

Exploring the Role of “Green” Altruism and Lifestyle in Influencing Sustainable Purchase Intention: A Theoretical Exposition

Anu Grover*, Hareesh Kumar T.*

Abstract

Over the past few decades, the concern for environmental issues has gained traction due to the alarming situation of the environment. Individuals around the globe came to understand the importance of a green lifestyle and green altruism in protecting the earth from major climate crises. Sustainability has become the need of the hour. By understanding this fact, companies have continuously endeavored to implement the idea of introducing green or sustainable practices in producing products. Various factors, including knowledge, attitude, beliefs, lifestyle, and values, affect the consumers' sustainable purchase intention toward green products. However, the scarcity of the relationship between green altruism, green lifestyle, and sustainable purchase intention has necessitated introducing this theoretical study in sustainable marketing. Green altruism comprises the willingness to protect the environment regardless of the motive of personal gain, whereas green lifestyles include the ways in which individuals redesign and reframe their habits in accordance with maintaining the beauty of the environment. Individuals have the prime power to preserve or deplete the environment's natural resources. Therefore, the study has been conducted to evaluate the effect of individuals' green altruism and green lifestyle in promoting sustainable purchase intention. The insights from this study will be valuable to managers, marketers, government, and policymakers to design and operate sustainable business practices and promote eco-friendly consumption patterns.

Keywords: Environmental Issues, Green Altruism, Green Lifestyle, Sustainability, Sustainable Purchase Intention

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed increasing concern and awareness toward the endlessly rising climate issues. The phase of COVID-19 pandemic has also created a significant change in the lives of individuals, emphasizing the importance of adopting a greener, more sustainable, and natural lifestyle (Leal Filho et al., 2022). Sustainable development is the concept that marked its presence in the early 1980s, when the Brundtland Commission, formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), popularized the concept of sustainable development (L. Wang et al., 2020). Sustainable production and consumption have been global concerns since the introduction of the world summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. As outlined in the UN “Agenda 2030,” Goal no 12 focuses on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. It necessitates the shift into producing and consuming goods and services in a more sustainable and responsible way. Consumers, the economy's most centered and dominant driver, have proven to be the most influential factors in promoting and achieving sustainable development. Human activities have become the primary cause of the deteriorating state of the environment, but at the same time, they have the power to change the world for the better (Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). A statement by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that if one out of eight billion citizens worldwide adopt eco-friendly behavior in their daily lifestyle, carbon emissions could drop up to 20 percent globally, highlighting the value of change in the lifestyle (Prashant et al., 2023). In developing countries like India, people are experiencing the impact

* Research Scholar (UGC-JRF), School of Management, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India.
Email: groveranu10@gmail.com

** Assistant Professor, School of Management, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, Punjab, India.
Email: hareesh.kumar@cup.edu.in

of climate change and realizing their responsibility toward protecting the environment. On September 21, 2021, During the Conference of the Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, on September 1, 2021, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced the concept of 'Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE)'. This international mass movement urges individuals and institutions worldwide to adopt a mindful and deliberate approach to utilization, rather than mindless and destructive consumption, to protect and preserve the environment (Prashant et al., 2023). This initiative encourages individuals and communities to adopt a lifestyle contributing to environmental conservation, which is crucial in combating climate change. It emphasizes the importance of changing individual behavior and transitioning towards a responsible lifestyle to protect the environment. Additionally, Binder and Blankenberg (2017) stated that sustainable world requires the participation of individuals in the form of green lifestyle. Sustainable or green lifestyle involves the practice of adopting altruistic behaviors that promotes harmony with the society, economy and the environment (Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al., 2021). Altruistic behavior of individuals reflects the consciousness of their actions for ecological benefits not for their personal gains. According to Uslu et al. (2023), altruism is a significant motivator for individuals to collaborate for the welfare of society. This principle has been expanded to include environmental studies (Corbett, 2005), resulting in the integration of altruistic values into the realm of sustainability. Green altruism is a powerful intrinsic motivator that reflects an individual's desire to take action towards a greener environment (Teng et al., 2015). Ali et al. (2020) and Ojo et al. (2019) have noted that individuals who exhibit altruistic green consumer behavior are typically more responsible and committed to doing what is right, driven by an innate desire to protect the environment without any personal gain. To extend the theoretical understanding of how humans' individualistic characteristics contribute to a sustainable future, this research aims to explore the role of lifestyles and the altruistic behavior of individuals in influencing sustainable purchase intention.

