




Unravelling Green Consumer Behaviour: A Systematic Literature Review

Pearl Fafa Bansah^{a 1} , Vanessa Gaffar^b, Disman Disman^b, Ayu Krishna Yeliawati^b

^a Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Faculty of Economics and Business Education, Management study Program, Bandung, Indonesia)

^b Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Faculty of Economics and Business Education, Bandung, Indonesia)

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Abstract

Background: Environmental concerns are increasingly influencing consumer decision-making, and green consumer behaviour has garnered attention in marketing and sustainability. Businesses, governments and researchers must understand green consumer behaviour in order to understand sustainable consumption motives, attitudes, and decisions.

Objective: The objectives of this review are to analyse and synthesise how researchers characterise and define green consumer behaviour, examine and evaluate the various research methods used to investigate it, and identify and discuss emerging trends and patterns in green consumer behaviour research.

Methods: This review followed the PRISMA standards for systematic literature reviews. A thorough screening procedure was used to select 64 papers from 1633. The EBSCOhost Business Source Ultimate, Science Direct, and Emerald were used. Only English-language research papers published between 2005 and 2023 were included. Articles were found using the "green behaviour," "consumer behaviour," "sustainability," and "environmentalism keywords".

Results: Green consumer behaviour was interpreted differently using theories such as the theory of planned behaviour, value-belief-norm theory, social cognitive theory, and environmental identity theory. Modern research in this field examines social media, individual values and motivations, environmental knowledge and awareness, and interventions and marketing strategies for eco-friendly consumption

Conclusion: This research illuminates significant findings and current trends in the green consumer behaviour debate. It emphasises the need for precise definitions, rigorous research methods, and further studies on green consumer behaviour dynamics. Businesses, governments, and marketers that promote sustainable consumption can learn from the results.

Keywords: Definitions; Green consumer behavior; Research methods; Research trends; Systematic literature review

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¹ Corresponding author.

E-mail address: pearlfbansah@upi.edu

1. Introduction

In recent years, the global concern for environmental issues and sustainability has surged. The concept of green consumer behaviour has gained significant attention as individuals and societies become increasingly cognizant of the detrimental impact of consumption patterns on the environment (Yadav, Singh, Srivastava, & Mishra, 2021). Green consumer behaviour refers to the decisions, preferences, and actions of individuals or groups when selecting and utilising environmentally responsible or low-impact products or services (Hafyana & Alzubi, 2024; Kottoor & Mathews, 2023; Tigan et al., 2021). However, the primary problem addressed by this study is the lack of a comprehensive and consistent understanding of green consumer behavior (GCB). Despite the growing body of literature, there is considerable variation in the definition of GCB, methodologies employed to study it, and emerging trends identified. This inconsistency hampers the ability to draw clear conclusions and develop effective strategies to promote sustainable consumption.

This study addresses the fragmentation and lack of coherence in the existing literature on green consumer behaviour (GCB). Despite numerous studies on GCB, there is still no unified understanding or framework that effectively captures the complex and multidimensional nature of green consumer actions. This study aims to fill this gap by systematically reviewing the literature, identifying common themes, and proposing a more integrated approach for understanding GCB. According Chandra and Verma (2023) and Trudel (2019), understanding green consumer behaviour is essential for businesses, policymakers, and researchers because it reveals consumers' motivations, attitudes, and decision-making processes related to sustainable consumption.

According to Linnenluecke, Marrone, and Singh (2020), a systematic literature review is a crucial instrument for the synthesis and analysis of the extant corpus of knowledge pertaining to a particular subject matter. Methodological methods ensure relevant research, decrease prejudice, and provide a comprehensive view of the study area. This study distinguishes itself by employing a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to provide a holistic and rigorous synthesis of existing studies on green consumer behaviour. By following PRISMA standards and including a broad range of studies from multiple databases, this review provides a comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, this study not only identifies key definitions and research methodologies, but also highlights emerging trends and gaps in the current literature, offering a valuable roadmap for future research.

The novelty of this study lies in its methodological approach and comprehensive scope. By utilising a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology, this study not only synthesises existing studies but also critically evaluates them to highlight inconsistencies, gaps, and emerging trends in the field of green consumer behaviour. This approach allows the development of a cohesive framework that integrates diverse perspectives and provides a more holistic understanding of GCB. Additionally, the study offers actionable insights and future research directions, making it a valuable contribution to both the academic and practical realms.

Green consumer behaviour requires a thorough literature review to identify important concepts, theories, research methods, and emerging trends that may help us understand this complex issue. The objective of this study is to perform a methodological review of the extant literature pertaining to the phenomenon of green consumerism. Through an examination of the existing literature, our objective is to investigate three primary research enquiries: (1) How is green consumer behaviour defined by researchers? (2) What research methods are used to study green consumer behaviour? (3) What are the current research trends in green consumer behaviour? By examining these aspects, we seek to provide a comprehensive overview of GCB including its definitions, research methods, and current trends.

By gaining insight into how green consumer behaviour is defined, we can establish a common understanding of the concept and identify any variations in its conceptualisation. Understanding the research methods employed to study green consumer behaviour is crucial for assessing the rigor and validity of existing studies and identifying potential gaps or limitations in the methodology. Furthermore, analysing current research trends will shed light on the most recent developments and highlight areas that require further investigation. This systematic literature review endeavours to enhance the existing knowledge on green consumer behaviour and provide valuable insights for businesses, policymakers, and marketers who aspire to promote sustainable consumption. This review

aims to conduct a comprehensive and critical analysis of current research on green consumer behaviour by scrutinising the definitions, research methods, and contemporary research trends in this domain. The primary objective of this review is to advance knowledge and inform future research and practical applications. This review focuses on the following research questions.

