

Exploring the Dynamics among Eco-friendly Vehicles, Sustainability, and Consumer Purchasing Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of sustainability perceptions of environmentally friendly vehicles on individuals' purchasing decisions using a quantitative research methodology. Data were collected through a survey conducted in Turkey in May and June 2025, yielding 419 valid responses. The survey comprised four sections: demographic information, Sustainability Awareness Scale, Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale, and Purchase Behavior Scale. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) indicated that the sustainability awareness and sustainable consumption behavior scales were not statistically suitable. Consequently, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted, resulting in a revised one-dimensional "Sustainability Scale" and a 15-item Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale with three subdimensions: "Sustainable Awareness," "Saving," and "Reuse." Path analysis, performed through structural equation modeling, examined the relationships between these variables. The analysis revealed that sustainability awareness significantly influences all dimensions of purchasing behavior, while the reuse dimension of sustainable consumption behavior impacts all subdimensions of purchasing behavior. However, the savings dimension only affects word-of-mouth communication, while environmental awareness only affects the willingness to pay more. The study's findings contribute to understanding how sustainability perceptions shape consumer behavior, offering insights for marketing strategies aimed at promoting environmentally friendly vehicles.

Keywords: Eco-Friendly Vehicles, Sustainability Perception, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing Decision

JEL Classifications: M31, D12, Q56, Q53

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing focus on sustainability and maintenance and care measures in recent years has significantly affected consumer spending and market conditions. This trend is particularly evident in the passenger car market, where there has been a significant shift towards environmentally friendly vehicles. These vehicles, including electric, hybrid and other low-emission models, represent a fundamental part of sustainable transportation solutions (Egbue and Long, 2012). Understanding the dynamics between sustainability awareness and economic purchasing opportunities is crucial for academics and industry stakeholders who aim to effectively promote accessible, environmentally friendly products (Bohnsack et al., 2014). As a result, interest in this area has increased significantly.

This study aims to explore the complex relationships between sustainability consciousness, sustainable consumption behavior perception, and consumer purchasing behavior toward eco-friendly vehicles. The primary objectives are to investigate the impact of sustainability consciousness on the purchasing behavior of consumers who prefer eco-friendly vehicles, to analyze how different dimensions of sustainable consumption behavior—such as saving, reuse, and environmental awareness—affect consumer decisions, to compare the findings with previous research to highlight consistencies and inconsistencies, and to provide actionable insights and recommendations for brands producing eco-friendly vehicles to increase consumer engagement and loyalty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

When purchasing a product or service, if consumers become aware of their environmental footprint, their purchasing preferences and behaviors in this direction may change towards more sustainable preferences. Electric and hybrid models, which are among the popular environmental vehicles (Shanmugapriya et al., 2023), are especially prominent in the automotive sector due to this trend.

According to Kronthal-Sacco et al. (2020), one of the reasons for the increase in loyalty towards businesses that choose environmentally friendly practices is that consumers are more willing to purchase such products that comply with environmental sustainability over time. Developments in technology and regulatory measures taken by official institutions also accelerate the transition to such environmentally friendly vehicles. Actions such as reducing environmental waste, choosing materials that have low environmental impact, and paying attention to energy saving are actually actions covered by sustainable consumer behavior. According to Gleim et al. (2013), the reasons why consumers choose brands that are important to them are the changes in consumer habits as a result of the increase in sustainability awareness. According to He and Zhan (2018), the factors that affect such changes are mostly legal regulations implemented by official institutions, rising environmental awareness, and social expectations. In addition, Rezvani et al. (2015) explain that most people think about investing in environmentally friendly vehicles as a result of a combination of financial, environmental, and social factors.

