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Consumers' Sentiment Towards Responsible Consumption and Its Impact on Sustainability

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ABSTRACT: This research paper is to measure the view point of consumers on responsible consumption, factors driving such consumption practices and suggested recovery plans that reverse the effect of current trends in consumption and production for a successful transition. Structured questionnaires were distributed to the consumers which was used to discover their attitude towards environment, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. The final result demonstrates that consumers are more concerned with responsible consumption practices. Major magnitudes contributed to the research were saving energy, limited waste generation and preference for biodegradable/recycled packaging materials, the consumption of local/seasonal products, increase in production efficiency, and some social benefits like increased employment, poverty reduction and improved health conditions. A responsible consumer always tries to reduce the consumption, consumes local products and services, reuses, recycles and identifies all the best possible ways to reduce the waste.

KEYWORDS: Responsible production, Responsible consumption, Sustainability, Carbon foot print, Sustainable consumption.

I. INTRODUCTION

Brundtland Report states that, "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED, 1987). Sustainable development goal 12, "Responsible Consumption and Production" is one among the 17 goals established by the United States to sustain the livelihoods of current and future generations. According to the sustainable development goals report 2022, the domestic material consumption rose by 65% globally. The report also witnessed 13.3 percent of food loss before it reached retail markets, 17 percent of food waste at households and retail outlets, accumulation of e-wastes and the demand for renewables in generating electricity. All these factors lead to triple planetary crisis such as climate change, bio diversity loss and pollution that result in unsustainable patterns of production and consumption which is a serious threat to the attainment of sustainable development goals (Balderjahn, 2013). Environmental degradation as a result of economic and social progress endangers every system on the planet by affecting the future development and survival. Thus, consumers must make better choices by considering the environment impact that they create while consuming the products or services. This research clearly explores the attitude of consumers towards responsible consumption and their readiness to adopt measures for such consumption to benefit the society in all the aspects as a whole.

The green economy framework allowed governments to refocus their commitment to addressing the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development by concentrating on reducing carbon emissions, enhancing energy efficiency, and reducing biodiversity loss through public and private investments. (United Nations Environment Programme, 2015). When the United Nations announced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals in 2015 to provide an integrated approach to sustainable development to fulfil the needs of both present and future generations, this idea was furthered.

We are determined to fence the globe from declination, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking critical action on climate changes, so that it can support the requirements of present and unborn generations. (United Nations, 2015, p. 2). Hence, it is important to understand the consumer sentiment towards responsible consumption and its impact on sustainable lifestyle we have addressed the



following research questions: **RQ: Does the consumer sentiments on responsible purchase matter for sustainable lifestyle of consumers?**

Need for the study

In our daily lives, the majority of us alternate between being consumers and producers. It is suggested that our unsustainable production and consumption patterns are to blame for the excessive carbon emissions that have exacerbated global warming. Rapid and major government actions are expected to be moving at a very slow pace due to the complexity of the political discussion and the divergent views on whether or not climate change is genuine. In this situation, consumers and marketers might take serious action to create an ecosystem that is sustainable by developing new methods for producing and consuming goods and services. In today's culture, consumers have a significant amount of power to persuade businesses to alter or improve the ways in which they create value, making them significant nodes in the circular economic network. It is necessary to spread exemplary sustainable behaviours that customers and marketers have shown through case studies and more study. Undoubtedly, both academics and practitioners should work on this project.