1. How is green consumer behaviour GCB defined by researchers?
2. What types of research methods are used?
3. What are the current trends in green consumer behaviour?

The subsequent sections of this paper are organised based on research enquiries. The subsequent section explains the methodology employed in this review, including the study selection process. Subsequently, the outcomes will be exhibited, and the research enquiries will be addressed, grounded on the chosen articles for this particular literature review. The findings of this study are summarised and suggestions for further investigation are provided.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Search Strategy /Data Selection

The databases that were utilised for the purpose of research include EBSCOhost Business Source Ultimate, Science Direct, and Emerald. The databases were selected based on their comprehensive scope and widespread utilisation in contemporary systematic reviews, as evidenced by the studies conducted by Christofi, Leonidou, and Vrontis (2017), Christofi, Vrontis, Thrassou, and Shams (2019), Leonidou, Christofi, Vrontis, and Thrassou (2020) Sharma, Aswal, and Paul (2023), Vidal-Ayuso, Akhmedova, and Jaca (2023) and Thukral, Shree, and Singhal (2023). The scope of the investigation was limited to scholarly articles written in English, as this approach has traditionally been employed in prior systematic reviews within the marketing discipline. The study conducted by Vrontis, Makrides, Christofi, and Thrassou (2021) excluded novels, book chapters, conference papers, editorials, and other similar non-refereed publications from its analysis.

A systematic literature review is a rigorous and transparent technique that analyses academic literature to provide critical reflections, insights, future research topics, and routes according to Giganti and Falcone (2022). This study provides a comprehensive and rigorous overview of researchers' definitions of green consumer behaviour, research methodology, and current research tendencies. This evaluation included all papers that met the selection criteria. Figure 1 shows how this study used a conceptual framework that included all literature selection processes. This study utilised the PRISMA methodology, a systematic approach that offers clear and structured guidelines for conducting a literature review. The present study adopts the systematic literature review methodology expounded by Petticrew and Roberts (2008) which has been implemented in previous works by Kostagiolas and Katsani (2021). A systematic literature search was performed to identify articles addressing the topic of green consumer behaviour.

Three databases, namely Science Direct, Scopus, and Emerald were searched using the following keywords: “green behaviour”, “customer behaviour”, “consumer behaviour”, “pro-ecologically behaviour”, “green consumer”, “sustainability”, “Environmentalism”, “pro-environmental behaviour” “sustainable behaviour”, “green consumer behaviour” and “green purchase”. Utilisation of a tripartite database system mitigates the potential limitations associated with a singular database. This systematic literature review aimed to synthesise existing research on green consumer behaviour. The initial search identified 1633 articles from various databases, including EBSCOhost, Business Source Ultimate, Science Direct, and Emerald. After removing duplicates, 677 articles were retained for further screening. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table 1, 336 articles were selected for the full-text review. Ultimately, 272 articles were excluded for reasons such as irrelevance to the research topic, lack of peer review, and non-English language, resulting in a final sample of 64 studies included in this review. The databases were searched for scientific publications containing at least one instance of "green behaviour" and any other term from a list in their title, abstract, or keywords. Only peer-reviewed English academic articles were found to be relevant. Monographs, books, book chapters, commentary

pieces, conference proceedings, and letters to the editor were excluded from this study. We searched in May 2023. Table 1 lists the inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study.

Table 1. Inclusion Criteria and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:	
	The study pertains to the behaviour of environmentally conscious consumers.
	Academic literature published within the timeframe of 2005 to 2023.
	The scholarly articles are composed in the English language.
	The scholarly articles have undergone a rigorous peer-review process prior to their publication.
	The study adheres to the appropriate research structure in accordance with the chosen research methodology.
Exclusion criteria:	
	The research study is not associated with the behaviour of environmentally conscious consumers.
	Research papers that have not been published within the timeframe of 2005 to 2023.
	Academic papers that are not composed in the English language.
	Non-peer-reviewed research papers.
	Publications that do not adhere to the appropriate research structure as per the chosen research methodology.