Recent studies have shown that consumers who pay attention to sustainability tend to use more environmentally friendly options. According to De Giacomo et al. (2019), they mention that those who mostly make positive actions such as accepting higher payments, recommending the products they buy to their surroundings, and repurchasing are the ones who buy environmentally friendly vehicles. In addition, Nguyen et al. (2019) explain that the factor that contributes strongly to brand loyalty and commitment is the feelings and behaviors of consumers towards sustainable vehicles. Gao et al. (2017) state that as sustainability has become a core value for many people, the market structure in the electric vehicle (EV) sector has changed and green vehicles are driving this transformation. Understanding the reasons for such decisions is very important for organizations that want to increase long-term consumer interaction with sustainability as a goal.

The rapid rise in environmental concerns has had significant effects on the electric vehicle market, where environmentally friendly innovations, including hydrogen, electric and hybrid vehicles, aim to reduce the damage by reducing the levels of harmful effects on the environment (Farhani et al., 2021; Fayez et al., 2021). Studies by Sovacool et al. (2020) and Wang et al. (2024) reveal that consumers are choosing vehicles that are more suitable for a sustainable lifestyle as their awareness of their environmental footprint increases. According to Rezvani et al. (2015), they mention that this tendency is not limited to people's consumption awareness, but has also become a kind of social movement in which they actively try to reduce their carbon footprint. Although

it may seem complex in terms of consumer behavior, it is actually very clear that the preference for vehicles called green is affected by a combination of economic, environmental and social factors. Barbarossa et al. (2015) and Jansson et al. (2017) explain that among consumers who are concerned about sustainability, the environmental benefits of the vehicles they purchase are the most important part of their selection process. Egbue and Long (2012) also state that the range of vehicles, charging options and overall costs are the most important factors in decisions to purchase electric vehicles. The policies and incentives implemented by states and governments play an important role in encouraging more preference for environmentally friendly vehicles. Li et al. (2017) and Hardman et al. (2017) explain that there has been a strong increase in the adoption of electric vehicles due to financial incentives such as subsidies and tax reductions implemented in a way that supports the effects of the same section. In addition, Bakker and Trip (2013) state that regulatory requirements such as energy efficiency and emission standards are also effective in encouraging manufacturers to produce cleaner vehicles and, as a result, in increasing consumer demand for them.

Such policies also play an important role in encouraging responsible attitudes in environmentally friendly transportation. Green vehicles can sometimes be considered as a kind of status symbol that affects consumer behavior. Noppers et al. (2014) and Peters and Dütschke (2014) mention that social and psychological factors such as the desire to create a positive public image or the desire to comply with social rules have an effect on the formation of consumer preferences. According to Rezvani et al. (2015), in some markets, owning an environmentally friendly vehicle is shown as a symbol of commitment to sustainable development. Therefore, marketing strategies often position the relevant vehicles not only as environmentally friendly alternatives, but also as a kind of indicator of individual value and identity. Despite the constantly increasing interest, some difficulties prevent the widespread consideration of environmentally friendly vehicles. Egbue and Long (2012), Rezvani et al. (2015) and Dinanta et al. (2023) indicate that these difficulties include high upfront costs, range limitations, insufficient charging infrastructures and performance concerns. Li et al. (2017) state that the restrictions considered are mostly seen in rural areas and regions where fuel supply networks are not developed. Therefore, it is very important to examine all these obstacles mentioned in order to expand sustainable vehicle markets and provide more access to green transportation alternatives. As a result, consumer preferences, which have increased especially in the field of sustainability, are being reshaped especially in the automotive sector, where electric vehicles are used more. The policies implemented by states and governments also support consumers to be more aware of environmental impacts and to make such vehicles more attractive. In order to ensure the greater adoption of such vehicles, it is very important to address other obstacles and deficiencies as well as to emphasize all kinds of social, economic and environmental benefits offered by sustainable transportation. Future research should explore strategies to overcome these challenges and increase consumer satisfaction with eco-friendly vehicles, ensuring that sustainability remains at the core of purchasing decisions.

