

## Sustainable Brand Storytelling: The Role of Ethical Consumerism in Purchase Intentions

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of sustainable brand storytelling on consumer purchase intentions, emphasizing the moderating role of ethical consumerism. With growing consumer awareness of environmental and social responsibility, brands increasingly use sustainability narratives to engage ethically conscious consumers. A quantitative survey was conducted among 300 respondents across diverse demographics to measure perceptions of sustainable brand storytelling, ethical consumerism, and purchase intentions. Descriptive analysis revealed high perception of sustainability narratives (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.58) and strong purchase intentions (Mean = 3.98, SD = 0.65). Reliability analysis confirmed internal consistency of constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.87 for brand storytelling, 0.85 for ethical consumerism, and 0.88 for purchase intentions. Correlation analysis showed significant positive associations between brand storytelling and purchase intentions ( $r = 0.67, p < 0.01$ ) and ethical consumerism ( $r = 0.52, p < 0.01$ ). Regression results indicated that sustainable brand storytelling significantly predicts purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.67, p < 0.001$ ), while moderation analysis confirmed that ethical consumerism strengthens this relationship (interaction  $\beta = 0.14, p = 0.002$ ). The findings suggest that brands leveraging authentic sustainability narratives can enhance consumer engagement, trust, and loyalty, particularly among ethically sensitive consumers. These insights offer practical guidance for marketers aiming to drive responsible consumption through value-driven storytelling.

**Keywords:** Sustainable brand storytelling, Ethical consumerism, Purchase intentions, Consumer behavior, Marketing strategy.



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### INTRODUCTION

Within the past several years, the concern of sustainability has been in the limelight among the consumers with reference not only to the lifestyle preference but purchase behavior as well. The process of making purchasing decisions based on moral and environmental factors has been highly prevailing, especially with increased social responsibility, environmentally conscious and corporate citizen going by the name of ethical consumerism [1]. Such transformation of the consumers values has resulted in a

drive to make the brands be vocal of what they were doing in regards to sustainable operations in transparent and persuasive manner. Marketing: Sustainable brand storytelling is now one of the most efficient marketing promotions in which a brand can spread its mission, values, and sustainability-oriented processes on the basis of credible tales [2]. One way that the brands can evoke a sense of emotion with the consumer is by working on authentic activities such as eco- friendly production, fair trade, and social responsibility practices which will aid in establishing trust and loyalty in

addition to a positive brand image. This type of storytelling is not limited to promotional material and instead includes moral and environmental messages within the brand, which attract the moral and emotional sense of consumers [3]. Although the concept of sustainability increasingly gains significance in marketing, little research has been carried out on how the brand storytelling affects the choice to buy. In particular, the shifts in ethics and sustainability of consumerism that alter the impact of the ethical consumerism on the level of consumer responsiveness to brand stories are not well-researched. The dynamic will be significant to the brands, who want to become better in the market, and simultaneously, promote responsible consumption. The proposed research aims to investigate the connection between sustainable brand storytelling and consumer purchase intentions, in this case, ethical consumerism. Through survey information on a mixed sample of consumers, the study is expected to determine the effects of sustainability-oriented stories on consumer behavior and how ethics affects this interaction. It is anticipated that the findings will offer practical implications to the marketers indicating the value of genuine and value-driven communication plans in building consumer confidence and promoting sustainable buying actions.

## RELATED WORKS

The emergence of sustainable brand storytelling and ethical consumerism as major areas of study in modern marketing can be viewed as a result of the growing consumer focus on environmental and social responsibility. According to previous literature, the perceptions of sustainability, trust, and convenience have great impact on the purchase intentions of consumers. To illustrate, Falah et al. [15] examined the consumption of organic foods in one of the developing nations and emphasized the role of environmental concern, trust, and convenience in determining the purchase intentions of consumers. On the same note, Feng et al. [16] investigated the interaction between government environmental policy and Green Consumer Orientation (GCO) on green purchase intention and revealed that both the policy structure and consumer values have a combined effect on the development of sustainable purchase behavior. On how sustainability can be facilitated by the use of digital marketing, this has also been presented. Digital marketing methods, as Kamyabi et al. [17] demonstrate, would be capable of enhancing customer communication and brand knowledge, positioning would be a significant mediating variable in ensuring consumer-brand relationships. Regarding the luxury fashion industry, Kaur et al. [18] stressed that brand story-telling in cooperation with sustainability not only leads to brand image but also consumer engagement, which is why transparent communication of sustainable practices is strategically crucial. Also, Kencebay and Ertugan [19] investigated the mediating role of brand equity in between sustainability initiatives, omnichannel operations, and consumer experiences and proved that integrated branding and ethical activities could increase