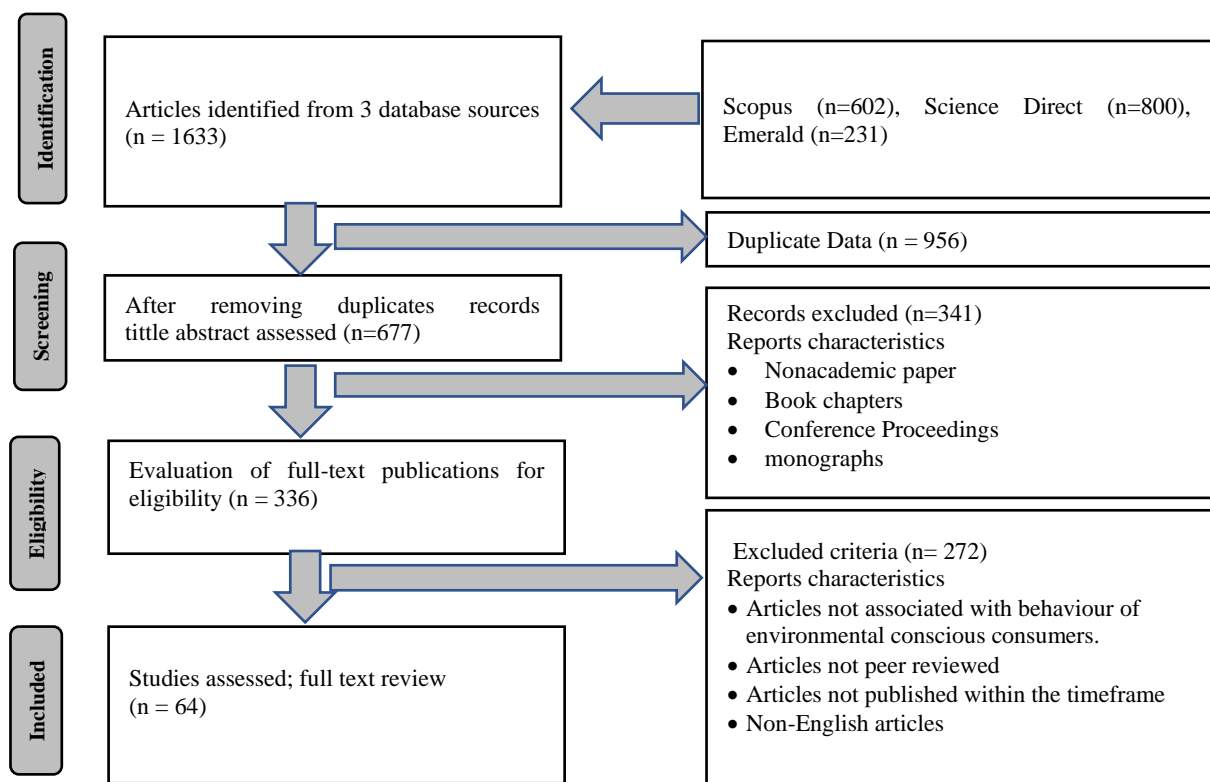


Figure 1. A flowchart depicting the literature review process based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach.

2.2. Data Coding

After selecting which publications to read, the researchers read each in its entirety in search of information pertinent to our research topic (Turabian, 2018). The researchers developed a data extraction

form to systematically gather and condense pertinent details from each article in a manner that was both replicable and comprehensible. The essential components of a scholarly article include the identification of the author(s), year of publication, title of the journal, research methodology employed (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed), key findings, and the proposed future research agenda. The data extraction form furnished the coding categories for conducting a descriptive and thematic analysis of the evaluated section. The use of a data extraction form facilitated the classification of the reviews into distinct descriptive and thematic analyses.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *Sampled papers published*

While the literature search and review process began in 2005, the analysis revealed that the earliest relevant publication on green consumer behavior included in this review was from 2006. (McDonald & Oates, 2006) This explains why the results reported start from 2006, as no qualifying publications from 2005 were identified during the screening process. Therefore, although the scope of the review included publications from 2005 onwards, the data only reflected articles published from 2006, when the first pertinent study was found.

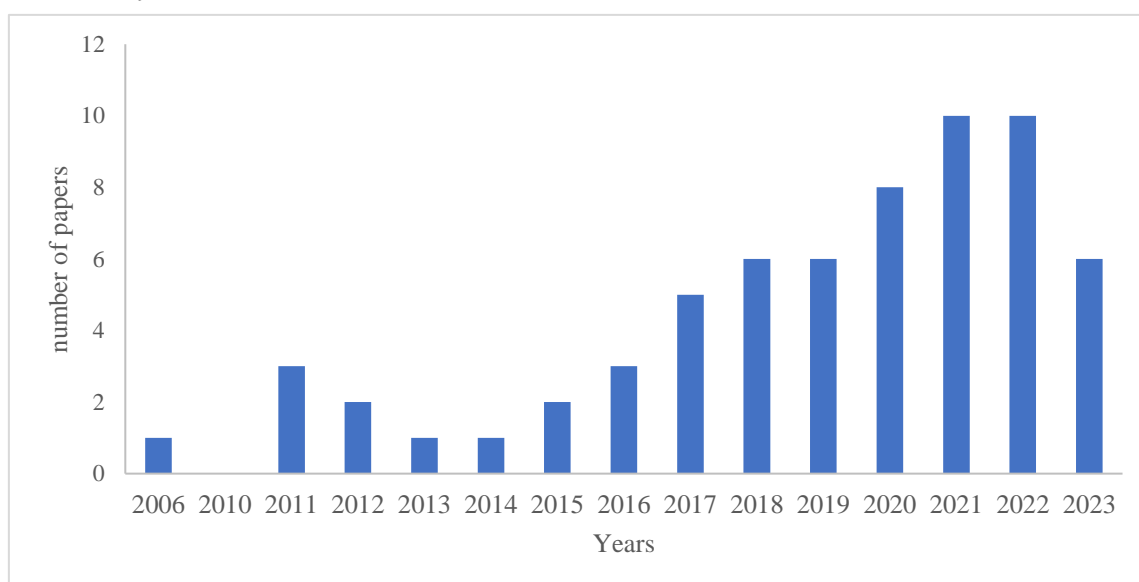


Figure 2. The number of papers published per year

From Figure 2, 2011, 2016, 2021, and 2022 stand out with a relatively higher number of publications, indicating increased interest and research activity in green consumer behaviour during those periods. The years 2017, 2018, and 2019 also showed a significant number of papers, suggesting a sustained focus on this topic during that time. A discernible upsurge in the number of published papers was observed from 2020 onwards, with a total of 10 papers published in both 2021 and 2022. The data indicate that there were no publications on green consumer behaviour in 2010, which might suggest a relatively lower interest or research focus during that particular year. The distribution of the number of papers across the years is somewhat uneven, with some years having more significant activity than others.

