

The Relationship of Sustainable Buying Behavior Dimensions Among the Gen Z: Modeling the Impact of Psychological Factors

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable consumption has continuously become a trend in the behavior of consumers over the recent decades due to drastic changes in technological advancement, economic development, and population growth on a global scale. This research aimed to establish the relationship among the dimensions of sustainable purchase behavior of the Gen Z living in Metro Manila, Philippines. Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the psychological factors of Generation Z's overall sustainable purchase behavior. Findings revealed that the Perceived Knowledge About Sustainability Issues (PKSI), Attitude Towards Sustainable Purchasing Behavior (ATS), Sustainable Purchase Behavior (SPB), Spirituality (SP), Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE), Drive for Environmental Responsibility (DER), and Perceived Marketplace Influence (PMI) dimensions were positively correlated among each dimensions.

Keywords: *Sustainable Consumption, Sustainable Purchase Behavior, Gen Z, Sustainability, Purchase Behavior.*



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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has been beneficial to the social and economic environment. The drastic development in production systems helps consumers across the globe to conveniently avail products in an affordable, safety, and healthy manner. However, this development is also becoming detrimental to some extent. In today's economy, we are experiencing severe economic and social problems affecting the rest

of the world (Seretny & Gierszewska, 2019). Consumer consumptions of goods and services increased tremendously over the past decades, resulting in the depletion of natural resources, even to the extent of damaging the natural environment (Joshi and Rahman, 2015). This situation brought various countries around the globe to see its adverse impact and are coming up with policies and initiative to solve the problem.

With the implementation of policies and awareness campaign initiated by multiple stakeholders, consumers are continuously changing their behaviors as they became more aware of the impact on the environment when it comes to their consumption behavior (Orzan, Crucero, Bălăceanu, & Chivu, 2018). Nowadays, consumer trends suggest that consumers consider different measures when shopping to live more sustainably (Szegedi, 2020).

The aim of sustainability in development and consumption is to meet the current needs without sacrificing future generations. Thus, there is an increase in the interest in promoting sustainable practices (Sesini, Castiglioni, & Lozza, 2020). Sustainable development and consumption are just some of the few things being promoted and are becoming popular to younger generations.

One of the generations into sustainable consumption is Generation Z who refers to the individuals born in 1995 or later (Dimock, 2019). Gen Z were introduced to healthy lifestyle choices, and research showed that they are much more knowledgeable about living a sustainable lifestyle compared to previous generations (Su, Tsai, Chen, & Qing Lv, 2019). Furthermore, Su, et.al (2019) stated that this cohort tends to be concerned more about the environmental sustainability, prioritizing health when it comes to food choices, and desiring a higher quality of life. With this, the researchers aimed to establish the relationship between the dimensions of the sustainable purchase behavior among the Generation Z. The sustainable buying behavior dimensions used in this research was anchored in the study of Joshi & Rahman in 2019, who studied about the consumer's sustainable purchase behavior considering the impact of psychological factors.

Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable consumption is the act of purchasing goods or services while considering the environment. Sustainable consumption has five classifications and this includes the aware consumers, conscious consumers, consumers

under transition, unwilling consumers, and rejecters (Francis & Sarangi, 2022). Similarly, it is established that sustainable consumption is driven by environmental and behavioral factors (Saari et al., 2021). We aim to discover if such classifications are consistent with our observations in the Philippines. However, this is through further analysis of other potential variables, such as environmental responsibility, spirituality, consumer effectiveness, sustainable purchases, marketplace influence, and consumer knowledge (Joshi & Rahman, 2019). Many marketers believe that there are challenges to encourage sustainable consumer practices (White et al., 2019). We aim to discover whether these consumer practices are inherently observed within our test subjects.

Environmental Responsibility

The drive towards a sustainable purchase is influenced by one's environmental awareness (Severo et al., 2021). This awareness then leads to a consumer commitment towards using sustainable products and services: it further creates an impact to the environment (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015). Factors such as knowing the benefits of sustainable purchases drives the overall behavior for consumer preference, such as in the case of the rise of purchasing paper cups for takeaway coffee (Charlotte, 2019). Further, sustainable purchasing behavior is more observed in Generation Y and Generation Z, who are likely to pay more (Joshua, n.d.).

Spirituality

Mindful consumption is the deliberate intent to buy goods and services while practicing spirituality and meditation. This process guides the consumers into thinking that the purchase serves a greater purpose (Subrahmanyam & Gould, 2012). In a study by Orellano et al., (2020), it is established that sustainable consumption is influenced by one's religious practices, specifically of western religious practices. This supports that achieving sustainable consumption enhances the overall role of religion (UN Environment Programme, n.d.).

