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Green Awareness and Eco-Friendly Products Shaping Purchase Decisions through Moral Obligation and Social Influence

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Abstract
Purpose: This study aims to examine how environmental awareness and the availability of eco-friendly products influence purchase decisions in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that sell eco-friendly food.
Research Methodology: This study employed a quantitative approach using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected through a survey of consumers who had previously purchased eco-friendly food products, and the proposed relationships were analyzed using Smart-PLS.
Results: The findings revealed that environmental awareness did not directly influence purchase decisions. However, it significantly affected purchase decisions indirectly through social influence, indicating a full mediating effect. In contrast, eco-friendly product availability had a significant direct effect on purchase decisions and an additional indirect effect through moral obligation, demonstrating the complementary role of moral motivation in sustainable consumption behavior.
Conclusions: Sustainable purchasing behavior is shaped more strongly by social influence and moral obligation than environmental awareness alone. The results emphasize the importance of integrating social and ethical mechanisms into strategies that promote eco-friendly consumption.
Limitations: This study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported responses from consumers of urban eco-friendly food SMEs.
Contributions: This study extends the Norm Activation Model by explicitly demonstrating the mediating roles of social influence and moral obligation in sustainable purchasing decisions. These findings provide practical insights for food SMEs and green marketing practitioners seeking to strengthen consumer engagement with eco-friendly products.

Keywords: *Eco-Friendly Food, Green Awareness, Moral Obligation, Social Influence*

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1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability is a major concern in consumer markets. However, people do not always turn their concerns into action (Al-Shaikh & Hanaysha, 2023). Although many consumers are aware of environmental issues, they often prioritize convenience, price, or availability over sustainability. This gap is evident in food choices, where eco-friendly options exist but are not always chosen. Research shows that awareness alone does not lead to sustainable buying. These patterns suggest that other

psychological and social factors shape people's purchasing decisions. These factors are not well understood in emerging and local markets. So, understanding what drives eco-friendly purchases remains a key challenge in sustainability research (Ak, Turkmenoglu, Elbardan, & Yüce, 2025).

Recent market data indicate that although consumer interest in sustainable food products is increasing, actual purchase behavior remains relatively low. Global surveys show that more than 60% of consumers express concern about environmental impacts, yet fewer than 30% regularly purchase eco-friendly food products, reflecting the well-documented attitude behavior gap in sustainable food consumption. This challenge is particularly pronounced for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), whose products often suffer from limited visibility and availability issues. Moreover, social media interactions and peer influence increasingly shape food choices, suggesting that sustainable purchasing decisions are influenced not only by individual awareness but also by broader social contexts and norms (Ricci, Banterle, & Stranieri, 2018).

Despite extensive research on green consumer behavior, the mechanisms through which environmental awareness translates into actual purchasing behavior remain unclear. Previous studies have reported inconsistent or weak direct relationships between environmental awareness and purchase decisions (Purwantoro, Aini, Hidayat, Arrafiqurrahman, & Afrizal, 2023). For example, environmental awareness influenced purchasing behavior only when supported by psychological factors (D. P. Alamsyah & Febriani, 2020). These findings suggest that the relationship between awareness and behavior is more complex than a simple direct effect and requires further examination of the intervening mechanisms that connect awareness with action (Masrokhah, 2024; Nurjanah, 2024). Furthermore, existing studies have predominantly focused on large retailers or developed market contexts, while eco-friendly food SMEs remain underexplored despite their distinctive operational challenges and social dynamics.

Unlike large retail chains, eco-friendly food SMEs often operate under resource constraints, with limited distribution networks and lower product visibility, making consumer purchase decisions more dependent on social interactions and perceived product accessibility. These contextual characteristics make SMEs a particularly relevant setting for examining how moral obligation and social influence shape sustainable consumption behaviors. Moral obligation is an important psychological factor that connects ethical awareness to actual behavior. Unlike general attitudes, it is about feeling personally responsible for acting in environmentally friendly ways (Bonisoli & Tinoco-Egas, 2025). This idea focuses on internal values rather than external pressure. Studies have shown that people are more likely to make sustainable choices when they feel morally responsible for the environment (Hasibuan, 2024, 2025). Moral obligation is important in food choices, which occur frequently and involve personal values. This helps explain why some people act on their awareness while others do not. The Norm Activation perspective is a useful way to study this in the context of sustainable buying (Schwartz, 1977).

In addition to moral obligation, social influence plays a critical role in shaping consumer decisions (H. Chae, Kim, Lee, & Park, 2020). Social influence encompasses peer recommendations, perceived social norms, and approval from the reference groups. In food-related decisions, social cues are especially powerful because of shared consumption and cultural practices. Consumers often rely on others' experiences to reduce uncertainty, particularly when products are unfamiliar or perceived as risky. Studies have shown that social validation can significantly increase the likelihood of purchasing eco-friendly products. This effect is amplified in community-based and digital environments, where opinions spread rapidly. Therefore, social influence represents a complementary mechanism that interacts with individual moral considerations (Ghouse, Shekhar, Ali Sulaiman, & Azam, 2025).