Literature Review

Lifestyle

In the words of Veal (2006), Lifestyle is defined as the "unique and different patterns of individuals' social and personal characteristics." The idea of Lifestyle emerged

within marketing research during the 1960s. Wells and Brown (2004) characterized Lifestyle as people's internal and external peculiarities. (Fredricks & Dossett, 1983; Mitchell, 1983) proposed that an individual's Lifestyle is influenced by their consumption habits and economic status, while Ansbacher (1967) believed that it reflects their self-concept. Consequently, understanding people's Lifestyle patterns is crucial to comprehending their purchasing intentions and behavior. The research conducted by Hawkins et al. (2004) posits that consumers exhibit distinct lifestyle patterns that influence their specific needs and desires and ultimately impact their decision-making processes. As a result, the market segmentation approach based on lifestyle has gained popularity in recent years (Akkaya, 2021).

Green Lifestyle

The concept of a green lifestyle entails adopting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in an individual's daily consumption habits (Florenthal & Arling, 2011). In comparison to the features mentioned above of lifestyle, a green lifestyle is characterized by a heightened awareness of the impact of human activities on the environment and the conscious effort to minimize such effects by embracing eco-friendly consumption practices (Lorenzen, 2012). Likewise, Chwialkowska (2019) opined that a green lifestyle incorporates actions that aim to have minimal impact on the beauty of nature. Genoveva and Syahrivar (2020) stated that a green lifestyle not only includes the individual action of purchasing green products but also considers the participation of individuals in green events.

Altruism

Altruism can be defined as a belief or state of mind that prioritizes or demonstrates concern for the happiness of other human beings (Panda et al., 2020). According to Uslu et al. (2023) altruism acts as a driving force that motivates individuals to work collectively towards the welfare of the society. This relationship has given space to implement this concept in the context of sustainability, and thus, altruistic values have been broadened to include environmental studies (Corbett, 2005). The decision-making process for selecting and adopting products is heavily influenced by an individual's emotional attachment and values. Ojo et al. (2019) stated that altruistic green consumers are

found to be more responsible and committed to doing the right thing, and they have the innate desire to protect the environment without considering personal gain.

Green Altruism

According to Mansoor and Paul (2022), Green altruism is conceptualized as consumers innate desire to help the society and environment reflecting consumers selfless concern for the others’ well-being. Green altruism is an intrinsically motivating force that reflects the feeling of taking actions towards greening of environment (Teng et al., 2015). Panda et al. (2020) opined that people with green altruistic mindset possess an inherent capacity to create an emotional connection with the society, whilst exhibiting concern for welfare of the living beings within the ecosystem. Additionally, Guéguen and Stefan (2016) demonstrated that the main driver of the motivating force of green altruistic consumers is the environmental benefits rather than their personal gain, and therefore, they are more inclined towards maintaining the beauty of the environment.

Sustainable Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects the perceived willingness of consumers to purchase products or services and demonstrates their readiness to make a purchase decision (Mei et al., 2012). It has been widely used as a predictor of actual consumer behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), intention to purchase is defined as the subjective probability of performing a particular behavioral action or engaging in a specific purchase behavior. Sustainable purchase intention is an essential indicator of a consumer’s environmental commitment and aligns with their decision to purchase environmentally friendly products (Jaiswal & Singh, 2018). Previous studies illustrate that purchase intention is influenced by various factors such as ecological knowledge, environmental concern, sustainable attitude, and perceived behavior control (Lavuri et al., 2023). There are pieces of evidence that these variables substantially affect sustainable purchase intention. Additionally, research has revealed that social capital positively impacts sustainable purchase intention, particularly in the context of sustainable fashion products (Kim et al., 2020). In summary, purchase intention is a critical factor in predicting consumer behavior and reflects

a consumer’s willingness to make a purchase decision, including sustainable purchases.