This paper contributes to the discussion on the relationship between sustainable consumption and consumer attitude. First, it investigates the positive association found in previous correlational studies by examining the hedonic, cognitive and eudaimonia dimensions of consumer attitude and its factor influencing by methodological and theoretical explanations. This is done in order to provide a deeper understanding on the relationship between sustainable consumption practices and consumer attitude that can help to identify possible policy measures enhancing both consumer sentiments and sustainability. Second, drawing on evidence that indicates to the growing importance of sustainability,

The paper starts by introducing the concept of 'Responsible Consumption' and its impacts on sustainability. Section 2 reviews empirical evidence on the relationship between sustainable consumption and consumer attitude is measured. Studies on consumer attitude and factors influencing sustainable consumption practices are noted here. Section 3 presents the research question and hypotheses. Section 4 describes the check and the data used for the analysis and introduces the empirical model. Regression results of the cross-sectional study are present in Section 5. The discussion section relates the findings to the main exploration questions and hypotheses, offers policy-related allegations and reflects on limitations and farther research openings. The final section concludes this article (Production & On-line, 2019).

Research Gap Identified

The preview literature review indicates that the sustainable consumption has become an important concept to deal with consumer behaviour, attitude and knowledge based on the environmental, economic and social sustainability, but still there are many issues like finding on actual eco-friendly products and study consumer motivations for purchasing those product, a large empirical survey ranking and rating consumer perceptions, the consumer's level of education and their level of environmental knowledge, to identify the respondent's knowledge of responsible consumption and etc that exist which need further investigation. No researcher has deeply explored to what extent its impact on sustainability.

Objectives

- First, this research aimed to investigate the attitude of consumers responsible consumption behaviour.
- Second, this paper provide evidence for the factors driving attitude towards responsible consumption practices.
- Third this article has suggested some recovery plan to reverse the current trends on consumption in the relevance of Responsible consumption.

II. LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Multiple phrases have been used in the last ten years to describe ecologically friendly purchasing. Numerous customers in various places have developed a wide range of terminologies. The word "biodegradable," for instance, has been frequently used since 1959. In 1985, the term "social responsibility" began to appear more frequently in advertising and in everyday speech. Marketers have used the word "organic" to disparagingly describe a number of products, confusing the majority of consumers. Several businesses have started using the term "eco-friendly" as a result of these issues to communicate a more



precise objective to their clients. (Kumar et al., 2021). The concept of environmentally responsible consumption was first explored in 1973 by Fisk (1973) defined the term “responsible consumption” as “rational and efficient use of resources with respect to the global human population.”

The term responsible consumption also defined as, "The consumption that has less negative impact or more positive impact on the environment, society, the self, and the other-beings". As pointed out by Wang et al. (2014, p. 154), "Sustainable consumption is an umbrella term that unites a number of critical issues, such as addressing needs, improving quality of life, increasing the use of renewable energy sources, decreasing waste, adopting a life cycle perspective, and taking into account the equity dimension." In other words, "sustainable consumption" refers to more than just buying and using ecologically friendly products; it also refers to a change in lifestyle (such as refraining from excessive consumption), a focus on the future, and a duty to future generations. According to the definition provided by (Quoquab & Mohammad, 2019), "sustainable consumption goes beyond the environmental concern by ensuring and managing the existing resources that are not only able to meet the current demand, but also without threatening the needs of future generations," our study complies with this definition.

Consumption and sustainability, two ideas that are perceptibly at odds with one another, make up the complex and vague concept of sustainable consumption. Nevertheless, prevailing definitions demonstrate that the key goal of sustainable consumption is to achieve balance between the fulfilment of consumer wants and environmental preservation. (Gupta & Agrawal, 2018); Liu et al., 2017). The main target is to strike a balance between consumer choice of freedom and social and environmental responsibility. Recent literature analysis reveals a variety of words used to describe sustainable consumption. To convey the idea of sustainable consumption the authors used the term sustainable consumption as responsible consumption (Ulusoy, 2016), green consumption (Alagarsamy et al., 2021), ethical consumption (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft & Wooliscroft, 2019; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018), environmentally friendly consumption (Kilbourne, n.d.)etc.