The availability of eco-friendly products is another key factor limiting sustainable buying. Even people who want to buy green products cannot do so if these products are hard to find or are not always in stock (Le, Mai, Tran, & Huynh, 2026). Small and medium-sized businesses selling eco-friendly food often struggle with sourcing, packaging, and delivering their products to stores. When green products are not widely available, it weakens the effects of awareness and moral motivation. Studies show that the availability of products has a significant impact on what people buy. When green options are rare,

people may justify purchasing less sustainable options. Therefore, availability needs to be considered along with psychological and social factors to fully understand buying behavior (Lim & Rasul, 2022). Bringing together green awareness, moral obligation, and social influence into a single model helps fill important gaps in research (Ru-Zhue, Rakangthong, Kim, & Issayeva, 2026). Most past studies have examined these factors separately rather than examining how they work together. A more comprehensive approach provides a better understanding of how people make buying decisions. This is especially important in eco-friendly food markets with many small businesses, where informal rules and limited product availability are common (Ikhwan & Barros, 2024; Pratiwi & Ardian, 2024; Triwibowo & Yusuf, 2024). Considering several factors simultaneously helps explain why awareness does not always lead to action. This approach addresses calls for research that better fits real-world situations and strengthens the behavioral models in green marketing (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026).

The urgency of this research is reinforced by the increasing environmental pressures linked to food systems. Food production and packaging significantly contribute to waste generation and carbon emissions. Therefore, encouraging sustainable food consumption is critical for achieving broader environmental goals. SMEs play a strategic role in promoting local and sustainable food practices (Ahmed, Bhatti, Gölgeci, & Arslan, 2022). However, their success depends on consumer acceptance and consistent purchasing behaviors. Understanding the drivers of purchase decisions can support more effective sustainability strategy development. This study contributes to both academic knowledge and practical solutions for sustainable consumption (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the research on sustainable behavior by examining how different factors interact in real small-business settings. It goes beyond mere intentions and focuses on what people actually buy (Eunike, Silalahi, Phuong, & Tedjakusuma, 2025). By including both moral obligation and social influence, this study examined both personal and social reasons for behavior. This matches the current calls for more psychology-based sustainability research. It also provides real-world evidence from a setting that is not often studied. These findings make sustainability theories more useful across different markets (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026).

The main goal of this study was to examine how green awareness and the availability of eco-friendly products affect buying decisions, with a focus on the roles of moral obligation and social influence. The study looks at both the direct effects of awareness and availability and how moral and social factors mediate these effects. It also explores how these factors work differently in the context of eco-friendly food SMEs. By meeting these goals, this study aims to provide a full explanation of what drives sustainable buying. The results should help both theory and practical work in green marketing (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026).

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 The Norm Activation Model

The Norm Activation Model (NAM) is the main theory used in this study. NAM explains prosocial and pro-environmental behaviors by focusing on internal moral processes rather than external rewards (Schwartz, 1977). This suggests that people act in environmentally responsible ways when they understand the consequences of their actions and feel personally responsible for avoiding negative outcomes. Moral obligation is the primary driver of behavior in this study. NAM is often used in research on environmental and ethical consumption because it highlights the importance of internalized norms. For these reasons, the NAM is well-suited for studying sustainable purchase decisions (Schwartz, 1977).

The Norm Activation Model was first used to explain altruistic behavior and is now applied to broader sustainability issues. Recent research has expanded the NAM by adding factors such as product availability and social influence to better explain behavior. Some researchers believe that moral norms alone are insufficient without supportive situations. Consequently, the current use of NAM often includes social and market factors. These changes help the model address complex consumer decisions and make it more useful in real-world applications. The NAM remains relevant and is supported by evidence in current sustainability research (Schwartz, 1977). In this study, NAM is used to explain how

green awareness leads to a moral obligation that, in turn, affects purchase decisions. Moral obligation links awareness and action. The model also includes social influence as a factor that can strengthen or weaken moral decisions. The availability of eco-friendly products is seen as a situation that can help or limit moral actions. Therefore, NAM provides a clear way to explain the indirect effects in this research model (Schwartz, 1977).

2.2 Green Awareness

Green awareness refers to consumers' understanding of environmental issues and the impact of consumption on environmental sustainability. It encompasses knowledge of pollution, resource conservation and environmentally responsible consumption practices (Aslan, 2023). Consumers with higher levels of green awareness are generally more likely to evaluate products based on their environmental attributes and long-term ecological consequences (Hasibuan, Suliyanto, & Novandari, 2026). Consequently, green awareness is widely recognized as an important antecedent of sustainable consumption behavior (Nguyen Tran Cam, 2023).

Within the Norm Activation Model (NAM), green awareness reflects awareness of consequences, which serves as the starting point for activating personal norms (Schwartz, 1977). Consumers who understand the environmental consequences of food production and packaging are more likely to develop a sense of environmental responsibility and support environmentally friendly consumption. This awareness contributes to the formation of internal moral norms that guide sustainable behaviors. In the context of eco-friendly food consumption, awareness represents an essential cognitive foundation for environmentally responsible purchasing decisions (Fatorachian et al., 2025).

Previous studies have provided evidence that environmental awareness contributes to sustainable purchasing behavior, although its influence may occur through psychological and normative mechanisms. Environmental awareness indirectly affects purchase decisions through moral and normative factors, while other studies emphasize the importance of awareness as a precursor to sustainable consumption behavior (Fatorachian et al., 2025). Moreover, environmentally aware consumers tend to pay greater attention to sustainability-related social norms and recommendations. Therefore, green awareness is expected to influence both purchase decisions and social influences.

