apriyani et al., n.d.; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Akgün, 2026; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Waqas et al., 2020; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Reyna, 2025; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Yigit, 2020; Ali et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Cuandra et al., 2026; Sarıoğlu, 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Shetty et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Kumagai et al., 2020; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

Third, the coding and synthesis depend on the information available in the extraction records. Page-level verification of all construct definitions, measurement items, statistical paths, and behavioral indicators has not been completed for every included article. Accordingly, the frequency counts describe the presence of coded categories and should not be interpreted as measures of effect size, causal strength, or the proportion of statistically supported relationships. (Sivapalan et al., 2026; Anwar et al., 2026; Apriyani et al., n.d.; Nazmi & Kurniawati, 2024; Jabr et al., 2023; Akgün, 2026; Küçükyörük et al., 2022; Apriliyanto et al., 2026; Waqas et al., 2020; Nga & Khoi, 2024; Reyna, 2025; Danish et al., 2026; Hoang & Tung, 2024; Upadhyaya & Sijoria, 2024; Yigit, 2020; Ali et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024; Sharma et al., 2023; Faludi & Füller, 2025; Mikalauskienė et al., 2026; Fathussyaadah, 2026; Byrd & Su, 2021; Cuandra et al., 2026; Sarıoğlu, 2026; Basri et al., 2026; Guo et al., 2026; Canoğlu et al., 2025; Huynh et al., 2026; Rumna et al., 2026; Yao & Jiang, 2026; Kwon et al., 2026; Al-Saedi et al., 2026; Weng, 2026; Nguyen, 2026; Rakuša & Milfelner, 2025; Hermalia et al., 2025; Rani et al., 2026; Shetty et al., 2026; Aman-Ullah et al., 2026; Shetu et al., 2026; Kumagai et al., 2020; Mendoza et al., 2026; Abdulwase et al., 2026; Tsetsegdolgor et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Manafe et al., 2026; Tram & Khoi, 2026; Ghaffar et al., 2026).

Fourth, the reviewed studies use heterogeneous definitions and measures of sustainable consumer behavior. Some focus on intentions or willingness, while others examine reported practices or broader behavioral constructs. This heterogeneity limits direct comparison and reinforces the need for careful distinction between intention, self-reported behavior, and independently observed behavior. Finally, the descriptive domain and category classifications involve analytical coding decisions. Although the coding scheme was applied consistently to the current matrix, further verification against the original full texts may result in refinements to individual classifications. These limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the proposed integrative framework and its implications.

5. CONCLUSION

Synthesizing 48 eligible articles, this review concludes that sustainable consumer behavior is better understood as a multidimensional and process-oriented phenomenon than as a direct outcome of environmental knowledge or favorable attitudes alone. Cognitive factors are the most consistently examined explanatory dimension, appearing in 47 studies, whereas affective factors appear in 16. This imbalance indicates that affective mechanisms remain comparatively underrepresented in the reviewed evidence, rather than demonstrating that they are less influential.

The findings also show that cognitive and affective explanations need to be considered alongside attitudinal, moral-normative, social, and situational conditions. Social factors were identified in 28 studies and situational/contextual factors in 47. Sustainable consumption decisions are therefore

represented in the literature as embedded in external conditions such as price, availability, marketing, packaging, retail practices, digital platforms, and infrastructure, as well as consumers' internal evaluations and feelings.

A further conclusion concerns the distinction between behavioral intention and behavior. Seventeen studies examined intention or willingness-related outcomes, 14 examined reported behavior or practices, and 14 included both. These categories are not interchangeable. Moreover, reported behavior should not automatically be interpreted as independently observed behavior. Consequently, the literature provides an uneven basis for explaining how sustainable orientations and intentions become enacted consumption practices.

Finally, sustainable consumer behavior has been investigated across multiple domains, including general sustainable consumption, green purchasing, food consumption and food waste, fashion, digital consumption, household products, and post-purchase practices. The distribution of studies suggests that domain-sensitive explanations are necessary because the opportunities, constraints, and behavioral requirements differ across consumption activities. Overall, this review contributes an integrative synthesis that connects psychological drivers with the intention–behavior process and the social and situational conditions surrounding consumption, while recognizing that the strength and direction of specific relationships cannot be assumed to be uniform across studies or domains.

Recommendation

Future research should develop more integrated and domain-sensitive models that distinguish cognitive processes from affective responses and examine how they jointly shape sustainable consumption intentions and behavior. Longitudinal, experimental, and field-based designs, together with objective or independently recorded behavioral indicators, are needed to clarify the intention–behavior process and reduce reliance on cross-sectional self-reports. Further studies should also compare consumption domains and examine how social and situational conditions—such as price, availability, information quality, retail environments, and digital platform design—enable or constrain sustainable practices across different cultural and geographical contexts.

For practitioners and policymakers, interventions should combine credible and accessible environmental information with messages that engage relevant consumer values and emotions, while making sustainable choices practical and actionable. Efforts should also address situational barriers by improving the affordability, availability, visibility, and convenience of sustainable alternatives. Retailers and digital platforms should provide transparent product information, trustworthy sustainability claims, and responsible choice environments, and evaluate these initiatives using behavioral outcomes rather than relying solely on consumers' stated intentions.

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