

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
AWARENESS AND GREEN TRUST ON
CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

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DECEMBER 2024

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
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BY

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A final year project submitted in the partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of

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(HONOURS)

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- (3) Sole contribution has been made by me in completing the FYP.
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Date: 12 December 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Completing this Final Year Project has been a challenging but rewarding journey, and I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to its success.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Komathi a/p Munusamy, for her invaluable guidance, professional advice, and unwavering support throughout this process. Her patience and encouragement were instrumental in helping me overcome challenges and achieve my goals.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my second examiner, Dr. Farah Waheeda binti Jalaludin, for taking the time to review my work and attend my defense despite her busy schedule. Her insightful feedback and constructive suggestions significantly improved both the quality of my research and my presentation skills.

In addition, I am deeply appreciative of all the respondents who participated in the survey for this study. Your willingness to share your time and valuable opinions played a critical role in the success of this research, and I am truly thankful for your contribution.

I am also grateful to those who supported and encouraged me behind the scenes. Your kindness and assistance gave me the strength and determination to persevere.

Special thanks go to my close friends Ricky, Swan, Connie, and Yuvarani a/p Suresh, who stood by me throughout this journey. Your unwavering support and encouragement inspired me to remain focused and motivated during difficult times.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my own efforts and dedication in completing this project. This experience has been an incredible learning journey, and I am proud of the growth and resilience I have demonstrated along the way.

DEDICATION

Completing this Final Year Project has been a challenging but rewarding journey, and I am truly grateful for the support and encouragement I received along the way.

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Komathi a/p Munusamy. Her patience, professional advice and encouragement enabled me to overcome the difficulties and successfully complete this study. Her support was one of the most important boosts throughout my research.

I would also like to thank my second examiner, Dr. Farah Waheeda binti Jalaludin, for reviewing my work and attending my defense during her busy schedule. Her feedback and suggestions allowed me to continuously improve my research and also enhanced my presentation skills.

In addition, I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the respondents who participated in the survey. Your invaluable time and opinions were the keystones to the success of this study, and I am very grateful for your dedication. I am also deeply grateful to those who quietly supported and encouraged me behind the scenes, and your help gave me a sense of warmth and strength.

Special thanks to my close associates Ricky, Swan, Connie and Yuvarani a/p Suresh, who have been a solid support to me on my journey. Your support has made me more determined and courageous in the face of pressure and challenges. Finally, I would like to thank myself for persevering in the face of adversity and completing this study with enthusiasm. This journey has not only given me knowledge and growth, but also made me realize the meaning of hard work and perseverance. We don't spend our lives to cater to everyone, but to find the part of us that resonates with us, the world is noisy, just be yourself, love you!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
Mean_Buying	Mean of Consumer Buying Behavior
Mean_Social	Mean of Social Sustainability
Mean_Green	Mean of Green Trust
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
SmartPLS	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
Sswa	Social Sustainability Awareness
GT	Green Trust
BL	Brand Loyalty
PI	Purchase Intention

PREFACE

This Final Year Project summarises the process of academic exploration and self-development which occurs during the course of learning. The research explores a pertinent and contemporary topic: The Impact of Social Sustainability Awareness and Green Trust on Consumer Buying Behavior. Similarly, this subject highlights the current trend on sustainable practice, and the principle of sustainable practices and ethical consumption that plays a pivotal role in tackling current world problems.

The concern for this study is informed by the emerging consumer concern by people to buy products and support companies that are socially and environmentally conscious. Understanding these dynamics this study aims at contributing knowledge to academia, the industry, and policymakers with regards to sustainable consumption.

It is my pleasure to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Komathi a/p Munusamy, without whom this project would not have been possible to complete, and the respondents who have completed the survey. The respondents provided valuable input that guided the identification of key conclusions of this study. I would like to believe that this work greatly helped in expanding the understanding of sustainability and provides a foundation for other works coming in the future.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of social sustainability awareness and green trust on consumer purchasing behavior in Malaysia, a country that is increasingly aligning with the global agenda of promoting sustainable consumption. Grounded in stakeholder theory and supported by an extensive review of existing literature, this research explores two pivotal relationships: the impact of social sustainability awareness and green trust on consumer behavior. The role of green trust as a critical determinant in shaping sustainable purchasing patterns. These relationships are analyzed to understand how consumers prioritize ethical and environmentally conscious choices in their decision-making processes.

Employing a quantitative research design, data was collected from a diverse sample of 120 Malaysian consumers through an online, self-administered questionnaire. The findings reveal a significant and positive correlation between the independent variables which are social sustainability awareness and green trust and consumer purchasing behavior. Among these, green trust emerges as a more influential factor, indicating that consumers are more likely to support companies demonstrating transparent and sustainable management practices. This underscores the importance of building trust in fostering ethical consumption.

The implications of this study extend across public policy, business strategies, and academic discourse. For businesses, the findings emphasize the value of integrating and promoting sustainable practices to attract ethically conscious consumers. Policymakers can leverage these insights to develop targeted campaigns and incentives that encourage sustainable consumer behavior. Furthermore, the study contributes to academic literature by highlighting the dynamics between social sustainability awareness, green trust, and ethical consumption.

Keyword: Social Sustainability Awareness, Green Trust, Consumer Buying Behavior, Malaysia, Society

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

In recent years, consumer buying decisions in Malaysia have increasingly been shaped by a heightened awareness of social sustainability and green trust. Social sustainability, a critical aspect of sustainable development, focuses on creating positive impacts for communities, such as fair labor practices, ethical supply chains, and equitable opportunities. This shift in consumer consciousness aligns with the global emphasis on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12): Responsible Consumption and Production. SDG 12 seeks to promote sustainable consumption patterns and encourage businesses to adopt production practices that reduce environmental harm and uphold ethical standards.

Other than that, Malaysia also has demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 12. Two significant milestones in Malaysia's efforts to align with SDG 12 are the Green Technology Master Plan 2017-2030 and the SDG Roadmap for Malaysia Phase II (2021–2025).

The SDG Roadmap for Malaysia Phase II (2021–2025) provides a comprehensive framework to guide the country's efforts in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and emphasizes the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns, with strategies such as Sustainable Public Procurement. There are Promoting the adoption of green procurement practices by government agencies to drive demand for sustainable products and services.

These policies and initiatives underscore Malaysia's dedication to addressing both the supply and demand sides of responsible consumption and production. On the supply side, the government's focus on resource efficiency and green technology adoption encourages businesses to align their operations with sustainability principles. On the demand side, efforts to enhance consumer awareness and trust

aim to bridge the gap between intentions and behaviors, fostering a market that values socially sustainable products.

While SDG 12 aims to foster responsible consumption, the persistent intention-behavior gap in Malaysia highlights challenges such as affordability, accessibility, and consumer skepticism. Addressing this gap is critical to achieving both national and global sustainability goals.

Consumers are becoming more aware of the ethical and environmental impacts of their purchases (Choi & Johnson, 2019). This growing awareness is leading to more selective purchasing decisions, with consumers expressing a preference for sustainable products (Alfarisi et al., 2021). However, despite this awareness, a gap exists between consumers' stated intentions to buy sustainable products and their actual buying behavior (Ghazali, Mutum, & Ariswibowo, 2018). Modern consumers show affinity towards green products; however, they are hesitant to purchase green products (Choi & Johnson, 2019). This hesitation may be due to numerous factors, such as product cost, availability, and doubts in the actual sustainability of some firms' claims (Choi & Johnson, 2019).

The concept of green trust is consumer confidence in a brand's sustainability claims (Ghazali, Mutum, & Ariswibowo, 2018). In Malaysia, consumers are more inclined to buy from brands they trust to be genuinely committed to sustainability (Alfarisi et al., 2021). However, the lack of consumer confidence in green products remains a challenge (Choi & Johnson, 2019). Consumers often seek recommendations from social circles or media sources before committing to sustainable purchases, which underscores the importance for businesses to establish credibility and effectively communicate their commitment to social sustainability (Ghazali, Mutum, & Ariswibowo, 2018).

Despite the increased awareness, sustainable products still occupy a relatively small market share in Malaysia (Alfarisi et al., 2021). This suggests that while social sustainability awareness influences consumer attitudes, it has not yet become a primary driver for purchasing behavior (Choi & Johnson, 2019). The challenge lies in bridging this intention-behavior gap (Ghazali, Mutum, &

Ariswibowo, 2018). To effectively influence consumer buying behavior, businesses need to not only raise awareness but also build green trust by offering affordable, accessible, and transparently sustainable products (Alfarisi et al., 2021).

In summary, while Malaysian consumers are increasingly aware of social and environmental sustainability, there is a need for more strategies that translate this awareness into concrete buying behavior (Choi & Johnson, 2019). By enhancing green trust and making sustainable products more accessible and affordable, businesses can positively impact consumer buying behavior, ultimately fostering a more sustainable consumption pattern (Ghazali, Mutum, & Ariswibowo, 2018).

1.1 Problem Statement

The challenges surrounding the integration of social sustainability into consumer behavior and business practices are multifaceted and complex. Despite increasing awareness of environmental sustainability, social sustainability remains relatively underdeveloped, with businesses and consumers often overlooking its significance. These challenges create a significant obstacle for companies that aim to promote social sustainability, making it essential to address these issues to drive meaningful change.