Consumer Effectiveness

Solomon (2018) affirms that when people regard the actions of others as beneficial, they tend to acknowledge and mimic such behaviors. This supports the premise that consumers have the perceptive ability to determine the rightful actions towards improving the environmental and social conditions (Dagher & Itani, 2014). Consumers' behavior towards selecting and purchasing goods and services come from their innate ability to do good to others. According to Hans & Doran (2020)

Sustainable Purchases

As in the course of making purchases, the drive seen in consumer effectiveness is through the consumer's voluntary and discretionary behavior (Dang et al., 2020). Likewise, there are prosocial behaviors that benefit retailers and other consumers (Balaji, 2014). Through a continued cycle of making sustainable purchases, consumers are ought to be observed as then habitually making decisions that are beneficial to others, yet voluntary at the same time. Thus, where one person starts to make responsible purchasing practices, others are believed to follow through.

Marketplace influence

Under this premise, a person's ability to engage in sustainable behavior is observed to likely influence the entire marketplace. This transcends to other consumers and organizations (Leary et al., 2014). Thus, the thought that when a consumer is likely to think that they're actions can influence others to do the same, speaks at its likelihood to motivate others to do the same. However, this is not to be confused with the actual acts of others as being influenced by another; that is with consumer effectiveness. This is an observation only as a precursor to another person's act of an influence towards purchasing behavior (Joshi et al., 2021).

METHODS

Descriptive - correlational was used as a research design to determine the relationship among the dimensions of sustainable buying behavior of generation Z. The research instrument utilized

in the study was anchored on the research conducted by Joshi and Rahman (2019) entitled: *Consumer's Sustainable Purchase Behavior: Modeling the Impact of Psychological Factors*. The researchers used opportunity sampling to gather five hundred (500) Gen Z respondents as a sample size for the study. The following sustainable buying behavior dimensions were considered for the study: Perceived Knowledge About Sustainability Issues (PKSI), Attitude Towards Sustainable Purchasing Behavior (ATS), Sustainable Purchase Behavior (SPB), Spirituality (SP), Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE), Drive for Environmental Responsibility (DER) and Perceived Marketplace Influence (PMI). Joshi and Rahman (2019) defined PCE as "the ability of the customer to affect environmental issue;" ATC as the "consumers cognitive evaluation of sustainable purchase behavior that includes the behavior of the consumer towards fair and green purchasing;" PMI as the "decision of the consumers to engage in sustainable behavior influences the marketplace behavior of other consumers and organizations;" SP is "the process through which people seek to discover, hold on to and when necessary, transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives;" and DER was defined as "consumers' commitment and endeavor towards protecting the environment and individual-level activities intended to improve the quality of the environment."

The relationship between the identified variables was employed using Pearson's correlation. Regression analysis was utilized to determine the significant relationship between variables of sustainable buying behavior of Gen Z students. The researchers took the consent of the respondents before employing the survey questionnaire. The anonymity of the respondents and confidentiality of the data was also considered during the data gathering.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 describes the perceived knowledge of the respondents regarding sustainable issues. The result shows that the overall rating for the said dimension is (3.07) with a descriptive

equivalent of agree and a descriptive interpretation as knowledgeable. Based on the table, the respondents agree with all of the statements regarding PKS. This means that Gen Z agrees that they know what product to purchase that is ecologically safe, know how to recycle, the sustainability symbols, and the current environmental and social issues. According to Sustainability Knowledge Group (2020), Generation Z is aware of the environmental issues that the world is facing. In addition, Franses (2021) stated that Gen Z displays socially and environmentally conscious buying behavior, which means they support brands that have something to do with sustainability and environmental protection.

Table 2 describes the overall mean for the Attitude Towards Sustainability (ATS) purchasing behavior, which is 3.54, which means that respondents strongly agree when it comes to reducing pollution and also helping to improve the environment. In addition, they also firmly believe that sustainable purchasing is helping in the reduction of wasteful use of natural resources and how to conserve it. Gen Z also

strongly agrees that they feel good about themselves when buying sustainable products. This supports the study of Petro (2021), who stated that the majority of Gen Z prefer to buy sustainable brands and they are willing to spend 10% more on sustainable products, and along with millennials, their purchase decision behavior are based on personal, environmental and social values and principles. Another study published about the behavior towards sustainable clothing showed that attitude towards sustainability has the highest impact on the purchase intention of the consumers (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021).

