

# **Analysing Socially Responsible Consumption Among Eastern Mediterranean University Students**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The concept of sustainable consumption and socially responsible consumption practises at the global level has been shaped by concerns surrounding the growing global population and the effects of social systems, economic trends, and environmental transformations. This study aims to analyse the concept of socially responsible consumption and investigate the psychological factors that influence university students as consumers to engage in sustainable and ethical behaviours. University students' consumption habits are essential for understanding future social norms, as they significantly impact the future.

To achieve the purpose of this study, an extensive exploration of existing literature on the concept of socially responsible consumption was carried out to discover the various definitions proposed by researchers in the past. The study used the theory of planned behaviour and the norm activation theory to understand the predictive factors influencing intentions and actual behaviours related to socially responsible consumption. Six hypotheses were developed from both theories and later tested through structured questionnaires shared with Eastern Mediterranean University students.

Correlation and multiple regression analysis were conducted from the data obtained from 140 students who participated in the survey. Results indicate that only obligations failed to predict intentional behaviours among the six tested hypotheses. The factors that were formulated to predict intentional behaviours had a significant effect, although

to a different degree. The results also portrayed a positive relationship between university students' intentional behaviours towards the practice of SRC.

The study concludes with its findings' theoretical and managerial implications for institutions of higher learning, decision-makers, and marketers. The limitations and suggestions for future research were also discussed.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Consumption, Socially Responsible Consumption, Intentions, Knowledge Awareness, Attitudes, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control, Moral Obligations.

## ÖZ

Küresel düzeyde sürdürülebilir tüketim kavramı ve sosyal açıdan sorumlu tüketim uygulamaları, artan küresel nüfusa ilişkin kaygılar ve sosyal sistemlerin, ekonomik eğilimlerin ve çevresel dönüşümlerin etkileriyle şekillenmiştir. Bu çalışma, sosyal sorumlu tüketim kavramını analiz etmeyi ve tüketici olarak üniversite öğrencilerini sürdürülebilir ve etik davranışlarda bulunmaya etkileyen psikolojik faktörleri araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin tüketim alışkanlıkları, geleceği önemli ölçüde etkilediklerinden gelecekteki sosyal normları anlamak için önemlidir.

Bu çalışmanın amacına ulaşmak için, geçmişte araştırmacılar tarafından önerilen çeşitli tanımları keşfetmek için sosyal sorumlu tüketim kavramına ilişkin mevcut literatürün kapsamlı bir araştırması yapılmıştır. Çalışma, sosyal sorumlu tüketimle ilgili niyetleri ve gerçek davranışları etkileyen öngörücü faktörleri anlamak için planlı davranış teorisini ve norm aktivasyon teorisini kullandı. Her iki teoriden de altı hipotez geliştirildi ve daha sonra Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi öğrencileriyle paylaşılan yapılandırılmış anketler aracılığıyla test edildi.

Ankete katılan 140 öğrenciden elde edilen verilerden korelasyon ve çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, test edilen altı hipotez arasında yalnızca yükümlülüklerin kasıtlı davranışları tahmin etmede başarısız olduğunu göstermektedir. Kasıtlı davranışları yordamak için formüle edilen faktörlerin farklı derecelerde de olsa önemli bir etkisi olmuştur. Sonuçlar ayrıca üniversite öğrencilerinin SRC uygulamasına yönelik kasıtlı davranışları arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koydu.

Çalışma, bulgularının yüksek öğrenim kurumları, karar vericiler ve pazarlamacılar için teorik ve yönetsel çıkarımları ile sona ermektedir. Ayrıca sınırlılıklar ve gelecek araştırmalara yönelik öneriler de tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürdürülebilir Tüketim, Sosyal Sorumlu Tüketim, Niyetler, Bilgi Farkındalığı, Tutumlar, Özne Normlar, Algılanan Davranışsal Kontrol, Ahlaki Yükümlülükler.

# DEDICATION

To My Late Father (Pa Awambeng Moma James) and My Late Mother (Ma Cecilia Atesiri Moma).

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EMU	Eastern Mediterranean University
NAT	Norm Activation Theory
SC	Sustainable Consumption
SRC	Socially Responsible Consumption
TPB	Theory Of Planned Behaviour
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

What are those underlying predictive factors that influence humans as consumers to take on socially responsible consumption practices is a question that has pondered researchers in both the field of marketing and social sciences within the last few decades. The present world we inhabit is believed to have been borrowed from future generations, and it will eventually be passed on to them. Evidence has shown that there has been a significant rise in the use and misuse of the available environmental resources which has eventually led to a fall in the vital resources needed to sustain our living on earth (Alisat and Reimer, 2015; Bogueva et al., 2017). Statistics from Global Footprint Earth (2016) indicates that human consumption of the earth's resources is 64 percent more than the resources generated by the planet earth. This continuous misuse and over consumption of the earth's natural resources has led to numerous environmental maladies such as deforestation, loss of biodiversity, ozone depletion, global climate change and pollution (Burak et al 2005). In addition to the various environmental problems the world is now facing, comes issues of population explosion that are putting stress to the already limited amount of available resources. These problems have called for concerns among academicians, various government and non-government policy makers to engage in an area of study known as socially responsible consumption as a means to promote sustainability and ethical practices (Kallio, 2017). Socially responsible consumption (SRC) involves the conscious and deliberate choice of products and services that are produced and consumed in a way that minimizes

negative impacts on the environment and society. This can include a variety of practices, such as using sustainably sourced products, choosing products with a minimal environmental impact, and supporting socially responsible companies (Thogersen, 2012).

This study focuses on analysing SRC behaviours among Eastern Mediterranean University students, especially their intentions and behaviours towards the practice of the concept. Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is a public university located in the Eastern Mediterranean region of North Cyprus. EMU recognizes the importance of shaping the minds of young individuals and preparing them to become responsible and environmentally conscious citizens. According to Hamid et al. (2017), higher education institutions have a significant role in shaping, creating, and fostering sustainability awareness among their students. This is accomplished through various means such as the education system, activities, curriculum, syllabus, campaigns, and visions related to green marketing. These efforts have a direct impact on the attitudes of the younger generation, emphasizing the importance and priority of preserving sustainability. Higher education institutions consider their students as valuable human capital for future development and as leaders of the future. The knowledge and understanding gained at the university level can profoundly influence their perspectives and guide their actions in the future. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness and promote the concept of sustainability, enabling students to apply what they have learned from their academic institutions. Consequently, as university students are seen as vital assets for future advancements, there is an urgent need to educate them on sustainability principles, practices, and issues. This will enable them to explore energy conservation practices, resource efficiency, risk reduction, sustainable decision-making, and climate change strategies.

The concept of sustainable knowledge and practices at a global level has been shaped by concerns surrounding the growing global population and the effects of social systems, economic trends, and environmental transformations. While individuals and organizations across the world have generally acknowledged, adopted, and utilized natural resources, developing countries have exhibited lower levels of awareness and action in terms of preserving and sustaining environmental resources. However, sustainability remains a multifaceted term that lacks a universally shared understanding of its causes, effects, roles, and strategies among different perspectives encompassing the environment, economy, and society (Alsaati et al., 2020).

Studies and research carried out in the area of SRC lie under the umbrella framework of sustainable development and consumption, which gained worldwide relevance due to concerns about preserving the earth and its resources (Gupta and Singh, 2020). Although sustainable development and sustainable consumption are terms that are often linked together in their usage, both terms differ in that sustainable development is like an antecedent to sustainable consumption. Through sustainable development, governments and firms are in charge of engaging in sustainable development practices, while individuals in society follow the same pathway by engaging in sustainable consumption practices (Beeco, 2022).

Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Peattie 1995; Bhattacharya 2007). In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly agreed upon a set of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) as aims to provide a decent life for all on a healthy planet by 2030. This can be seen in the 12th Goal, which focuses on promoting resource efficiency, building sustainable

infrastructure, providing access to essential services, protecting the environment, creating good jobs, and improving the quality of life for all (Barea et al, 2020).

Sustainable consumption (SC) refers to the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials, and emissions of waste and pollutants over the lifecycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations (Ofstad, 1994). The concept of SC received recognition during the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg in the year 2002 (Dubey et al, 2016).

SC and SRC practices are aligned in their objectives, which encompass mitigating adverse environmental effects caused by human activities, fostering social fairness, and ensuring economic sustainability (Seyfang, 2005). SRC integrates social and environmental considerations as factors that consumers employ when making decisions about what to buy and consume, and it goes further by examining every stage of the value chain (United Nations, 2015). This implies that the concept of SRC does not only stress the stage of purchasing a product; it also involves thoughts and actions such as recycling during the production process. SRC does not necessarily involve purchasing, as it may include actions such as recycling, sharing, or producing goods/services or moderating consumption as an alternative to buying (Fisk, 1973; Francois-Lecompte & Roberts, 2006; Shaw & Newholm, 2002).

Nowadays, consumers have the opportunity to choose from an extensive variety of goods and services due to the recent advances in communication and information technology (Auger et al., 2010). Technological advancements have not only increased the variety of products available to consumers but also enabled consumers to be well-

informed about their consumption choices' impact on society and the environment (Gonzalez, Korchia, Menuet, and Urbain, 2009).

From the 1970s to date, different definitions have been used by academic researchers to analyse the concept of SRC. The perspectives used in defining the concept include political, social, green, ethical, and sustainability perspectives (Roberts, 1995; Newman & Bartels, 2011; Anderson & Cunningham, 1972; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Although there are some similarities in these perspectives used in the literature on SRC, there are also areas of inconsistency in the concept's definition and expressions (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Garcia-Rosell & Moisander, 2008; Lim, 2016, 2017). To analyse the concept of SRC among university students, it is important to get a brief definition of these perspectives used by renowned authors in the past. Note should be taken that the perspectives used in defining the concept have changed as the years go by in both marketing and economics domains (Prendergast and Tsang, 2019).

The earliest definition used in the study of SRC came from Webster (1975). According to him, SRC (socially conscious consumption) refers to a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change. Going through the work of Webster, it is observed that his studies were directed principally towards the social perspective of consumers (Webb et al., 2008).

