Impact of Environmental Concern and Product Perceived Value on Purchase Intention for Sustainable Fashion Products

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Abstract

This study investigates the complex connection between Indian consumers' perceptions of the value of products and the tendency to buy sustainable fashion items, and environmental concern in an era marked by growing environmental difficulties. Understanding the mechanisms driving consumer behavior toward sustainable products is critical for both academia and industry as the globe struggles with urgent ecological concerns. The study uses a quantitative methodology and a structured survey to gather information from 200 Indian customers. AMOS was used to apply SEM to analyse the data. Environmental concern is measured using recognized measures that indicate how much people know, care about, and feel responsible for environmental issues. Indicators that show customers' propensity to make environmentally conscious purchasing decisions are used to gauge their intention to buy sustainable fashion items. Preliminary results show a strong positive link between the intention to buy sustainable items and environmental concern, indicating that increased sensitivity and awareness of environmental issues have a favourable impact on consumer behavior. The Perceived value of sustainable items further also found to have a significant impact on purchase intention suggesting that consumers are highly intended to buy environmentally friendly goods when they believe they provide both concrete and intangible benefits.

Keywords: Environmental concern, Perceived value, sustainability, sustainable fashion products.

Introduction

The fashion sector bears a substantial portion of the responsibility for environmental damage, from resource-intensive production processes to the disposal of used goods. Academics who have studied the detrimental effects of traditional fashion practices on ecosystems, such as trash generation, energy use, and water contamination, include (Fletcher, 2015) and (Black et al., 2018). Customers' understanding of the environmental impact of this product has increased, leading to a movement in preferences toward environmentally friendly options. The

way that consumers behave has a significant impact on how sustainable fashion develops. The impact of customer attitudes, values, and awareness on the uptake of sustainable fashion goods is emphasised in the article of (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Consumers nowadays are getting more aware of the usage or wardrobe because they know the environmental issues related to the same, which is driving up demand for products that are transparent and made responsibly. Further evidence that customers are ready to spend extra for products that are in line with their environmental ideals comes from the (Laitala et al., 2018) study. According to literature review we found the most frequently used factor determining what people decide to buy is Perceived value (PV). PV in the context of sustainable fashion incorporates social and environmental factors in addition to more conventional elements like price and quality. According to (Bocken et al., 2017), customers find value in a product's beneficial effects on society and the environment in addition to its material features. The aim of this research is to examine the moderating and mediating impacts of PV on the relationship between consumers' environmental concern (EC) and their purchase intentions for sustainable fashion goods.

Research Objectives:

• To analyse the influence of environmental concern on the intention of Indian consumers to purchase sustainable fashion products.

• To assess the influence of perceived value on the intention of Indian consumers to purchase sustainable fashion products.

Literature Review

Three subsections mostly make up this section. Section 2.1 discusses about some concepts related to sustainability in context of fashion products. The introduction to the theories that dominated the literature review will be found in Section 2.2. The theoretical model is presented in section 2.3 and comprises the following independent variables: Perceived value, environmental concern, and dependent variable (purchase intention).Section 2.4 talks about the research gap which encouraged us to work on this particular study. Section 2.5 will involve the hypotheses development.

Operational terms related to the study

Sustainability

Sustainability is the capacity of present and future generations to meet their needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to fulfil their needs. Finding a harmonic balance between social progress, economic expansion, and environmental conservation is necessary to achieve sustainability. Sustainability has become increasingly important as global issues like pollution, resource depletion, and climate change become more pressing. According to a 2015 study by Fibre Year Consulting, development that prioritises addressing the needs and aspirations of the current generation while preserving those of future generations is what we basically understand from the term sustainability.

Sustainable fashion

"Sustainable fashion" refers to methods for producing, utilising, and discarding apparel and accessories that have the least negative effects on the economy, society, and environment. It entails making decisions that take into account the effects on society and the environment at every stage of the life cycle of a fashion item, from design and sourcing to manufacture, distribution, usage, and disposal. The goal of sustainable fashion is to address problems that are frequently linked to the fashion business, such as excessive waste, pollution, exploitation of labour, and depletion of resources.