customer loyalty. The contribution of social media towards sustainable consumer behavior has been a well-documented fact. Kumar and Kumar [20] pointed to the influence of social media content on consumer behavior based on social comparison, materialism, and impulse buying and suggested that digital stories could influence the intentions to make a purchase. In clothing purchase, Lin et al. [21] studied the impacts of individual norms, corporate social responsibility (CSR) anticipations, hedonic and utilitarian shopping values, and found that ethical standards play an important role in making sustainable purchase decisions. Liu and Jiang [22] also emphasized that eco-friendly communication in the fast-food sector leads to eco-friendly behavior where the messaging of the brands matches with the responsibility, obligation and value perception of the consumers. The importance of brand trust and perceived value as a means of environmentally sustainable consumption promotion was highlighted in recent studies. Liu et al. [23] have shown that green perceived value in terms of new environmentally friendly products has an important impact on the purchase intentions mediated by the attitudes to the brand, trust, and digital customer engagement. Machine learning models have been used to decode consumer behavior in green consumption, and emotions and social influences shown by Lu and Sang-Do [24] as the determining factors of sustainable purchasing patterns. In addition to that, Maradiaga-Lopez et al. [25] conducted a scoping study of marketing factors in the field of fair-trade coffee farming, where branding and ethics communication play a vital role in responsible consumerism formation. Finally, Nascimento and Correia Loureiro [26] emerged the sphere of sustainability branding highlighting the novel tendencies and prospective possibilities, i.e., the increasing role in consumer choice by digital marketing, ethical consumerism, and brand stories. Combinations of all these studies point to the fact that sustainable brand stories, responsible consumerism, and communication premised on trust is a final inducement of purchase intention in any industry and environment. They provide a knowledge foundation on the use of sustainability narratives as a brand strategy to gain more consumer interaction, trusts and purchasing loyalty as a whole. The current results are the basis of the study, as it empirically explores the moderating nature of the concept of ethical consumerism to the relationship between sustainable brand storytelling and purchase intentions to inform the scholarly and practice community in the marketing strategy.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

### Research Philosophy

The underlying research philosophy used on the study is interpretive, and it revolves around the subjective meaning of consumer action to sustainable brand stories. Interpretivism also allows the responses to be packaged and interpretation of the brand connotations, ethical aspects, and sustainability discourses to be developed, which are all subjective, and influenced by values [4]. This research will attempt to extract data on implicit relationships between sustainable brand

narration, ethical consumerism and purchasing intention by lingering on the consumer perceptions and attitudes.

### Research Approach

The article has applied deductive research to find out some form of hypothesis about the effects of sustainable brand tales on the purchase intentions, mediated by ethical consumerism. Deductive reasoning it is possible to formulate hypotheses based on existing literature and theories and then test them empirically so as either to accept or to reject the relationships to be developed [5]. This will allow the study findings to be based on theory and the observed consumer behavior.

### Research Design

The quantitative research design has been employed to give tangible evidence of the relationships under study. Data were collected on the consumer perceptions, attitude and purchase intentions using a structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was created based on the previous study scales that were tested and proven to be reliable and consistent [6]. The respondents have rated the statements in the areas of sustainable brand storytelling, ethical consumerism, and intention to purchase, on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

### Population and Sampling

The study sample was adult consumers aged 18 to 60 years having previous experience in buying branded products especially those that underline sustainability. The convenience sampling technique applied was non-probability, and the consumers were reached online and through social media [7]. The sample size collected was 300 responses which is sufficient to provide statistical and generalization.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	85	28.3
	26–35	110	36.7
	36–45	65	21.7
	46–60	40	13.3
Gender	Male	140	46.7
	Female	160	53.3
Education Level	High School	40	13.3
	Undergraduate	180	60.0
	Postgraduate	80	26.7
Occupation	Student	75	25.0
	Professional	160	53.3
	Other	65	21.7

## Data Collection Method

The primary data was obtained via online survey which was sent over social media, email and online consumer forums. The survey consisted of such sections as:

- ❖ Sustainable Brand Storytelling – statements that assess the perception of the consumers regarding brand stories about sustainability.
- ❖ Ethical Consumerism - products that find the sensitivity of purchase decisions on ethical matters.
- ❖ Purchase Intentions - items asking about the potential of buying items of a business with sustainable practices.
- ❖ Peer-reviewed journals, books, and industry respectable reports were utilized to collect secondary data to give theoretical foundation and evidence to the research hypotheses [8].