Relating to the social perspective of the concept of SRC, Mohr also defines the term as a consumer who avoids products or services from companies that he or she perceives will harm society and will prefer products or services from companies that benefit society (Mohr et al., 2001).

The ethical perspective in the study of SRC is noticed in the works of Smith (1990), Roberts (1998), Crane (2001), and Starr (2009). They define ethical consumption as the act of consuming products and services in accordance with society's values.

Moving forward to the green perspective (green consumption) in analysing the concept of socially responsible consumption, Johnstone and Tan (2015) defined the term as consumption behaviours that are perceived by people to have either a nil, minimal, or reduced impact on the environment, such as purchasing environmentally friendly products, recycling, and protecting waterways (Falcão and Roseira, 2022).

The sustainability perspective (sustainable consumption) has also been used in the studies of SRC. The Oslo Roundtable on Sustainable Production and Consumption (1994) defines the term as 'the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials, and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of the future.

Lastly, the political consumerism perspective used in the studies of SRC is defined by Micheletti and Stolle (2012) as the assessment and selection of producers and products with the objective of changing organizational or market practices that are morally, environmentally, or politically undesirable.

From the various definitions proposed in the literature on SRC, the best and frequently used definition is the one proposed by Roberts (1993). He defines the concept as someone who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive or less negative impact on the environment, or someone who patronizes businesses that

attempt to bring about related positive change. In his definition, he captures both the environmental and social consciousness perspectives, and the scales he developed both try to measure a wide range of social issues and behavioural tendencies towards the practice of socially responsible consumption, which previous scales used in the literature lacked (Webb et al., 2008).

The definition that will be used in this study is the one proposed by Roberts (1993). He defines the concept as someone who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive or less negative impact on the environment, or someone who patronizes businesses that attempt to bring about related positive change. In his definition, he captures both the environmental-social concern perspectives, and the scales he developed both try to measure a wide range of social issues and behavioural tendencies towards the practice of socially responsible consumption, which previous scales in the literature lacked (Webb et al., 2008).

## **1.1 Theoretical Background of Study**

In this study on analysing SRC among students in EMU, two relevant theories can be anchored to investigate the predictive factors that influence SRC behaviours: the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Norm Activation Theory (NAT).

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB): The TPB, proposed by Ajzen (1991), is a widely used psychological theory for understanding and predicting human behaviour. It posits that individual behaviour is influenced by three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of this study, TPB is applied to investigate the underlying predictive factors influencing university students' intention and actual engagement in socially responsible consumption practices.

University students' attitudes toward SRC behaviours, including their beliefs and evaluations of the positive and negative consequences associated with such behaviour, will shape their intentions and actions. Positive attitudes toward sustainable and ethical consumption are likely to result in a higher likelihood of engaging in socially responsible consumption practices. The subjective norms component of TPB refers to the influence of social norms, including the perceived expectations and approval/disapproval of important reference groups such as peers, family, and teachers. The study can explore how social influences and the perceived norms within the high school environment impact students' intentions and behaviours related to socially responsible consumption.

The Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) factor refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. Students' perception of their ability to engage in SRC practices, the availability of resources, and the perceived barriers or constraints they face can influence their intentions and actual behaviours. The study can examine how perceived behavioural control affects students' engagement in SRC practices.

Norm Activation Theory (NAT): Norm Activation Theory, proposed by Schwartz (1977), focuses on the influence of personal and social norms on pro-environmental behaviour. It suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in sustainable behaviours when they are aware of the environmental consequences, have a personal norm (moral obligations) to act in an environmentally responsible manner, and perceive social norms that support such behaviour. In the context of this study, NAT can be employed to examine how student's intentional behaviours are influenced by their personal norms and the social norms prevalent within their EMU community.

University students' awareness and knowledge of the environmental and social consequences associated with consumption choices can influence their motivation to engage in SRC. The study can explore how students' understanding of the consequences of their actions affects their intentional behaviours related to sustainability practices. Personal norms refer to an individual's internalized beliefs about what is morally right or wrong. If university students have a personal obligation to act in a socially responsible and sustainable manner, they are more likely to engage in such behaviours. This study can investigate how personal norms influence students' intentions and actual practices of SRC.

By utilizing the TPB and the NAT, this study can establish a comprehensive theoretical framework that accounts for the factors influencing students' engagement in SRC behaviours within the EMU context.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

In this study, we examine the underlying psychological factors that influence university students' consumption behaviors and investigate their level of engagement to SRC behaviors. Understanding students' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, knowledge/awareness, obligations, intentions, and behaviors toward socially responsible purchases can help us identify obstacles that may prevent them from developing more sustainable purchasing patterns.

According to a study by Naderpoor et al. (2021), although universities are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, there is a lack of awareness and implementation of sustainable behaviours among students. Another study by Teixeira and Carvalho (2018) identified that while students understand the importance of sustainable

development, there is still a gap between their knowledge and their actual behaviour. These studies highlight the need for further research to understand the factors that influence sustainable behaviours among university students.

Moreover, previous research has focused primarily on Western countries, and there is a lack of research on socially responsible consumption practices among university students in the Eastern Mediterranean region, particularly at EMU. This gap in the literature creates a need to analyse the concept of socially responsible consumption among students at EMU and identify the factors that influence their engagement in such practices.

Therefore, the current study aims to address this gap in the literature and provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence socially responsible consumption practices among university students in the Eastern Mediterranean region. By doing so, this study can contribute to the existing literature on sustainable behaviours among university students and inform the development of effective strategies to promote sustainable practices among EMU students.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to investigate those underlying predictive factors that influence EMU students as consumers to engage in socially responsible buying and consumption practices. University students' attitudes and intentions towards socially responsible consumption will be probed in this study to provide insights into factors that impact their decision-making processes when making ecologically and socially conscious decisions.

In order to achieve the research aim of the study, the following factors are examined to show the extent to which they influence university student's intentions which finally leads to actual behaviours towards the practice of the concept of SRC:

1. Knowledge and awareness
2. Attitudes
3. Subjective norm
4. Perceived behavioural control
5. Obligations
6. Intentions

By focusing on these goals, this study aims to advance the body of knowledge about university students' socially responsible consumption and shed light on the psychological variables that can guide the creation of successful initiatives and interventions to promote sustainable consumer behaviour. This study hopes to provide useful information that will encourage university students to adopt responsible and sustainable consumption habits in the future.

#### **1.4 Research Gap and Significance of the Study**

Previous studies have primarily focused on the general population, neglecting the unique characteristics and perspectives of university students. As university students represent a crucial stage in their development, it is important to analyse the concept of SRC. This study aims to fill the research gap by examining the factors that influence university student's intentions and behaviours towards sustainable and ethical consumption practices, as they are the future consumers and decision-makers.

Understanding the research gap in terms of analysing SRC among university students at EMU is crucial for developing effective strategies and interventions that can promote sustainable consumption behaviours among this specific demographic. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide valuable insights that can inform educational institutions, policymakers, and relevant stakeholders in promoting sustainable and ethical consumption practices among university students.

The primary beneficiaries of the study's findings are the students at EMU. The findings will provide insights into their current level of awareness and perception of the concept of SRC. By understanding their attitudes and behaviours, the students can gain knowledge about sustainable and ethical consumption practices, which can empower them to make informed choices that contribute to a more sustainable future.

The findings will be valuable for educational institutions, including EMU and other universities in the Mediterranean region. The study can provide a basis for curriculum development and educational initiatives that aim to integrate sustainability and ethical consumption into the educational system. By incorporating the findings, institutions can enhance their programs to foster a sense of social responsibility among students.

Policymakers involved in environmental and educational policies can benefit from the study's findings. By analysing the concept of SRC and investigating on the underlying predictive factors that influence university students to engage in the practice of the concept can lead to the development of policies and initiatives that promote sustainable consumption practices among the younger generation. Policymakers can use the

findings to create strategies and guidelines that encourage schools to incorporate sustainability education into their curricula.

Environmental organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focused on sustainability can use the findings to tailor their educational campaigns and initiatives to target university students. By understanding the awareness and perception of these students, these organizations can design effective programs that engage and empower them to adopt sustainable consumption practices.

The findings can also be valuable for businesses and industries interested in appealing to socially responsible consumers. Understanding the attitudes and behaviours towards SRC among university students can provide insights into consumer preferences and behaviour. Businesses can use this information to develop sustainable and ethical products and services that align with the values and expectations of the younger generation.

Ultimately, the findings of the study can benefit society as a whole. By promoting awareness and fostering positive attitudes towards SRC among university students, the study can contribute to the development of a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society. The findings can help shape future generations to become responsible citizens who prioritize sustainability and contribute to the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants.

## **1.5 The Structure of the Research Paper**

The organization of the research paper will follow the following structure. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, which will provide an overview of the study's background, context, and theory. It will outline the problem statement, research aims, research gap,

and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will comprise the literature review, offering a synthesis of the existing literature pertaining to the research problem. It will identify gaps, limitations, and contradictions within the literature, establishing a rationale for the research study. Chapter 3 will detail the methodology, encompassing a description of the research design, approach, methods, data collection techniques, sampling strategy, and data analysis procedures. This section will also address the study's limitations and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 will present the findings. It will describe the collected data, conducted analyses, and resulting outcomes. The findings will furnish evidence to address the research questions and support the study objectives. Subsequently, Chapter 5 will comprise the discussion. Here, the findings will be interpreted and correlated with the literature reviewed in the earlier section. The discussion will also delve into the implications of the study and propose areas for future research, and it will summarize the main findings of the study, restate the research aims, and underscore the contributions of the study to the existing knowledge in the field.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Increasing world population and rising consumption activities put pressures on the environment, existing resources and societies. As the world population continues to grow geometrically, great pressure is being placed on arable land, water, energy, and biological resources to provide an adequate supply of food. Not only the growing world population, but also the lifestyle and consumption patterns of people directly lead to the serious environmental, economic and social problems the world is now facing.

SC activities include efficient use of resources and energy, building sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services such as food, water and electricity and a better quality of life. It helps achieving adequate supply of food, water, and energy, decreasing waste reduction, improving economic competitiveness and lowering poverty. Its implementation is complicated and requires efficient policies, strategic decisions and collective responsibility.