Table 2. The number of papers published per Journal

Journal	Frequency	Percentage
Journal of Cleaner Production	16	25
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	4	6.25
Business Strategy and the Environment	4	6.25
Industria Textila	2	3.1
Journal of Applied Business Research	2	3.1
Journal of Industrial and Management Optimization	2	3.1
Problems and Perspectives in Management	2	3.1
Revista Brasileira de Marketing	2	3.1
Applied Geography	1	1.5
Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal	1	1.5
Brazilian Journal of Operations and Production Management	1	1.5
Cleaner Logistics and Supply Chain	1	1.5
Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	1	1.5
Economics and Sociology	1	1.5
Estudios Gerenciales	1	1.5
Fashion and Textiles	1	1.5
Gestao e Producao	1	1.5
IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management	1	1.5
International Business Management	1	1.5
International Journal of Management	1	1.5
International Journal of Production Economics	1	1.5
Journal of Business Research	1	1.5
Journal of Distribution Science	1	1.5
Journal of Macromarketing	1	1.5
Journal of Marketing	1	1.5
Journal of Marketing Research	1	1.5
Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics	1	1.5
Journal of Risk and Financial Management	1	1.5
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1	1.5
Marketing Letters	1	1.5
Organizations and Markets in Emerging Economies	1	1.5
Polish Journal of Management Studies	1	1.5
RAUSP Management Journal	1	1.5
Revista de Administracao Mackenzie	1	1.5
Sinergie	1	1.5
Technology Analysis and Strategic Management	1	1.5
Technovation	1	1.5
Tekstilec	1	1.5
Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	1	1.5

As shown in Table 2, The Journal of Cleaner Production is the most prolific journal in the field, accounting for 25% of the sampled research. It focuses on sustainability and environment-friendly practices in various industries. Other journals include Business Strategy and the Environment,

Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Industria Textila, Problems and Perspectives in Management, and Revista Brasileira de Marketing. These journals cover a wide range of disciplines including geography, accounting, finance, economics, sociology, and engineering. The distribution of papers across different journals demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of green consumer behaviour research and the increasing attention given to sustainability and environmental concerns in various fields. The importance of integrating sustainability principles into business strategies and practices is emphasised in these journals.

3.2. The Definition of Green Consumer Behaviour in Reviewed Articles

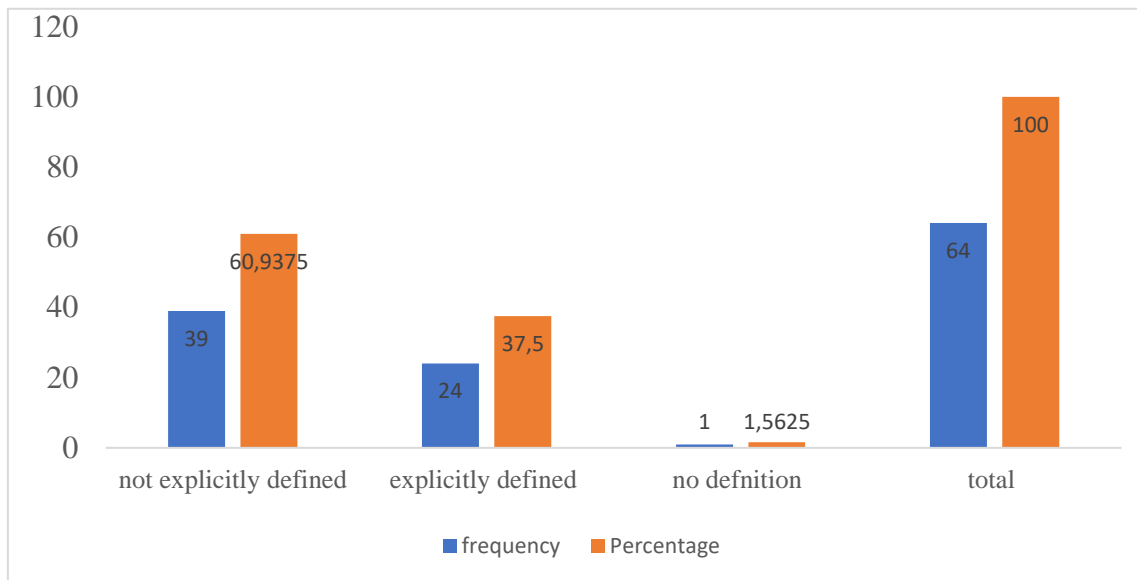


Figure 3. Definition of Green Consumer behaviour in reviewed articles

Of the 64 articles examined, 60.9375% did not provide a clear definition of green consumer behaviour (GCB). This lack of definition can lead to inconsistencies in how GCB is interpreted and measured in different studies. In contrast, 37.5% of the articles provided an explicit definition of GCB, recognising the importance of establishing a precise understanding of the concept. Only 1.5625% of the articles did not provide a definition for GCB. The lack of clear definitions for exploring GCB highlights the need for future research to provide clear definitions for clarity and promote comparability and consistency in studies. The analysis of these findings indicates a considerable range of perspectives and understanding within the research community regarding the definition of GCB. The concept of green consumer behavior (GCB) been defined differently by different researchers, leading to a lack of consensus. Further research should consider specific contexts and parameters to establish a shared understanding of GCB, which is important for advancing this field.