## Instrument Reliability and Validity

Cronbach’s Alpha was used to test the reliability of the survey tool. Findings showed an excellent internal consistency of all constructs sustainable brand storytelling (0.87), ethical consumerism (0.85) and purchase intentions (0.88). Validity was also achieved by having the items reviewed by experts and pilot-testing them on 30 respondents who verified that the items were appropriate to measure the intended constructs [9].

## Data Analysis Method

“The data collected was analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 28. It involved descriptive statistics that were used to present the demographics of the respondents and the general trends”. To analyze the association among sustainable brand storytelling, ethical consumerism and purchase intentions, inferential statistics, such as multiple regression analysis were used [10]. Ethical consumerism was also used as a moderating variable to determine whether the effect of brand storytelling on purchase intentions was determined by consumer sensitivity to ethical issues.

**Table 2: Variables and Measurement**

Construct	Number of Items	Scale Used	Source/Reference
Sustainable Brand Storytelling	6	5-point Likert	Adapted from Dicu et al., 2025
Ethical Consumerism	5	5-point Likert	Adapted from David-Florin et al., 2025
Purchase Intentions	4	5-point Likert	Adapted from Jayawardena et al., 2022

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were given a high priority during the process of conducting the research. Respondents had informed consent among them and the participation in the survey was voluntary. The data were also collected in the state of anonymity and were confidential and private [11]. This study would be carried out in the ethics of social research where no cajoling or coercion would take place.

## Summary

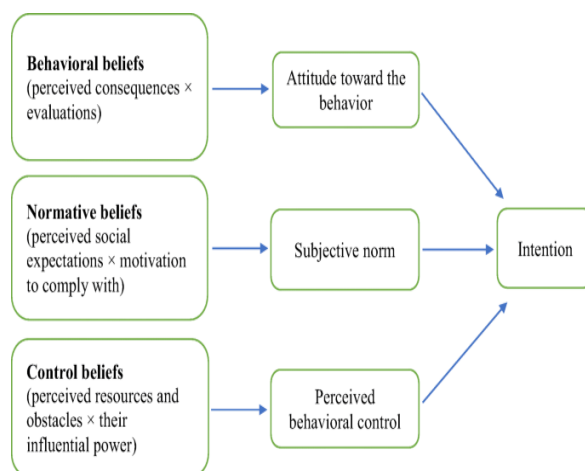
The approach is a powerful quantitative research design that would be used to study the influence of the use of sustainable brand story-telling on the intentions to purchase, which are governed by the idea of ethical consumerism. The offered study will be applied to provide empirical results based on which both scholarly knowledge and laboratory practical tactics in marketing will receive guidance through a combination of properly designed surveys, strict by the sampling, quality measuring instruments and statistical research.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The chapter shows the results of the research in determining the influence of the sustainable brand storytelling on the consumer purchasing intentions where ethical consumerism was brought in as a moderator. It has been examined with

the use of survey information of 300 participants. The results are presented in five parts including descriptive statistics, reliability analysis correlation analysis, regression analysis and moderation analysis. The sections offer information on the associations of the major constructs and how they are relevant to the consumer behavior [12].



**Figure 1: “Toward a theory of ethical consumer intention formation”**

### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is a summary of the views and attitudes of the respondents towards sustainable brand storytelling, ethical consumerism as well as purchase intentions. The mean and the standard deviation of each construct is demonstrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Key Constructs**

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Sustainable Brand Storytelling	4.12	0.58	High perception among respondents
Ethical Consumerism	4.05	0.62	Respondents moderately sensitive to ethical issues
Purchase Intentions	3.98	0.65	Positive purchase intentions observed

The results indicate that respondents generally perceive sustainable brand storytelling positively (mean = 4.12), exhibit moderate sensitivity to ethical consumption (mean = 4.05), and show strong purchase intentions (mean = 3.98) toward brands emphasizing sustainability.