Nowadays consumers have better access to information and are well informed, they are more demanding and they are being more and more conscious of their consumption consequences, on the environment and on the society (Joshi and Rahman, 2015, Gonzalez, Korchia, Menuet and Urbain, 2009). This influences the aspects that consumers take into account when buying and, more importantly, their actual buying

behaviour. Consumers can significantly lower the social, economic and environmental consequences of irresponsible consumption if they make rational choices regarding the products and services they consume. Consumers today seek to influence the markets through their purchasing and consumption choices. They buy fair trade and environmentally friendly products, boycott companies involved in child labour or pollution and support small and local enterprises.

Even when consumers are willing to act as responsible consumers in some cases their willingness does not translate in behaviour. (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Nittala, 2014; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). One of the reasons that can explain this gap between intentions and behaviour is that there are some obstacles that may impede consumers to behave responsibly. The main categories of such barriers are the motivational ones, referring to people's willingness to make a political statement, the cognitive ones, dealing with consumers' ability to get, process or recall information and the behavioural ones, meaning individuals' ability to find such products on the market (Valor 2008).

## **2.1 Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC)**

The concept of SRC is a complex term that has been used by researchers in various ways in the past. In previous studies carried out by researchers, it can be noticed that the term SRC has been used interchangeably with other terms such as socially conscious consumption, sustainable consumption (SC), ethical and moral consumption (Yeow et al., 2014; Caruana, 2007; Chatzidakis, Hibbert, and Smith, 2005). It is important to understand the definitions given by prominent researchers who have conducted extensive work on this topic to pursue the study of SRC among EMU students.

One of the first official definitions of SRC came from Webster (1975). He defined a socially conscious consumer as “a consumer who takes into account the public consequences of his or her private consumption or who attempts to use his or her purchasing power to bring about social change”. Webster based his definition practically on the social involvement construct and mentioned three characteristics that a socially responsible consumer must have. As a socially responsible consumer, first, he or she must notice a social problem and be willing to buy products or services that can directly or indirectly solve these problems in one way or the other. Second, a socially responsible consumer must have the feeling that he or she has the power to influence the society and third, he or she must actively participate in the social affairs of the community in which he or she belongs to. Roberts (1993) defined a socially responsible consumer as “one who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive (or less negative) influence on the environment or who patronizes businesses that attempt to affect related positive social change”. In his definition, he implied that SRC has two dimensions: environmental concern and general social concern. Conceptualising and furthering on the research carried out by Webster, Mohr and his associate researchers (Mohr et al., 2001) moved beyond the environmental aspects of a socially responsible consumer and defined this segment of consumers as those who avoid buying goods or services from companies or enterprises they believe harm the society and favour buying goods and services from companies they believe contribute to society. Similar to the definitions of Webster and Mohr, Francois Lecomte and Roberts (2006) defined a socially responsible consumer as one who acquires products and services that make a positive or less negative impact on the environment and other persons considering his or her purchasing behaviour as an exercise of power in expressing consumer’s environmental and social concerns.

Webb, Mohr and Harris (2008) defined responsible behaviour based on social marketing concept as a person basing his or her acquisition, usage and disposition of products on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-run beneficial impact on society". They also identified three dimensions of socially responsible behaviour: the influence of firm's SRC performance on consumer purchase behaviour; consumer recycling behaviour; and consumer avoidance and usage reduction of products harmful to the environment. Similar to this definition, Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt and Birtchnell, (2011), identified the social responsibility as the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs. They included two elements: an ethical element relating to the underlying importance of the social aspects of a company's products and business processes; and a consumerism element that describes that the preferences and desires of consumer groups are partially responsible for the increasing influence of ethical or social factors. Therefore, the socially responsible of consumers highlights that consumers are responsible for their consumption behaviour and their impact on the larger social good. Helm (2011) expanded the consumer social responsibility to include the willingness to avoid negative external effects the individual's consumption has towards society and the environment.

Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) have noted that the more recent treatment of consumer social responsibility recognises the need to relocate the consumer from being the sole agent behind the increasing responsibilities of everyday consumption. They asserted that consumer social responsibility should be recognized as the outcome of organized efforts by a range of collective actors to practically re formulate the ethical nature of daily consumption. Asante (2019), as a conclusion, proposed that consumer social responsibility can be proposed to include personal, social, corporate, environmental,

health and moral/ethical components as well as many different responsibilities, one towards society and another towards stakeholders including organisations. In the context of this study, the definition that will be used is the one proposed by Roberts (1993). He defines the concept as someone who purchases products and services perceived to have a positive or less negative impact on the environment, or someone who patronizes businesses that attempt to bring about related positive change.

## **2.2 Measurement of Socially Responsible Consumption**

Webster (1975) developed a construct to measure socially responsible consumer based on attitudinal, personality, social activity, and socioeconomic and demographic variables. Antil (1984) measured socially responsible consumer construct with perceived consumer effectiveness, effort, knowledge, conservatism, and traditional social responsibility. Roberts (1993) employed four individual difference variables to measure socially responsible consumer behavior? Perceived consumer effectiveness, liberalism, alienation, and environmental concern. Leigh, et al., (1988) constructed socially responsible consumption tendencies construct including seven dimensions, namely ecological impact, societal impact, product performance, product extension, product information, product design, and product embellishment. Mohr et al., 2008 generated socially responsible consumption based on four dimensions corporate social responsibility performance, consumer recycling behaviour, traditional purchase criteria, and environmental impact and use criteria. Durif et al., (2011) created socially responsible consumer construct based on citizen behaviour, measuring the behaviour in support of organizations with social convictions, behaviour focusing on protection of the environment, recycling behaviour, composting behaviour, local consumption behaviour, taking into account animal protection, deconsumption behaviour, and sustainable transport behaviour. Villa Castaño et al. (2016) conducted a study aimed

at developing a measurement scale for Socially Responsible Consumption in the specific context of Colombia. The study employed a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology. The scale consisted four main dimensions, namely external customer social responsibility, internal customer social responsibility, consumption rationalization, and healthy lifestyle through healthcare. Andrei et al., (2017) developed 5 factors of socially responsible consumption construct unwillingness to buy related to irresponsible firms' behavior, preference for cause-related products, support of small businesses, preference for local geographic origin, and consumption volume limitation as a pro-environmental act. Prendergast and Tsang (2019) attempted to explain socially responsible behavior with intentions, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB).

Whereas some scales measuring socially-responsible consumption behaviour have focused on attitudes (Antil, 1984), some have intended to measure intentions (François-Lecompte & Valette-Florence, 2006; François-Lecompte and Roberts, 2006). Others have specifically measured actual behaviour (Mohr, Webb and Harris, 2001; Webb, Mohr and Harris, 2008; Yan and She, 2011). However, upon inspection of the items composing these scales, some ask about what consumers “try” or “avoid”, on Likert-type scales ranging generally from 1 to 5. Most scales merge therefore intentions with actual behaviour (e.g., Webb, Mohr and Harris, 2008; Yan and Shen, 2011) or intentions and attitudes (e.g. Antil, 1984). Consistent with prior Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Ajzen and Madden, 1986), intentions are antecedents to actions. However, there remains a gap between intentions and actual actions (Nuttin, 1987). Studies reveal a difference between the percentage of adults who claim to be aware of social issues and that of those who actually purchase social

products (Krier, 2007; Nicholls and Lee, 2006). The existence of such a gap has been demonstrated by theoretical works and research projects carried out in experimental settings (Bjørner et al., 2004; Page and Fearn, 2005). Bagozzi (1993) identified this as a volitional process. At one end of the continuum some researchers argue that consumer responses will never provide reliable estimations of actual behaviour (Ulrich and Sarasin, 1995). At the other end, narrowing the gap is a matter of refining models and methods (Newholm and Shaw, 2007). This latter perspective is mostly in tune with models developed in social psychology so far.

Although the topic has been the object of a broad range of studies (Anderson and Cunningham, 1972; Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Pol, 1986; Roberts, 1995), there is still a general need to foster research in the field since results have been mixed and contradictory and unsuccessful in providing clear understanding of responsible consumers (Schlegelmilch et al., 1996; Wagner, 1997; Straughan and Roberts, 1999; McDonald et al., 2006).

### **2.3 Sustainable Consumption (SC)**

The concept of sustainable consumption (SC) revolves around the idea of using products and services in a way that minimizes their impact on the environment and ensures the preservation of resources for present and future generations (Al-Nuaimi & Al-Ghamdi, 2022). SC has gained significant attention as a research area, especially in recent years, due to the growing recognition of environmental issues and their widespread impacts on a global scale. The focus of SC is to promote responsible consumption practices that align with the principles of sustainability. It entails making conscious choices about the products we use, considering their life cycle and environmental implications. By adopting SC, individuals, communities, and societies

aim to mitigate environmental degradation, reduce waste generation, conserve resources, and contribute to a more sustainable future. Since its introduction in 2015, the concept of SC has garnered increasing interest from researchers across various disciplines. This reflects the urgency of addressing the environmental challenges faced worldwide and the need to transition towards more sustainable consumption patterns. By studying SC, researchers seek to understand the factors influencing consumer behaviour, develop strategies to promote sustainable choices, and assess the effectiveness of policies and interventions aimed at fostering sustainable consumption practice.

Scholars with diverse backgrounds have assigned different meanings and interpretations to the concept of sustainable consumption behaviour (SCB), leading to varying connotations and a wide range of components associated with it (Francis and Sarangi, 2022). SCB, as a term, encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviours and practices related to sustainable consumption. These behaviours may include conscious choices in purchasing eco-friendly products, adopting energy-efficient practices, reducing waste generation, recycling, and engaging in ethical consumption patterns. The understanding and conceptualization of SCB can differ among scholars due to their unique perspectives and disciplinary lenses. The variations in interpretations can be attributed to the multifaceted nature of sustainability, which encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions. For instance, some scholars may emphasize the environmental aspect of SCB, focusing on reducing ecological footprints and mitigating environmental harm. Others may take a broader view, considering social equity and justice in consumption patterns, such as fair-trade practices and support for local communities. The diverse connotations and components associated with SCB reflect the complexity of sustainable development and the need

for interdisciplinary approaches to address its challenges. By recognizing and exploring these different interpretations, researchers can contribute to a comprehensive understanding of SCB and develop effective strategies to promote sustainable consumption patterns among individuals, communities, and societies as a whole.