Table 3. Definition of Green Consumer Behaviour

Author and Year	Definition
Becchetti, Fiaschetti, and Salustri (2021), Dhir, Talwar, Sadiq, Sakashita, and Kaur (2021), Pommeranz and Steininger (2021), Zver and Vukasović (2021), Dangelico, Alvino, and Fraccascia (2022), Nekmahmud, Naz, Ramkissoon, and Fekete-Farkas (2022), Oncioiu and Ifrim (2022), Tan, Makkonen, Kaur, and Salo (2022).	Precise definition: These definitions explicitly outline the core elements of green consumer behaviour. They emphasise consumers' purchasing behaviour towards environmentally friendly products or services and their willingness to pay a premium price. Additionally, they highlight actions taken by consumers to reduce their negative impact on the environment
Piscicelli, Ludden, and Cooper (2018), Effendi (2020), TM, Kaur, Bresciani, and Dhir (2021), TM, Kaur, Ferraris, and Dhir (2021), Farronato, Scuotto, Pironti, and Del Giudice (2022), Sharma, Aswal, and Paul (2022), Kapse, Mahajan, Hudnurkar, Ambekar, and Hiremath (2023),	Not Explicitly Defined: In this category, researchers use environmental factors or related terms to describe green consumer behavior without providing a specific, formal definition. These descriptions offer insights into the multifaceted nature of GCB but do not present a concise definition
Barr and Prillwitz (2012)	No definition

In the course of our systematic literature review, we encountered diverse interpretations of green consumer behaviour (GCB) among researchers. Table 3 categorises these definitions into three groups.

3.4 *Emerging themes from the definition of GCB*

Green consumer behaviour pertains to consumer attitudes, beliefs and actions towards eco-friendly products and services. Sustainable consumption refers to various consumer actions, including buying eco-friendly products, minimising waste, and adopting sustainable consumption habits. Green consumers are environmentally conscious individuals who actively seek out and support products and services with lower environmental impact (Dangelico et al., 2022; Nekmahmud et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2022). Table 4 depicts emerging themes from the definitions of GCB.

Table 4. Emerging themes from the definition of GCB

Factors	Consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards environmentally friendly products and services	Reference
Individual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental Concern: The level of concern individuals have for the environment plays a crucial role in shaping their green consumer behaviour. Greater awareness of sustainability is linked to increased engagement in eco-friendly behaviours. 2. Personal Values: Green consumer behaviour is influenced by personal values, such as altruism, environmental consciousness, and sustainability. Individuals who prioritise these values are more likely to exhibit green consumer behavior. 3. Knowledge and Awareness: Consumer knowledge and awareness about environmental issues and the impacts of their consumption choices play a significant role in shaping green consumer behavior. Educating consumers about the benefits of environmentally friendly products can positively influence their attitudes and behaviours. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. McDonald and Oates (2006), Coleman, Bahnan, Kelkar, and Curry (2011), Claudy, Peterson, and O'Driscoll (2013), Shrouf and Miragliotta (2015), La Venture and Norrgard (2016), Cardoso and Van Schoor (2017), Trivedi, Patel, and Acharya (2018), Tuwanku, Rohman, and Rofiq (2018), X. Wang, Yuen, Wong, and Teo (2018), Hong, Wang, and Gong (2019), do Paço, Shiel, and Alves (2019), Russo, Confente, Scarpi, and Hazen (2019), Trudel (2019), Viana, Alves, and Vieira (2019), Jaini, Quoquab, Mohammad, and Hussin (2020), Jouzdani and Esfahani (2020), Shiel, do Paço, and Alves (2020), Becchetti et al. (2021), Lubowiecki-Vikuk, Dąbrowska, and Machnik (2021), Gravelines, Banytė, Dovalienė, and Gadeikienė (2022), Nekmahmud, Naz, Ramkissoon, and Fekete-Farkas (2022), Prieto-Sandoval, Torres-Guevara, and Garcia-Diaz (2022), Shankar, Dhir, Talwar, Islam, and Sharma (2022), Tan, Makkonen, Kaur, and Salo (2022), Fraccascia, Ceccarelli, and Dangelico (2023), Kapse et al. (2023).
Social	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Norms: The social influence of family, friends, and peers can shape green consumer behavior. When individuals perceive social norms that favour environmentally friendly behavior, they exhibit a higher propensity to engage in such conduct. 2. Reference Groups: Consumer behavior can be influenced by the behavior and opinions of reference groups, such as environmental organisations or influential individuals advocating for sustainable practices. 3. Social Identity: Consumers may adopt green consumer behavior to align with their social identity as environmentally conscious individuals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foster, McMeekin, and Mylan (2012), He, Xiong, and Lin (2016), Narula and Desore (2016), Li, Moul, and Zhang (2017), Piscicelli et al. (2018), Chwialkowska, Bhatti, and Glowik (2020), Herberz, Hahnel, and Brosch (2020), Pommeranz and Steininger (2021), Turunen and Halme (2021), Veleva (2021), Farronato et al. (2022), Delistavrou, Tilikidou, and Papaioannou (2023), , ,
Contextual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product Attributes: Consumers are influenced by the specific attributes of environmentally friendly products, such as eco-labelling, energy efficiency, recyclability, and organic certifications. Positive perceptions of these attributes increase the likelihood of green consumer behaviour. 2. Marketing and Communication: Effective marketing strategies, such as eco-friendly advertising and green messaging, can influence consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards environmentally friendly products. Clear and transparent communication about the environmental benefits of products can enhance consumer trust and encourage green consumption. 3. Economic Factors: Price, availability, and affordability of environmentally friendly products can impact consumers' purchasing decisions. The availability and affordability of eco-friendly alternatives may positively influence consumers' inclination towards engaging in environmentally conscious consumer behaviour. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sonnenberg, Jacobs, and Momberg (2014), Nam, Dong, and Lee (2017), Bashir, Jørgensen, Pedersen, and Skard (2020), Effendi (2020), Palmero and Montemayor (2020), L. Wang, Wong, and Narayanan Alagas (2020), Oncioiu et al. (2021), Tarulli, Morrone, and Toma (2021), TM, Kaur, Bresciani et al. (2021), TM, Kaur, Ferraris et al. (2021), Zver and Vukasović (2021), Dangelico, Alvino, and Fraccascia (2022), Oncioiu and Ifrim (2022), Loaiza-Ramírez, Moreno-Mantilla, and Reimer (2022), Sharma et al. (2022), Delistavrou et al. (2023), Gáspár, Pataki, Barta, Thalmeiner, and Zéman (2023),