H_1: Green Awareness significantly affects Purchase Decisions
H_2: Green Awareness significantly affects Social Influence

2.3 Eco-Friendly Product Availability

Eco-friendly product availability refers to the perceived accessibility and consistency of environmentally friendly products in the market. These factors include product visibility, variety, and ease of purchase (Nguyen Tran Cam, 2023). Availability determines whether consumers can act on their environmental intentions. Limited access often leads consumers to choose conventional alternatives over organic products. This variable is particularly relevant in the SME context, where supply constraints are common. Therefore, availability is a critical situational factor in sustainable consumption (Le et al., 2026). From the perspective of the Norm Activation Model, availability functions as a facilitating condition for moral action. Even when moral obligation is activated, behavior may not occur if situational barriers are present. Product availability reduces the effort required to behave ethically (Schwartz, 1977). This supports the translation of moral intentions into actual behavior. In terms of food consumption, frequent purchasing increases sensitivity to availability issues. Thus, availability strengthens the link between moral norms and purchasing decisions (Schwartz, 1977).

Previous research has shown that the availability of eco-friendly products is important. When products are difficult to find, moral motivation has less impact on sustainable buying (Doni Purnama Alamsyah & Muhammed, 2018). Ease of access to products affects ethical consumption patterns. These results show that availability affects purchase decisions both directly and indirectly (Ghouse et al., 2025). Therefore, availability is expected to influence both purchase decisions and moral obligation.

H_5: Eco-Friendly Product availability significantly affects Purchase Decisions
H_6: Eco-Friendly Product availability significantly affects Moral Obligation

2.4 Moral Obligation

Moral obligation is a person's inner sense of responsibility to act in an environmentally friendly manner. It comes from personal values, not external pressure (H. Chae et al., 2020). Moral obligation motivates people to act according to their ethical standards. Consumers who feel this obligation typically act in accordance with their values. This idea is important in research on ethical and sustainable consumption because it helps explain why people act beyond their economic interests (Bonisoli & Tinoco-Egas, 2025). Within the Norm Activation Model, moral obligation is the core mediator between awareness and behavior (Schwartz, 1977). Once individuals recognize the environmental consequences, moral norms are activated. These norms guide the decision-making process. Moral obligation transforms concerns into action-oriented motivations. In terms of food consumption, moral obligation can influence routine purchasing decisions. Therefore, it plays a crucial role in explaining sustainable purchasing behavior (Schwartz, 1977).

Empirical evidence supports the idea that moral obligation links environmental concern and green buying. Moral obligation played a key role in connecting environmental concern to green purchases (Ebaidalla, Abusin, Malkawi, & Mandikiana, 2025). Moral norms strongly predict sustainable consumption. These results support including moral obligation as a mediator (Channa, Tariq, Samo, Ghumro, & Qureshi, 2022). Therefore, it is expected that moral obligation will influence purchase decisions igation has a significant effect on purchase decision.

2.5 Social Influence

Social influence refers to the impact of other people's opinions, behaviors, and expectations on an individual's decision-making (Ampornklinkaew, 2025). It includes peer recommendations, perceived social norms, and support from the reference groups. In purchasing situations, social influence helps reduce uncertainty and strengthens consumer confidence in their product choices. Food consumption decisions are particularly susceptible to social influence because they are often embedded in social interactions and shared experiences. Consequently, social influence has become an important determinant of sustainable consumer behavior (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026). Although the Norm Activation Model primarily emphasizes internal moral norms, recent extensions have recognized the importance of social context in shaping environmentally responsible behavior. Social influence can reinforce moral motivation by creating social approval for sustainable actions and encouraging conformity to pro environmental norms. In eco-friendly food SME markets, community interactions, peer recommendations, and digital word-of-mouth are particularly influential in shaping consumer decisions (Atmaja & Bernarto, 2024). Therefore, social influence serves as an important complementary mechanism that links environmental awareness to actual purchasing behavior.

Prior studies have consistently supported the role of social influence in sustainable consumption. Social norms significantly influence sustainable food purchasing decisions (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026), and social influence mediates the relationship between environmental concern and consumer behavior. Based on these findings, social influence is expected to directly affect purchase decisions and mediate the relationship between green awareness and purchase decisions (Ampornklinkaew, 2025).

H_3: Social Influence significantly affects Purchase Decisions

H_4: Social Influence mediates the relationship between Green Awareness and Purchase Decisions

2.6 Purchase Decision

A purchase decision is the final choice that a consumer makes to buy a product. It shows the result of thinking, judging, and weighing moral and social factors. In sustainable consumption, purchase decisions reflect what people actually do, not just what they plan. This makes it important to measure the real environmental impact. Therefore, the purchase decision is the main outcome measured in this study (Dewi & Gunanto, 2023).

2.7 Conceptual

This study presents a framework based on the Norm Activation Model (Figure 1), adding context and social factors. Green awareness and the availability of eco-friendly products is the starting points. Moral

obligation and social influence are the links in this process. The final result is the purchase decision-making. Green awareness affects purchase decisions directly and indirectly through social influence. The availability of eco-friendly products affects purchase decisions both directly and through moral obligation. This framework covers both the psychological and situational factors underlying sustainable food choices and explains eco-friendly purchasing in small- and medium-sized food businesses. The proposed research hypotheses are summarized and presented in Table 1.