Rizkalla et al. (2019) conducted a study to explore the role of psychological factors, specifically norms and personal values, in influencing SCB among university students in Indonesia. The study aimed to understand what factors can encourage consumers to engage in environmental preservation and conduct sustainable consumption behaviours. The researchers collected data from 256 respondents to test the proposed model of the study. The findings revealed that norms and personal values have a significant impact on sustainable consumption behaviour, specifically in terms of buying and curtailment behaviours. Altruistic values and personal norms were found to be influential factors for both types of behaviour, while egoistic values were not significant. However, there was a difference in the effect of subjective norms on sustainable consumption behaviour. Subjective norms were found to explain sustainable buying behaviour but failed to explain sustainable curtailment behaviour. The study also suggests directions for future research in this area. Further investigations could explore additional psychological factors and their influence on sustainable consumption behaviour. Additionally, examining different cultural contexts and demographic groups could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting SC.

According to Sheoran and Kumar (2020), the importance of analysing various factors that influence Socially Conscious Behaviour (SCB). In order to fully comprehend

consumer behaviour, it is crucial to examine the entire consumption cycle, including post-choice behaviours such as product usage, product life extension, and product disposal. These post-choice behaviours have a profound and equally significant impact on sustainability.

According to Xue et al. (2021), various environmental issues resulting from extensive human interference, such as pollution, global warming, land degradation, and biodiversity loss, have significant implications for the sustainability and overall quality of the environment and ecosystems.

## **2.4 Responsible Consumption**

According to Ulusoy (2016), responsible consumption is increasingly observed, and prior research has primarily focused on perceiving it as a conscious activity driven by rational individuals. However, there is limited understanding regarding the incidental, communal, and experiential aspects of responsible consumption and how these factors impact consumers. In simpler terms, responsible consumption is becoming more widespread, where people are actively considering the environmental and social impacts of their consumption choices. While previous research has predominantly portrayed responsible consumption as a deliberate and logical behaviour, Ulusoy suggests that we should also take into account the unintentional or spontaneous aspects of this phenomenon. Additionally, the author emphasizes the importance of examining the social and community aspects of responsible consumption, such as how individuals' choices and actions are influenced by their interactions with others. Furthermore, the experiential aspects of responsible consumption, such as the emotions and personal satisfaction derived from making sustainable choices, also deserve further exploration. By delving into these dimensions, a more comprehensive

understanding of responsible consumption and its effects on consumers can be attained.

Epuran et al. (2017) highlight the increasing attention paid by national, European, and global institutions to responsible consumption of raw materials and resources. Companies, regardless of their industry, are actively incorporating social responsibility into their operations, striving for competitive advantages and consumer protection. Within the tourism industry, there is a trend among companies, including rural tourist guesthouses in Romania, to adopt sustainable development principles and strategies of responsible consumption. These efforts aim to offer unique experiences to consumers while safeguarding their interests. Tourists are becoming more discerning in selecting services that align with sustainability principles. Regulatory institutions also play a role in monitoring and shaping messages conveyed to tourists. The authors conducted qualitative research among managers of rural tourist guesthouses in Romania to understand their approach to responsible consumption and develop strategies that enhance tourist safety and contribute to effective strategy formulation.

Jacob-John et al. (2021) explain that the past century witnessed both economic and social progress alongside environmental degradation, which poses a threat to our future. Goal 12 of the SDGs, "Responsible consumption and production," advocates for a fundamental shift in individual perspectives by raising consciousness about the consequences of individual actions on social and ecological systems. It emphasizes the importance of practicing responsible consumption, encouraging individuals to prioritize doing more with less.

Gupta et al. (2022) explains that consumerism, driven by the notion that increased consumption is beneficial for the economy, has witnessed significant growth since the Industrial Revolution. This behaviour, influenced by population growth and lifestyle changes, poses a threat to future resource availability. Addictive consumption and conspicuous consumption further contribute to the problem. The paper adopts a descriptive approach and relies on secondary data from various sources to explore the concept of demarketing in relation to contemporary consumer behaviour. Specifically, it focuses on green demarketing strategies implemented by companies through sustainable marketing practices to address the environmental impact of excessive consumption.

Terent'eva et al. (2023) emphasize the relevance of consumerism in the global context and its association with environmental degradation. To explore the interplay between physical and digital environments concerning responsible consumption, the researchers develop a comparative assessment tool. They establish a methodology for measuring responsible consumption across various categories and conduct a survey among students from two universities. Additionally, the authors employ a Python 3 algorithm to analyse the digital environment, specifically the Instagram accounts of the universities. The study reveals a correlation between the indicators of the physical and digital environments, and its scientific novelty lies in the proposed methodology. The practical implementation of this research allows universities to investigate their students' adherence to responsible consumption and develop strategies to influence both individual behaviour and the representation of responsible consumption in institutional communication channels.

## **2.5 Relationship between Sustainable Consumption (SC) and Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC) Practices**

SC and SRC practices are aligned in their objectives, which encompass mitigating adverse environmental effects caused by human activities, fostering social fairness, and ensuring economic sustainability (Seyfang, 2005). These concepts underscore the significance of informed consumer decision-making, whereby individuals consider the environmental and social consequences of their consumption behaviours when selecting products and services.

Sustainable consumption and socially responsible consumption practices are complementary strategies that can be implemented simultaneously to encourage more sustainable patterns of consumption. While sustainable consumption addresses the broader aspects of consumption, such as the reduction of resource utilization, waste generation, and pollution, socially responsible consumption practices concentrate on specific actions that consumers can take to mitigate the adverse effects of their consumption decisions on the environment and society (Barr, Gilg, & Ford, 2005).

SRC practices are essential components of SC, which refers to the utilization of goods and services that satisfy basic needs and enhance quality of life while minimizing the depletion of natural resources, the use of toxic materials, and the generation of waste and pollutants (Hartmann & Ibanez, 2010). By incorporating SRC practices, individuals can contribute to SC. These practices encompass the deliberate selection of environmentally friendly, ethically produced, and socially responsible products and services. Examples of SRC practices involve opting for products sourced sustainably,

choosing items with minimal environmental impact, and supporting companies committed to socially responsible initiatives.

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis of Study**

The conceptual framework of this study lies under the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to investigate on those underlying factors that determine university student's engagement in SRC practices. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is the most dominant theory that have been used in predicting human behaviours in the field of social psychology (Dean et al 2011). TPB is originally developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which assumes that humans are usually rational and will systematically make use of the information available to them (Ajzen and Fishbein 1978). According to the TRA a specific behaviour is influenced primarily by attitudes towards a behaviour and subjective norms. This implies that an individual before engaging in a certain action or behaviour will always think about the consequences such behaviours or actions. Prendergast and Tsang (2019) outlined that the TRA was over simplified and highly related to actions that were voluntary by which much of human behaviours may not be voluntary and under control. Moreover, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), specifies that the use of TRA in predicting intentional behaviours is applicable only at specific times and within diverse contexts (Anisman and Kusnecov 2022). This gap in the model led to the inclusion of perceived behavioural control that was added to the TRA to produce the TPB (Palalacios-Gonzalez and Chamorro-Mera 2018). In a study carried out by Cheung et al. (2012) and Ramayah et al. (2012), they mentioned that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural controls are crucial elements that impact consumers' intentions, subsequently influencing their purchasing behaviour. The most power influential determinant of an individual's behaviour is his intentions to perform the behaviour

which is in turn affected by 3 other factors: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Han and Stoel 2016).

The TPB has been extensively used by different authors to explore the predictive capabilities of socially responsible behaviours. These settings include; recycling behaviour (Zhang, Huang, Yin, and Gong, 2015; Poskus, 2015; Park and Ha, 2014; Bezzina and Dimech, 2011; Tonglet, et al., 2004), green marketing (Maichum, Parichatnon, Peng, 2015; Wu and Chen, 2014; Kalafatis et al., 1999), purchasing organic products (Ajzen, 2015; Kim and Chung, 2011; Lodorfos and Dennis, 2008; Arvola et al., 2008), intention to visit green hotels (Chen and Tung, 2014; Han et al., 2010)), energy saving (Pollard, 2015; Lee and Tanusia, 2016), and waste separation (Siti Fadzilah Ayob, Low Sheau-Ting, Rohaya Abdul Jalil, Hon-Choong Chin, 2017; Zhang, Huang, Yin, and Gong, 2015; Li, Zuo, Cai, and Zillante, 2018). (Auger & Devinney, 2007; Carrington et al., 2010; Wei et al., 2017; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). To further confirm the power of the TPB in predicting socially responsible consumption behaviours the theory has been applied in different research areas of consumerism, including ethical consumption, sustainable and green consumption (Auger & Devinney, 2007; Carrington et al., 2010; Wei et al., 2017; Yadav & Pathak, 2016). From their study the TPB was used as a theoretical model to study the effects of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on intentions to engage in the various perspectives of socially responsible consumption behaviours.

### **2.6.1 Factors Influencing Socially Responsible Consumption**

According to the TPB proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), there are three factors that will influence an individual's intention to engage in a particular behaviour: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. These

three variables serve as factors that influence behavioural intentions which in turn predict the actual behaviour (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). Palacios- Gonzalez and Chamorro-Mera (2018) clearly state that, the relationship between these variables (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) and the final behaviour are mediated by the intention to perform the set behaviour. More specifically, TPB is the extension of theory of reasoned action (TRA) which says that behaviour is the product of intention which itself is the result of subjective norm and attitude towards a specific stimulus. TPB is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action TRA. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a person's behaviour is determined by intention to perform the behaviour and the intention is formed by attitudes and subjective norms (Mimiaga et al., 2009). The influential power of subjective norms and attitudes on behavioural intentions have been confirmed in a number of studies (Sheppard et al., 1998). Criticisms of the TRA come from the fact that not all intentions always lead to behaviours, and this led to the development of the TPB (Mimiaga et al., 2009). The TPB is a theory that has been extensively used by researchers (Han and Stoel 2017, Jones et al 2017, Prendergast & Tsang, 2019) in the field of SRC (Petrovskaya 2020). More specifically, TPB is the extension of theory of reasoned action (TRA) which says that behaviour is the product of intention which itself is the result of subjective norm and attitude towards a specific stimulus.