The other authors have mentioned in favour of the consideration of both internal and external factors as important predictors of the sustainable consumption behaviour of individuals (Pilgrimien 'e et al. 2020; Wang et al. 2014; Wu et al. 2016). Consumer citizenship: consumers prioritise and actively contribute to the maintenance of just and sustainable development by caring and acting responsibly on a family, national, and international level. Earlier studies (Panzone et al. 2016; Bhutto et al. 2021; Sheoran and Kumar 2022) have indicated that demographic variables, i.e., age, gender, education level, income, etc., affect sustainable consumer intention and/or SCB.

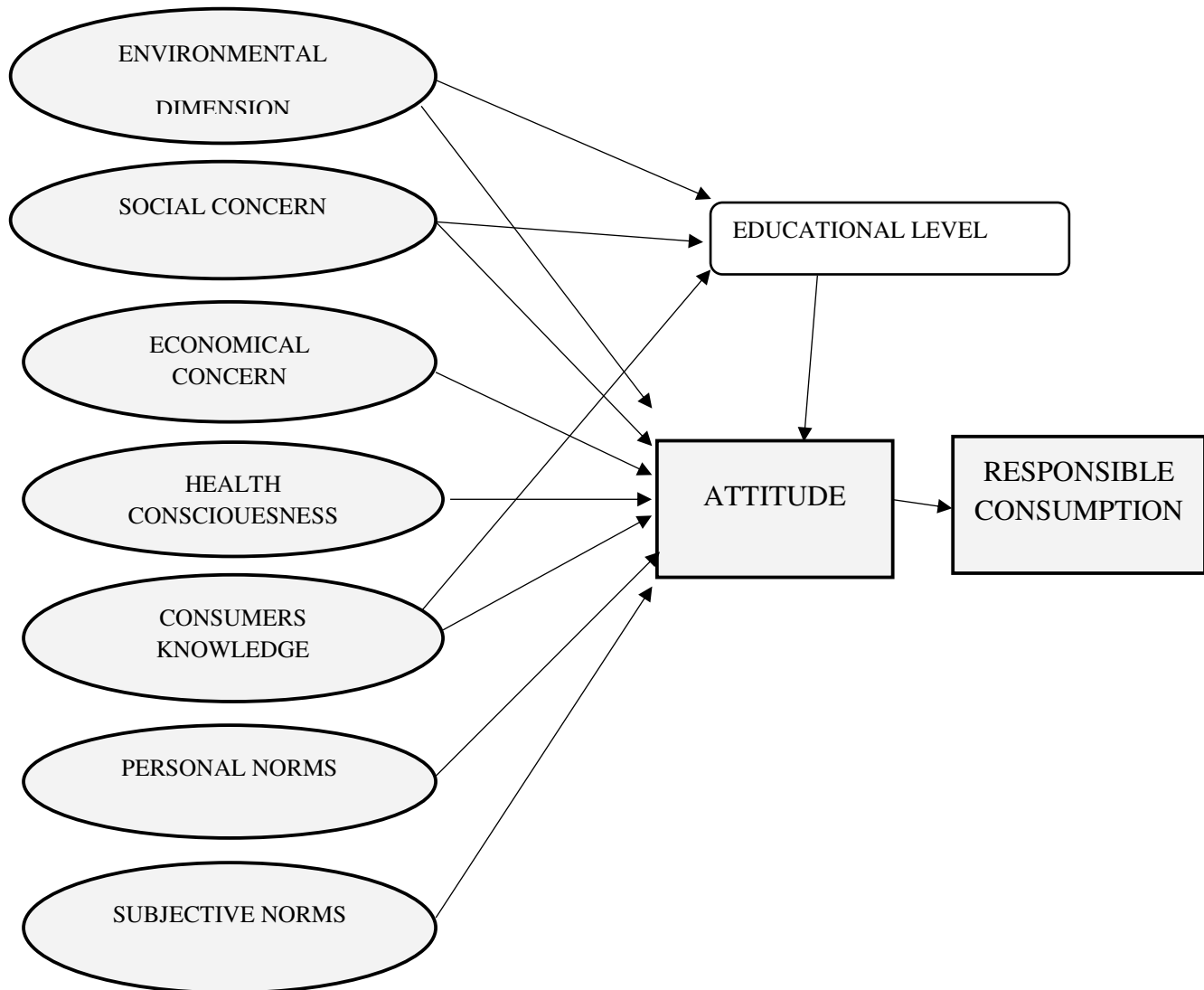
Looking first at attitude, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe attitude is a person's perspective on carrying out a particular action. They claim that beliefs are typically developed through direct observation or inference based on life events. They might be beneficial or detrimental. The research of Bertrandias and Elgaaied-Gambier (2014), have stated that the environmental concern of others is a social cause of green buying. Healthy lifestyles have become a priority for consumers; at the same time, social and environmental responsibility has also acquired greater importance (Ríos-Rodríguez et al., 2021). The views of sustainable development and green consumption have both been taken into account when analysing consumption. integrated both perspectives when creating a sustainability indicator for mindful, sustainable consumption based on an analysis of views about the significance of various sustainability dimensions. (Social, environmental, and economic) (Balderjahn et al., 2013).