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

This study aims to determine the impact of the sustainability perception of environmentally friendly vehicles on individuals' purchasing decisions. In this study, where the numerical research method was used, a questionnaire was chosen as the data collection technique and consisted of four stages in total. While the first part includes demographic statements, the second includes Michalos et al. (2012), developed by Gricke et al. There are 15 statements belonging to the "Sustainability Consciousness" scale, which was updated, and adopted into Turkish by Yüksel and Yıldız (2019). In the second part, Doğan et al. (2015) include the 17-item "Sustainable Consumption Behavior" scale. In the last section, Lee et al. (2010) and adapted by Berk and Celep (2020) There is a nine-statement "Purchasing Behavior" scale. This survey was implemented in Turkey in May and June 2025. Random people responded, and a total of 419 usable responses were received. The data obtained were examined by establishing a structural equation model in line with the research purpose, and the results were discussed by comparing them with similar studies in the literature.

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to the scales planned for the research. The results for the Sustainability Consciousness Scale ($\chi^2/df: 5.150$, GFI: 0.864, AGFI: 0.810, CFI: 0.895, RMSEA: 0.105, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) and for the Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale ($\chi^2/df: 10.054$, GFI: 0.816, AGFI: 0.737, CFI: 0.880, RMSEA: 0.147, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) showed the goodness of fit values. According to these values, the scales were not statistically suitable for the study (Byrne, 2013). For the purchasing behavior scale ($\chi^2/df: 7.099$, GFI: 0.920, AGFI: 0.904, CFI: 0.926, RMSEA: 0.781, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), goodness of fit values were obtained and were found to be within the acceptable range. The statistical accuracy of the usability of this scale in research is understood.

Upon discovering that the confirmatory factor analysis results for the sustainability consciousness and sustainable consumption behavior scales were not appropriate, exploratory factor analysis was applied. It was found that the statements in the Sustainability Consciousness Scale, which originally had three sub-dimensions, clustered under a single factor. Consequently, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted again for this scale. According to the obtained values, the Sustainability Consciousness Scale ($\chi^2/df: 4.553$, GFI: 0.924, AGFI: 0.907, CFI: 0.935, RMSEA: 0.076, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) was within the acceptable range of goodness-of-fit values, leading to the decision to evaluate the research using a single dimension named the "Sustainability Scale."

Conversely, the Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale, consisting of 17 statements and four sub-dimensions, was subjected to exploratory factor analysis. It was observed that the statements grouped under three sub-dimensions. Since one of the 17 statements had a factor loading below 0.3 and another statement loaded on two factors, these statements were removed from the scale. Finally, the revised 15-item Sustainable Consumption Behavior Scale was subjected to confirmatory factor analysis. The goodness-of-fit values ($\chi^2/df: 5.689$, GFI: 0.917, AGFI: 0.900, CFI: 0.939, RMSEA: 0.077, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) were found

to be within the acceptable range. The three new sub-dimensions were named "Sustainable Awareness," "Savings," and "Reuse," respectively. After confirmatory factor analysis, the reliability of the scales was calculated for sustainability awareness ($\alpha = 0.954$, $N = 15$), sustainable consumption behavior ($\alpha = 0.940$, $N = 15$), and purchasing behavior scales ($\alpha = 0.903$, $N = 9$). It is understood that the reliability values (Cronbach's Alpha) obtained are within the appropriate range. After achieving statistical harmony in terms of the usability of the scales for research, path analysis was conducted with structural equation modeling to find answers to the research questions.

The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study were examined and are shown in Table 1. Accordingly, 69.7% of the participants are male, 73.5% are married, 21.7% are between the ages of 36-45, 68.2% have a bachelor's degree, and 33.6% have a monthly income between \$1501 and \$2000. Additionally, 52.5% of the participants drive an environmentally friendly vehicle.