Since this paper aims to investigate the underlying predictive factors that will influence consumers to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviours, it is important to get a close view of how they can influence university students at EMU to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviours. Montano et al., (1997) confirm that the TPB is an important framework that has been proven by previous studies to measure and identify factors that influence behaviours and behavioural intentions (Vermeir and

Verbeke 2007). However, Tanner and Karst (2003) stipulate that personal or contextual factors could alter the predictive power of attitudes on behavioural intentions. To confirm this, Bisonette and Contente (2001) in their studies on organic food consumption revealed that adults are more likely to engage in the purchase of organic and locally produced foodstuffs. In explaining the predictive power of the TPB as a driving factor for consumers to buy from socially responsible companies, Patrovskaya and Haleem (2020) state that 3 behavioural factors come into play; the perceived social pressures of the consumers family and friends to patronize such companies; perceived behavioural control meaning that the consumer should be able to get the right product from information concerning the company corporate social responsible activities; and lastly; the consumer should have a positive attitude in mind that the company is behaving in a socially responsible way.

#### **2.6.1.1 Knowledge and Awareness**

Knowledge and awareness of sustainable consumption behaviours are among the most critical factors that may influence people to engage in ethical consumption behaviours. To confirm this statement Webster (1975) states that the first aspect that must be considered in a socially responsible consumer is that he must be aware of the problems plaguing the environment for example air and river pollution. According to Eryilmaz and Ozkan's (2018) findings, those with a better knowledge of sustainable consumption practices were more likely to engage in sustainable consumption behaviours. Similarly, Sert et al. (2015) discovered that students with a greater level of knowledge regarding topics associated with sustainability were more inclined to engage in sustainable consumption habits. Another crucial element that can impact the adoption of socially responsible consumption behaviours is knowledge. Consumers are more likely to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviours if they are

aware of environmental and social challenges. The purchasing decisions of consumers can be influenced by information on the environmental impact of products, worker working conditions, and the social and economic ramifications of items (Hartmann and Ibanez, 2010).

Maniatis (2016) addresses the lack of comprehensive structural constructs that define the interactions between various indicators of consumer knowledge, commitment, and general awareness regarding green products and their overall green consciousness when making purchasing decisions. The study investigates the influence of consumers' knowledge, commitment, and general awareness on their green consciousness in relation to buying green products. The research involved surveying consumers who visited four shopping malls in Athens and selected green food products, using a self-assessment card. The collected data from 253 respondents was analysed using techniques such as Principal Component Analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. The research resulted in the development of a structural construct that demonstrates the impact of 15 indicators reflecting consumers' knowledge, commitment, and general awareness of green products on four dimensions of their green consciousness: environmental benefits, economic benefits, green reliability, and green appearance. The construct categorizes the indicators into general awareness, knowledge, and commitment of consumers and elucidates their interactions with the four dimensions of consciousness. It provides insights into how consumers utilize their awareness, knowledge, and commitment to green products to shape their overall consciousness about the environmental and economic benefits, reliability, and appearance of green products when making purchasing decisions.

*H1*: University student's awareness and knowledge about environmental sustainability will influence their intentions to engage in SRC behaviours.

### **2.6.1.2 Attitudes**

Among the four predictive variables that influence behaviours attitude is the most influential Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). To confirm this view, Justin et al (2015) claimed that consumer attitudes are among the most relevant predictors of sustainable behavioural intentions (Jordana Soares de Lira and Marconi Freitas da Costa, 2021). The Oxford English dictionary defines attitude as the way in which a person views and evaluates something or someone and it determines an individual's like or dislike for an object or an entity (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10>). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitude refers to a person's belief or opinion regarding a particular behaviour or act. They proposed beliefs can be positive or negative and can be shaped through observations, inference and life experiences (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). For Ajzen (2015), an individual is likely to engage in a behaviour if he or she has a favourable attitude towards the object. In a study carried out on environmental conservation, Paswan, Guzmán and Lewin (2017) discovered that people's environmental beliefs and attitudes tend to be strongly linked to their pro-environmental behaviours (Prendergast and Tsang 2019).

Previous studies have found that student's attitudes towards socially responsible behaviour are significant predictors of their intention to adopt such behaviour. Similarly, Lee and Han (2019) found that students' positive attitudes towards eco-friendly products and environmental protection positively influence their intentions to engage in sustainable consumption. Baumann et al. (2015) in their studies found that students who had a favourable or positive attitude towards sustainable consumption will likely adopt such behaviours. Additionally, Khechine, De-Marcilly, and Kadri-

Mehrezi (2020) showed that students are more likely to adopt sustainable consumption habits if they have a good opinion toward ethical products. The attitudes students have toward ethical consumerism significantly affect their intentions and conduct. For Ajzen 2015 an individual is likely to engage in a behaviour if he or she has a favourable attitude towards the object.

*H2: University students' attitude influences the intention of the students.*

### **2.6.1.3 Subjective Norms**

Another factor that influences intentions to behave in a specific manner is subjective norms. Ajzen and Fishbein (1991) define this variable as the degree of social pressure felt by an individual with regard to behaviour or an individual's feelings of social pressure from other people or groups (Ajzen 1991). Screen et al. (2018) relate the term to social pressures that empower individuals to perform or adopt certain behaviours (Bhutto et al. 2019). According to Bratt (1999), consumers when uncertain about adopting specific behaviours, will seek support and advice from friends, family members, or relatives (Mimiaga et al 2009). Subjective norms constitute a person's beliefs that specific individuals or groups, friends think he or she should or should not perform the behaviour (S. Sutton, 2001). Chen and Tung (2013) declare that previous studies done by researchers (Han et al., 2010; Taylor and Todd, 1995; Tonglet et al., 2004) have confirmed there is a positive relationship between subjective norms and behavioural intentions. This implies that the more positive subjective norms people have, the stronger the intention to act (Chen and Tung 2013).

Similarly, Suki and Suki (2019) state that subjective norms directly influence the attitudes of individuals due to the fact that people tend to highly value the opinions of their families and others. In investigating the relationship that exists between

subjective norms and behavioural intentions, Taylor and Todd (1995) and a host of other researchers confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the two variables (Chen and Tung 2013). It is assumed that consumers' intentions to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviours will be strong if there are great expectations from their families and friends to engage in such behaviours (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). In other words, if an individual's family and friends consist of people who support socially responsible consumption behaviours, there is a tendency for the individual in question to have a strong intention to adopt socially responsible consumption behaviours (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). Adding to this view, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) explain that there are situations in which the views of an individual's family might be more influential than those of his professors or friends.

While investigating the predictive power of the TPB on influencing behaviours it is important to understand the relative power of each variable. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) tried to do this by examining the relative power of attitudes and subjective norms and found that both variables have equal importance but their relative power on influencing behaviours might differ according to the behaviour in question. Subsequent studies carried out by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975); Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) demonstrate how different situational variables such as personal characteristics and external variables such as demographics can affect the importance of attitudes and subjective norms on influencing behavioural intentions (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). To demonstrate how subjective norms positively affects behavioural intentions Han et al., (2009) cited a number of studies (Baker et al., 2007; Cheng et al., 2006; Conner & Abraham, 2001; Taylor & Todd, 1995) to confirm his view.

In the context of this study, University student's intentions towards the practice of socially responsible consumption can be influenced by their respective family members, friends and professors. To confirm, Baumann et al., 2015 discovered that the influence of peers and family members has a beneficial effect on students' attitudes and behaviours concerning sustainable consumption. With this in mind, we will develop the second hypothesis of our research study.

*H3*; Subjective norms will influence the intention of university students.

#### **2.6.1.4 Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)**

Perceived behavioural control is an important variable in the TPB together with subjective norms and attitudes that help determine behavioural intentions. Hosta and Zebkar (2021) mentions that PBC is the last variable to be added to TPB and presents the main distinctive factor from the TRA. Ajzen (2005) describes this variable as an individual's belief of how difficult or easy it would be to practice a particular behaviour (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). Han et al. (2009) explain that perceived behavioural control measures an individual's perception of their ability to control the factors that could either enable or hinder the actions required to address a particular situation. A person's perceived behavioural control is determined by his or her general attitude through specific control beliefs (Yang et al., 2018). Ajzen (1991) confirms the predictive power of PBC on behaviours by stating that a person's behaviour is highly influenced by his or her ability to perform the given behaviour. Ajzen (1991) further states that, PBC and intentions function together to influence the performance of a behaviour. Bandura et al., (1980) noted that an individual's ability is measured by the level of his confidence for the performance of the said behaviour. Therefore, if an individual feels the absence of resources or opportunity to perform a behaviour, it will be as a barrier to form strong intentions to engage in adopting such a behaviour

(Vermeir and Verbeke 2007). Ajzen (2005) confirms this by mentioning that people's actions can be interfered or facilitated by the presence of external factors such as resources and opportunities. This implies that an individual's perception of the presence of such factors can influence his or her intentions to practice a particular behaviour (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). In justifying the inclusion of PBC and its predictive power on influencing behavioural intentions, Hameed et al. (2019) mentions that an individual's belief about h/her incapability of executing a behaviour due to lack of required skills is unlikely to have a strong behaviour despite the effectiveness of the other variables in the TPB model (Hameed et al., 2019).