Malaysia still underdeveloped social sustainability awareness. Social sustainability, while gaining some traction, remains significantly underdeveloped when compared to environmental sustainability. This is due to several reasons, including a limited understanding of what social sustainability entails and how it can be effectively integrated into business strategies. Dyllick and Muff (2016) argue that environmental issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and pollution are more visible and have garnered widespread attention, while social sustainability, which focuses on factors like social equity, labor rights, community well-being, and human rights, tends to receive less focus. As a result, businesses and consumers alike are less inclined to prioritize social sustainability unless it is

paired with more pressing environmental concerns, limiting its potential for broader application and implementation

Malaysia's consumer prioritization of other factors when buying product. Consumers often prioritize other aspects such as price, convenience, and product quality over sustainability factors. According to Dyllick and Muff (2016), social sustainability practices are typically seen as secondary considerations to the more immediate and tangible benefits of lower costs, convenience, and high product quality. In competitive markets, where price-sensitive consumers make purchasing decisions based on immediate value, businesses struggle to convince them of the long-term benefits of purchasing products that adhere to sustainable practices. This consumer behavior creates a significant barrier for businesses that wish to embed sustainability in their offerings, as customers may not see the added value in paying a premium for products that align with social sustainability, especially if the direct benefits are unclear or less visible.

Malaysia also lack of regulatory framework. While many countries have established regulations regarding environmental sustainability such as carbon emission standards, waste management policies, and renewable energy incentives social sustainability often lacks equivalent legal structures. For example, the European Union has implemented the Green Deal Policy, which focuses on environmental sustainability, setting ambitious targets for reducing emissions and promoting clean energy. However, Malaysia still lacks strong government policies and regulations to actively encourage businesses to invest in social sustainability. As noted by Kurucz, Colbert, and Wheeler (2017), without clear regulations and incentives, businesses are less likely to prioritize social sustainability. This regulatory gap leads to inconsistencies in how social sustainability is defined and applied across industries, further discouraging companies from making investments in this area. Developing a more comprehensive regulatory framework in Malaysia could help businesses adopt more robust social sustainability practices and drive positive societal change.

Another problem is the consumer awareness gap regarding social sustainability. Many consumers are either unaware of the importance of social sustainability or

have a limited understanding of what it involves. Terms like fair trade, ethical sourcing, labor rights, and community impact may sound unfamiliar or vague to the average consumer, making it difficult for companies to communicate the value of these practices effectively (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). The lack of clarity leads to confusion about how consumers can align their purchasing decisions with their ethical values, contributing to a reluctance to pay more for socially responsible products. This gap in understanding also creates challenges for companies, as they are tasked with not only adopting social sustainability practices but also educating consumers about the significance of these initiatives and the positive impact they can have on society (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

1.2 Research Objectives

This research aims to investigate and address the factors influencing consumer buying behavior with respect to social sustainability awareness and green trust. The research objectives are categorized into general and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General Objective

The primary aim of this study is to examine how social sustainability awareness and green trust impact consumer buying behavior. Specifically, it explores how these two factors influence consumers' buying decisions and preferences.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

This study aims to build a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing consumer buying behavior in the context of social sustainability awareness and green trust. The specific objectives are:

- i. To investigate whether social awareness of sustainable development has an impact on consumer buying behavior
- ii. To investigate whether green trust affects consumers' buying behavior

1.3 Research Questions

This study proposes the following research questions:

- i. Does social sustainability awareness positively influence consumer buying behavior?
- ii. Does green trust impact consumers' buying behavior

1.4 Research Significant

The finding of the present research is relevant in various fields, and its theoretical, managerial, policy, and social implications are discussed in detail in the present work.

First, This research contributes to Academic Significance the body of knowledge in consumer behavior and sustainability. In this respect, it shifts focus towards an increasingly relevant topic of social sustainability awareness that enriches the existing literature in consumer decision-making based on sustainability aspects even further. While research on sustainability has mostly focused on the environmental aspects, this paper seeks to address the research question on how social sustainability practices affect consumer behaviour. This research also fills this void and additionally offers fresh findings to enrich theoretically conceived definitions of sustainability informing consumer decision making.

In addition, the presented investigation contributes to the existing literature by elucidating the relationship between social sustainability and consumers' behaviors in buying, thereby enhancing the theoretical development of sustainability measures.

The results of this research are of very high value for businesses that are seeking to understand how they can better position their offerings to reflect sustainability trends. With an increasing number of consumers taking responsibility for the environment and the society, producers who understand and are willing to implement the principles of social sustainability also enjoy some competitive advantage. This study will contribute new knowledge about customer behavior that can be used to improve the marketing techniques employed by firms when trying to launch a new product. When the understanding on social sustainable consumption is enhanced, companies stand to gain mainly because they can effectively create and exceed the demand by producing socially sustainable products that propel brand image and fortify market share. This means that firms can obtain critical insights into most effective product portfolio, communication, and firm-wide strategies consequently, firms can adapt better to the growing marketplace focus on sustainability in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

It is also important to note that the research is highly valuable for policymakers since it offers information that will be helpful in formulating regulations and policies regarding social sustainability. As evident in this paper, whereas most governments formulate measures towards the promotion of environmental sustainability, social sustainability is least controlled. Hence, the research findings on the effect of social sustainability awareness on consumer behavior can help shape policies that would compel the firms adopt favorable social sustainable practices. The data obtained can help policy makers implement relevant incentives and policies to ensure social justice, result in better labour relations, societal and community welfare, ultimately leading to a sustainable development paradigm. This research therefore makes the foundation for decision-making in formulating policies and coming up with government policies in line with the consumers' and business values.

In a larger perspective, this study is expected to contribute to changing the consumption patterns that form the basis of the global sustainability agenda. With enhanced consumer understanding of social sustainability factors, the community as a whole will progressively start to make ethical solutions paramount as seen in the case of the textile manufacturing industry presented above. It will encourage the society's shift towards sustainability of resources hence embrace of responsible consumption and resource production for issues to do with inequity, labor, and community. In the light of sustainability the research also advocates the engagement of the business and consumer in developing a fair society. In this way, the contribution of this research to advance the knowledge on sustainable development can be said to be useful for developing the positive social change and making affect the overall society's sustainability.

Altogether, this research has theoretical, managerial, public policy, and practical importance for businesses and societies. It enriches the academic knowledge, improves the formation of better business models, provides communities with guidelines for decisions, and serves to advance society. In this regard, this research can contribute to the advancement of sustainability studies by filling in the gaps in the understanding of consumers' behaviors to ensure that the practices are innovative and socially responsible worldwide.

CHAPTER 2: PROCEDURES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the reviews and analyses of past literature in accordance with the research issues discussed in Chapter 1. The theory, variables of this research, theoretical framework, and hypotheses will be discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, a dominant framework in business ethics, posits that organizations should consider the interests of all groups affected by their operations, not just shareholders (Zakhem et al., 2008). Stakeholder theory emphasizes that sustainable business success depends on creating value for various stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, and communities (Guttermann, 2023). The theory highlights that long-term success relies on addressing the interests of all affected groups, rather than focusing solely on shareholders and argues that values are inherently part of business and encourages managers to articulate a shared sense of purpose among stakeholders (Freeman et al., 2004).

To operationalize this concept, Mitchell et al. (1997) proposed a framework for identifying and prioritizing stakeholders based on their power, legitimacy, and urgency. Despite its widespread appeal and influence on corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory continues to evolve, addressing challenges in stakeholder identification, ethical foundations, and practical applications in organizational management (Zakhem et al., 2008).

According to the stakeholder theory of management elaborated by Freeman (1984), managers are accountable for fulfilling consumers' needs and wants as well. In this regard, consumers are perhaps the most important and sensitive stakeholder who influence their purchases in line with the practices of social sustainability. When business organizations take positions congruent with the attitudes of these socially conscious customers, then the green trust, which is the confidence consumers have in a firm's environmental messages, which in turn influences purchasing behavior (Chen & Chang, 2013).

Ethical policies for labor, investors, consumers, etc and community involvement programs are representations of promises a business make to society. These actions show that companies are answerable to them, and establish goodwill in the eyes of the stakeholders, aspects well supported by stakeholder theory. For instance, companies such as Patagonia have managed to develop the perception of sustainability and the right ethical standards thus strengthening commitment among the consumer chain (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Understanding how these practices benefit consumers and enhance their trust gives better understanding of the part they play in buying behaviour.

Green trust is a necessity and is used to ensure that consumer loyalty and consumption are achieved. Of specific importance to this discussion, stakeholder theory provides a useful model to categorize how transparent and ethical business practices strengthen this trust. Understanding that a particular firm follows all their responsibilities towards stakeholders by undertaking sustainable activities, creates trust in the brand and consequently affects the consumers' buying behaviour (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). For instance, Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan shows that sustainability embedded into core business strategies and processes is not a threat to but a great opportunity to gain the consumer's trust and improve business results.

The concept of stakeholder theory that seeks to generate and recognise the value for all stakeholders is considered to be one of the key managerial concepts (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Through managing social sustainability issues, companies do not only satisfy stakeholder demands but they also build a better image. Such an

alignment might also result in high levels of consumers' loyalty and sales, which demonstrates the outcome that may stem from stakeholders' sustainability engagement for both benefits.