Table 3 describes the descriptive result of the sustainable purchase behavior of the respondents. Findings revealed that Gen Z supports sustainable consumption with a 2.98 overall mean equivalent to a descriptive equivalent as agree. As presented above, all of the statements presented received a mean equivalent of agree, which means that Gen Z chose to buy products that have eco-friendly packaging. The question that got the lowest mean rating was about buying expensive products

Table 1. Perceived Knowledge About Sustainable Issues (PKSI) Descriptive Results

PKSI	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
I know I purchase ecologically safe products.	3.14	0.70	Agree
I have more knowledge about recycling than an average person.	3.02	0.71	Agree
I know where I can buy products that create less wastage.	2.86	0.86	Agree
I have the knowledge about the sustainability symbols used on product packages.	2.97	0.84	Agree
I am very knowledgeable about environmental and social issues.	3.13	0.71	Agree
Overall	3.07	0.55	Agree

Table 2. Attitude Towards Sustainable Purchasing Behavior (ATS) Descriptive Results

ATS	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
I believe that sustainable purchasing by me will help in reducing pollution and also help in improving the environment.	3.55	0.64	Strongly Agree
I believe that sustainable purchasing by me will help in reducing wasteful use of natural resources.	3.54	0.67	Strongly Agree
I believe that sustainable purchasing by me will help in conserving natural resources.	3.56	0.64	Strongly Agree
I feel good about myself when I involved in sustainable purchasing.	3.5	0.63	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.54	0.55	Strongly Agree

with a mean rating of 2.87, which means that some Gen Z are conscious about the price even if the product is sustainable. A study conducted about the ethical consumption of Gen Z revealed that Gen Z's intention to buy was significantly influenced by the product interest and subjective norm (Robichaud & Yu, 2021). Another study of sustainable green purchases stated that Gen Z's environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental citizenship, and collectivism are strong antecedents of green and sustainable purchases (Casalegno, Candelo, & Santoro, 2022).

The respondents' overall rating regarding the spirituality dimension is 3.2, with an interpretation of agree. This means that Gen Z respondents agree to the process where people seek to discover, hold on to, and when necessary,

transform whatever they hold sacred in their lives. This result was strengthened with the statement "I feel God's presence," where respondents strongly agree, with the highest mean rating of 3.43. The rest of the statements interpreted agree, while "I feel selfless for others" got the lowest mean rating of 3.04. Subrahmanyam and Gould (2012) stated that mindful consumption guides consumers into thinking that the intent to buy goods and services serves a greater purpose. Thus, religion supports achieving sustainable consumption. Gen Z agrees with spirituality and how it is related to sustainable consumer behavior. The findings also strengthened the result of this study published by Orellano et al. (2020), stating that religious practices influence one's sustainable consumption, specifically the practices in western religion.

Table 3. Sustainable Purchase Behavior (SPB) Descriptive Results

SPB	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
When shopping, I deliberately check products for environmentally harmful Ingredients.	2.95	0.75	Agree
When shopping, I deliberately choose products with environmentally friendly packaging.	3.17	0.77	Agree
While purchasing, I see environmental and fair trade label before buying the products.	2.96	0.82	Agree
I'll prefer to buy sustainable products even if they are expensive than others.	2.87	0.83	Agree
Overall	2.98	0.67	Agree

Table 4. Spirituality (SP) Dimension Descriptive Results

SP	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
I feel God's presence	3.43	0.82	Strongly Agree
I experience a connection to all life.	3.25	0.77	Agree
I feel selfless for others.	3.04	0.75	Agree
I feel deep inner peace and harmony.	3.08	0.8	Agree
Overall	3.2	0.62	Agree

Table 5. Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) Descriptive Results

PCE	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
When I buy products, I try to consider how my use of them will affect the environment and other consumers.	3.13	0.73	Agree
Each consumer behavior can have a positive effect on society by purchasing products sold by socially responsible companies.	3.40	0.64	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.26	0.58	Strongly Agree

Table 5 describes the perceived consumer effectiveness dimension with an overall mean rating of 3.26. Results showed that Gen Z strongly agrees (3.40 mean rating) that consumers can have a positive effect on society if they buy products in the market that socially responsible companies are selling. In addition, respondents also agree that when they buy products, they consider the impact of using them. Hans & Doran (2020) defined perceived consumer effectiveness as the ability of the consumer to contribute to specific sustainable development-related outcomes through particular behaviors. Gen Z strongly agrees with the overall perceived consumer effectiveness, which is also aligned with the definition given by Hans & Doran (2020). In a study conducted by Solomon (2018), people mimic behavior if they find the action beneficial to them. Thus, this is an affirmation that Gen Z strongly agree that when they buy products sold by socially responsible companies creates an effect on society.

