

Abstract

Numerous scholars have undertaken empirical and theoretical studies to examine sustainable consumption in terms of possible factors driving the individual's intention towards it. However, there is still an ambiguity on which factors may drive an individual towards sustainable consumption as external factors have been found insufficient. Recent literature highlights the fact that the moral identity and spirituality of an individual tend to influence their consumption decisions. But it is evident that spirituality and moral identity have scarcely been addressed in relation to sustainable consumption intention. Hence, this study attempts to examine the possible factors influencing sustainable consumption intention and the mediating role of moral identity.

Prior literature was reviewed to understand the theories and concepts related to this context of the study. Among several theories used Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) could be recognized as a dominant theory incorporated in most of the studies in this context in understanding the underlying factors influencing the intention of consumers. However, the theory has been criticized for the incapability in explaining moral considerations. Through the rigorous literature review conducted, it could be recognized that personal factors in the shape of moral thought and self-evaluative responses, moral conduct, and environmental impacts work as association determinants in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) of moral agency. Later, the basis that morality is formed through an individual's beliefs such as spirituality, has been proposed stating that a person is led through his or her spiritual experiences. Therefore, based on this understanding the mediating role of moral identity on the relationship between spirituality and attitude towards sustainable consumption was hypothesized with the aim of enhancing the predictive power of the TPB in relation to moral consideration.

The study undertook a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design developing a questionnaire as the survey instrument. The development of the questionnaire was operationalized with established and previously validated scales. 386 usable responses proceeded to the data analysis which was collected using convenience sampling technique. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was incorporated in testing the established hypotheses. The data analysis revealed that attitude towards sustainable consumption and perceived

behavioral control has a statistically significant impact on sustainable consumption intention while subjective norms were reported statistically insignificant in their impact. Further, a partial mediation was reported from the moral identity on the relationship between spirituality and attitude towards sustainable consumption. This revealed a higher level of impact from the total influence from the indirect impact from spirituality through moral identity on attitude towards sustainable consumption in comparison to its direct impact.

The study, therefore, contributes to several theoretical and social implications. The empirical validation of the role of moral identity and spirituality on sustainable consumption through the Theory of planned behavior refines its criticism of moral considerations improving its prediction power without damaging the originality of the theory. Further, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating programs enhancing spirituality and moral identity which would drive an inner change in the individuals driving them towards sustainable consumption practices succeeding the initiatives commenced by the policy makers and the government. Hence, the present study indicates that without an inner change in individuals driving sustainable consumption is difficult even in the existence of production side policies and government regulations on restricting unsustainable consumption practices.