Embracing the perspective of change in the relationships with stakeholders enables examination of how such relationships unfold over time as firms institute and report on sustainable development initiatives. This is in line with a study exploring on the process of formation of social sustainability consciousness among consumers and the resultant consumers' buying behaviour. Knowledge of these dynamics gives meanings to the sustainability strategies' endurance (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

2.2 Review of Variable

2.2.1 Social Sustainability Awareness

Social sustainability awareness is a crucial element that defines consumer buying behavior as it involves the way consumer utilizes ethical, environmental, social and buying aspects in order to arrive at a particular purchasing decision. This relationship is thus ambiguous and can be explained by consumer perception and competitive market environment a business operates. Social sustainability is about being responsible for discrepancies for legal and reasonable working conditions, human rights, and citizenship (Missimer et al., 2017). This means considering both internal and external contexts, organization's people, customers, vendors, and community. Measures like marketing for the diverse employment opportunities, the welfare of employees, creation and maintenance of diversity, interaction with community, and handling of supply chain are some of the measures which form a part of sustainability strategies. Currently, the world operates on an integrated market, where companies struggle to conform to the highest ethical standards. Business organisations seen as socially irresponsible faced criticisms, publicity and loss of confidence among consumers (Maignan and Ferrell 2004).

It is found that a vast number of consumers have their willingness towards active involvement in sustainable economic practices. In the study conducted by McKinsey, more than 60 percent of the respondents showed their interest in paying more for the product, especially if it contains sustainable packaging indicating consumers' increasing concern towards sustainability. This positive attitude proves that consumers are becoming more conscious of environmental implications of buying processes. Consumers are becoming more willing to involve themselves with brands that are associated with social sustainable values. With increasing consciousness, consumers also utilize their dollar to fund ethics and responsible business conduct.

However, there is still a large gap between intention and actual behavior. For example, although 65% of consumers state that they have a preference for brands with a particular purpose, only 26 % of them actually buy these brands. This intention-action gap can be explained by factors such as price consciousness and disbelief in the impact of sustainable decision (Carrington et al., 2010). Again, pricing is still a challenge, as consumers still associate sustainable products with higher prices. Lack of information about sustainable products due to price sensitivity leads to lesser purchase of socially sustainable products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Furthermore, the enormous amount of information influences consumers and makes them lose motivation in making the right decisions for a sustainable future.

Social sustainability awareness also creates pressure on the business to set advocacy of how their production and operations are related to sustainability. People get more demanding towards corporate environmental responsibility disclosures. This area is best explained by social factors as consumers tend to refer to word of mouth recommendations from peers in their community. Friends have an influence and tradition results from a community on the purchasing behaviour of people, which sees some individuals being inspired to act sustainably out of pressure from their friends and relatives. On the other hand, where some social groups discuss environmentalism minimally or not at all, it erases sustainable behaviours (White et al., 2019).

Studies show that those goods produced with some ESG claims have better performance than other goods, especially among the affluent consumer group. These demographics are more likely to make more conscious decisions and make sure businesses understand what people want. Yet, to really invest, show the company's assurance and not just call it in a marketing campaign, businesses cannot simply rely on labelling. Businesses need to undertake real steps to support the uttered statements and develop the consumers' beliefs about those claims (Kotler, 2011).

Consumers are more likely to embrace products from companies that support social sustainable initiatives such that those from the Millennial and Gen Z generations (Wang & Anderson, 2011). Products identified with fair trade, gender empowerment or charity are likely to cultivate a closer relationship between the firm and the customers. Such actions promote consumer loyalty because everyone wants business with like-minded organizations (Hult, 2011). Such loyalty is always reflected in sustainable profits due to the realization that companies that are receptive to high level of social sustainability policies, stand to benefit in the long run besides enjoying customer patronage (Galbreath, 2010).

For the market, the change in consumer behavior that I will describe further has positive effects beyond the impact on businesses. The increased global customer concern for social sustainability make it an important factor for differentiation. Despite the fact that corporations need to follow principles of social sustainability, they must pass the message about it, and do it properly to explain the gap between the customer's ethical intentions and his/her purchases.

2.2.2 Green Trust

Green trust is an essential perspective in consumer behavior especially with the current trending topic of sustainability. It captures the assurance that consumers place in a company's environmental information and management factors have a

huge impact on their buying decisions. As the topic of environment grows and contributes on climate change, deforestation, and pollution, so does the attention of consumers puts pressure on the firms. As a result there is a raised sensitivity on the amount of environmentally friendly image that the brands in question elicit (Chen, 2010).

Green trust can be defined as consumers' perceived credibility and legitimacy of firm environmental efforts. In the light of ongoing environmental degradation on the global society, consumer trends will shift towards products identified with their values and caring companies. This trust is critical for creating brand loyalty the purchases from firms that effectively demonstrate their efforts to decrease negative effects on the environment (Darnall et al., 2018). Such activities as environmental logic, minimizing carbon footprint, and endorsing fair production or consumption means not only benefit the environment but also contribute to building a company's valuable image among consumers.

With demand for sustainable products rising among consumers, green trust plays a significant role in the selection of brands. Some of the key reasons relied on to support the advent of green brands include Consumers are inclined to reject brands that are considered environmentally resistant. It is evident from the literature that consumers' perception of the effort a company is willing to take in order to reduce its environmental impact through supply chain management policies, use of environmentally friendly raw material or environmentally friendly policies impacts consumers' perception (Darnall et al., 2018). Unclear or misleading messages may harm the company more effectively than self-reported environmental disclosures that are easy to reject, even if the firm's environmental management is actually superior.

One of the major challenges to green trust, not surprisingly, is green washing, which is the act of falsely claiming environmental stewardship. Sustainability reporting that presents distorted information gives a company's stakeholders a wrong impression of the sustainability agenda thereby reducing credibility of such firms once the truth comes out. It is obvious that green washing can cause disillusion in other environmental marketing activities hence making consumers

down-right skeptical every time they encounter a sustainability claim. This skepticism can harm the company a great deal as well as the consumers (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). If consumers become more selective, then those firms that are not delivering on environmental responsibilities they might brick it, and suffer reduction in market share, sales, and tarnished image.

On the other hand, those businesses which actually go green and support this concept explaining it through proper certification, external audit, and clear client communication are likely to establish the green trust with customers. Sustainability measures require customers trust and should therefore be genuine rather than being used as marketing strategies for gain (Testa et al., 2020). It also found that the more confident consumers are in a company's actions regarding the environment, the higher the chances are that the consumer will repurchase products also, the consumer is more likely to recommend the brand to other people. This word of mouth is very effective method to improve the company's reputation and extend its advertising space.

Research suggests that high levels of green trust are closely linked to increased customer loyalty. Consumers who trust a company's environmental information are more likely to return and promote it to others (Kim & Choi, 2012). This commitment also allows such companies to charge higher costs for their green items since consumers see it as a product that aligns with their ideals. Furthermore, green consumers with significant trust have a beneficial impact on those around the organization and affect their purchasing decisions as well. Gaining consumer satisfaction with products from environmentally responsible enterprises helps to increase community support, hence strengthening the company's industry status.

Therefore, green trust serves as a vital link between corporate environmental behavior and consumer buying behavior. As environmental awareness grows, consumer preferences are increasingly shaped by sustainability considerations. Companies that prioritize authenticity and transparency in their environmental initiatives are likely to benefit from enhanced consumer trust, loyalty, and market competitiveness. On the other hand, companies engaging in green washing risk

damaging their reputation and losing consumer confidence in an era where sustainability is paramount.

Conclusion, Green trust has evolved into a key factor in consumer purchasing decisions. As consumers continue to seek brands that align with their values and demonstrate genuine environmental responsibility, companies that build and maintain green trust will have a competitive advantage. However, while awareness of environmental issues continues to increase, the level of green trust remains relatively low, as many consumers are still skeptical about the authenticity of corporate claims. Businesses that fail to meet their environmental commitments or engage in deceptive practices risk losing consumer trust and loyalty. Future studies should explore the long-term consequences for companies that breach green trust, providing valuable insights for businesses seeking to maintain consumer confidence and strengthen their sustainability claims.

2.2.3 Consumer Buying Behavior

From consumer decision process, consumer buying behavior refers to the complex when and process through a consumer is willing and decides to make a purchase or hire a particular product or service makes the decision to purchase or acquire a certain product or select a service. In the context of this research, this kind of pattern is gradually changing towards more ethical and sustainable behavior. The individual tends to factor in the sustainability proposition of a firm before he or she considers buying its products (Paul et al., 2016). Consumer are fascinated by brands that signal values congruence (White et al. 2019).

Sustainable consumers take into consideration features like origin (Suki, 2016). These factors are symptomatic of a higher-order assumption that practicing sustainability is helpful for the benefit of society and the world (Kotler & Lee, 2005). The public is not only interested in the product from the company but also in the business's or company's ethical factors. For instance, the companies that offer products from environmentally, friendly materials, implementing low carbon

emission, or sourcing products from the fair trade practice appeal to these determined customers.

One must note the revealed facts about a competitive market in which those firms that embrace sustainable practices stand to reap enormous benefits. This evidence highlights how the green positioning is preferred by brands since customers consider sustainable components in the company's plans as desirable (Luchs et al., 2010). Retail customers are willing to sacrifice for these products and services as long as they have confidence in the sustainability claims made by the firm. In particular, the transparency in the disclosure of sustainability commitments results in brands being viewed more favourably and being effective at gaining customer trust.