Theoretical background

One of the pertinent social-psychological models that is regularly used to study consumer behavior in the recent studies is the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which was identified by (Ajzen, 1991; Perri et al., 2020; Xu and Jackson, 2019). According to the theory known as TPB, a person's, subjective standards, attitude toward behaviour and perceived behavioral control all influence their behavioural intentions, which in turn lead to positive conduct towards any good or service (Ajzen, 1991; Brandao & da Costa, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). This study uses PV and ECas drivers to mimic customers' behavioral intentions for sustainable fashion goods using a modified version of the TPB model. We also investigate the

connection between these constructs and behavioral intention to purchase them. We have conducted a literature review, developed some hypotheses, and based some of the current theories.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1. Theoretical model of the study
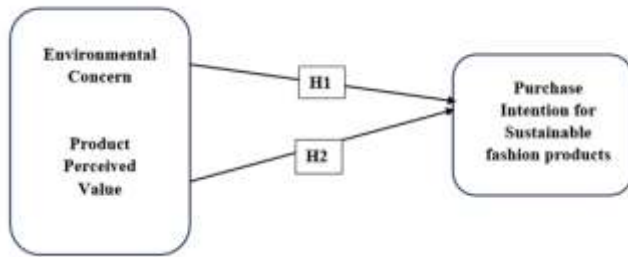
Research gap

One potential area of research is the examination of the connections between the aforementioned factors, especially as they relate to the consumption of sustainable fashion. Despite the wealth of research on the direct linkamongEC and purchase intention as well as the influence of PV on sustainable consumption behaviour, few studies have looked at the intricate interactions between these variables in the context of sustainable fashion products. Furthermore, prior research has often focused on specific product categories, like organic food products or eco-friendly household goods, or on broad consumer behaviour rather than specifically analysing the consumption of sustainable fashion. The necessity to focus on the distinct dynamics of sustainable fashion consumption behaviour is highlighted by this study gap.

Hypothesis Development

To test the above objectives following hypotheses are proposed:

Objective 1: To investigate the influence of EC and product PV of Indian consumers on purchase intention to purchase the sustainable fashion goods.

Objective 2: To investigate the influence of product PV of Indian consumers on purchase intention the sustainable fashion goods.

Environmental concern: EC is a term used to describe how willing customers are to take action to address local environmental issues. Rausch and Kopplin (2021) discovered that EC can have a favourable impact on both attitude and PI for sustainable fashion products. When EC are in line with consumer values and beliefs, they can raise the PV and appeal of sustainable products. Studies that have examined this association, including (Gadenne et al., 2011), have discovered that buyers are more likely to value products that reflect their environmental values. This contributes to the PV of eco-friendly products rising. In emerging countries like India, where public awareness of environmental issues is quickly expanding, this connection is essential. Considering the discussion mentioned above, the following theories are developed:

H1: Purchase intention is positively influenced by the environmental concern towards a sustainable fashion product.

PV: PV is the overall evaluation of a product's usefulness by users based on what they are offered and receive. It is dependent upon the product's delivery, features, services, attention to quality, and cost. The perceived worth of sustainable fashion items is a crucial element that influences the intention to buy. (Kim and Forsythe, 2008) proposed that customers place greater value on sustainable fashion items when they perceive them to offer both functional and emotional benefits, such as quality and durability and ethical considerations and social duty.

H2: Purchase intention is positively influenced by the perceived value of a sustainable fashion product.

Methodology

There are three subsections in this section. The sample and the process for gathering data are presented in Section 3.1. The questionnaire is presented in Section 3.2. This section outlines the analytical method applied to the data analysis.

Methodology and selection of sample size

Since the client base was unknown, 385 is the minimum sample size needed for an unknown population (Cochran 1977). There was also the 50+5x school of thought, where x is the number of indicators. All 21 reflective structures are included in the model, and 225 is the necessary sample size. 202 respondents' responses were taken into consideration for the study.

Structure of the questionnaire

The questionnaire has been divided into different sections. In section first, demographic questions were there to ask from the respondents. Items in other sections were included to assess their effect on consumers' behavioural intentions regarding sustainable fashion products.