When it comes to the drive for environmental responsibility (DER), the overall interpretation has a mean rating of 3.39. This means that the

Gen Z consumers are committed and endeavor towards protecting the environment and individual-level activities intended to improve the quality of the environment. The highest statement that got the highest mean rating was "I should be responsible for protecting the environment," with a mean rating of 3.62, meaning Gen Z strongly agrees when it comes to their responsibility in protecting the environment. The statement that got the lowest mean rating of 3.17 was "Supporting environmental protection makes me special," with Gen Z agreeing to this statement.

The overall rating strongly agrees that the awareness of the environment influences the drive for environmental responsibility of Gen Z. According to Severo et al. (2021). This was further strengthened by the study of Kumar & Ghodeswar (2015), stating that awareness of a person leads to commitment towards the use of sustainable products and knowing the benefits of sustainable purchases resulting in a driven behavior when it comes to sustainable purchases (Charlotte, 2019).

Table 6. Drive for Environmental Responsibility (DER) Descriptive Results

DER	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
Supporting environmental protection makes me feel as an environmentally responsible person.	3.46	0.64	Strongly Agree
I should be responsible for protecting our environment.	3.62	0.61	Strongly Agree
Environmental protection starts with me.	3.55	0.68	Strongly Agree
I would say I am emotionally involved in environmental protection issues.	3.17	0.73	Agree
Supporting environmental protection makes me special	3.15	0.84	Agree
Overall	3.39	0.54	Strongly Agree

Table 7. Perceived Marketplace Influence (PMI) Descriptive Results

PMI	Mean	Std Deviation	Descriptive Equivalent
I believe my individual efforts to be environmentally friendly will persuade others in my community to purchase environmentally friendly products.	3.37	0.66	Strongly Agree
The choices I make can influence what companies make and sell in the marketplace.	3.33	0.69	Strongly Agree
If I buy environmentally friendly products, companies will introduce more of them.	3.44	0.7	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.38	0.59	Strongly Agree

Table 7 revealed that the overall mean rating for the perceived marketplace influence was 3.38. This means that Gen Z strongly believes that their decision to engage in sustainable doings can influence other people, may it be consumers or organizations. All of the statements had an interpretation that strongly agreed with “If I buy environmentally friendly products, companies will introduce more of them,” with a mean rating of 3.44. The statement “The choices I make can influence what companies make and sell in the marketplace” got the lowest mean rating of 3.33. Leary et al. (2014), similar to consumer behavior and organizations, when a person is observed to practice sustainability, they also influence the entire marketplace. In addition to their study, the role of PMI is very vital in transforming environmental concerns into a behavior. Hence, marketplace influence is directly related to environmental concerns and sustainable consumption behavior.

The researchers analyzed the dimensions of sustainable purchase behavior to see a significant relationship among the variables. Regression analysis revealed that all the dimensions were significantly correlated with one another. The test was done at 95% confidence interval (alpha = 0.05). In terms of PKSI, a moderate positive correlation was established with SPB, SP, PCE, and DER, while PMI and ATS resulted in a low positive correlation. When ATS was tested statistically, results showed a high positive correlation with DER, moderate positive correlation with PCE and PMI, while

a low positive correlation was established with SP and SPB. When SPB was considered, a positive moderate correlation was attained with SP, PCE, DER, and PMI. The same result was obtained when SP was considered, it had a moderate positive correlation with PCE, DER, and PMI. A high positive correlation was achieved when PCE was correlated with DER and PMI.

The established relationship between and amongst the dimensions of psychological factors in sustainable purchase behavior of Gen Z is the same result with the study conducted by Joshi & Rahman (2019). The result showed that all the dimensions considered directly correlate with a positive relationship. Thus, in considering the overall consumer purchase behavior of Gen Z, it is imperative to consider the dimensions involved as it is related to one another.

Resulting Model

The regression analysis was used to test the significance and the relationship between and amongst the dimensions of sustainable purchase behavior of Gen Z.