Additionally, sustainability efforts are usually related to an increase in the level of customers' loyalty. Loyalty is established when consumers perceive that a company's sustainability activities and claims are believable. This loyalty is not absolute product quality but is related to the perceived emotional affiliations toward a company's ethos. For example, Patagonia company has been capable of identifying customers by associating products with environmentalism hence achieving customer loyalty. Consumers are likely to buy more products from the company and even recommend the brand to others (Nielsen, 2015)

Besides building customer loyalty, companies that give attention to sustainability can contribute to changing the world infinitely. Thus, by incorporating the sustainability strategies to the business activities these firms are also able to pose as models for other firms. In view of that, sustainability is estimated to transform consumerism culture and the world market as it has emerged as a key criteria for consumers' choice. In the long-run sustainability will not be regarded as the latest marketing ploy but as a strategic management approach that defines consumption and rivalry.

In conclusion, sustainability has transited from a fad to a key factor that influences customers' behavior. Since sustainability and the environment will remain important factors influencing consumers' buying behavior, firms that have

aligned themselves to sustainable business practices stand to benefit in terms of customer loyalty, and competitive edge. Consequently, changes in such trend has long-lasting impacts within the strategies of a specific market, especially considering that sustainability keeps playing a significant role into decision-making and consumption habits affecting the world economy.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

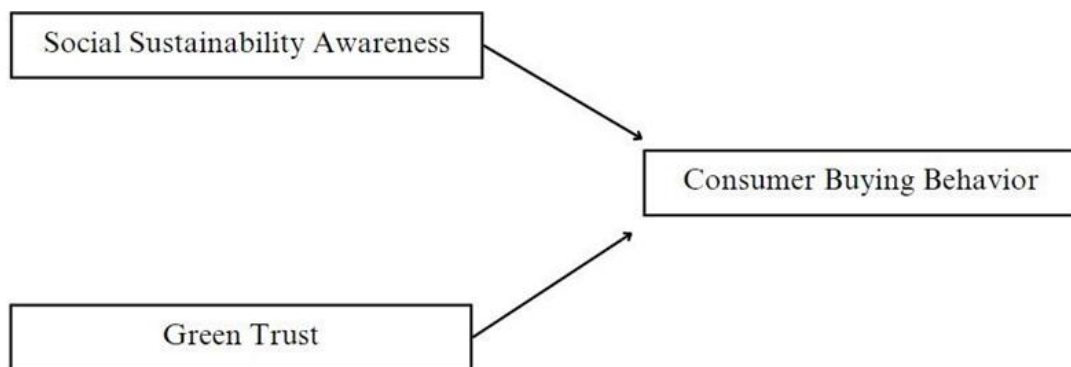


Figure 1 shows the proposed conceptual framework. There are a total of two (3) variables in this framework, including two(2) independent variables, and one (1) dependent variable. Hence, there are two (2) hypotheses being proposed in this model for testing the connection between the variables.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 The Relationship between Social Sustainability Awareness and Consumer Buying Behavior

Social sustainability knowledge pertains to consumers' knowledge and perception of the social consequences of their purchasing decisions including labor rights,

ethics in sourcing, and contribution to community. Earlier studies indicate that there is a positive correlation between consumers' product involvement and their ability and willingness to make a purchasing decision based on social sustainability concerns; this is because consumers tend to be conscious about the products they purchase, and this include the companies they are affiliated with, and their impact on the society (Papadas et al., 2019).

According to various researches, increased awareness of social sustainability have been found to affect consume purchase behavior, where customers have a preference for goods that are considered as being made through socially sustainable means. People with concern to social sustainability are willing to buying products from brands that have a well articulated concern on social welfare and have a stand against unethical practices. (Wang & Anderson, 2011)

Hence, the hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Social sustainability awareness has a positive relationship with consumer buying behavior.

2.4.2 The Relationship between Green Trust and Consumer Buying Behavior

Specifically, green trust refers to the extent of the consumer's endorsement of the environmental claims and actions of a brand or product. It is based on the belief that a brand is concerned and has a genuine interest in the welfare of the environment and is not just out to make a quick buck by pushing a green image that has no substance to it. Chen and Chang (2013) stated that green trust can essentially affect consumers' buying decision, where trust in the environmental credibility of a brand make customers more likely to select products from the brand.

Previous research evidence shows that green trust can affect the consumer buying behaviour because it assures consumers that the product under consideration has

environmental benefits over its conventional counterpart. Consumers prefer sustainable brands on the basis that they are green, meaning that when consumers have confidence in a brand, products from such brand will be adopted by consumers, illustrating their choice of green products.

Hence, the hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Green trust has a positive relationship with consumer buying behavior

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research technique used to determine the impact of social sustainability awareness and green trust on consumer buying behavior. It consists of the sampling plan, research instruments, data processing, data analysis techniques, and research design.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Quantitative Research

In order to find trends and test hypotheses, this study uses a quantitative research approach, which involves collecting and evaluating numerical data. Because quantitative research enables objective measurement and statistical analysis, it is appropriate for investigating the relationship between social sustainability awareness, green trust, and consumer buying behavior.

3.2 Sampling Design

3.2.1 Target Population

This study's target population are Malaysian consumers aged 18 and up with purchasing experience. This group was chosen because they can provide information about their understanding of social sustainability awareness and trust in green products, as well as how these variables influence their purchasing decisions.

3.2.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Location

There is no specific sampling frame used in this study. Malaysian consumers from a range of backgrounds are included in the sampling frame. Given that the objective of this research is on general consumer behavior, the sampling location is not limited to any area; instead, it tries to cover a wide range of demographics by dispersing online surveys.

3.2.3 Sampling Technique

A non-probability sampling technique, specifically convenience sampling, will be used due to time and resource constraints. This method allows for quick data collection from respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the study.

3.2.4 Sample Size

To determine the minimum sample size for this study using the formula suggested by Hair et al. (2010) was applied.

According to their guidelines, the minimum sample size is calculated using the formula: Minimum Sample Size=(Number of Indicators+Number of Latent Variables)×Estimated Parameters. In this study, which includes 15 measurement items (indicators) and 2 latent variables, and assuming an estimated number of parameters (such as paths) to be 5, the minimum sample size is calculated as follows: Minimum Sample Size=(15+2)×5=85.

Thus, the study requires at least 85 respondents to meet the criteria set by Hair et al. (2010). This approach aligns with best practices in SPSS and provides a

sufficient basis for analyzing the relationships between social sustainability awareness, green trust, and consumer buying behavior.

3.3 Data Collection Method

3.3.1 Primary Data

The primary data will be collected via a structured questionnaire. Direct measurement of relevant factors, such as consumer buying behavior, green trust, and social sustainability awareness, is made possible by this approach. The questionnaire will be distributed online to ensure a wider reach and efficient data collection.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is designed to capture data on social sustainability awareness, green trust, and consumer buying behavior. It includes sections on demographic information, awareness of social sustainability practices, trust in green products, and purchasing behavior. The questions are primarily closed-ended, using a Likert scale to measure the level of agreement with various statements.

Table 3.1: Construct Instrument

Section	No.of Item	Measurement Scale
Section 1 Demographic Information	5	-
Section 2 Social Sustainability Awareness	5	Interval Scale
Section 3 Consumer	5	Interval Scale

Buying Behavior		
Section 4 Green Trust	5	Interval Scale

3.4.2 Pilot Test

A pilot test is a small-scale preliminary study conducted before the main research project. Its primary purpose is to evaluate the feasibility, time, cost, risk, and adverse events involved in the full-scale study. This process helps identify potential issues in the research design or methodology and allows for refinement before the larger study is undertaken (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002).

For the pilot study, 30 sets of questionnaires will be distributed. The information gathered from the participants was utilized to improve the survey's quality by eliminating any mistakes found inside. Using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), a reliability test will be conducted after the questionnaires have been gathered.

Table 3.2: Pilot Test (N=30)

Constructs/ Variable	No.of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items
Social Sustainability Awareness	5	0.779	0.795
Consumer Buying Behavior	5	0.746	0.776
Green Trust	5	0.818	0.814

Source: Developed from research

In accordance with Tavakol & Dennick (2011), alpha values between 0.70 and 0.95 are acceptable. It can be seen the table presents the results of a pilot test conducted with 30 participants, focusing on the internal consistency of three constructs: Social Sustainability Awareness, Consumer Buying Behavior, and Green Trust. Each construct was measured using five items, and the Cronbach's Alpha values were calculated. Social Sustainability Awareness had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.779, increasing to 0.795 when standardized. Consumer Buying Behavior showed a value of 0.746, which rose to 0.776 when standardized. Green Trust had the highest value, 0.818, slightly increasing to 0.814 when standardized. These Cronbach's Alpha values suggest that all three constructs demonstrate reliable internal consistency, with values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7. All variables, including their reliability, are higher than the recommended validation level of 0.70. This indicates that the study's results are accurate.

3.5 Construct Measurement

3.5.1 Scale Measurement

3.5.1.1 Nominal Scale

Nominal scales will be used for categorizing demographic information such as gender, profession, and education level.

Table 3.3 : Example of Nominal Scale

Section 1: Demographic Information
Please fill in some of your personal information on all the questions below.
1. Gender: ○ Male ○ Female

3.5.1.2 Ordinal Scale

Ordinal scales will be used to rank consumer preferences or levels of awareness in a meaningful order, such as the frequency of purchasing green products.