Generally, understanding green consumer behaviour requires consideration of the interplay between individual, social, and contextual factors. By examining these factors and their influence on consumer attitudes and behaviours, businesses, policymakers, and marketers can develop effective strategies to encourage and support green consumer behaviour, ultimately contributing to sustainable consumption patterns and a greener future.

3.5 Theories used to explore GCB

Table 5. Theories used to explore GCB

Theories	Descriptions	References
Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	Utilisation Rate: 15.6% (n=10) Description: TPB, a psychological theory proposed by Ajzen (1989), focuses on explaining and predicting human behaviour, particularly decision-making in relation to specific actions or behaviours. Researchers employing TPB aim to elucidate the determinants that influence consumers' attitudes and actions towards eco-friendly goods and services.	Nam et al. (2017), Tuwanku et al. (2018), do Paço et al. (2019), Palmero and Montemayor (2020), Zver and Vukasović (2021), Dangelico et al. (2022), Nekmahmud et al. (2022), Shankar et al. (2022), Delistavrou et al. (2023), Fraccascia et al. (2023).
Environmentalism-Centred Model	Utilisation Rate: 17.2% (n=11) Description: Some articles, while not explicitly using a specific theory, employ models centred on environmentalism. These models delve into the realm of green consumer behaviour with a focus on environmental aspects	McDonald and Oates (2006), Foster et al. (2012), He et al. (2016), La Venture and Norrgard (2016), Narula and Desore (2016), Li et al. (2017), Santos et al. (2018), Braga et al. (2019), Jouzdani and Esfahani (2020), Becchetti et al. (2021), Gravelines et al. (2022), Fraccascia et al. (2023), Gáspár et al. (2023).
Multi-Theoretical Approaches	Utilisation Rate: 1.6% (n=1) Description: Some articles employ various theories and models to provide a comprehensive understanding of green consumer behaviour. These approaches encompass multiple theoretical perspectives	Claudy et al. (2013) (Cognitive mechanisms underlying green consumer behavior); Piscicelli et al. (2018) (Schwartz's Portrait Value Questionnaire); Viana et al. (2019) (Ecologically Conscious Consumer Behavior); Wang et al. (2019) (Stackelberg game models); Bashir et al. (2020) (Business experimentation for sustainability); Chwialkowska et al. (2020) (Dunlap & Van Liere theory); Jaini et al. (2020) (Personal norm, Pro-environmental belief); Palmero and Montemayor (2020) (Self-determination theory); Shiel et al. (2020) (Concept of generativity to sustainable development and green consumer behaviour); Pommeranz and Steininger (2021) (Hedonic regression model); Dangelico et al. (2022) (Value-Attitude-Behavior model and Environmental Concern Theory); Loaiza-Ramírez et al. (2022) (Psychological approaches, protected values, and halo effect); Sharma et al. (2022) (Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology framework).
Theory of Reasoned Action	Utilisation Rate: 4.7% (n=3) Description: it is a framework that focuses on understanding the cognitive mechanisms underlying green consumer behaviour	This theory was utilised by Coleman et al. (2011), do Paço et al. (2019), and Zver and Vukasović (2021).

Table 5 presents the theories used to analyse articles on green consumer behaviour. These theories help explain the factors that influence eco-friendly consumer behaviour and offer recommendations to

companies. Future research can benefit from using these theories to better understand green consumer behaviour and develop more effective sustainability strategies.