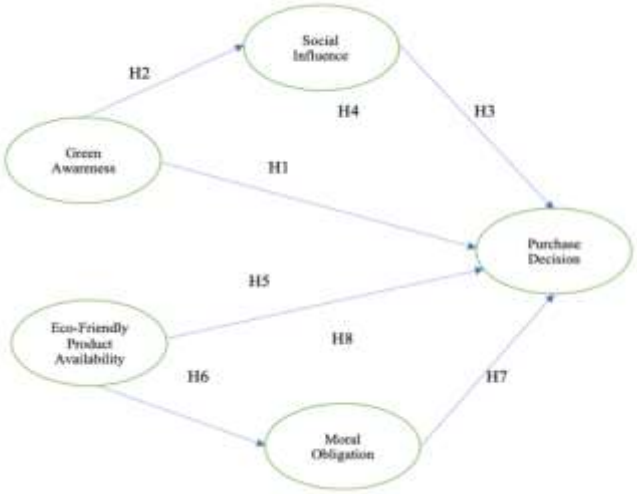

Figure 1. Research mode

Table 1. Summary of research hypotheses

Hypotheses	Proposed Relationship	Type
H_1	Green Awareness → Purchase Decision	Direct Effect
H_2	Green Awareness → Social Influence	Direct Effect
H_3	Social Influence → Purchase Decision	Direct Effect
H_4	Green Awareness → Social Influence → Purchase Decision	Mediating Effect
H_5	Eco-Friendly Product Availability → Purchase Decision	Direct Effect
H_6	Eco-Friendly Product Availability → Moral Obligation	Direct Effect
H_7	Moral Obligation → Purchase Decision	Direct Effect
H_8	Eco-Friendly Product Availability → Moral Obligation → Purchase Decision	Mediating Effect

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative explanatory research design to explore the relationships among green awareness, eco-friendly product availability, moral obligation, social influence, and purchase decisions (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2022). The explanatory approach aligns with the goal of testing the proposed causal links among these factors. Data were obtained from a structured questionnaire that gathered information on consumers' views and actions. The analysis focused on individual consumers. This study used a cross-sectional design and collected data at one point in time. This method is common in consumer behavior and sustainability studies and enables the efficient testing of mediation effects within the proposed framework (Hair et al., 2022).

3.2 Research Context and Object

This study focuses on people who buy eco-friendly food products from Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMEs). These SMEs sell their products through social media, online messaging applications, and local markets in cities. Eco-friendly food products include organic foods, plant-based items, and foods with environmentally friendly packaging materials. This setting was chosen because SME food businesses often struggle with product availability and building consumer confidence. While these consumers hear a lot about sustainability, they do not always act on it when they make purchases.

This makes the context a practical choice for studying the proposed relationship (Hair et al., 2022). The focus on urban SMEs is justified by the higher concentration of eco-friendly food businesses, greater consumer exposure to sustainability campaigns, and stronger digital engagement through social media platforms in these areas. Urban consumers are also more likely to encounter eco-friendly products and sustainability-related information, making this context particularly suitable for examining the relationships between green awareness, social influence, moral obligation, and purchase decisions.

3.3 Population and Sample

The study included people who had bought eco-friendly food products from SMEs at least once in the past six months. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participants met the study criteria. The criteria were being at least 18 years old and having experience buying eco-friendly food products from SMEs. This ensured that the participants could answer the questionnaire accurately. The sample size followed the guidelines for structural equation modeling, with 200 to 300 respondents considered sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis (Hair et al., 2022).

To ensure that respondents met the study criteria, a screening question was included at the beginning. Participants were first asked whether they had purchased eco-friendly food products from SMEs in the last six months. Only respondents who answered "yes" were allowed to proceed with the survey. In addition, respondents were required to confirm that they were at least 18 years of age. Responses that did not meet these criteria were automatically excluded during the data screening process before analysis. The inclusion criteria required respondents to be at least 18 years old and to have purchased eco-friendly food products from SMEs within the previous six months. Respondents who did not meet the criteria or submitted incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected using an online self-administered questionnaire (Hair et al., 2022). The main data for this study were obtained from an online questionnaire completed by the participants. The questionnaire was shared via social media and community groups focused on eco-friendly consumption, which aligns with the digital habits of SME food consumers. Participants provided informed consent before starting the study. To reduce the potential influence of Common Method Bias (CMB), several procedural remedies were applied during the questionnaire design and data collection processes. First, respondents were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and would be used only for academic purposes, which helped to reduce evaluation apprehension. Second, the questionnaire items were arranged in random order and written in clear and simple language to minimize respondents' tendency to provide consistent or socially desirable answers. Third, different sections were used to separate the measurement of independent and dependent variables to reduce respondents' ability to infer the relationships between the constructs. These procedural steps followed the recommendations suggested in behavioral research to minimize the risk of common method bias.

All questions were closed-ended to facilitate analysis. Although self-reported questionnaires are widely used in consumer behavior research, they may be subject to social desirability and recall biases. To mitigate these risks, respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and no personally identifiable information was collected from them. Nevertheless, the possibility of response bias cannot be completely eliminated and should be considered when interpreting these findings. Data were collected over a set time period to maintain consistency. scales adapted from established international journals. The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The use of established scales enhances content validity and comparability with previous studies. Minor wording adjustments were made to fit the eco-friendly food SME context without altering the original meaning.

The indicators are reflective. Each variable used a different number of indicators to avoid mechanical measurement patterns (Hair et al., 2022). This study distributed 320 questionnaires to consumers who had previously purchased eco-friendly food products from SMEs through social media and online messaging platforms. After the data collection period, 286 questionnaires were returned and analyzed.

Following the screening process to ensure completeness and eligibility, 270 valid responses were retained for further analysis, resulting in a response rate of 84.38. Questionnaires with incomplete answers or responses that did not meet the study criteria were excluded from the analysis to maintain the data quality.

3.5 Variable Measurement and Indicators

3.5.1 Green Awareness

Adapted from Green awareness refers to consumers' knowledge, understanding, and concern regarding environmental issues associated with food consumption. In this study, green awareness was measured using four indicators. The indicators include consumers' awareness that food consumption can significantly affect the environment, their understanding of the environmental consequences of excessive plastic packaging in food products, their attention to environmental information related to food products, and their concern for environmental sustainability when making food purchasing decisions (Doni Purnama Alamsyah & Muhammed, 2018).