A host of studies have proven the predictive power of PBC on influencing behaviours linked to the concept SRC (organic foods (Tarkiainen and Sundqvist 2005); recycling (Taylor and Todd 1995); green products in general (Moser 2015); and conservation (Albayrak et al. 2013) Hamid et al., (2019). Previous research has been conducted indicating the predictive power of PBC in influencing intentional behaviours towards socially responsible consumption practices. Baumann (2015) found that students who feel they have control if to or not to adopt socially responsible consumption behaviours are more likely to adopt such behaviours. Sparks and Shepherd (1992) conducted a study on the consumption of organic vegetables and found out that perceived behavioural control is significant predictor of intentional behaviours to the consumption of organic vegetables. Taylor and Todd (1995) on their studies confirm that attitudes together with PBC were positively related to an individual's recycling and composition intentions (Oreg and Katz- Gerro 2006). Also, Cheung et al., (1999) in their findings still on recycling behaviours postulated that PBC, attitudes, and subjective norms jointly predict intentions to recycle wastepaper which then leads to

the actual recycling behaviour (Oreg and Katz- Gerro 2006). From this notion, the third hypothesis for this study is generated.

*H4: Perceived behavioural control will influence the intentions of university students.*

#### **2.6.1.5 Obligations**

Obligations otherwise known as moral obligations or perceived moral obligations refers to the ethical duties and responsibilities that an individual feels compelled to fulfil based on his or her internalized sense of right and wrong. It is a feeling from a person to perform or abstain from certain actions (De Groot and Steg 2009). Moral obligations direct a person's behaviour in ways that are consistent with what is believed to be morally right and acceptable. To explain the influential power of obligations on intentional behaviours, the Norm Activation Model (NAM) will be used. The model posits three variables that influences consumer intentions and behaviours which include knowledge of unfavourable consequences, accountability for those consequences, and devotion to personal norms (Savari et al., 2023). Among the variables that constitute the NAM, personal norms are the most influential factor that determines prosocial behaviours (Manosuthi et al., 2020). According to Razaee et al., (2019) an individual will feel a personal moral obligation to perform a behaviour when he or she is aware of the adverse effects of doing so for others and feel personal responsibility as a result of the consequences which in turn has a direct impact on people's intention (Shin et al., 2018). Personal norms when joined with the TPB gives a higher predictive power in reducing the gaps between intentions and behaviours. This has been proven in various joint analysis for example Shin et al. (2019) fused the two theories and tested it to investigate the predictive power of TPB and personal norms in influencing intentions to consume organic food that was to be featured in restaurant dishes and the results indicated a positive relationship (Zang et al., 2022). The success

of NAM in explaining behaviours related to SRC practices have been proven by a host of authors such as Bamberg et al., 2007; Matthies et al., 2012; Onwezen et al., 2013; and Zhang et al., 2013 just to name a few. However, Heesup Han (2014) argues that it remains unclear how critical elements of the NAM framework relate to one another. This uncertainty is mainly due to the conflicting interpretations of the framework that academics have made in the past. The literature above will lead to the last hypothesis of the study which goes as follows;

*H5: University student's moral obligations will influence their intentions to adopt sustainable and ethical practices.*

#### **2.6.1.6 Intentions and Behaviours**

Intentions according to Ajzen (1991) refers to a person's readiness to behave in a certain way and it is the central factor in the (TPB). Bird (1998) defines intentions as the state of mind directing a person's attention and action towards a certain object or behaviour. Another definition by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) relates behavioural intentions as the likelihood of an individual to engage in a behaviour of interest. Intentions is a good predictor of behaviour and functions as mediating variable to the impact of attitudes and subjective norms to the given behaviour (Liobikiene et al., 2016). Ajzen (1991 p. 181) further emphasizes that 'Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour and that they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, or how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behaviour' (Falcao and Roseira 2022). According TPB, intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC (Patel et al., 2012). Some researchers (Ajzen and Madden 1986; Pointer 2000; Smith et al., 2008) have confirmed the predictive power of intentions on behaviours in certain domains, others (Bray et al., 2011; Barber et al., 2014; Steg et al., 2014; De Canniere et al. 2009) have

criticized this view by stating that consumers ethical intentions do not always lead to purchasing behaviours (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). This gap in behaviours is often termed the intention- behaviour gap and it exist as a result of inconveniences such as money and previous experiences (Prendergast and Tsang 2019). As a remedy to this gap, Newholm and Shaw (2007) proposed that the models and methods used to explain how behavioural intentions lead to actual behaviours should be refined and fine-tuned by which more recent psychology models are trying to do so (Myriam and Ertz, 2016). In the same line, Devinney et al. (2006) use the case of consumer ethical purchasing behaviours and specified that for consumer purchasing intentions to translate to actual ethical purchasing the antecedent variables (attitudes, subjective norms and PBC) together with other instrumental variables such as money, time and convenience must be evaluated (Prendergast and Tsang 2019).

With the general idea in mind that if an individual as a consumer has the intention to engage in SRC behaviours, it will be highly probable that he/she tries to practice the behaviour. This notion in mind has led to the build-up of the last hypothesis of this study.

*H6: University student's intentions to engage in SRC behaviours will influence their actual behaviours.*

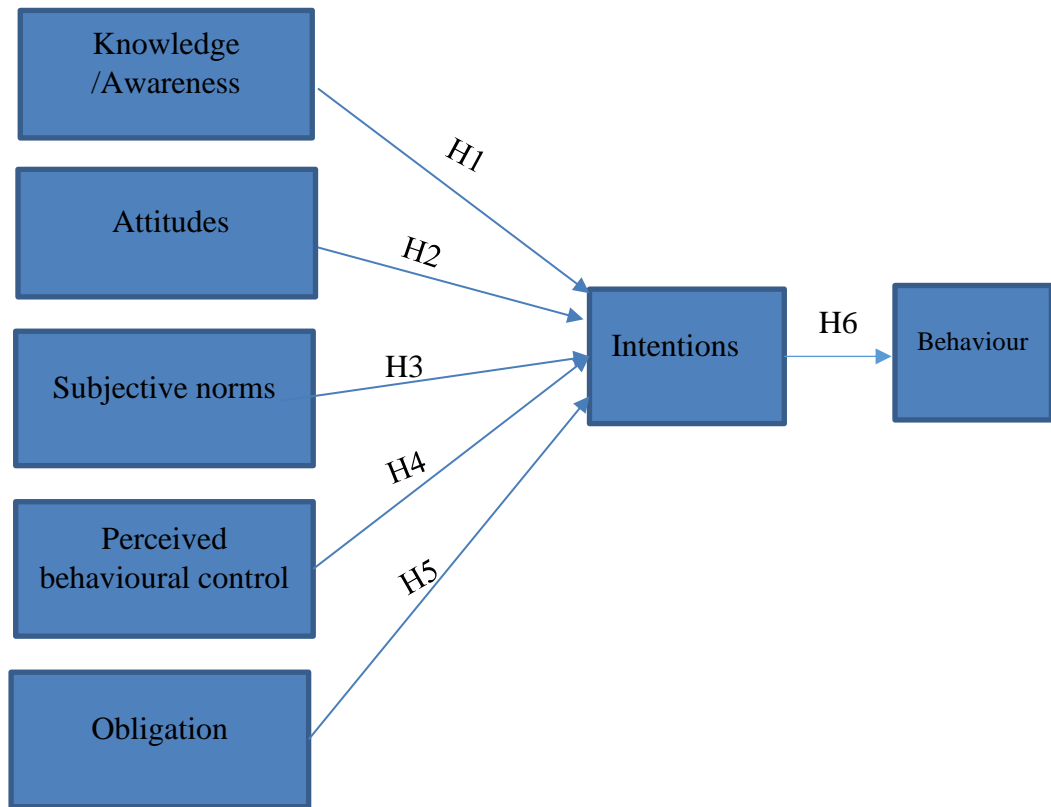


Figure 1: Illustration of Hypothesis used in the Study.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the description of the research design to be use, the research question, the sample design, the instruments used, the procedures and the treatment of data.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

For this research, a deductive research approach would be adopted. A deductive research approach involves the development of a hypothesis or a hypothesized theory, and seeking to test it, to prove its accuracy (Saunders et al., 2016). Data would be collected to examine the underlying psychological factors that influence university students' consumption behaviours and investigate their level of engagement to socially responsible consumption behaviours.

A quantitative research method will be adopted for this research because it enables a researcher to examine the relationship between variables, and also to measure and analyse these variables numerically using statistical and graphical techniques (Saunders et al., 2016).

The research strategy to be adopted in this study is the survey technique, because it enables a researcher to collect data from a sizable population in the most efficient way possible (Saunders et al., 2016).

## 3.2 Research Questions

This study was instituted to seek out the answers to the following questions;

- Do university student's knowledge and awareness about issues related to sustainability influence their intentions to engage in SRC behaviours?
- Do university students' attitudes, influence their intention to adopt socially responsible consumption?
- Do subjective norms and standards influence the intentions of university students to adopt socially responsible consumption?
- Does the perceived behavioural control of university students influence their intention to adopt socially responsible consumption?
- Do university students' obligations impact their intentions to adopt SRC behaviours?
- Do the intentions of university students to engage in SRC behaviour influence their actual behaviours?

This study aims to analyse the concept and perception of socially responsible consumption among university students attending Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). SRC refers to the conscious and ethical decision-making process individuals undertake when purchasing goods and services, taking into consideration the social, environmental, and economic impacts associated with their consumption choices. The study specifically focuses on students in EMU to gain insights into the awareness and perception of this demographic group, which represents a significant segment of the university community. By understanding their perspectives, it will be possible to develop strategies to promote sustainable consumption patterns among young consumers.

### **3.3 Data Collection Procedure**

The data for this study were collected through an online questionnaire, which would be administered through online outlets such as email, social media (WhatsApp, Teams, Telegram etc.), and respondents could fill it online. Clear instructions were provided, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the confidentiality of responses. A reasonable deadline was set for the completion of the survey to encourage timely submission.

This study is targeted at the students at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) Famagusta, which consists of over 16,000 diverse population of students, majorly considered to be 18 years and above. According to Saunders et al., (2016), a sample size of 370 – 1050 respondents should be targeted to ensure 3-5% margin of error.

The convenient sampling technique was used for the data collection process. This process involves sharing the link to the online questionnaire to as many students are within reach.

Data was collected through a self-structured questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice and Likert scale questions, designed to measure various aspects of awareness, attitudes, and behaviours related to socially responsible consumption. The questionnaire was pretested with a small group of students to ensure clarity and validity. Following the pre-test, necessary adjustments will be made to enhance the questionnaire's reliability.