Analysis Technique used

We used structural equation modelling (SEM) with Principal Component Analysis estimation with AMOS 28.0 to test our hypotheses. Prior to evaluating the structural model, the measurement model was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Results

Profile of the Respondents

"Table 1. Descriptive statistics and Demographic study of sample"

"Item"	"f"	"Percent"
Age Group (Years)		
15-20	44	21.89
21-30	99	49.25
31-40	47	23.38
40 and above	11	5.47
Marital Status		
Married	73	36.3
Unmarried	128	63.7
Education		
Matriculation/Higher Secondary		
Post Graduate	30	14.9
Professional Degree	63	31.3
Under Graduate	22	10.9
Doctorate	83	41.3
	3	1.5
Occupation		
Business/Profession	39	19.4
Non-Working	99	49.3
Service	63	31.3
Annual Income		
3 lakh- 6 lakh	45	22.4
6 lakh- 9 lakh	31	15.4
above 9 lakh	15	7.5
less than 3 lakh	32	15.9
Not employed	78	38.8

Source: Primary data processed

Methodology

In order to verify the researcher's theoretical model, SEM analysis was performed on the data using IBM AMOS 28 version. The inner and outer measurement models were evaluated by the writers. There are 21 indicators across 6 reflective constructs in the study. Researchers have used IBM-AMOS to assess absolute path-coefficients in a variety of behavioural studies involving both normal and non-normal data, as well as small and large sample sizes (Hair et al., 2013).

Here, we report the findings of the structural equation modelling (SEM) used to evaluate the theoretical framework and conjectures of the author. Since there are 21 indicators across 6 reflective constructs in this study, validity and reliability of the items were evaluated in order to guide future research (Hair et al. 2011). Table 2 displays the factor loadings and inner outer model.

"Table 2. Factor loadings for study variables"

	"Environmental Concern"	**"Factor loading"**
EC1	I have serious concerns towards the environment.	0.815
EC2	If it will help the environment, I would intend to cut back on or change my habits of consumption.	0.821
EC3	I believe my quality of life is improved by preserving the environment.	0.835
EC4	I am aware that human intervention with nature frequently results in terrible outcomes.	0.876
EC5	I understand that nature's delicate balance is sensitive to disturbance.	0.879
EC6	I am concerned about shortage of natural resources in the future.	0.871
EC7	I believe that we all need to change our behavior to protect the natural environment.	0.807
EC8	I would not buy harmful fashion products in future for a cleaner environment.	0.844
	Product PV	
PV	I believe that buying the sustainable fashion product instead of traditional harmful products made from chemicals, artificial dyes etc. would feel right thing to do.	0.742
PV2	It makes sense to use sustainable fashion products instead of non-sustainable products because of its environmental commitments.	0.816
PV3	I purchase sustainable fashion product because it has more environmental benefits than chemically produced products.	0.779
PV4	I think that a product made from sustainable material such as vegan material, organic cotton, recycled polyester, Linen etc. possess a better quality.	0.736
PV5	I think that a product made from sustainable material is generally more expensive than non-sustainable products.	0.753
PV6	I think that using a sustainable fashion product such as vegan handbags, clothes, sustainable watches, vegan shoes etc. in today's time is trendy.	0.728
PV7	If I buy or use a sustainable fashion product, it would create a favorable perception.	0.773
PV8	I believe that sustainable fashion products have good quality standards in terms of durability.	0.754
	Purchase Intentions	
PI1	I would prefer buying sustainable fashion products specially skincare, clothes etc.	0.798
PI2	I am willing to purchase sustainable fashion products made from eco-friendly material.	0.896
PI3	The probability of my purchasing sustainable fashion products made from less harmful chemicals is high.	0.903
PI4	I would like to increase purchase of sustainable fashion products for me.	0.845
PI5	I would like to continue purchasing sustainable fashion products in the future as well.	0.929

Measurement model

The measurement model was tested using AMOS version 28 and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Each indicator or item in the CFA had its factor loadings evaluated, and two items related to environmental concerns and one item related to product PV were removed from the analysis since their factor loadings were less than 0.5. The model's overall goodness of fit is evaluated using the model-fit metrics (MIN/df, IFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA), and each value came within the acceptable range

(Ullman, 2001; Hu and Buntler, 1998, Bentler 1990). The three models (product PV, purchase intention, and environmental concerns) produced a very good model fit (CMIN/df=1.382, TLI=0.947, GFI=0.952, CFI=0.952, IFI=0.953, SRMR=0.062) for the data.