3.5.2 Eco-Friendly Product Availability

Eco-friendly product availability refers to the ease, accessibility, and consistency with which consumers can find and purchase environmentally friendly food products. In this study, eco-friendly product availability was measured using five indicators. The indicators assess whether eco-friendly food products are easy to find when consumers intend to purchase them, available in diverse product variations, regularly accessible from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), able to meet consumer expectations regarding availability, and rarely associated with difficulties in the purchasing process (Ghouse et al., 2025).

3.5.3 Moral Obligation

Moral obligation refers to an individual's internal sense of responsibility and ethical commitment to engage in environmentally friendly behavior. In this study, moral obligation was measured using three indicators. The indicators capture consumers' feelings of moral responsibility when choosing environmentally friendly food products, their sense of guilt when ignoring environmental impacts during food purchasing decisions, and their perception that selecting eco-friendly food products represents the appropriate and responsible action for consumers (M.-J. Chae, Kim, & Roh, 2024).

3.5.4 Social Influence

Social influence refers to the extent to which consumers' attitudes and purchasing decisions are shaped by the opinions, behaviors, and recommendations of other people or social groups. In this study, social influence was measured using four indicators. The indicators assess the extent to which important individuals encourage consumers to purchase eco-friendly products, the influence of friends and family in selecting eco-friendly food products, the impact of social media recommendations on eco-friendly food purchasing decisions, and consumers' tendency to follow trends related to sustainable food consumption (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026)

3.5.5 Purchase Decision

A purchase decision refers to the final choice made by consumers in selecting and buying eco-friendly food products based on their preferences, considerations, and perceived benefits. In this study, purchase decision was measured using five indicators. The indicators evaluate consumers' tendency to choose eco-friendly food products over conventional alternatives, their intention to continue purchasing eco-friendly food products, their willingness to pay for environmentally friendly products, their priority toward eco-friendly products when making food purchases, and their confidence in the decision to purchase eco-friendly food products (Alena & Hasanah, 2023).

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This technique is suitable for complex models that involve multiple mediators (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is also appropriate for prediction-oriented research and does not require strict data normality assumptions. The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software. The measurement model was

evaluated using indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The structural model was assessed using path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). The mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping procedures (Hair et al., 2022).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Result

4.1.1 Outer Loading

We evaluated outer loadings to determine how strongly each indicator was related to its underlying construct. Indicators with loadings of 0.70 or higher were considered to have good convergent validity, as they explained a substantial variance in their constructs (Hair et al., 2022). We reviewed items with lower loadings to determine whether removing them would improve reliability and the average variance extracted. By keeping only indicators with strong loadings, we ensured that each construct was measured by items that truly reflected its meaning. This approach also helped make the measurement model more consistent by reducing errors. For this study, we used outer loadings in Figure 2 and Table 2 above 0.70 as the main standard for indicator adequacy.

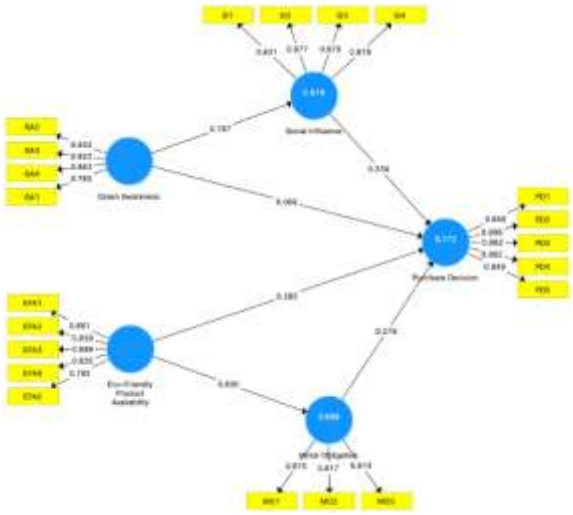

Figure 2. Outer loading

Table 2. Outer loading

Indicators	Eco-Friendly Product Availability	Green Awareness	Moral Obligation	Purchase Decision	Social Influence
EFA1	0.861				
EFA2	0.859				
EFA3	0.889				
EFA4	0.825				
EFA5	0.782				
GA2		0.933			
GA3		0.922			
GA4		0.883			
MO1			0.875		
MO2			0.917		
MO3			0.814		
PD1				0.849	
PD2				0.898	
PD3				0.862	

PD4				0.862	
PD5				0.849	
SI1					0.831
SI2					0.877
SI3					0.879
SI4					0.819
GA1		0.785			

Table 2 shows the indicator loading test showed that all measurement items loaded strongly on their intended constructs. The factor loadings ranged from 0.782 to 0.933, which is above the recommended threshold of 0.70. This means that each indicator represents its latent variable well. There are no cross-loading issues, as each indicator loads the highest on its own construct. These results confirm the reliability of the indicators and support the convergent validity of the measurement model. All indicators were retained for further analysis.

4.1.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed to ensure that each construct represented a unique concept. This was done by comparing the extent to which the constructs shared variance with each other to the variance explained by their indicators. Discriminant validity is considered adequate when a construct is more closely linked to its indicators than to other constructs in the model. This shows that the constructs are distinct and do not overlap with each other. Confirming discriminant validity helps ensure that the observed relationships are not solely due to measurement overlap. In models with mediating variables, this step is especially important to avoid confusion regarding the meaning of each construct. Therefore, discriminant validity was a key standard for confirming that each latent variable was unique.