Health consciousness is defined as an attitude in which people is aware of the healthiness in their diet and lifestyle (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014). Ajzen Moser (2015) identified personal norms as one of the strongest predictors of everyday green purchasing behaviour. Nevertheless, when one's friends and family support a behaviour, that ought to promote stronger intentions to engage in it. Both attitude and subjective morals are important in determining a person's intentions, but their relative significance isn't typically equal, and it can be awaited to vary for different behaviours, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). Financial socialisation may have an impact on financial views, which in turn may have an influence on financial behaviours, according to Gudmunson and Danes (2011).This author has (Jorgensen et al., 2016)examined the role of geographic location on financial achievement attitudes, financial power attitudes, and responsible spending behaviours of emerging adults from a family financial socialization model perspective.



The limited economic resources and a disturbed ecological balance, is especially important to take into account inter-sectoral externalities that determine the choice of optimal mechanisms, both stimulating and restraining positive and negative external effects from institutional approach standpoint (Shokhnekh et al., 2020). The author highlights that consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control are significant determining factors of consumers' sustainable consumption behaviour (Vantamay 2018; Matharu et al. 2021) Depending on their backgrounds, scholars have connoted sustainable consumption behaviour (SCB) differently, and it may include a broad range of elements and take different forms.(Francis & Sarangi, 2022). "Green behavioural consumption" (Biswas 2017), "Ethical consumption behaviour" (Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft 2019), etc. These topics may be partly attributed to the multifaceted and hesitant nature of "sustainable consumption" (Pilgrimien 'e et al. 2020) on the other side, and to the progression and alteration of this concept in time, on the other hand (Roy 2020). It is "sustainable consumption" (SC) that plays a vital and legitimising role for SCB.

III. PROPOSED MODEL OF FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTITUDE TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION





IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Proposed methodology for the research work

a) Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive research design as it attempts to describe consumers attitude toward responsible consumption and its impact on sustainability. The research attempts to describe the demography of responsible consumers to define their age, gender, family size, education, attitude, factor influencing attitude towards responsible consumption and etc.

b) Population

The population taken for the study is within Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. Consumers can be considered for the studies as they could contribute to different aspects through their diversified feeling towards responsible consumption behaviour.

b) Sample & Sampling Technique:

The consumers can be segregated into different categories based on their daily core activities on consumption. This gives a clear understanding of the contribution of different consumers towards sustainability based on their daily core activities. Primary Data- A Google form-based questionnaire was distributed through various social networking platforms and the consumers replies were gathered and examined. Secondary Data- In this study, secondary data has been collected from databases, books, and journals. Sampling method adopted in this research work is convenience random sampling. 63 individuals' consumers were chosen at random and provided their opinion online thus made up the sample. Hypotheses was tested using SPSS- Reliability, Multiple Regression Analysis and Chi-Square method. At first, we checked the overall reliability of the variables and it was .969 which is strong enough to continue with another test.