The measuring model (Figure 2) and the internal content of the links between the several latent constructs displayed in the structural model (Figure 3) are presented in Table 3. The model fits quite well, according to the model-fit parameters.

"Table 3. Model fit parameters"

"Item"	"Estimate"	"Range"	"Reference"	"Interpretation"
"CMIN"	746.036			
"DF"	540.000			
"CMIN/DF"	1.382	<2 to <5	Ullman, 2001 & Schu,acler & Lomax 2004	
"Comparative fit index (CFI)"	0.952	">0.95"	"Bentler & Bonnet, 1980"	"Excellent"
"Incremental Fit Index (IFI)"	0.953	">0.90"	"Bollen & Lemox, 1991"	"Excellent"
"Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)"	0.947	">0.90"	"Tucker & Lewis (1973)"	"Excellent"
"Normed Fit Index"	0.94	">0.90"	"Bentler & Bonett, 1980"	'Excellent"
"Standard Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)"	0.062	"<0.08"	"MacCallum et al. (1993)"	"Excellent"
"Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)"	0.050	"<0.06"	"MacCallum et al. (1993)"	"Excellent"
"PClose"	0.473	">0.05"	"James et al. (2009)"	"Excellent"

"Source: Primary data processed"

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to evaluate Construct Reliability. Every study construct's Cronbach Alpha was found to be higher than the mandated and advised standard of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). In excess of the suggested value of 0.70, composite reliability varied from 0.89 to 0.95 (Hair et al. 2010). Thus, the establishment of the composite reliability was made (Table 4.)

Average Variance Extracted was used to measure the convergent validity of the scale items (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). According to them, the average variance-extracted values were more than the 0.50 criterion. As a result, the measures employed in this investigation possess the necessary convergent validity (Table 4).

The Fornell and Larcket Criterion and the Heterotrait Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio were used to evaluate the study's discriminant validity (DV). This criterion states that DV is proven when a construct's square root of AVE is higher than its correlation with the other research constructs. The HTMT ratio is a novel technique that is being used more and more to evaluate discriminant validity, as the criterion has been under fire recently. The Fornell and Larcker criteria is not fully used in this study to establish DV. But when measured with the HTMT ratio, none of the ratios above the necessary 0.85 threshold (Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, discriminant validity was proved. Table 5 displays the results of DV. Table 6 displays correlations between the variables under investigation.

"Table 4: Reliability and Convergent Validity for study constructs"

"Construct"	"Split-Half (Odd-Even) Correlation"	"Cronbach alpha"	"CR"	" AVE"
Environmental concerns	0.77	0.942	0.952	0.712
Product PV	0.78	0.911	0.916	0.579
Purchase Intention	0.83	0.956	0.942	0.756

Figure 2: Measurement model ECC: Environmental concern, PVC: Product Perceived value on PIC: Purchase Intention of customers
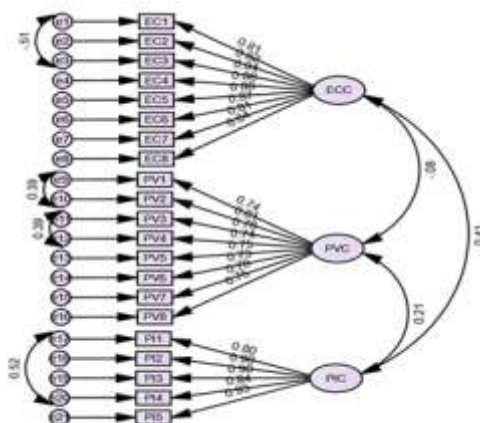
Heterotrat-Monotrait Analysis

Table 5. Discriminant validity – HTMT Analysis

	Environmental Concerns	Product PV	Purchase Intention
Environmental Concerns			
Product PV	0.071		
Purchase Intention	0.395	0.197	

Thresholds are 0.850 for strict and 0.900 for liberal discriminant validity.