Table 3. Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker

Variables	**Eco-Friendly Product Availability**	**Green Awareness**	**Moral Obligation**	**Purchase Decision**	**Social Influence**
Eco-Friendly Product Availability	0.844				
Green Awareness	0.818	0.883			
Moral Obligation	0.830	0.796	0.870		
Purchase Decision	0.821	0.769	0.817	0.864	
Social Influence	0.805	0.787	0.794	0.822	0.852

Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker criterion shows that all constructs have acceptable discriminant validity. For each construct, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (shown on the diagonal) was higher than its correlations with other constructs. This means that each construct shares more variance with its indicators than with those of other constructs in the model. Some inter-construct correlations were fairly high, but none were higher than the AVE square roots. Therefore, these constructs are empirically distinct. In summary, the Fornell–Larcker results confirm the discriminant validity.

Table 4. Discriminant validity Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variables	Eco-Friendly Product Availability	Green Awareness	Moral Obligation	Purchase Decision	Social Influence
Eco-Friendly Product Availability					
Green Awareness	0.902				
Moral Obligation	0.943	0.907			
Purchase Decision	0.897	0.844	0.930		
Social Influence	0.900	0.881	0.927	0.912	

Table 4 shows the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) analysis, a stricter test of discriminant validity, shows that most values are below the conservative threshold of 0.90, although a few are slightly above it. However, all values are below the more liberal threshold of 0.95, which is considered acceptable in behavioral research when constructs are conceptually related. This indicates that discriminant validity was still present. While HTMT is stricter than the Fornell–Larcker criterion, both methods show that the constructs are sufficiently distinct. Taken together, these results support the discriminant validity.

4.1.3 Construct Reliability and Validity

Assessed construct reliability and validity to ensure that each construct was measured consistently and accurately. Composite reliability values above 0.70 indicate good internal consistency among the indicators. We assessed convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with values above 0.50 indicating that each construct explained more than half of the variance in its indicators. High reliability meant that the indicators measured the same concept, while high AVE values indicated that the indicators represented the construct rather than just measurement error. These results show that the measurement model is reliable and valid, which increases our confidence in the structural model analysis.

Table 5. Construct reliability and validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Eco-Friendly Product Availability	0.899	0.901	0.925	0.713
Green Awareness	0.904	0.914	0.934	0.780
Moral Obligation	0.838	0.851	0.903	0.756
Purchase Decision	0.915	0.916	0.936	0.747
Social Influence	0.874	0.875	0.914	0.726

Table 5 shows the results for reliability and convergent validity showed strong internal consistency for all constructs. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended minimum of 0.70, indicating that the measurements were reliable. The AVE values, ranging from 0.713 to 0.780, exceeded the 0.50 threshold and indicated that each construct captured sufficient variance. The rho_A values also support a strong internal consistency. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement model meets the criteria for both reliability and convergent validity; therefore, the constructs were measured accurately and consistently.

4.1.4 F-square (f^2)

The effect size (f^2) was used to quantify the extent to which each exogenous construct influenced the endogenous variables. This value indicates how the explained variance changes when a specific predictor is added or removed from the model. Effect sizes of approximately 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 were considered small, medium, and large, respectively. Unlike significance testing, f^2 helps to show how important these relationships are in practice. This is important in behavioral research, where significant results may still be weak. Examining f^2 values helps the analysis focus on theoretical relevance rather

than just hypothesis testing. Therefore, effect size estimation was used along with path coefficient evaluation.

Table 6. Effect size (f^2)

Variables	Moral Obligation	Purchase Decision	Social Influence
Eco-Friendly Product Availability	2.206	0.069	
Green Awareness		0.005	1.624
Moral Obligation		0.084	
Social Influence		0.136	

Table 6 shows the effect size (f^2) analysis revealed varying magnitudes of predictor influence. The availability of eco-friendly products has a significant effect on moral obligation ($f^2 = 2.206$), indicating a substantial explanatory contribution. Green awareness has a large effect on social influence ($f^2 = 1.624$), highlighting its dominant role in shaping social dynamics. Other relationships, such as social influence and moral obligation on purchase decisions, exhibited small to medium effect sizes. These results suggest that structural and psychological factors contribute differently to the models. Overall, the key predictors demonstrated meaningful practical significance.

4.1.5 R-square (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the accuracy of the model in predicting outcomes for endogenous constructs. R^2 shows the extent to which the variation in a dependent variable is explained by its predictors. Values near 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 were considered weak, moderate, and strong, respectively, in terms of explanatory power. Higher R^2 values indicate that the model explains more variation in the outcome variable. In mediation models, R^2 also indicates how well the intermediate variables transmit explanatory power to the final outcome. Although R^2 does not prove causality, it is a key measure of how well the model performs. For these reasons, R^2 was chosen to assess the overall explanatory strength of the proposed framework.

Table 7. Coefficient of determination

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Moral Obligation	0.688	0.687
Purchase Decision	0.772	0.768
Social Influence	0.619	0.617

Table 7 shows the coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the structural model explains a large proportion of the variance in the data. Specifically, the model explains 68.8% of the variance in moral obligation, 61.9% in social influence, and 77.2% in purchase decisions. These results are considered strong in consumer behavior research. The adjusted R^2 values were also very close to the original R^2 values, suggesting that the model was stable. This means that the proposed predictors explain the endogenous constructs well and that the structural model has high predictive accuracy.