By summarises in chronological order some of the factors influencing consumer attitude towards responsible consumption by using (SPSS)Statistical Package for the Social Science. Building on this literature, we aim to examine the factors that influence the consumer attitude towards sustainable consumption behaviour: environmental dimension, social concern, economic concern, health consciousness, consumer knowledge, personal norms and subjective norms. To the best of our knowledge, there is a limited number of studies on the influence of values with consumers' attitude.

c) Tools used:

Reliability:

The reliability of constructs was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The overall reliability was tested and satisfied (.969). At this state it indicates that the study can be continued to the next stage.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.969	.966	44

Multiple Regression:

Multiple regression can be used to identify the impact of each goal on sustainable development of the economy. Multiple Regression was calculated in order to estimate the Consumer attitude towards Responsible Consumption. The value of R square and Adjusted R square is >.8000. It is proven that all independent variable is highly significant with dependent variable as significant=.00



Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.919 ^a	.845	.825	.34802

a. Predictors: (Constant), SN_MEAN, ED_MEAN, HC_MEAN, SD_MEAN, PN_MEAN, CK_MEAN, ECD_MEAN

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	36.336	7	5.191	42.857	.000 ^a
	Residual	6.662	55	.121		
	Total	42.997	62			

a. Predictors: (Constant), SN_MEAN, ED_MEAN, HC_MEAN, SD_MEAN, PN_MEAN, CK_MEAN, ECD_MEAN

b. Dependent Variable: RCB_MEAN

Chi-Square:

- Environmental dimension has a highly significant with educational level. Environmental dimension

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.009 ^a	28	.035
Likelihood Ratio	34.700	28	.024
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.897	1	.015
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 38 cells (95.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

- Social concern has a highly significant with educational level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.108 ^a	16	.031
Likelihood Ratio	35.305	16	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.519	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 22 cells (88.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .13.

- Consumer Knowledge has a highly positive significant relationship with educational level.



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.505 ^a	52	.011
Likelihood Ratio	66.883	52	.050
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.951	1	.026
N of Valid Cases	63		

a. 68 cells (97.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Result of the study and Discussion

Variables	Measures	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	19	30.2
	female	44	69.8
Age	18-26	26	41.3
	27-41	28	44.4
	42-55	7	11.1
	Above 55	2	3.2
Education	Diploma	24	38.1
	UG	23	36.5
	PG	11	17.5
	Professional Qualification	3	4.8
	Others	2	3.2
Occupation	Self employed	10	15.9
	Employee in private sector	15	23.8
	Employee in govt. sector	1	1.6
	Students	24	38.1
	Others	13	20.6
Income Level	Up to 50,000	40	63.5
	50001-80000	4	6.3
	80001-100000	8	12.7
	Above 100000	11	17.5
Family Size	2 or less members	4	6.3
	3-4 members	45	71.4
	5-6 members	10	15.9
	Above 6 members	4	6.3
Area of Living	Urban	4	6.3
	Semi- Urban	45	71.4
	Rural	10	15.9
	Remote	4	6.3



V. FINDING

The average age of the samples were approximately 18-41 age group consumer and household size were 3- 4 per house. Most of the respondents are diploma and UG level educated consumer and average income level 63.5% of the consumer were Rs 50,000 or less. Overall reliability of the variables was tested and result is satisfied. So, the researcher was able to continue the study further. When calculating the Multiple regression, the value of R-square value is .825, Adjusted R-square value is .845 and Significance is .000 which clearly indicate that all independent variables are highly significant with dependent variable, Therefore, factors are driving the attitude towards responsible consumption practices. With the help of Chi-square, attitude is investigated partially, result states that the environmental dimension, social concern and consumer knowledge has a positive significant relation with the educational level.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper has certainly contributed to the research area of consumer belief towards Responsible Consumption in Coimbatore. The Seven factors are determined to have the influence on consumer attitude in Responsible consumption. They are named as environmental dimension, social concern, economic dimension, health consciousness, consumer knowledge and personal norm and subjective norms. Continuously, the next contribution of this study is to underline the positive relationship between consumer attitude with responsible consumption. Results from testing hypothesis have demonstrated that the more positive attitude the consumers hold towards Responsible Consumption.