3.6 Methods used by the researchers

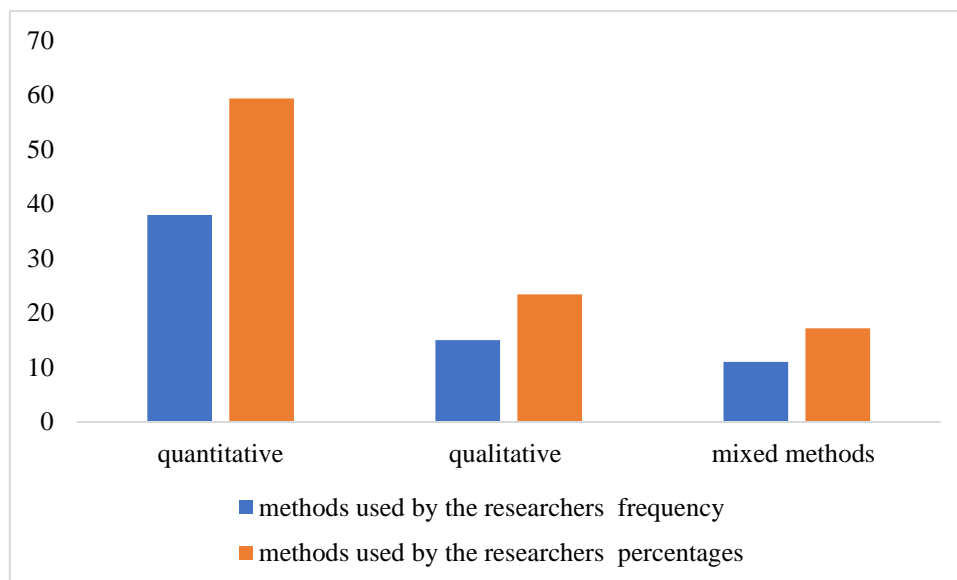


Figure 4. Methods used by the researchers

Figure 4 shows that the landscape of research methodologies appears to be diverse and dynamic, with researchers strategically selecting the most suitable approach for their studies. Of the 64 articles analysed, 59.375% utilised quantitative research, which involves analysing numerical data to identify patterns and relationships. A total of 23.4375% of the studies used qualitative research, which involved analysing non-numerical data to understand experiences and perceptions. A mixed-methods approach was used in 17.1875% of the studies, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The choice of methodology ultimately hinges on the research objectives and nature of the research questions being pursued, highlighting the flexibility and adaptability of researchers in their quest for knowledge and insight.

4. Implications

4.1 The distribution of research methods used and implications.

From Figure 4, the implications of the methods used to guide future research can be grouped into five parts: (i) methodological diversity, (ii) holistic perspective, (iii) complementary, (iv) practical relevance, and (v) advancing knowledge.

- (i) **Methodological Diversity:** The use of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods reflects the recognition of the complexity and multidimensionality of green consumer behaviour. Researchers have employed different methods to capture various aspects of consumers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.
- (ii) **Holistic Perspective:** The inclusion of qualitative and mixed-methods approaches suggests a desire to go beyond numerical data and explore the subjective experiences, motivations and contextual factors that influence green consumer behaviour. This holistic perspective helps uncover deeper insights and provides a richer understanding of GCB.

- (iii) **Complementary Insights:** Quantitative methods provide numerical data that allow for statistical analysis, generalisability, and identification of patterns and correlations. Qualitative methods offer in-depth insights, context-specific understanding and exploration of individual experiences and meanings. By combining these methods in mixed-methods studies, researchers can benefit from both quantitative rigour and qualitative richness.
- (iv) **Practical Relevance:** Quantitative methods can provide empirical evidence and statistical significance, which is useful for informing evidence-based decision-making and practical implications for businesses and policymakers. Qualitative methods can provide nuanced insights that help identify the underlying motivations, barriers, and opportunities for effective interventions and strategies.
- (v) **Advancing Knowledge:** Methodological diversity in green consumer behaviour research contributes to the advancement of theoretical frameworks, measurement scales and research methodologies in the field. This helps build a comprehensive knowledge base that can inform future studies and facilitate a deeper understanding of the factors influencing green consumer behaviour.

The distribution of research methods implies that a multidisciplinary and multifaceted approach is necessary to comprehensively investigate and understand green consumer behaviour, ensuring that the research findings are robust, meaningful and applicable to real-world contexts.

4.2 *Emerging trends in green consumer behaviours*

From the 64 articles analysed, the following issues emerged:

- (i) **Sustainable Packaging:** There is a growing trend among consumers to prioritise products with sustainable packaging. These include packaging made from recycled materials, minimal use of plastics, and biodegradable or compostable packaging options.
- (ii) **Circular Economy:** Consumers are increasingly interested in products and services that embrace the principles of a circular economy. This involves designing products for durability, repairability and recyclability as well as promoting practices such as product reuse, remanufacturing and recycling.
- (iii) **Ethical and Fair Trade:** Consumers place greater emphasis on companies' ethical and fair-trade practices. They seek products produced under fair working conditions, adhering to ethical sourcing practices, and supporting the wellbeing of workers and local communities.
- (iv) **Carbon Footprint Consciousness:** Consumers are becoming more aware of the carbon footprint associated with their purchases. They are interested in products and services that have a lower carbon footprint, such as those produced using renewable energy sources or those with reduced energy consumption throughout their lifecycle.
- (v) **Digital Influence:** The rise of digital platforms and social media has increased consumer awareness and engagement with green consumer behaviour. Consumers are more likely to share information, seek recommendations and make informed choices based on online reviews, sustainable lifestyle influences and digital platforms dedicated to green living.
- (vi) **Sharing Economy:** The sharing economy, including practices such as ride-sharing, co-working spaces and shared ownership models, is gaining popularity. Consumers embrace these alternatives to reduce resource consumption, minimise waste and promote sustainable lifestyles.
- (vii) **Conscious Consumerism:** Consumers are increasingly seeking transparency and accountability from companies regarding sustainability practices. They are willing to support brands that align with their values and make efforts to reduce their environmental impacts through supply chain transparency, responsible sourcing and ethical business practices.

- (viii) **Personalisation and Customisation:** As consumers become more conscious of their environmental impacts, there is a growing demand for personalised and customised products that cater to their specific needs. This trend aligns with the idea of reducing waste by providing tailored solutions, instead of mass-produced goods.
- (ix) **Impactful Brand Activism:** Consumers are drawn to brands that actively engage in environmental and social activities. Brands that demonstrate genuine commitment to sustainability, engage in environmental initiatives and support social causes are gaining favour among environmentally conscious consumers.
- (x) **Green Technology and Innovation:** Advancements in technology have enabled the development of innovative solutions that promote sustainable living. Consumers embrace smart home devices, energy-efficient appliances, renewable energy solutions, and other green technologies to reduce their environmental footprints. These emerging trends indicate a shift towards more mindful and sustainable consumer behaviour. By being informed about these trends, businesses and policymakers can adapt their strategies to meet the evolving preferences and expectations of green consumers.

4.3 *Future research directions*

The potential future research directions derived from this analysis are as follows.