Ethical considerations will be prioritized throughout the study. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, clearly stating the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, and anonymity of responses. The data collected will be treated with strict confidentiality, and only aggregated data will be reported to ensure individual privacy. The study will also comply with ethical guidelines set by the university's research ethics committee and adhere to relevant data protection regulations.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data collected would be analysed using IBM SPSS software. The analysis carried out would include;

- Descriptive analysis – this is aimed at describing the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as the respondents' age, gender, level of study, field of study, and personal income level.
- Reliability analysis – this is aimed at determining the reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire questions or scales. This test is also known as the Cronbach's alpha.
- Correlation analysis – This test is done to determine the relationship between two variables in a test. This analysis will help to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationship between 2 variables.
- Regression analysis – this test is done to determine the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. This test will help to determine the degree of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by changes in the independent variable.

## **Chapter 4**

# **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The data for this study was obtained through an online questionnaire. The analysis of the data was carried out using IBM SPSS software. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics method to indicate the respondents' demographic characteristics. Other tests such as Regression and Correlation tests were carried out to test the hypothesis of the study.

### **4.2 Descriptive Analysis**

The number of respondents that filled out the questionnaire was 140 respondents. The descriptive statistics measured the frequency and percentage of the gender, age, and marital status, field of study, level of study and personal income levels of the respondents.

Table 1: Distribution Sample

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	Male	76	54.3
	Female	61	43.6
Age	18-22	54	38.6
	23-27	52	37.1
	28-32	16	11.4
	33 and above	18	12.9
Marital status	Single	124	88.6
	Married	16	11.4
Field of Study	Arts and Sciences	13	9.3
	Engineering & technology	46	32.9
	Business & Management	39	27.9
	Medical sciences	24	17.1
	Other	18	12.9
Level of Study	Prep school	2	1.4
	Bachelors	81	57.9
	Masters	40	28.6
	Doctoral	13	9.3
	Others	4	2.9
Personal Income	Less than 300\$	88	62.9
	301\$-900\$	42	30.0
	901\$-1800\$	2	1.4
	1801\$-2400\$	1	0.7
	More than 2400 \$	6	4.3

Out of a total of 140 participants of the survey, 137 respondents indicated their respective genders. The make-up is 76 male and 61 female representing a percentage of 54.3 and 43.6 percent respectively.

The sample included participants who are aged 18 and above, of which 54 out of 140 respondents (38.6 percent) were aged between 18-22; 52 out of 140 respondents (37.1 percent) were between the ages of 23-27; 16 out of 140 respondents (11.4 percent) were between the ages of 28-32; and 18 out of 140 respondents (12.9 percent) were 33 years and above.

Out of a total of 140 respondents, 124 respondents (88.6%) were single, while 16 respondents (11.4%) were married.

The field of study of the 140 respondents were 13 from Arts and Sciences (9.3%), 46 from Engineering and Technology (32.9%), 39 from Business and Management (27.9%), 24 from Medical Science (17.1%), and 18 respondents from other fields of study not mentioned in the survey (12.9%).

Based on the education level, 2 out of 140 respondents (1.4%) were in prep school, 81 respondents (57.9%) were bachelor's students, 40 respondents (28.6%) were masters students, 13 respondents (9.3%) were doctoral students, and 4 respondents (2.9%) have a level of education not stated in the study.

Out of 140 respondents, 139 indicated their personal income level. 88 respondents (62.9%) earn between 0-300 USD, 42 respondents (30%) earn between 301-900USD, 2 respondents (1.4%) earn between 901-1800USD, 1 respondent (0.7%) earn between 1801-2400USD, and 6 respondents out 139 (4.3%) earn more than 2400USD.

## **4.2 Reliability Analysis**

The reliability analysis measured the level of internal consistency or reliability of the questionnaire, to determine how well the questions (or scales) in the questionnaire

measures the research concept. The Cronbach alpha is one of the statistical tools used in this measurement. Table 2 indicates that the total of the 45 items (questions or scales in the questionnaire), have a reliability of 0.921. This shows that the constructs used in the study is highly reliable given that the Cronbach alpha of 0.912 is higher than the benchmark of 0.60.

Breaking down the questionnaire based on the sections in the questionnaires, the reliability analysis of each section is as follows:

Table 2: Reliability analysis of the sections

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
Moral obligation (O)	0.566	5
Subjective norms (SN)	0.727	4
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	0.802	6
Awareness/Knowledge (AK)	0.788	5
Intentions	0.783	4
SRC	0.835	21

The moral obligation section had 5 questions (or items) in the survey. With a Cronbach alpha of 0.566, which is lower than 0.60, indications suggests that the scales in the section does not effectively measure the underlying concept. The subjective norms section had 4 items, with a reliability score of 0.727 which indicates high reliability of the scales in that section of the study.

The perceived behavioural control section had 6 items, with a reliability score of 0.802 which indicates a high reliability of the scales in that section of the study. The

awareness or knowledge section had 5 items, with a reliability score of 0.788 which indicates a high reliability of the scales in that section of the study.

The Intentions section had 4 items, with a reliability score of 0.783 which indicates high a reliability of the scales in that section of the study. The SRC section had 21 items, with a reliability score of 0.835 which indicates a high reliability of the scales in that section of the study.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis is a statistical process used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables measured on an interval scale. Any score between 0.5 and 1 indicates a significant relationship between the variables in question. The direction of this relationship could be positive or negative. A positive relationship is indicated by a positive sign on the coefficient, while a negative relationship is characterized by a negative sign on the coefficient. A score of 0 indicates there is no relationship between the 2 variables.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

	A/K	AT	MO	PBC	SN	INT	SRC
A/K	1						
AT	.080	1					
MO	.359**	.181*	1				
PBC	.574**	.077	.592**	1			
SN	.379**	.136	.415**	.459**	1	.476**	.451**
INT	.515**	-.009	.427**	.681**		1	
SRC	.387**	.321**	.446**	.554**		.508**	1

\*\*p<0.01; \*p<0.05.  
A/K= Awareness/Knowledge; AT= Attitude; MO= Moral Obligation; INT= Intentions; PBC= Perceived Behavioural Control; SRC= Socially Responsible Consumption behaviour; SN= Subjective Norms

Based on the correlation table, it can be concluded that moral obligation, subjective norms, awareness/knowledge, perceived behavioural control have a positive correlation with intentions. The relationship between these variables and intentions to behave socially responsible was investigated by using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. It is clearly seen that there is a strong and positive correlation between, awareness/knowledge, moral obligation, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and intentions to behave socially responsible. Respectively,  $r=.62$ ,  $r=.43$ ,  $r=.48$ ,  $r=.68$  at  $p < .01$  which indicate high level association between the variables. However, there is no correlation between attitudes towards socially responsible behaviour and intentions. There is also a strong and positive correlation between, awareness/knowledge, moral obligation, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, intentions to behave socially responsible and socially responsible behaviour. The values are respectively  $r= .39$ ,  $r= .45$ ,  $r= .32$ ,  $r= .45$ ,  $r= .55$ , and  $r= .50$  at  $p < .05$  level.

#### **4.4 Regression Analysis**

Regression (R-square) is a statistical method used to determine the effects of more than one independent variable on a dependent variable. In a regression analysis, there usually is the R-square and adjusted R-square values. Because there is more than one independent variable in this study, the adjusted R-square value is used.

This model includes the independent variables (awareness/knowledge, moral obligation, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) and the dependent variable (Socially responsible behaviour intentions).

The adjusted r figure of 0.551 indicates that 55.1% of the changes in Intentions to engage in SRC behaviours could be explained by the attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, awareness/knowledge and obligation.

The beta ( $\beta$ ) value of the standardized coefficients table indicates to what degree each independent variable influences the dependent variable. There is a significant and negative relationship between attitude (waste of time) and intentions to engage in SRC behaviour such that a 1% increase in attitude would lead to 0.091% decrease in intention to engage in SRC behaviour at a 0.1 significant level ( $\beta = -0.091$ ,  $p = 0.063$ ).

There is a significant and positive relationship between subjective norm and intentions engage in SRC behaviour, such that a 1% increase in in subjective norm would lead to 0.173% increase in intention engage in SRC behaviour at a 0.01 significant level ( $\beta = 0.173$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived behaviour control and intentions engage in SRC behaviour such that a 1% increase in in subjective norm would lead to 0.426% increase in intention engage in SRC behaviour at a 0.01 significant level ( $\beta = 0.173$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Results Socially responsible behaviour intentions”

<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T-Values</b>	<b>Sig. (P-Values)</b>
Constant	868	453		-1.875	.063
Awareness/knowledge	.346	.079	.310	4.409	.000
Attitude	-.215	.137	-.091	-1.567	.119
Moral obligation	.010	.089	-.008	.111	.912
Perceived behavioural control	.446	.086	.426	5.197	.000
Adjusted R Square=.551		F= 35.123		P < .001	

- a. Dependent variable: Intention
- b. Independent variable: Awareness/Knowledge, Attitude, Moral Obligation, Perceived behavioural control.

There is a significant and positive relationship between awareness/knowledge of SRC behaviour and intentions engage in SRC behaviour such that a 1% increase in awareness/knowledge would lead to 0.310% increase in intention engage in SRC behaviour at a 0.01 significant level ( $\beta = 0.173$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). There is also a positive relationship between obligation to engage in SRC behaviour and intentions to engage in SRC behaviour such that a 0.08% increase in obligation would lead to 0.08% increase in intention to engage in SRC behaviour, although this relationship is not significant at 0.1 significant level ( $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $p = 0.912$ ).

Table 5: Regression Analysis Results Socially responsible behaviour intentions”

<b>Model</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T-Values</b>	<b>Sig. (P-Values)</b>
Constant	2.150	.165		13.027	.000
Intentions	.318	.046	.508	6.932	.000

Adjusted R Square=.258                      F= 48.049                      P < .001

- a. Dependent variable: Socially Responsible Consumption behaviour (SRC)
- b. Independent variable: Intention

Another regression analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between independent variable Intentions to engage in SRC behaviour and dependent variable SRC. Because there is only one independent variable in this analysis, the R-square value is used. With a R-square value of 0.258, this indicates that 25.8% changes in the dependent variable (SRC) is explained by the independent variable (intentions).