4.1.6 Hypotheses Test

Hypothesis testing was used to assess the significance and direction of the model's structural links. The analysis relied on path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. A relationship was considered statistically significant if the t-value was greater than 1.96 and the p-value was less than 0.05, indicating significance at the 5% level. Positive path coefficients showed a direct effect in the expected direction, whereas negative coefficients showed an inverse relationship. For mediation effects, indirect paths were examined to determine whether the mediating variables exerted an influence from exogenous to endogenous variables. Mediation was confirmed if the indirect effect was statistically significant, even when the direct effect was not. This method affords a thorough evaluation of both direct and indirect relationships, thereby strengthening the conclusions of the structural model.

Table 8. Hypotheses Test

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Green Awareness to Purchase Decision	0.069	0.071	0.080	0.860	0.390
Green Awareness to Social Influence	0.787	0.790	0.031	25.269	0.000
Social Influence to Purchase Decision	0.334	0.335	0.108	3.104	0.002
Social Influence mediat Green Awareness to Purchase Decision	0.263	0.264	0.086	3.070	0.002
Eco-Friendly Product Availability to Purchase Decision	0.265	0.267	0.093	2.858	0.004
Eco-Friendly Product Availability to Moral Obligation	0.830	0.831	0.026	31.565	0.000
Moral Obligation to Purchase Decision	0.278	0.273	0.086	3.213	0.001
Moral Obligation mediat Eco-Friendly Product Availability to Purchase Decision	0.230	0.227	0.072	3.178	0.002

Table 8 shows the hypotheses testing results reveal several important findings regarding sustainable purchasing behaviors. First, green awareness does not have a significant direct effect on purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.069$, $p = 0.390$), indicating that environmental awareness alone is insufficient to encourage consumers to purchase eco-friendly food. This finding suggests that awareness must be supported by additional psychological or social mechanisms before it can be translated into actual purchase behavior.

In contrast, green awareness had a strong and significant effect on social influence ($\beta = 0.787$, $p < 0.001$), and social influence significantly affected purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.334$, $p = 0.002$). More importantly, the indirect effect of green awareness on purchase decisions through social influence was significant ($\beta = 0.263$, $p = 0.002$). This finding confirms the mediating role of social influence and indicates that consumers who are environmentally aware are more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing when their choices are reinforced by social norms, peer recommendations, and community support. From a practical perspective, this result suggests that awareness campaigns alone may be insufficient unless accompanied by social engagement strategies that encourage collective support for eco-friendly consumption.

The results further show that eco-friendly product availability significantly affects purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.265$, $p = 0.004$) and has a very strong effect on moral obligation ($\beta = 0.830$, $p < 0.001$). Moral obligation also significantly influenced purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.278$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that consumers who feel personally responsible for environmental protection are more likely to choose sustainable products. Furthermore, the indirect effect of eco-friendly product availability on purchase decisions through moral obligation was significant ($\beta = 0.230$, $p = 0.002$). This result highlights the mediating role of moral obligation in transforming product accessibility into actual purchase behavior. This finding suggests that making eco-friendly products more visible and accessible not only facilitates purchasing opportunities but also strengthens consumers' ethical commitment to sustainable consumption. For SMEs, improving product availability can simultaneously enhance moral motivation and increase sustainable purchasing behavior.

The results demonstrate that indirect pathways play a more influential role than direct effects in explaining eco-friendly purchase decisions. Social influence serves as the primary mechanism through which environmental awareness is translated into purchasing behavior, whereas moral obligation explains how product availability encourages sustainable consumption. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating social, moral, and structural factors when designing sustainability strategies for eco-friendly food SMEs.

4.2 Discussion

The findings show that green awareness does not directly affect purchase decisions, suggesting that awareness of environmental issues alone does not lead consumers to buy eco-friendly products. This aligns with earlier studies that highlighted the gap between attitudes and actions in sustainable consumption. For eco-friendly food SMEs, consumers may be aware of environmental problems but still choose products based on price, convenience, or taste. This supports the idea that awareness is necessary but insufficient for sustainable buying. The result also fits the Norm Activation Model, which states that awareness must trigger internal norms before it changes behavior. Therefore, the lack of a direct effect is expected from a theoretical perspective.

Conversely, green awareness has a strong effect on social influence. This means that people who are more aware of environmental issues are more likely to pay attention to social norms and what others think about sustainability. Awareness makes people more open to social cues rather than directly changing their behavior. Those with greater green awareness may seek approval from their social circles to support eco-friendly choices. In SME food markets, community and social media interactions are important for shaping consumer purchases. This finding adds to the Norm Activation Model by showing that social factors help turn awareness into action. Therefore, social influence is a key factor in which awareness affects behavior.

The results further demonstrate that social influence significantly affects purchase decisions, confirming its importance for sustainable food consumption. The results also show that social influence has a strong impact on purchase decisions, highlighting its role in making sustainable food choices. Food decisions are often shaped by social factors, as recommendations and shared experiences help people feel more confident in their choices. In eco-friendly SME settings, where product trust can differ, social approval is crucial. This suggests that consumers seek social validation when choosing environmentally friendly products. This finding aligns with current research that views social norms as key drivers of ethical buying behavior.

Consequently, social influence accelerates eco-friendly purchasing decision-making. However, awareness alone does not directly lead to purchasing; it indirectly influences behavior through social mechanisms such as word-of-mouth. This full mediation indicates that socially reinforced awareness is more effective than individual awareness in driving actions. These results highlight the importance of community- and peer-based sustainability narratives. This also suggests that interventions targeting social norms may be more effective than purely informational campaigns. This finding strengthens the explanatory power of the extended norm-activation frameworks.