- (i) **Exploring the role of cultural and societal influences:** Investigate how cultural values, norms and societal factors shape green consumer behaviour. Examine how cultural differences impact consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards environmentally friendly products and services.
- (ii) **Understanding the influence of marketing and communication strategies:** Examine the effectiveness of different marketing and communication strategies in promoting green consumer behaviour. Investigate how various marketing techniques such as eco-labelling, green advertising and social media campaigns influence consumers' perceptions, attitudes and purchase intentions.
- (iii) **Examining the impact of product characteristics and attributes:** Investigate the influence of specific product characteristics and attributes on green consumer behaviour. Analyse how factors such as product quality, price, convenience and eco-friendliness impact consumers' decision-making processes and willingness to purchase environmentally friendly products.
- (iv) **Assessing the role of consumer knowledge and information:** Exploring the impact of consumer knowledge and information on green consumer behaviour. Investigate how consumers' awareness and understanding of environmental issues, sustainability concepts and product-related information affects their attitudes, beliefs and purchase decisions.
- (v) **Investigating the role of social influence and peer effects:** Examine the influence of social factors such as social norms, peer pressure and social networks on green consumer behaviour. Investigate how social interactions and influence shape consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards environmentally friendly products and services.
- (vi) **Examining the barriers and challenges to green consumer behaviour:** Identify the barriers and challenges that hinder consumers from adopting and engaging in green consumer behaviour. Explore factors such as price premiums, limited product availability, lack of trust in green claims and consumer scepticism and investigate strategies to overcome these barriers.
- (vii) **Exploring the impact of policy and regulatory interventions:** Assess the effectiveness of policy and regulatory interventions in promoting green consumer behaviour. To examine the

influence of government initiatives, environmental regulations and incentives on consumers' attitudes, perceptions and purchase decisions regarding environmentally friendly products.

- (viii) Investigating the long-term sustainability of green consumer behaviour: Explore the long-term sustainability of green consumer behaviour and its impact on environmental outcomes. We analyse the durability and consistency of green consumer behaviour over time, assess its potential to drive sustainable consumption patterns, and contribute to broader environmental goals.

4.4 *Implications for businesses and industries.*

Here are some key implications for businesses and industries.

- (i) **Product development and innovation:** Understanding consumer attitudes and behaviours towards environmentally friendly products and services can guide businesses in developing innovative and sustainable offerings. By incorporating green features, materials and production processes into their products, companies can meet the growing demand for environmentally friendly options and gain competitive advantage in the market.
- (ii) **Marketing and communication strategies:** Knowledge of green consumer behaviour can inform effective marketing and communication strategies. Businesses can highlight the environmental benefits of their products, use eco-labelling and certifications, and leverage social media and other channels to engage and educate consumers about their green initiatives. Transparent and credible communication on sustainability efforts can build trust and enhance brand reputation among eco-conscious consumers.
- (iii) **Supply chain and operations management:** Green consumer behaviour can influence businesses' supply chain and operations management practices. Companies may need to assess and improve their sustainability practices such as sourcing sustainable materials, implementing energy-efficient manufacturing processes, reducing waste and adopting environmentally friendly packaging and logistics. Aligning supply chain practices with green consumer preferences can enhance brand image and attract more environmentally conscious customers.
- (iv) **Collaboration and partnerships:** Recognising green consumer behaviour opens opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders along the value chain. Businesses can work with suppliers, manufacturers and retailers to adopt sustainable practices, develop eco-friendly packaging solutions, and promote the circular economy. Collaborative initiatives and partnerships focused on sustainability can help businesses meet consumer expectations and more effectively address environmental challenges.
- (v) **Consumer engagement and loyalty:** Green consumer behaviour presents opportunities for businesses to engage in and build loyalty towards environmentally conscious consumers. By actively involving consumers in sustainability initiatives, such as recycling programmes, carbon offset programmes, or cause-related marketing campaigns, businesses can foster a sense of shared values and create a positive brand image. Providing personalised experiences, rewards and incentives for green behaviour can further strengthen customer loyalty.
- (vi) **Risk management and reputation:** Failure to recognise and respond to green consumer behaviour can pose risks to a company's reputation. Negative environmental impacts, ethical controversies, or lack of transparency can lead to consumer backlash and damage brand reputation. Businesses must proactively manage environmental risks, ensure transparency in their sustainability practices, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to environmental responsibility to maintain consumer trust and loyalty.
- (vii) **Regulatory compliance and market regulations:** The study of green consumer behaviour can also inform businesses about evolving regulatory requirements and market regulations related

to sustainability. Anticipating and adapting to regulatory changes can help businesses stay ahead of compliance requirements and leverage opportunities presented by shifting consumer preferences and government initiatives to promote sustainable practices.

Understanding green consumer behaviour can enable businesses to align their strategies, products and operations with sustainability goals; enhance brand value; and capitalise on the growing demand for environmentally friendly products and services. By incorporating sustainability principles into their business models, companies can position themselves as responsible and socially conscious organisations in the eyes of consumers, and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

5. Conclusions

This literature review systematically analyses the results of 64 studies on green consumer behaviour (GCB) that were published between 2005 and 2023. The study focuses on the various definitions, theories and research methodologies used in these studies, with the majority employing quantitative approaches. This study highlights developing trends, including the impact of social media, personal values and environmental awareness on GCB. However, it also acknowledges the existence of considerable gaps in the establishment of a cohesive framework. Future studies should prioritise the establishment of standardised definitions, improvement of methodological rigour, and the investigation of neglected areas. This will contribute to a more unified and practical understanding of GCB, which can then be used to advise companies, policymakers and researchers in their efforts to promote sustainable consumption.

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