VII. LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The study was conducted within Coimbatore city. Therefore, further research needs to be extended and explored. The lack of data that may serve as a sample frame prevented the implementation of probability sampling techniques. Innovative models had to adopted by the researchers to deal with various factors influencing responsible consumption should be developed. The result of this study could be served as the interest for future research to go deeper into each factor and explain about their positive impact on consumer attitude towards Responsible Consumption. On the other hand, the relationship between consumer attitude, preferences, purchase intention, behaviour could be in depth investigated by using qualitative method such as one to one interview or focus groups. Education and income level could be further investigated such as specifying into different ranges to observe the impact of these factors on attitude more clearly. In terms of the influence of factors on consumer attitude, future studies could be done with different countries and cultures. For future researches, other sampling techniques could be adapted in order to reach large number of respondents. As declared above, additional questions should be included to better measure a variable.

VIII. SUGGESTION

The Back casting- Begin with the end in mind. Adopting ABCD Methodology- Awareness, Baseline, Creative Solution, decide on priority will helps to reduce unsustainability. Consumer should practise Ethical/ Sustainable consumerism in their day-to-day lifestyle. Get start by implementing 9 R's- Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Regift/ Refurbish, Recycle/ Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recover. We can lessen our impact on the society and create a more sustainable future by being conscientious of making wise decisions.

How to increase Responsible Consumption practice of sustainable products.

Demand for Responsible consumption practice is induced by the action of an array of factors. The first stage consists of environmental Dimension: knowledge of ethical/ sustainable products importance, habits, tradition, assortment, market supply, brand recognition, resources consumption, biodiversity, energy, biophysical interactions etc. The second stage consists of social factors: human diversity (cultural, linguistic, ethnic), ensuring equality, spreading environmental education, avoiding child labours and supporting activities that promote human health and wellness. The third stage consists of economic dimension: consumers' income and investment, retail prices of the sustainable products, money and capital, technological growth, market forces, and etc. Therefore, measures for consumption increase can be taken at several levels:



- Measures to be taken by the Government: Educating the importance of consumption of sustainable products; starting from the kindergarten till universities; strictly rules for the public to follow certain norms and protocols which leads to sustainability.
- Measures by Producers/ processors: Active promotion of sustainable products through the media, exhibitions, forums, manifestations, workshops and etc. The proactive use of adequate marketing and promotion are required, through which producers can communicate better with their surroundings, positive picture of ethical company or ethical products can be portrait, and helps to achieve a positive impact on consumer's present and future attitudes.
- Personal motivation of consumers towards sustainability for better and more quality of lifestyle. The 9 R's of sustainability plays a prominent role in responsible consumption practices. Overall, of waste produced are to be reduced, possibly following 9R's is a crucial step in reducing sustainability impact. Choosing Eco-friendly products: Selecting goods that are created using eco-friendly methods, have minimal packaging, avoiding plastic packaging are made from sustainable resources. By considering the product's whole lifecycle, from the resources required to create it through the method employed for disposal. Support ethical businesses which uphold moral standards and sustainability. Reduce energy conservation: Use energy-efficient home appliances and light bulbs, turn off lights and devices when they are not in use, and take decision switching to renewable energy sources like solar or wind power. Consume sustainably: Select products/ items such as organic, locally-grown, or fair-trade items.

This suggestion can provide some ideas for marketers and public, policy makers on how to potentially increase the desirability of sustainable and responsible consumption behaviours.

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