"Table 6.Correlations among the study variables"

	"Environmental Concerns"	"Product PV"	"Purchase Intention"
EC	0.844		
PV	-0.081	0.761	
Purchase Intention	0.408***	0.211*	0.875

Common method bias

The increase or, in rare instances, decrease of the genuine correlation between the study's observable variables is known as the Common Method Bias (CMB). It is common for respondents to provide answers to questions involving both dependent and independent variables at the same time, which increases the possibility of deliberate covariance inflation. Harman's Single Factor Test and the Common Method Latent Factor were used in this work to evaluate common method bias.

Harman's Single Factor Test: Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to evaluate the model fit following the loading of all the indicators into a single factor. When the model fit was confirmed, a very excellent match meant that there was no bias from shared operations. Without using the latent common approach, the observed Chi-square with 540 degrees of freedom is 746.036.

With 539 degrees of freedom, the chi-square of the original model with latent factor is 750.636. The existence of a common procedure bias is suggested by the chi-square difference of 4.60. However, the CMB is not a major issue in this analysis because it is so low and has no effect on the findings of the study. In Table 7. and 8.Results have been displayed below:

"Table 7. CMIN without latent common method"

"Model"	"NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF"
"Default model"	125	746.036	540	.000	1.382
"Saturated model"	665	.000	0		
"Independence model"	70	4886.318	595	.000	8.212

"Table 8. CMIN with latent common method"

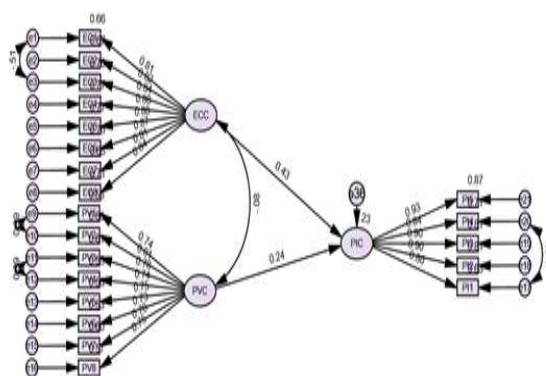| "Model"	"NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF"
"Default model"	125	750.636	539	.000	1.972
"Saturated model"	665	.000	0		
"Independence model"	70	4886.318	595	.000	8.212

Structural Model assessment

The correlations were tested using a SEM model created using AMOS. According to Hair et al. (2010), a model is deemed great if the Tucker Lewis (1973) index (TLI), the Confirmatory fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), the goodness of fit (GFI) indices (Hair et al., 2010), and the value of CMIN/df = is less than 5. Additionally, according to Hair et al. (2010), the model was deemed to be properly fitting if the root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) was between 0.05 and 0.08 and the standardised root mean square residual (RMR) AMOS computed value was less than 0.05. Excellent model fit is indicated by the model's fit indices, which are displayed in Table 5. The squared multiple correlation for buy intentions was 0.35, meaning that environmental concerns, product PV.

Figure 3.Structural Model Assessment

Hypothesis testing

From the Table 9 it can be observed that EC is statistically significant and influencing the Purchase Intention of the customers (ß=0.404; t=3.475, p<0.01), environmental concerns goes up by 1 unit the purchase intentions of the customers goes up by 0.404 units. Therefore, we accept the first hypothesis H1: Purchase intention is positively influenced by the EC towards a sustainable fashion product.

Similarly, Product PV is statistically significant and influencing the Purchase Intention of the customers (ß=0.215, t=1.948, p<0.05). Therefore, we accept H2: Purchase intention is positively influenced by the PV of a sustainable fashion product.

"Table 9. Hypothesis testing"

"Hypothesis Relationship"	"Standard Estimates"	"t-value"	"p-value"	"Decision"
H$_1$: EC? Purchase Intention	.404	3.475	p<0.001	"Supported"
H$_2$: PV? Purchase Intention	0.212	1.948	p<0.05	"Supported"

Implications

The study's conclusions influence managers, legislators, and scholars. From a theoretical perspective, the paper makes several contributions to our knowledge of environmentally conscious consumer behavior. This study first looks at the factors influencing consumers' behavioural intentions for sustainable fashion items using the TPB. In particular, we examine the following determinants: EC, PV and purchase intention. Our research's conclusions have important ramifications for both academics and business. Our research adds to the body of knowledge on consumer behaviour in academics by emphasising the particular influence of perceived product value and environmental concern on purchase intention in the context of sustainable fashion. This study offers insights for creating theoretical frameworks that incorporate environmental factors into consumer decision-making models and lays the groundwork for further investigation into the nuances of sustainable purchasing.