### Reliability Analysis

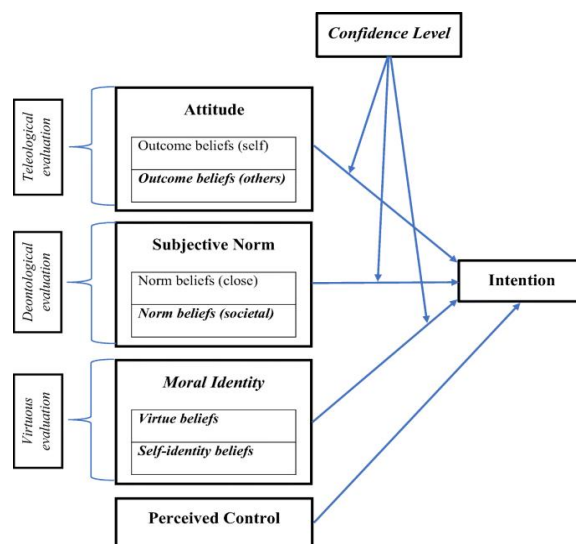
“Reliability analysis ensures the internal consistency of the measurement scales. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to assess reliability for each construct”.

**Table 2: Reliability Analysis**

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Reliability Level

Sustainable Brand Storytelling	6	0.87	High
Ethical Consumerism	5	0.85	High
Purchase Intentions	4	0.88	High

All constructs exhibit high reliability ( $\alpha > 0.85$ ), confirming that the items consistently measure the intended variables.



**Figure 2: “Toward a theory of ethical consumer intention formation”**

### Correlation Analysis

“Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the constructs. Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 3”.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix**

Variable	1	2	3
1. Sustainable Brand Storytelling	1		
2. Ethical Consumerism	0.52**	1	
3. Purchase Intentions	0.67**	0.59* *	1

Note:  $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed)

“The results indicate a significant positive correlation between sustainable brand storytelling and purchase intentions ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ”). Ethical consumerism also correlates positively with both sustainable brand storytelling ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and purchase intentions ( $r = 0.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), suggesting that ethically conscious consumers are more responsive to sustainability-focused brand narratives [13].

### Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of sustainable brand storytelling on purchase intentions. Ethical consumerism was included as a moderating variable in the subsequent analysis.

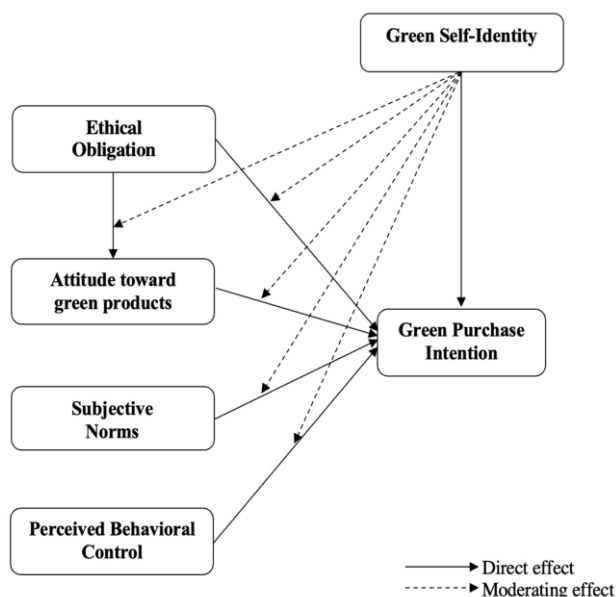
**Table 4: Regression Analysis – Sustainable Brand Storytelling on Purchase Intentions**



Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.72	0.23	—	3.13	0.002
Sustainable Brand Storytelling	0.61	0.07	0.67	8.71	0.000

$R^2 = 0.45$ ,  $F(1, 298) = 75.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$

The regression results show that sustainable brand storytelling significantly predicts purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 45% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.45$ ). This indicates that effective sustainability narratives strongly influence consumers' willingness to purchase [14].