Table 3.4 : Example of Ordinal Scale

Section 1: Demographic Information
Please fill in some of your personal information on all the questions below.
2. Age: ☐ > 20 Years Old to 30 Years Old ☐ > 30 Years Old to 40 Years Old ☐ > 40 Years Old to 50 Years Old ☐ Over 50 Years Old

3.5.1.3 Interval Scale

An interval scale, specifically a 5-point Likert scale, will be used to measure the degree of agreement with statements related to social sustainability awareness, green trust, and buying behavior. This allows for the analysis of respondents' attitudes and perceptions

Table 3.5 : Example of Interval Scale

Section 2: Social Sustainability Awareness
Please fill in some of your personal information on all the questions below.
1. I am aware that the firms are carefully implementing social practices for social development. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

3.5.2 Origin of Construct

The constructs for this study are adapted from existing validated scales in the literature. Social sustainability awareness and green trust are measured using items adapted from prior research, ensuring content validity and reliability.

Table 3.6 : Origin of Construct

Construct	Measurement Items	Sources
Social Sustainability Awareness	1. I am aware that the firms are carefully implementing social practices for social development. 2. I am aware that my personal safety and health is affected due to the products I use. 3. I believe that social influence can enhance the awareness of an individual his/her about environment. 4. I will not buy that product because I am aware product is not updated according to my social needs. 5. I believe that some products serve as community development.	Khalil, M. K., & Khalil, R. (2022).
Green Trust	1. I believe that green environmental images of products are usually reliable 2. I believe that overall, the environmental claims of the product are generally trustable. 3. I believe that the performance of the brand is in accordance with my ethical expectations. 4. Do you believe that companies that	Muhammad Amad Saeed, Ammara Farooq, Wolfgang Kersten & Semah Ibrahim Ben Abdelaziz. (2019)

	engage in sustainable practices are more trustworthy? 5. When an organization steps forward for the welfare of society and the betterment of the environment, I find it trustworthy to purchase its items before planning.	
Consumer Buying Behavior	1. I expect to purchase sustainable products/brands in the near future. 2. I avoid buying products/brands that are potentially unsustainable 3. Overall, I am glad to purchase sustainable products/brands, because they are sustainable. 4. When I have to choose between two similar products/ brands, I choose the one that is more sustainable. 5. I will not consider sustainability-related issues when making a purchase	Khalil, M. K., & Khalil, R. (2022).

3.6 Data Processing

3.6.1 Data Checking

Collected data will be checked for completeness and accuracy to ensure all responses are valid and usable for analysis.

3.6.2 Data Editing

Data editing will involve reviewing and adjusting responses to address any inconsistencies or errors identified during data checking.

3.6.3 Data Coding

Responses will be coded into numerical values for analysis. Each response option on the Likert scale will be assigned a specific code, facilitating data entry and processing.

3.6.4 Data Cleaning

Data cleaning will involve removing any incomplete or invalid responses, such as those with missing or contradictory answers, to ensure data quality and integrity.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, will be used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and provide an overview of their responses to the questionnaire items.

3.7.2 Reliability Analysis

In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha will be employed hence determining the internal consistency of the constructs in the research questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha is one of the techniques in research

utilized in measuring the reliability of a test especially in cross-sectional research designs (Forero, 2014). Cronbach's coefficient Alpha: this assesses the extent of similarity between the set of items as a total sample and gives an insight of the reliability of the scale internally. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ranging of 0. An acceptable internal consistency will be 0.7 or higher, this mean that there is good internal consistency for the scale used.

3.7.3 Inferential Analysis

Inferential Analysis including regression analysis and hypothesis testing, will be applied to ascertain the relationship between social sustainability awareness, green trust and purchase intent. These methods enable us to extrapolate a conclusion based on the sample data to the whole population (Ball & Rague, 2022)

Multiple regression analysis will be used to evaluate the hypotheses. The dependent variable is consumer purchasing behavior, while the independent variables are green trust and social sustainability awareness. The relationships will be examined using the following regression model:

$$\text{Consumer Buying Behavior} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Social Sustainability Awareness}) + \beta_2(\text{Green Trust}) + \varepsilon$$

This model will allow us to evaluate the individual effects of social sustainability awareness (H1) and green trust (H2) on consumer purchasing behavior while accounting for other variables.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology, including the research design, data collection methods, sampling design, research instruments, data processing,

and analysis techniques. The next chapter will present the findings of the study based on the data collected and analyzed using the methods described.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

4.1.1 Respondent Demographic Profile

A Google Form link was distributed to collect 120 questionnaires from the respondents. All 120 sets were valid for analysis, as the screening process ensured that only qualified respondents participated in the study. No questionnaires were voided, and all respondents met the required criteria. In this Section 1, the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, profession, and education, will be explained.

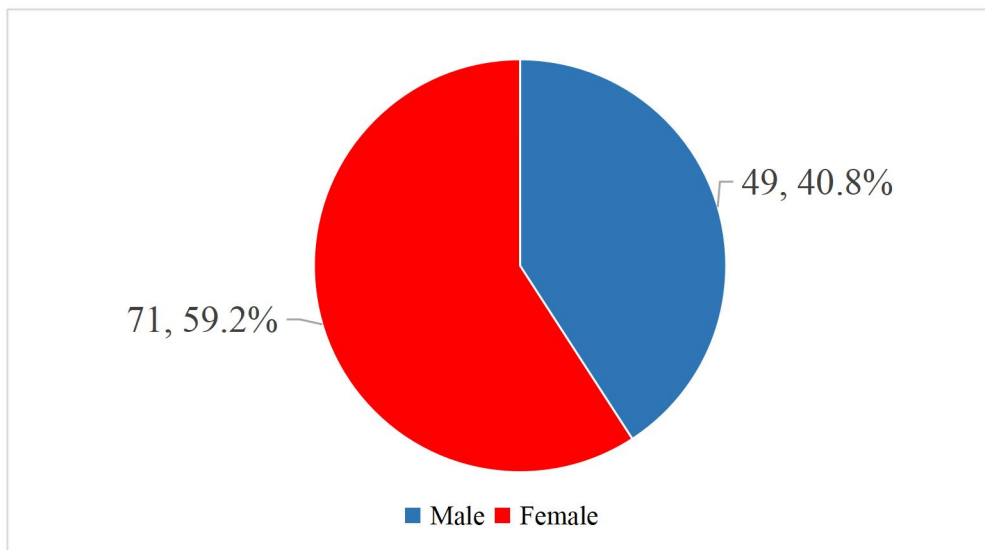
4.1.1.1 Gender

Table 4.1: Gender

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	49	40.8	40.8	40.8
	Female	71	59.2	59.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Developed from research

Figure 4.1: Gender



Source: Developed from research

Based on the distribution of gender of the respondents shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1, there are 40.8% or 49 respondents who are male and 59.2% or 71 respondents who are female.

4.1.1.2 Profession

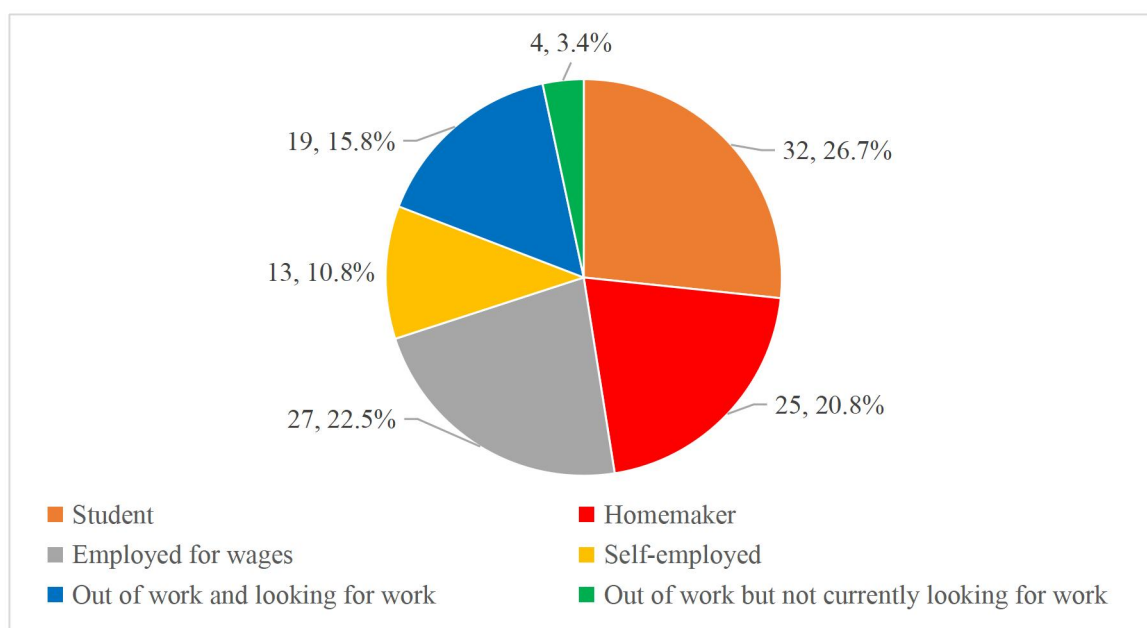
Table 4.2: Profession

Profession		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	32	26.7	26.7	26.7
	Homemaker	25	20.8	20.8	47.5
	Employed for wages	27	22.5	22.5	70
	Self-employed	13	10.8	10.8	80.8

	Out of work and looking for work	19	15.8	15.8	96.6
	Out of work but not currently looking for work	4	3.4	3.4	100
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Developed from research

Figure 4.2: Profession



Source: Developed from research

Based on the distribution of profession of the respondents shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2, there are 26.7% or 32 respondents who have are students, 20.8% or 25 respondents who are homemaker, 22.5% or 27 respondents who are employed for wages, 10.8% or 13 respondents who are self-employed, 15.8% or 19 respondent

who are out of work and looking for work and 3.4% or 4 respondent who are out of work but not currently looking for work.