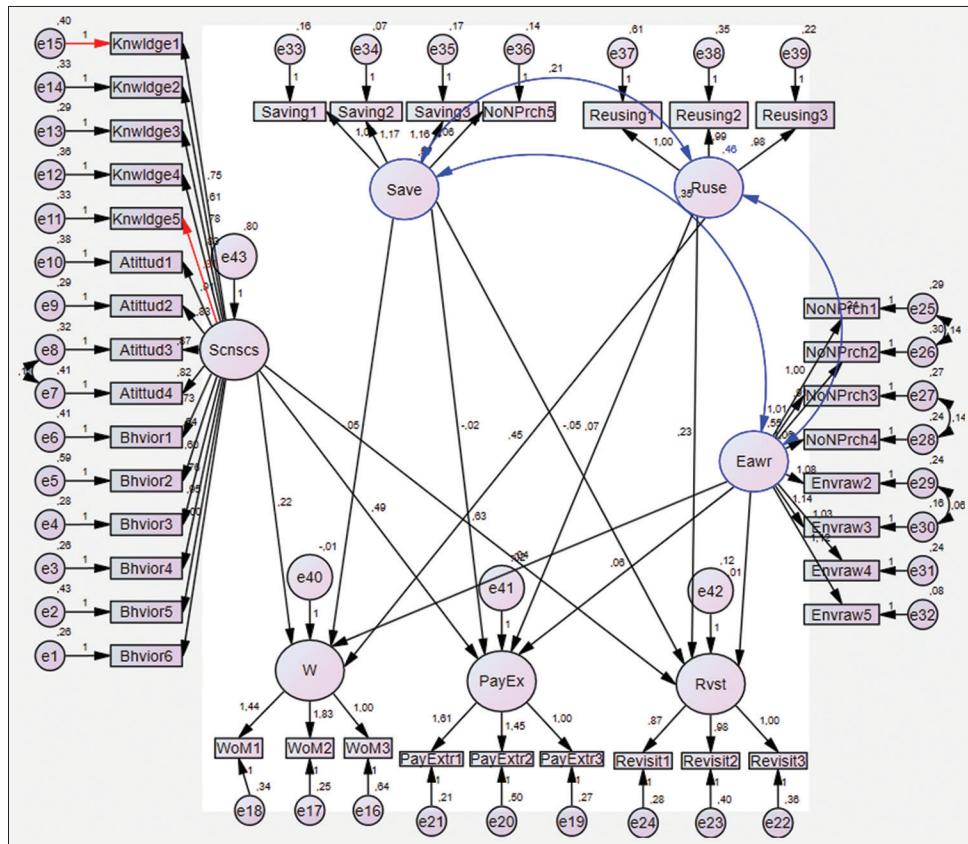
The path diagram, constructed using the research variables, was developed through the structural equation model and is presented in Figure 1. The path analysis examines the effect of the sustainability awareness variable and the sub-dimensions of the sustainable consumption behavior variable (Saving, Reuse, Environmental Awareness) on the sub-dimensions of the purchasing behavior variable (Word of Mouth, Willingness to Pay More, Revisiting). The goodness of fit values of the established model ($\chi^2/df: 3.666$, GFI: 0.929, AGFI: 0.912, CFI: 0.927, RMSEA: 0.075, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$) fall within the acceptable range, indicating no statistical obstacles in establishing the model. These fitness indices demonstrate the hypothesized relationship between the variables align well, and the model accurately captures the dynamics of sustainability awareness, consumption behavior, and purchasing behavior. Data regarding the relationships between the variables in the path diagram are provided in Table 2. These results emphasize the role of sustainability in consumer behavior and offer actionable insights for marketers and firms.

When examining Table 2 above, it is understood that there is a significant effect among the variables in eight cases ($P < 0.05$) and no significant effect in four cases ($P > 0.05$). The sustainability awareness variable appears to influence all sub-dimensions of purchasing behavior (Estimates: 0.220, 0.487, 0.631). It is understood that the saving dimension of the sustainable

Table 1: Demographic characteristic of the participants

Variables	N
Gender	Male (292); Female (127)
Marital Status	Married (308); Single (111)
Age	18-25 (73); 26-35 (87); 36-45 (91); 46-55 (87); 56 and above (81)
Education	High School (60); Bachelor (286); Master and above (73)
Income	1500 \$ and Less (51); 1501 \$-2000 \$ (141); 2001 \$-2500 \$ (126); 2501 \$ and above (101)
Environmentally friendly vehicle type	Car (220); Scooter (125); Electric Bike (70); Other (4)