Based from the resulting model an equation was also derived:

$$\text{Gen Z Sustainable Purchase Behavior} = 0.1852\text{PKS} + 0.1481\text{ATS} + 0.1481\text{SPB} + 0.1481\text{SP} + 0.0741\text{PCE} + 0.1851\text{DE} + 0.1111\text{PMI}$$

For every unit of PKS there is an increase of 0.1852 in the overall sustainable purchase behavior, for every unit of ATS, SPB and SP there

Table 8. Relationship Between the Dimensions of Sustainable Purchase Behavior

Dimensions of Sustainable Purchase Behavior	PKSI	ATS	SPB	SP	PCE	DER	PMI
PKSI	1.0000						
ATS	0.4522**	1.0000					
SPB	0.6511**	0.4737**	1.0000				
SP	0.5018**	0.4835**	0.5486**	1.0000			
PCE	0.5468**	0.6940**	0.6395**	0.5734**	1.0000		
DER	0.5104**	0.7026**	0.5804**	0.6956**	0.7030**	1.0000	
PMI	0.4041**	0.6740**	0.5737**	0.5236**	0.6692**	0.7889**	1.0000

** Statistically significant

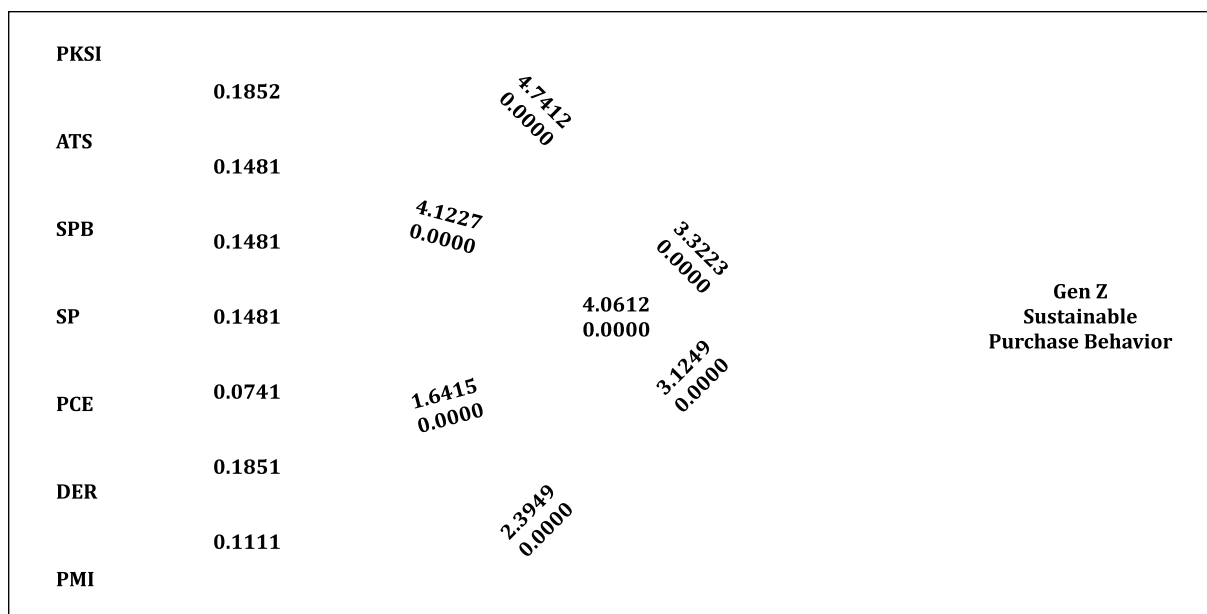


Figure 1. Resulting Model

is an increase of 0.1481, for every unit of PCE there will be 0.0741 increase in overall sustainable purchase behavior of Gen Z, for every unit of DE the increase will be 0.1851 and for every unit of PMI the increase will be 0.1111.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Gen Z is one of the generations that is expected to dominate the market in the future. With the current consumer behavior of Gen Z, they are gearing towards sustainability. Several studies published stating that this generation is very much concerned about protecting the planet. Hence, sustainability is one of their concerns. Companies should look into developing products that will cater to this generation based on what they want. This study concludes that the more the companies will be socially and environmentally responsible, the more likely that this generation will also support the product. This study gave us an overview of what psychological factors can

be considered when it comes to the sustainable purchase behavior of Gen Z consumers. The Perceived Knowledge About Sustainability Issues (PKSI), Attitude Towards Sustainable Purchasing Behavior (ATS), Sustainable Purchase Behavior (SPB), Spirituality (SP), Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE), Drive for Environmental Responsibility (DER), and Perceived Marketplace Influence (PMI) are significantly related to one another.

In the future, it is best to consider the demographics of the respondents to further this study. The impact of other generations can also be considered. A comparative study can also be done to see the difference between the overall sustainable purchase behavior of the consumers. It will be interesting to see as well if this study can be carried out in different industries both in the Philippines and other countries.

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