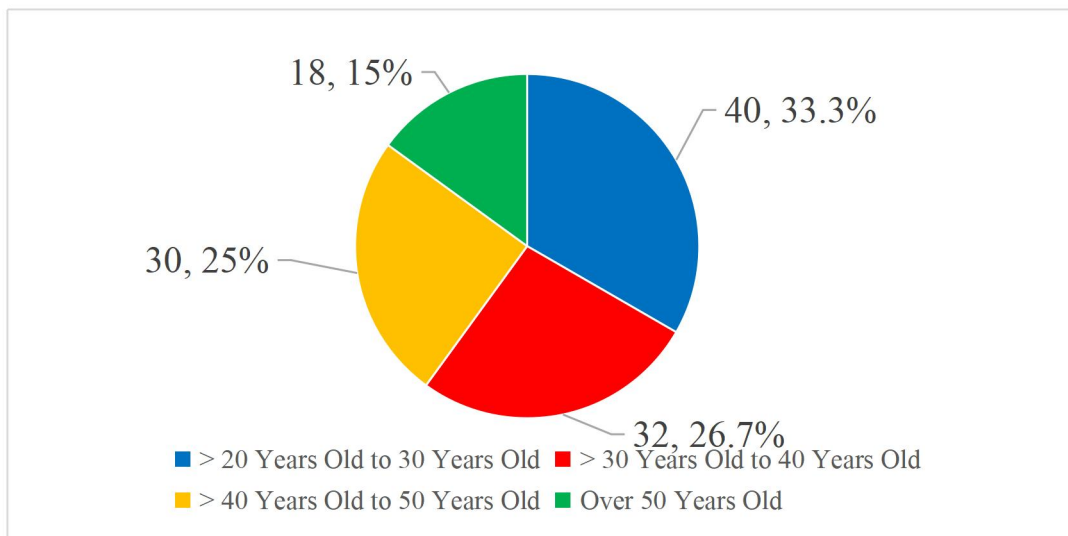
4.1.1.3 Age

Table 4.3: Age

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	> 20 Years Old to 30 Years Old	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
	> 30 Years Old to 40 Years Old	32	26.7	26.7	60.0
	> 40 Years Old to 50 Years Old	30	25.0	25.0	85.0
	Over 50 Years Old	18	15.0	15.0	100
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Developed from research

Figure 4.3: Age



Source: Developed from research

Based on the distribution of age of the respondents shown in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3, there are 33.3% or 40 respondents who are above than 20 years old to 30 years old, 26.7% or 32 respondents who are above than 30 years old to 40 years old, 25% or 30 respondents who are above than 40 years old, and 15 % or 18 respondents who are over 50 years old.

4.1.1.4 Education

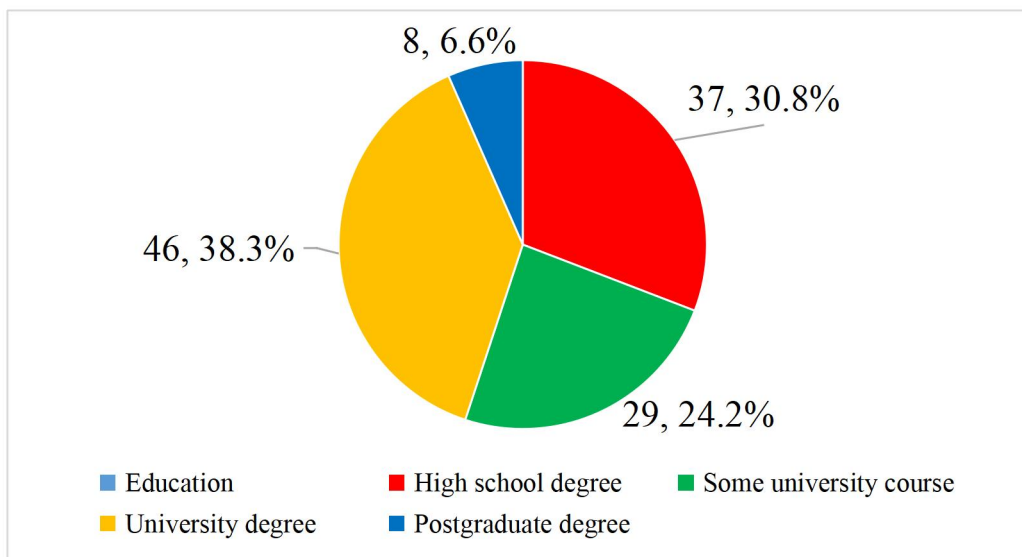
Table 4.4: Education

Education		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Some high school	14	11.7	11.7	11.7
	High school degree	23	19.2	19.2	30.9

Valid	Some university course	29	24.2	24.2	55.1
	University degree	46	38.3	38.3	93.4
	Postgraduate degree	8	6.6	6.6	100
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: Developed from research

Figure 4.4: Education



Source: Developed from research

Based on the distribution of education level of the respondents shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4, there are 30.8% or 37 respondents who have an education level of some high school, 24.2% or 29 respondents who have education level of some university course, 38.3% or 46 respondents who have the education level of university degree, 6.6% or 8 respondent who have the educational level of Postgraduate degree.

4.2 Scale Measurement

4.2.1 Internal Reliability Test

Table 4.5: Reliability Test

Variables	No.of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Sustainability Awareness	5	0.722
Consumer Buying Behavior	5	0.728
Green Trust	5	0.765

Source: Developed from research

Based on Table 4.5, the alpha coefficient of each and every variable is above 0.6, and it is considered reliable. Consumer Buying Behavior has the highest alpha coefficient of 0.765, which is good reliability. Social Sustainability Awareness and Green Trust each also have good reliability with the alpha coefficient of 0.722 and 0.728 respectively.

4.3 Inferential Analysis

4.3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4.6: Pearson Correlation

		Mean_Social	Mean_Green	Mean_Buying
Mean_Social	Pearson Correlation	1	.768**	.710**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	120	120	120
Mean_Green	Pearson Correlation	.768**	1	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	120	120	120
Mean_Buyin g	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.774**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	120	120	120

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

Source: Developed from research

According to Table 4.6, there are relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. There is a strong correlation coefficient between social sustainability awareness, green trust and consumer buying behavior.

4.3.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.795*	.632	.626	.56334
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Green, Mean_Social				

Source: Developed from research

The model yield fairly good prediction accuracy, with an R Square of 63.2 %. This tells us that 63.2 % of the total variation in consumer buying behavior as measured by Mean_Buying is accounted by Mean_Social, which is the social sustainability awareness, and Mean_Green, which is the green trust. That is, it may be said that the predictors which are incorporated in the model do have a direct impact on the dependent variable.

The model with adjusted R Square value of 62.6% showed the level of explained variance of the model, which can be more reliable and acceptable in other datasets with more predictors as the current model consists of 7 predictors out of which 1 is control variable.

An even more important point is that the rest of 31.8% of the variance is left unaccounted for by the model. This implies that may impact by other factor by this study, including; price specialization, brand identification, product quality,

promotion techniques or individual inclination could also affect consumer purchases.

This implies that the average deviation of observed buying behaviour from the estimated equation is moderate, given the standard error of estimate of 0.56334.

Table 4.8: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.776	2	31.888	100.480	<.001 ^b
	Residual	37.131	117	.317		
	Total	100.907	119			

Source: Developed from research

The ANOVA results ($F=100.480$, $p<0.001$, $F=100.480$, $p<0.001$) confirm that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This means that Mean_Social and Mean_Green collectively have a significant impact on Mean_Buying. The low p-value indicates that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 4.9: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.409	.216		1.892	.061
	Mean_Social	.299	.093	.281	3.205	.002
	Mean_Green	.563	.119	.559	6.376	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Buying

Source: Developed from research

The **Coefficients Table** shows that both **social sustainability awareness** (Mean_Social) and **green trust** (Mean_Green) have a significant positive impact on consumer buying behavior. Green trust has a stronger influence (Beta = 0.559) compared to social sustainability awareness (Beta = 0.281). Both variables are statistically significant, with **p = 0.002** for Mean_Social and **p < 0.001** for Mean_Green.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will provide a comprehensive analysis of the findings in Chapter 4 as well as a detailed analysis of the study's limitations, implications, and recommendations for resolving those limitations. It also brings a thorough discussion to a close.

5.1 Discussion on Major Finding

The major findings will focus on analyzing the factors influencing students' intention to use digital reading platforms, along with a discussion on the key elements that affect their perceptions and usage intentions of these platforms.

The study investigating the relationship between social sustainable awareness, green trust, and consumer buying behavior revealed significant findings that contribute to a deeper understanding of sustainable consumer practices. Two hypotheses were tested, both of which were supported by the data, demonstrating the critical role of sustainability and trust in shaping consumer decisions.