Figure 1: Path diagram



Source: Author work

Table 2: Regression weights

Variables		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Word of mouth (purchase behavior)	<---	0.220	0.030	7.359	***
Willingness to pay more (purchase behavior)	<---	0.487	0.032	14.998	***
Revisiting (purchase behavior)	<---	0.631	0.042	15.201	***
Word of mouth (purchase behavior)	<---	-0.048	0.023	-2.142	0.032
Word of mouth (purchase behavior)	<---	0.447	0.064	6.990	***
Word of mouth (purchase behavior)	<---	-0.037	0.024	-1.534	0.125
Willingness to pay more (purchase behavior)	<---	-0.019	0.024	-0.790	0.430
Willingness to pay more (purchase behavior)	<---	0.066	0.026	2.577	0.010
Willingness to pay more (purchase behavior)	<---	0.063	0.026	2.403	0.016
Revisiting (purchase behavior)	<---	-0.053	0.045	-1.164	0.244
Revisiting (purchase behavior)	<---	0.231	0.049	4.665	***
Revisiting (purchase behavior)	<---	0.013	0.048	0.271	0.786

consumption behavior variable and the purchasing behavior variable only affect word-of-mouth communication (Estimate: -0.048). The reusing dimension of the sustainable consumption behavior variable affects all dimensions of the purchasing behavior variable (Estimates: 0.447, 0.066, 0.231). Additionally, the environmental awareness dimension of the sustainable consumption behavior variable only affects the willingness to pay more dimension of the purchasing behavior variable.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, the effects of sustainability consciousness and the perception of sustainable consumption behavior regarding environmentally friendly vehicles on consumer purchasing

behavior were examined. The findings indicate that these relationships are significant in some cases and not significant in others.

The results of the study show that different aspects of purchasing behavior, such as word of mouth, willingness to pay extra, and intention to repeat purchases, are affected by consumers' sustainability awareness. These results are consistent with previous studies investigating similar relationships (Jackson, 2005; Nolcheska, 2017). The data show that consumers who are more aware of sustainability are more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products. Therefore, it is of great importance for sustainable vehicle brands to educate their target markets about the importance of sustainability and integrate this

message into their marketing strategies to raise awareness among consumers.

Another notable finding of the study is that the savings dimension of sustainable consumer behavior has a negative effect on word of mouth, which is one of the basic elements of purchasing behavior. Previous studies examining similar variables have suggested that the economic benefits of savings do not always translate into social sharing, because savings-oriented behavior tends to focus on personal financial gain (Van Doorn and Verhoef, 2011). On the contrary, repeating sustainable consumption behaviors was found to have a significant and positive effect on all aspects of purchasing behavior, including word of mouth, willingness to pay more, and repurchase intentions. This is consistent with previous studies showing that repeated sustainable actions encourage greater customer loyalty (Peattie, 2010; White et al., 2019).

Another important finding emphasizes that environmental awareness mainly affects consumers' willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly products. This is consistent with previous studies showing that people with higher environmental awareness are more willing to invest in products that support sustainability (Laroche et al., 2001; Wei et al., 2018; Ghaffar et al., 2023; Golla et al., 2022). This suggests that consumers with strong environmental concerns tend to adopt a forward-looking approach, prioritizing long-term environmental benefits over immediate costs.

This study is examined in detail considering the significant contributions it will make to the literature, as the variables of sustainability awareness, sustainable consumption behavior and consumer purchasing behavior are a research topic on electric vehicles. While previous studies generally confirm the effects of these variables on consumer behaviors, this study offers a more in-depth perspective by emphasizing differences in some of the sub-dimensions of the variables used. Since the study was conducted only on people using electric vehicles in Turkey within a certain period, which limits the generalizability of the results. Broader perspective on the subject can be achieved by applying it to different consumer segments through long-term longitudinal studies.

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