Our research provides useful information on marketing tactics and product development techniques that may be used by industry practitioners to promote sustainable fashion items. Brands may influence consumer perceptions and purchase intentions by highlighting the value proposition and environmental advantages of sustainable fashion items. Fashion firms may satisfy the changing demands of environmentally conscious consumers and make a positive environmental effect by implementing sustainability across the whole product lifecycle, from design and sourcing to production and distribution. In the end, our study emphasises how critical it is to include sustainability into corporate operations in order to cater to customer preferences and promote constructive change in the direction of a more sustainable fashion sector.

Discussion

The purpose of this article is to investigate the driving forces behind the desire to buy sustainable fashion products. Our data show that customers' intentions to buy sustainable fashion items are significantly influenced by perceived product value as well as environmental concern. First of all, plans to buy sustainable fashion products are

greatly influenced by environmental concerns. When it comes to buying purchases, customers that care more about the environment are highly expected to give eco-friendly features top priority. This result is consistent with previous research showing how much environmental values and moral considerations influence consumer behaviour (Kim & Damhorst, 1998; Ottman, 1992). Purchase intentions for sustainable fashion are being driven by consumers' growing desire for products that are consistent with their sustainability principles as environmental concerns like pollution and climate change continue to garner attention on a worldwide scale.Second, customers' intents to buy sustainable fashion products are highly influenced by their perception of the product's value. Aesthetics, durability, ethical qualities, and product quality are all included in the perceived value (Kim & Forsythe, 2008). If customers believe that sustainable fashion products are practical and consistent with their ideals, they are more likely to purchase them. Our results provide credence to the Means-End Chain Theory (Gutman, 1982), which highlights the relationship between customer values, buying intents, and product features.

The interplay between consumers' perceived product value and environmental concerns highlights how difficult it is for them to make informed decisions on sustainable fashion. The fashion industry needs to adapt to the growing customer demand for items that align with their values and environmental consciousness by incorporating sustainability throughout all stages of the product lifecycle, ranging from design and sourcing to production and distribution. Brands may influence consumer perceptions and purchasing intentions in favour of sustainability by stressing the value proposition and environmental benefits of sustainable fashion items. The authors discovered that while customers' intents to purchase were more influenced by perceived consumer values and environmental concerns, their positive attitudes towards clothing made of recycled materials were less impacted by these factors.

Conclusion

The study's conclusions should influence managers, legislators, and scholars. From a theoretical perspective, the paper makes several contributions to our knowledge of

environmentally conscious consumer behavior. This study first looks at the factors influencing consumers' behavioural intentions for sustainable fashion items using the TPB. In conclusion, our research has provided valuable insights into the impact of EC and PV on purchase intention for sustainable fashion goods. The findings underscore the significance of these factors in shaping consumer behavior within the context of sustainability. We have identified a clear relationship between consumers' environmental consciousness and their inclination towards purchasing eco-friendly fashion items, aligning with prior literature highlighting the growing importance of environmental values in consumer decision-making. Additionally, the perceived value of sustainable fashion products, encompassing attributes like quality, durability, and ethical considerations, emerged as a key driver of purchase intention.

Future Research Directions

Future research in the areas of perceived product value, environmental concerns, and consumer intents to buy sustainable products in India is intended to be guided by the following directions: Longitudinal Studies: - Longitudinal studies can shed light on how customer attitudes and actions change over time. The dynamic character of sustainable consumption patterns in India can be elucidated by monitoring shifts in environmental concerns and purchase intents.Cultural Dynamics: - Examine more closely the subtle cultural influences on sustainable consumption in India. Examine the ways in which cultural influences affect how people view environmental challenges and incorporate sustainable practices into their daily lives.

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