Research Methodology

This study investigates the impact of a “Green” lifestyle and altruism on fostering sustainable purchase intentions, drawing on existing literature. By synthesizing previous research, the study seeks to understand how these factors influence consumer behavior and decision-making. Additionally, it examines how incorporating a green lifestyle and altruistic values can enhance brand authenticity and trustworthiness, ultimately leading to more effective sustainable marketing strategies.

Discussion

“Green” Lifestyle and Sustainable Purchase Intention

Lifestyle is a set of behavioral characteristics an individual develops and modifies due to interaction with social conditions. Different consumers have different lifestyles that eventually exhibit different purchasing patterns. The lifestyle of an individual measures the impact of the surrounding living environment on their purchase intention. From the perspective of information lifestyle, Koshksaray et al. (2015) identified the seven dimensions of lifestyles: socially, demand, and internally driven. Sheng Guanghua and Gao Jian (2016) divided lifestyle into four dimensions from the perspective of innovation: fashion consciousness, price consciousness, leadership consciousness, and development consciousness in which the development consciousness leads to the long-term perspective and concern of individuals toward future development (Sheng et al., 2019).

Additionally, Xie et al.(2022), measure lifestyles from three different dimensions, including fashion consciousness, environmental consciousness, and fashion consciousness. Environmental consciousness demonstrates that the environmental concern consumers have a high level of green cognition and practice integrating this cognition into their purchase intention. Likewise, Georg (1999) stated that consumers’ transition to sustainable purchase behavior led to the shift toward an environmentally conscious lifestyle. In the context of green purchase decisions, previous research has

argued that consciousness toward the climate motivates consumers to modify their behavior concerning a sustainable lifestyle (Haq et al., 2008). Thus, based on the extant literature, this research posits the significant relation between green altruism and the sustainable purchase intention of consumers.

“Green” Altruism and Sustainable Purchase Intention

Altruism is a powerful motivator that persuades individuals to engage in pro-social behavior. Green altruism is the natural tendency toward maintaining the greening of the environment and indulging in actions that promote the sustainability of nature (Teng et al., 2015). It is an internally motivated factor inclined towards helping others selflessly and for the climate. This drive to promote environmentalism and support others can be crucial for their engagement in green initiatives (Verhagen et al., 2015). According to research conducted in psychology, individuals who exhibit altruistic behavior experience pleasure in being kind to the environment (Batson, 2014).

Additionally, altruism increases the feeling of positivity among consumers, leading to a more significant influence on their pro-environmental behavior, such as purchasing green or sustainable products (Wei et al., 2013). Similarly, Yadav and Pathak (2017) exemplify that there is a direct relation between the altruistic behavior and purchase intention of consumers for sustainable products. Altruistic individuals, being the most prominent helping hand to others, could become the dominant factor in involving and promoting environmental behavior. As a result, this research proposes that green altruism significantly influences consumers’ intention to purchase sustainably.

Research Analysis

The study demonstrated that adopting a “Green” lifestyle increases sustainable purchase intentions significantly by linking customers’ attitudes with environmentally conscious behaviors. Altruism reinforces this relationship by increasing brands’ perceived authenticity and trustworthiness. Consequently, organizations incorporating these features into their marketing strategies are more likely to build consumer trust and commitment to sustainable purchase behavior.

Conclusion and Future Research Direction

In light of the heightened global concern for the environment, shifting towards a natural, sustainable, and eco-friendly lifestyle has become increasingly important. This shift is reflected in the changing attitudes and behaviors of individuals who demonstrate pro-environmental behavior. Despite the marked increase in awareness regarding climate crises, there remains a discernible gap between individuals’ positive attitudes toward “green” and their intent to purchase eco-friendly products (ElHaffar et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). This research combined the literature from the specific individuals’ domain in a theoretical perspective to holistically understand the role of lifestyle and altruism. The active involvement of governments and organizations in promoting sustainability will eventually prompt the masses to adopt a healthy and green lifestyle. Past studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between the “green” lifestyle and consumer purchase intention, as influenced by altruism. Further theoretical evidence is required to bridge the prevailing gap effectively and promote positive consumer actions toward sustainable products. Additionally, future studies may conduct empirical research to acquire practical insights into the sustainable purchase intentions of consumers.

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