Also, analysing the standardized coefficients indicates that there is a significant and positive relationship between exhibiting SRC behaviours and intention to engage in SRC behaviour, such that a 1% increase in intention would lead to 0.508 increase in SRC at 0.01 significant level ( $\beta = 0.508, p < 0.01$ ).

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research set out to analyse the underlying psychological factors that affect the consumption behaviours of university students, and to investigate their level of engagement to socially responsible consumption behaviours. This analysis would help administrators and advocates to understand these factors and enable them to develop adequate strategies to improve the chances of motivating students to adopt responsible consumption behaviours.

To successfully conduct this analysis, 6 hypotheses were formulated and tested through a survey. The response from this survey was analysed using statistical methods, and the subsequent conclusions were reached.

The first hypothesis considered was “Awareness or knowledge will influence the intention of the students”. Based on the correlation analysis, there is a strong correlation between awareness or knowledge of SRC behaviours and the intention to adopt SRC behaviours. The regression analysis also supports this hypothesis, such that an increase in the awareness/knowledge of SRC behaviour will lead to an increase in the intention to adopt SRC behaviours. Hence this hypothesis was accepted.

Another hypothesis tested was “University students’ attitude influences the intention of the students”. This hypothesis was accepted because the correlation and regression

analysis indicated that the relationship between attitude and intention to engage in SRC behaviour although weak was significant and negative. The negative relationship means that an increase in the attitude (or belief that SRC is a waste of time) would lead to a decrease in the student's intention to engage in SRC behaviour. The regression analysis shows a much stronger relationship between the two variables.

The third hypothesis considered was "Subjective norms will influence the intention of the students". The data analysis indicates that subjective norms moderately correlate with the intentions to adopt SRC behaviours. This relationship is positive and significant at conventional significance levels, such that an increase in the subjective norms, moderately increases the intentions to engage in socially responsible consumption (SRC) behaviours. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

The fourth hypothesis tested was "Perceived behavioural control (PBC) will influence the intention of the students". This hypothesis was accepted because the correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between PBC and the intention to engage in SRC behaviours. This result was further supported by the regression analysis which also indicated that an increase in a student's perceived behavioural control, would lead to a marked increase in the intention to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviours.

The fifth hypothesis tested was "obligation will influence the intention of the students". This hypothesis was rejected because the regression analysis indicates a weak positive relationship between obligation and intention to engage in SRC, and the result is not significant at the conventional significant levels (1%, 5%, and 10%). This

means that although there is a correlation between the obligation and intention to engage in SRC, this relationship may not be conclusively considered as causative.

The last hypothesis tested was “intentions will influence the behaviour of the students”. This hypothesis was accepted because the data analysis indicates that there is a moderate and positive correlation between the intention to engage in socially responsible consumption behaviour and actually exhibiting these behaviours. The regression analysis also indicates that an increase in the intention to engage in SRC behaviours would increase the exhibition of SRC behaviours markedly.

### **5.1 Managerial implication**

This study intended to determine how the independent variables obligation to engage in Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC), subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, awareness/knowledge of SRC behaviours and attitude, affect the intention to adopt socially responsible consumption behaviours.

The study results indicate that awareness/knowledge about SRC behaviours, attitudes towards SRC, subject norms around SRC, and perceived behavioural control, would influence the intentions of students to adopt socially responsible consumption behaviours. This implies that managers, teachers, business people, or campaigners in favour of the adoption and propagation of socially responsible consumption (SRC) behaviours should endeavour to create awareness on the benefits of socially responsible consumption behaviours, and consequences of not adopting these behaviours. In so doing, they would increase the chances of students adopting SRC behaviours.

Also, if students thought or believed that adopting SRC behaviours was a waste of their time, this their intention to adopting SRC behaviours would reduce. Hence implies that the conveners and promoter of SRC should consider the framing of the campaigns to highlighting more of the benefits of adopting SRC.

Managers, conveners and campaigners in favour of adopting SRC behaviours should also understand that obligation does not increase the adoption of SRC behaviours, and such should not adopt any method of interaction is deemed to inhibit an individuals perceived behavioural control. The study indicates that an increase in a student's perceived behavioural control would lead to an increase in their intention to adopting SRC behaviours.

## **5.2 Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations to this study is that 140 respondents participated in the study. Increasing the number of participants would greatly increase the accuracy of the result. Future research may consider reaching as much as 375 respondents at 5% margin of error or at least 964 respondents at 3% margin of error.

Another limitation to this study is that the statistical methods used were only reliability, correlation and regression analysis. Subsequent research may consider other statistical test methods such as ANOVA, T-tests or factor analysis, to further analyse the relationship between the variables.

## **5.3 Further Research**

The regression analysis in this study indicated that 55.1% of the changes in the independent variables which are obligation, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, awareness or knowledge, and attitude influences the intention of students to

adopting and/or exhibiting socially responsible consumption behaviours. This score is quite moderate, as it indicates that considerable 44.9% of the changes in the intention of students to adopt SRC behaviours is not explained or moderated by the independent variables considered in this study.

Subsequent research must consider other variables that might influence the intentions of students to adopt socially responsible behaviours, or any behaviour at all.

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## **APPENDIX**

## Appendix A : Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

The following survey was prepared by James Asang Moma (Business Administration Department) as part of a study conducted for the Eastern Mediterranean University. The purpose of this survey is to analyse socially responsible consumption among Eastern Mediterranean University students. The results of this survey are strictly for a research basis and will remain confidential. There is no right or wrong answer, only your personal information matters. Please fill out the survey to the best of your knowledge.

### Demographics

#### Q.1 Gender

1	Male	2	Female
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Q2. What's your age? .....

Q.3. What's your marital status?

1	Single	2	Married
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Q.4. What is your monthly personal allowance?

1	0USD to 300USD	3	901USD to 1800 USD	5	Above 2400USD
2	301USD to 900USD	4	1801USD to 2400USD		

**Q.5.What is your field of study**

	Business and Management
	Engineering and Technology
	Humanities and Social sciences
	Natural sciences
	Other

<b>OBLIGATION</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel a strong personal obligation to recycle a large proportion of my household's recyclables	1	2	3	4	5
I would feel guilty if I didn't recycle regularly my household's recyclables	1	2	3	4	5
I consider that household waste separation should be compulsory by law	1	2	3	4	5
I am willing to go blocks out of my way to recycle household materials regularly	1	2	3	4	5
For me, recycling is just a matter of money: I wouldn't recycle material	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Subjective norms</b>					
Most people who are important to me think that I should purchase and use products that do not harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
People that mean a lot to me think that I should buy from socially responsible companies as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
My family thinks that I should walk or take public transport instead of driving to reduce pollution	1	2	3	4	5

My friends think that should try to reduce my waste	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Perceived behavioural control</b>					
I am certain that I will buy from socially responsible companies as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
I am sure that will walk or take public transport instead of driving to reduce pollution	1	2	3	4	5
I will try to recycle my waste	1	2	3	4	5
I am certain that I will buy the environment-friendly product	1	2	3	4	5
It is mostly up to me whether or not I buy from socially responsible companies	1	2	3	4	5
It is certainly under my control to recycle my waste.	1	2	3	4	5

**Q7. How much do you know about the following social issues?**

<b>Awareness/Knowledge</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The reason for climate change	1	2	3	4	5
The consequences of wasting natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
The laws and regulations related to protecting the environment and natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
The social responsibilities of businesses	1	2	3	4	5
Effects of the Use of the Products that you buy on the Environment and Consumers	1	2	3	4	5

**Q8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

<b>Intentions</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I plan to buy from socially responsible companies as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
I expect to walk or take public transport instead of driving to reduce pollution	1	2	3	4	5
I want to try to recycle my waste	1	2	3	4	5
I intend to buy environment-friendly products	1	2	3	4	5

<b>To what extent do you undertake the following activities?</b>	Not at all	Few times	Sometimes	Often	All the time
1-I buy and use energy-efficient light bulbs	1	2	3	4	5
2-I buy energy-efficient household appliances	1	2	3	4	5
3-I try very hard to reduce my water consumption	1	2	3	4	5
4-I always put limits on my way energy use, such as natural gas and electricity to reduce their harmful impacts on the environment	1	2	3	4	5
5-I recycle paper/cardboard	1	2	3	4	5
6-I recycle plastic containers	1	2	3	4	5
7-I purchase paper products from recycled paper	1	2	3	4	5
8-I recycle aluminium/steel/tin cans	1	2	3	4	5
9-I wouldn't bother about recycling®	1	2	3	4	5
10-I use non-polluting laundry detergents while washing my clothes	1	2	3	4	5
11-I refrain from buying a product using excessive package	1	2	3	4	5
12-I walk, ride a bicycle or take a bus to reduce air pollution	1	2	3	4	5

13-I carry my shopping bag with me instead of getting plastic ones in the shops when I go shopping.	1	2	3	4	5
14-I drive my car everywhere I go since pollution is not personally affecting my life.	1	2	3	4	5
15-I do not buy products from companies that discriminate against minorities such as women and disabled individuals	1	2	3	4	5
16-I do not buy from companies that engage in child labour.	1	2	3	4	5
17-I have attempted to buy from companies that help the needy people	1	2	3	4	5
18-I try to buy from companies that support societal causes with their donations	1	2	3	4	5
19-I reduce my purchasing to what I need	1	2	3	4	5
20-In a general manner, I reduce my consumption	1	2	3	4	5
21-It is impossible for me to reduce my consumption.	1	2	3	4	5

How do you rate each of the following values as a **GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN YOUR LIFE?**

**Q9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

Overall, I consider socially responsible consumption and living as

<b>Attitude</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
<b>A waste of time</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Useful</b>
<b>Not rewarding</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Rewarding</b>
<b>Not responsible</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Responsible</b>
<b>Not sensible</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Sensible</b>
<b>Not self-satisfying</b>	1	2	3	4	5	<b>Self-satisfying</b>

THANKS.