Table 5.1 Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypotheses	Significant Level (p-value)	Results
H1: There is a significant relationship between social sustainability awareness and consumer buying	0.002	Supported

behavior		
H2: There is a highly significant relationship between green trust and consumer buying behavior	<0.001	Supported

Source: Developed from research

5.1.1 Discussion on The Relationship between Social Sustainability Awareness and Consumer Buying Behavior

H1: Social sustainability awareness has a positive relationship with consumer buying behavior.

The first hypothesis (H1) focused on the relationship between social sustainability awareness and consumer buying behavior. The result for this hypothesis was confirmed with a P value 0.002 which showed the strong relationship. This result clarifies the significance of consumers' knowledge of social sustainability concerns—ethical labor standards, community well-being, and environmental protection—in decision-making on consumption. With awareness something as simple as informing the consumers of social consequences of the choices made by the consumer would go a long way in making the society uphold brands and products that are socially and ethically sustainable. It confirms the modern trend toward greater responsibility for the purchases made by citizens and indicates that companies declaring their concern for social obligations can successfully target aware buyers.

The first hypothesis relates to the relationship between social sustainability awareness and consumer buying behavior. It is a well established fact that awareness of Social sustainability creates a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. According to Galbreath (2010), managers practicing high-level social sustainability policies must seek to enhance customer loyalty and advocacy which

underpins sustainable profitability. This observation corresponds to Hult's (2011) premise that consumers are willing to commit their loyalty to those firms whose beliefs are similar to their own.

This relationship is supported by subsequent studies as well. For example, Pivato and Misani and Tencati (2008) conducted a study and concluded that social impact of a brand has a positive correlation with brand image, which leads to an improvement in consumers' trust. In the same respect, Luo and Bhattacharya (2006) highlight that CSR initiatives increase customer satisfaction hence enhancing purchase intentions. Such findings support the postulation that if organisations promote and implement social sustainability, then they will not only conform to ethical practices but also reflect consumer preferences which lead to a large shift in consumers buying behaviour.

5.1.2 Discussion on The Relationship between Green Trust and Consumer Buying Behavior

H2: Green trust has a positive relationship with consumer buying behavior

The second hypothesis (H2) hypothesized a highly significant relationship between consumer purchasing behavior and green trust. The calculated t-ratio of less than 0.01 further supported this hypothesis and the wider claim that trust is essential to the growth of sustainable purchasing. Green trust refers to the consumer's perception of the trustworthiness and validity of the company's environmental assurance. According to this research, customers are more likely to purchase goods when they have faith in the brand's genuine green initiatives and their beneficial effects on the environment. Therefore, it is recommended that businesses invest in building and maintaining green trust by adopting credible and sustainable practices, such as statistical awards, green packaging, and verifiable carbon emission reduction strategies.

The equally apply to the part played by green trust in influencing the purchase behavior of a consumer. Kim and Choi (2012) established that green trust is the intermediary between a firm's environmental activities and the consumer's buying behavior. The authors concluded that, by developing and communicating their environmental claims, the companies can increase consumers' trust in their brand extending green trust through word-of-mouth communication.

Other research supports this relationship. Chen (2010) pointed out that green trust plays a positive role in changing the perception regarding green products hence enhancing purchase intentions. Furthermore, Rahbar and Wahid (2011) establish that consumers' preference to purchase products with Eco-label is a function of perceived environmental responsibility of the company. Increased sensitivity to environmental issues is a result of customers' willingness to select products, which are from companies they trust to be environmentally friendly, thus supporting the need for green trust.

Together these arguments demonstrate that the roles of awareness and trust are interlinked as two pillars towards defining sustainable patterns of consumer behaviour. These results not only confirm the study's theoretical reference system but also offer practical applications for marketers, policymakers, and every sustainability activist interested in social consumption patterns change. Apart from that, based on these studies, it can be realised that social sustainability awareness and green trust are essential in determining customers preferences and buying behavior. These relationships call for organisations to include social and environmental variables into their operational models in order to appeal to current society.

5.2 Implication of Study

The research benefits businesses specifically in the area of social sustainability awareness and its effect on brand positioning. This knowledge can be used to apply understanding of consumers' ethical consumption preferences to improving product development approaches that tap into a rising concern for sustainability in

companies' products and services. Marketing wise, a business firm can work on the best ways of communicating to the public their concern and effort in sustainability initiatives in order to attract the socially astute customers. Through the implementation of such strategies, organizations are capable of catering for the increasing number of ethical consumers and increasing its long-term organizational standing.

In particular, the findings of this study for policymakers are that the appreciation for the role of social sustainability in consumers' behaviors should be conceptualized in order to direct policy making toward the promotion of sustainable consumption. With these concerns, policymakers could use the knowledge to develop programs of cultivating increased awareness on social sustainability among the consumers. Consumer education can be carried out in public campaigns or as part of business cooperation in order to change purchasing behavior and make it sustainable.

All in all, the outcomes of this study provide a conceptual model that future research on social sustainability in consumer behaviour can follow. Thus, the findings can be taken to a different new contexts, industries, or geographical locations which supports a broader understanding of the relationship between social sustainability awareness and Consumers' decisions. It will also be possible for researchers to investigate the interaction between other aspects, including green trust and social sustainability, to determine the way these factors affect not only the tendency of consumers' buying behavior but also the trends in social development.

For society, the study focuses awareness on the need for ethical buying and supports change by encouraging individuals. It is the hope of this research that by creating awareness on the social and environmental effects arising from consumers' decisions people will be more responsible in their consumption patterns. It is about encouraging people to buy products that meet the standard of ethically acceptable consumption in the society so as to transform the society's attitude towards consumption. This could in turn have beneficial effects on international community as well as the environment, the elements of sustainability, which is a long-term welfare concepts all together.

Reflecting a variety of approaches incorporated into the evaluation of social sustainability awareness, this paper demonstrates the possibility of significant improvements both on the consumer level and on societal levels.

5.3 Limitation

The methodological limitations to this study on The Impact of Social Sustainability Awareness on Consumer Buying Behavior are quite important considerations to make when reviewing the broader relevance and potential for generalization of results. These have implications have not only impaired the interpretation of the findings of the study, but they are also classic indication that pointed areas should be explored deeper in order to get the best information regarding the subject matter.

The paper analyzing the effect of social sustainable awareness and green trust on the consumer buying behavior is useful but is not without limitations. These limitations reduce the richness, scope, and transfer-ability of the results, which suggests directions for enhancement in subsequent research.

The panel selection is one of the major drawbacks of this study since the study employed non probability sampling thereby limiting the generalization of the results sampled. Convenience which is a non probability sampling technique, intends to identify the persons in need of study based on the existing connections. Although this method is relatively convenient particularly for limited scale samples, the identified populations may not represent the diverse populations in the whole community. For instance, if the study targeted customers who cared for the environment the results would probably over-represent environmentally friendly consumer behavior. This forms a selection bias, which lowers the study's external validity and makes it difficult to affirm the outcomes in demographics or regions other than the one under study. As a result, interesting knowledge

regarding the sources of variation in consumer buying behaviour within different populations is hidden from view.

In stance, quantitative data may show how green trust affects consumers' buying behavior but are insufficient in showing how consumers develop trust in green products. Unfortunately, this focus restricts the research study's capacity to explain the nature and specific reasons of consumers' actions comprehensively.

The elision of mediating variables in the research model also limits the efficiency of explanation in the study. Intermediate variables also known as intervening variables help in explaining a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Excluding them means that the study is only going to suggest direct relationships rather than revealing detail on what actually happens. For instance, though, the studies might go ahead identify that social sustainable awareness does affect buying behavior, it does not determine whether this relationship might be partial by other factors like environmental attitudes, observed norms, or perceptions that green products work. This omission means that a portion of the map of the narrative remains largely uncharted, as well as restricting possible uses of the results to practical purposes.

Moreover, the lack of mediating variables in the research model eliminates further possibility of providing a deeper explanation to flow of relation. Intermediate variables are used to clarify the connection between an independent and a dependent variable. By exclusion of the elements in question, the study is only able to establish direct associations while losing fine-grained information about the kinds of processes present. For instance, although the research may show that social sustainable awareness affects buying behavior it does not determine whether this connection is indirect through aspects like environmental attitude, subjective norms or perceived behavioral control of green products. Unfortunately, this gap does not allow for examining a part of the story and does not encompass more possible real-life implementations of the results.

Last, the findings of this study were analyzed by means of SPSS, which is a methodological limitation. Although SPSS is a reliable program for simple

parameters including correlation and regression examinations, it does not contain most of the factors necessary to model relationships and indirect effects effectively.

Therefore, the use of non-probability sampling mode, the predominance of quantitative data, no inclusion of mediating factors, and simple analysis tools all limit the overall potential of the study. These limitations should be avoided in future research which will act as fertile ground for developing a significant and more comprehensive theoretical framework to understand consumer buying behavior in relation to social sustainability and green trust.

5.4 Recommendation

To overcome the limitations identified in the study on the impact of social sustainable awareness and green trust on consumer buying behavior, several recommendations are proposed. These suggestions aim to enhance the methodological rigor, analytical depth, and overall validity of future research in this domain.

The first and perhaps most critical recommendation is the adoption of probability sampling techniques. Unlike non-probability sampling, probability sampling methods, such as stratified or random sampling, ensure that every individual in the target population has an equal chance of being selected. This approach enhances the representative of the sample and improves the external validity of the findings. For example, by employing stratified sampling, researchers can ensure proportional representation of various demographic groups, such as age, gender, income, and geographic location. This will allow future studies to draw more generalizable conclusions about consumer buying behavior across different segments of the population.