**Figure 3: “Modeling Environmentally Conscious Purchase Behavior”**

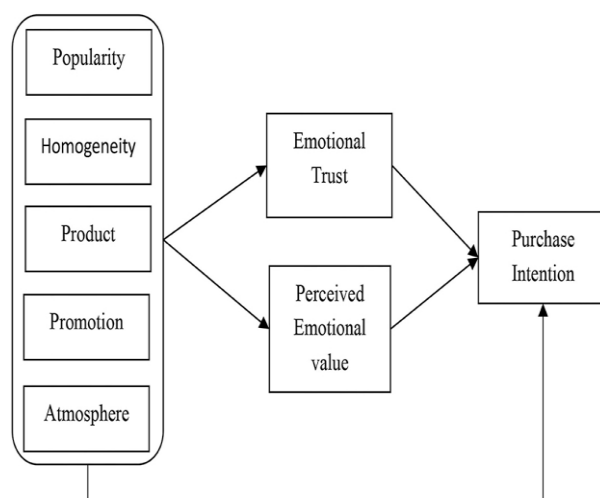
### Moderation Analysis

“To examine whether ethical consumerism moderates the relationship between sustainable brand storytelling and purchase intentions, an interaction term was created and analyzed using hierarchical regression”.

**Table 5: Moderation Analysis – Interaction Effect of Ethical Consumerism**

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
Sustainable Brand Storytelling	0.54	0.08	0.59	6.75	0.000
Ethical Consumerism	0.29	0.09	0.25	3.22	0.001
Interaction Term (SBS x EC)	0.16	0.05	0.14	3.20	0.002

The positive and significant coefficient of the interaction term ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) indicates that ethical consumerism strengthens the effect of sustainable brand storytelling on purchase intentions [27]. In other words, consumers who are more ethically conscious are more influenced by sustainability narratives in their purchase decisions [28].



**Figure 4: “A Study on the Influencing Factors of Consumers' Purchase Intention During”**

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results demonstrate that sustainable brand storytelling is a strong predictor of purchase intentions, aligning with prior studies that emphasize the importance of authentic sustainability communication in marketing. Consumers who believe that a brand cares about its sustainability initiatives have a higher chance of developing positive attitudes and purchasing behavior when they believe that these are authentic [29]. Ethical consumerism also positively compliments sustainable brand storytelling and purchase intentions to an extent, but also it is a powerful moderator. The results in this manner highlight the importance of the idea of the fact that brand-centered sustainability makes the most ethically responsive consumers also the one that is most sensitive [30]. To discuss transparent and unambiguous sustainability practices with their brands might make those less engaged and loyal to the brand to become even more involved and devoted. The descriptive statistics are accurate demonstrations that consumers are very recognizable with sustainability message and that they value it, and that the measures of reliability and correlation indicate that the constructs are consistent and high. Regression outcomes provide strong evidence in relation to the conclusion that there is a positive influence on buy intentions through sustainability stories, and to indicate the moderation to enhance the interesting effect of sustainability stories on the ultimate purchase intentions by referencing the significance of ethical consumerism.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the role of sustainable brand stories in shaping consumer buying behavior by examining the role of one conceptualizing concept of ethical consumerism to mediate the relationship between the two. The findings demonstrate that the more accurate, authentic and engaging sustainability stories supported by the brands, the better prospects of the latter have towards influencing their choice to purchase the goods. Besides improving the claimed brand credibility and trust, sustainable brand stories implement emotional engagement, which enhances positive brand attitude. Furthermore, as the paper argues, the ethical consumerism establishes this connection especially strong that is, the less ethically sensitive consumers turn out to be more responsive to the brand stories, those that emphasize sustainability. This explains why a marketer ought to reflect the necessity of adapting his or her message models to meet the morals and ethical requirements of ethically oriented consumers. The quantitative analysis of the study sources was sued to confirm these findings and comprised the following, descriptive statistics,

reliability tests, correlation, and regression tests, which verified that there were significant positive correlations between sustainable brand storytelling, ethical consumerism, and purchase intentions. Practically, the basis of these realizations is that the strategic application of these brand communication ideologies can be utilised as a strategic tool to raise consumer affections, make responsible consumers, and produce a competitive advantage amid the rival groups within the competitive markets. Overall, the research contributes to the body of literature on sustainable brand communication since it fills the gap between the concept of ethical consumer behavior and sustainable brand communication and offers feasible implications on the practice of the practitioners along with bestows to the theoretical foundation of the efficacy of value-based storytelling in influencing the purchasing behavior within the setting of the growing consumer sensitivity to the role of social and environmental responsibility.

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