Regarding structural factors, the availability of eco-friendly products directly affects purchase decisions. Access and consistency are important because even motivated consumers cannot buy products that are not available. This is especially true for SMEs, which often face supply and distribution challenges. The findings show that real-world limits shape what people buy, not just their attitudes. It also highlights the practical difficulties in encouraging sustainable buying in local food markets. Therefore, making eco-friendly products more widely available is key to increasing their sales. Lability has a strong effect on moral obligation, suggesting that access to eco-friendly options strengthens consumers' sense of responsibility. When sustainable choices are visible and attainable, consumers are more likely to feel morally obligated to choose them. This finding aligns with the Norm Activation Model, which posits that situational cues facilitate norm activation. In the SME food context, availability signals the feasibility and legitimacy of sustainable consumption. The results show that

moral obligation is not only an internal construct but is also shaped by market conditions. This highlights the interaction between structure and morality in consumer behaviors.

Furthermore, moral obligation significantly influences purchase decisions, confirming its central role in ethical consumerism. Consumers who feel morally responsible are more likely to act in accordance with their values. This finding supports the core assumption of the Norm Activation Model that moral norms directly guide behavior. In routine decisions, such as food purchasing, moral obligation provides a stable motivational force. The results suggest that internalized ethical values are crucial for sustaining eco-friendly consumption. Thus, moral obligation serves as a key psychological driver of purchasing decisions.

Moral obligation also helps explain how product availability leads to purchasing decisions. Availability not only makes buying possible but also boosts moral motivation, which, in turn, influences behavior. This means that availability affects decisions both directly and indirectly through the availability heuristic. The findings show that making eco-friendly products easier to obtain can increase people's moral commitment, not just their convenience. In SME food markets, better availability may strengthen consumers' ethical choices. This result underscores the importance of considering both structural and moral factors in sustainability studies.

Overall, the discussion shows that indirect effects, such as moral obligation and social influence, matter more than direct effects. This implies that eco-friendly purchasing decisions are complex and involve several factors. The findings expand the Norm Activation Model by adding social and structural influences. They also showed that sustainable buying in SME food markets depends on awareness, morality, social context, and product availability. Therefore, strategies to boost eco-friendly purchases should go beyond just raising awareness and also focus on social and practical factors.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined sustainable purchasing behavior in eco-friendly food SMEs by integrating environmental awareness, moral obligation, social influence, and eco-friendly product availability into the extended Norm Activation Model (NAM). The findings demonstrate that sustainable purchasing behavior is shaped by both internal moral factors and external social and structural conditions. The key findings of this study indicate that green awareness does not directly influence purchase decisions, suggesting that environmental awareness alone is insufficient to encourage consumers to engage in sustainable purchasing behavior.

However, social influence significantly mediated the relationship between green awareness and purchase decisions, demonstrating that consumers with environmental awareness are more likely to purchase eco-friendly products when supported by positive social norms, recommendations, and peer influence. Furthermore, eco-friendly product availability directly influences purchase decisions and indirectly affects them through moral obligation, emphasizing the importance of product accessibility and availability in promoting sustainable consumption behavior. In addition, moral obligation emerged as a significant predictor of purchase decisions, confirming that consumers tend to engage in environmentally friendly purchasing when they feel personally responsible for contributing to environmental protection and sustainability.

Theoretically, this study extends the Norm Activation Model (NAM) by incorporating social influence and eco-friendly product availability as complementary mechanisms that activate and reinforce sustainable purchasing behavior. The findings provide a more comprehensive explanation of sustainable consumption within food SMEs, where social interactions and product accessibility are critical. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that food SMEs should not rely solely on such campaigns. Instead, they should actively leverage social influence through customer communities, user-generated content, testimonials, and social media engagement to strengthen the sustainable consumption norms. In addition, SMEs should improve the visibility, accessibility, and availability of eco-friendly products

across distribution channels, as greater product accessibility enhances consumers' moral commitment and increases sustainable purchasing behaviors.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design limits the ability to observe changes in consumer behavior over time. Sustainable consumption patterns may evolve as environmental awareness, social norms, and product availability change, which cannot be captured in a single period study. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may have introduced bias due to social desirability. Respondents may overstate their environmental concerns or sustainable purchasing behavior to align with socially acceptable norms. This limitation may have affected the accuracy of the findings. Third, the scope of this study was limited to urban consumers interacting with eco-friendly food SMEs. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to rural areas or different retail contexts, such as large supermarkets or international markets. Finally, the model focuses on selected variables and does not include other potentially influential factors, such as price sensitivity, trust in eco-friendly claims, and perceived product quality, which may also shape sustainable purchase decisions.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are proposed. First, future studies should adopt longitudinal designs to better understand how sustainable purchasing behavior evolves over time and how moral obligation and social influence interact dynamically. Second, researchers should consider using alternative data collection methods, such as experimental approaches or actual purchase data, to reduce the potential bias associated with self-reporting. The inclusion of qualitative methods may also provide deeper insights into consumer motivation and decision-making processes.

Third, future research could expand the scope by including diverse contexts such as rural areas, different cultural settings, or comparisons between SMEs and large retailers. This would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide a broader understanding of sustainable consumption behaviors. Finally, future studies should extend the research model by incorporating additional variables such as price sensitivity, trust in eco-friendly products, and perceived product quality. Examining these factors may provide a more comprehensive explanation of consumer behavior and improve the model's predictive power.

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Author Contributions

SP contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, data curation, writing, original draft preparation, and correspondence. DLP contributed to literature review, methodology validation, writing, review and editing, and supervision. OADW contributed to data interpretation, visualization, writing, review and editing, and proofreading. All authors contributed substantially to the research, critically reviewed the manuscript, approved the final version, and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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