The second recommendation involves integrating qualitative methods alongside quantitative approaches. While quantitative data provides valuable statistical insights, qualitative methods, such as interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic

studies, offer a richer understanding of consumer behavior. These methods enable researchers to delve into the underlying motivations, perceptions, and attitudes that drive consumer decisions. For instance, focus group discussions could uncover why consumers trust certain green certifications or how social sustainable awareness influences their brand loyalty. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, often referred to as a mixed-methods approach, provides a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied.

The second recommendation of the study is that; the researcher has to incorporate mediating variables into the research model. Mediating variables assist in revealing the other ways that the independent variables affects the dependent variables. As it is advocated, the subsequent research could explore how environmental values, peer pressure, or perception of relevancy of green campaign moderate the connection between social sustainable consciousness and purchasing behavior. These mediators will make the research more explanatory but also provide a practical value to the marketers or policymakers wanting to bolster sustainable consumption.

The last suggestion is to use the means of underground statistical analysis like AMOS or SmartPLS. These tools allow researchers to carry out Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is most suitable for elaborative research on the relationships between variables. In addition, because SEM can test both the direct and indirect impacts, this procedure offers more enlightenment than a simple sequential analysis of the nested effects. For example utilizing SmartPLS, in one framework, it is possible to show how the interaction of Sswa, GT, BL, and PI occurs. This shall provide a more elaborate understanding of the results and shall also offer more rigid evaluation outcomes.

In conclusion implementing the above recommendations will help overcome the some of the limitations of the current study and enhance the quality of next studies. In sum, it is recommended to use probability sampling to examine the unveiled gaps of knowledge all together with the help of the integration of mixed research methods, including mediating variable as well as the help of the selection of the highly sophisticated analytical tools to study the nature of consumer buying behaviour under circumstances of social sustainability and green trust. All these

improvements will not only help create progress in academic field but will shed light on achievable actions to encourage sustainable consumption in a society.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire



FINAL YEAR PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARENESS ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

SUPERVISOR : DR KOMATHI A/P MUNUSAMY

NAME	MATRIX NO.	H/P NO.
FANG YU MEI	2100090	0183707016

Dear respondents,

I am a final-year undergraduate student from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in International Business (Hons) under the Faculty of Accountancy and Management (FAM). I am conducting a project as part of the requirement to complete my degree.

"The Impact of Social Sustainability Awareness on Consumer Buying Behavior" is the title of my research. The objective of this research is to identify and study how awareness of social sustainability influences consumer purchasing decisions.

What is social sustainability?

Social sustainability is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development which seeks to enhance the quality of life of current as well as future generations by giving people fair treatment. They incorporate human rights, labour relations, social advancement, community welfare and social integration. For instance, socially sustainable development can be seen through provision of adequate wages, good working conditions and possibilities for local community. Through implementing of these practices, businesses take responsibility for improvement of the condition in the entire society apart from the problems related to environment.

This research is conducted mainly for educational purposes only. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and all your responses will remain anonymous. All information provided will be kept confidential, and we will not disclose your personal information to a third party. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

For further information, questions, or concerns regarding this research project, please contact me at fangyumei0217@utar.my. Thank you for your cooperation and participation.

Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Profession:

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Employed for wages
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Out of work and looking for work
- ☐ Out of work but not currently looking for work
- ☐ Other

3. Age:

- ☐ > 20 Years Old to 30 Years Old
- ☐ > 30 Years Old to 40 Years Old
- ☐ > 40 Years Old to 50 Years Old
- ☐ Over 50 Years Old

4. Education:

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school degree
- ☐ Some university course
- ☐ University degree
- ☐ Postgraduate degree

Section 2: Social Sustainability Awareness

1. I am aware that the firms are carefully implementing social practices for social development.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

2. I am aware that my personal safety and health is affected due to the products I use.

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

3. I believe that social influence can enhance the awareness of an individual his/her about environment.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I will not buy that product because I am aware product is not updated according to my social needs.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. I believe that some products serve as community development.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section 3: Consumer Buying Behavior

1. I expect to purchase sustainable products/brands in the near future.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. I avoid buying products/brands that are potentially unsustainable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. Overall, I am glad to purchase sustainable products/brands, because they are sustainable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. When I have to choose between two similar products/ brands, I choose the one that is more sustainable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. I will not consider sustainability-related issues when making a purchase.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Section 4: Green Trust

1. I believe that green environmental images of products are usually reliable

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. I believe that overall, the environmental claims of the product are generally trustable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3. I believe that the performance of the brand is in accordance with my ethical expectations.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. I always believe that an organization that is engaged in sustainability practices is fully transparent.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. When an organization steps forward for the welfare of society and the betterment of environment, it will be trustworthy for me to purchase its items without prior planning.

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Appendix 2: Cronbach Alpha Result (Pilot Test)

Social Sustainability Awareness

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.779	.795	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.207	3.967	4.300	.333	1.084	.019	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I am aware that the firms are carefully implementing social practices for social development.	16.80	4.166	.753	.710	.661
2. I am aware that my personal safety and health is affected due to the products I use.	16.80	4.924	.483	.380	.764
3. I believe that social influence can enhance the awareness of an individual his/her about environment.	16.73	6.064	.463	.237	.772
4. I will not buy that product because I am aware product is not updated according to my social needs.	17.07	4.478	.510	.305	.765
5. I believe that some products serve as community development.	16.73	5.168	.672	.669	.711

Consumer Buying Behavior

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.746	.776	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.220	3.867	4.433	.567	1.147	.053	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I expect to purchase sustainable products/brands in the near future.	16.67	5.333	.604	.533	.678
2. I avoid buying products/brands that are potentially unsustainable.	16.97	4.999	.539	.441	.690
3. Overall, I am glad to purchase sustainable products/brands, because they are sustainable.	16.70	5.183	.673	.623	.658
4. When I have to choose between two similar products/ brands, I choose the one that is more sustainable.	16.83	5.592	.429	.384	.729
5. I will not consider sustainability-related issues when making a purchase.	17.23	4.323	.447	.263	.760

Green Trust

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.818	.814	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	4.087	3.967	4.200	.233	1.059	.010	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I believe that green environmental images of products are usually reliable.	16.43	5.978	.640	.565	.775
2. I believe that overall, the environmental claims of the product are generally trustable.	16.27	6.133	.680	.576	.760
3. I believe that the performance of the brand is in accordance with my ethical expectations.	16.23	8.323	.382	.352	.837
4. I always believe that an organization that is engaged in sustainability practices is fully transparent.	16.33	6.368	.698	.532	.756
5. When an organization steps forward for the welfare of society and the betterment of environment, it will be	16.47	6.120	.665	.530	.765

Appendix 3: Conbrach Alpha Result (Actual Test)

Social Sustainability Awareness

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.722	.723	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.390	3.175	3.700	.525	1.165	.042	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I am aware that the firms are carefully implementing social practices for social development.	13.70	12.666	.550	.333	.649
2. I am aware that my personal safety and health is affected due to the products I use.	13.48	13.411	.424	.198	.696
3. I believe that social influence can enhance the awareness of an individual his/her about environment.	13.25	12.710	.512	.284	.662
4. I will not buy that product because I am aware product is not updated according to my social needs.	13.78	13.033	.443	.209	.689
5. I believe that some products serve as community development.	13.59	12.311	.481	.248	.675

Consumer Buying Behavior

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.728	.727	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.397	3.258	3.608	.350	1.107	.025	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I expect to purchase sustainable products/brands in the near future.	13.38	13.783	.520	.328	.669
2. I avoid buying products/brands that are potentially unsustainable.	13.73	14.890	.462	.243	.692
3. Overall, I am glad to purchase sustainable products/brands, because they are sustainable.	13.47	13.159	.551	.315	.656
4. When I have to choose between two similar products/ brands, I choose the one that is more sustainable.	13.64	14.316	.510	.297	.674
5. I will not consider sustainability-related issues when making a purchase.	13.73	15.243	.401	.201	.714

Green Trust

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.765	.766	5

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.333	3.225	3.483	.258	1.080	.010	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. I believe that green environmental images of products are usually reliable.	13.41	15.101	.500	.252	.734
2. I believe that overall, the environmental claims of the product are generally trustable.	13.32	13.512	.560	.329	.714
3. I believe that the performance of the brand is in accordance with my ethical expectations.	13.44	14.316	.542	.318	.720
4. I always believe that an organization that is engaged in sustainability practices is fully transparent.	13.18	14.302	.523	.297	.727
5. When an organization steps forward for the welfare of society and the betterment of environment, it will be trustworthy for me to purchase its items	13.32	14.588	.549	.316	.718

Appendix 4: Correlations Result

Correlations

		Mean_Social	Mean_Green	Mean_Buying
Mean_Social	Pearson Correlation	1	.768**	.710**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	120	120	120
Mean_Green	Pearson Correlation	.768**	1	.774**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	120	120	120
Mean_Buying	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.774**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	120	120	120

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

Appendix 5: Multiple Regression Result

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.795 ^a	.632	.626	.56334

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Green, Mean_Social

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.776	2	31.888	100.480	<.001 ^b
	Residual	37.131	117	.317		
	Total	100.907	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Buying

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean_Green, Mean_Social

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.409	.216		1.892	.061
	Mean_Social	.299	.093	.281	3.205	.002
	Mean_Green	.563	.088	.559	6.376	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Mean_Buying