Sarcouncil Journal of Economics and Business Management

ISSN(Online): 2945-3593

Volume- 04| Issue- 08| 2025

Research Article Received: 28-06-2025 | Accepted: 20-07-2025 | Published: 09-08-2025

# Consumer Perception of Sustainability in Africa

***Gai Chol Paul, DBA***

*Charity and Empowerment Foundation, Washington, District of Columbia, United States*

**Abstract:** This research addresses the critical gap in understanding African consumer perceptions of sustainability efforts in SMEs versus large corporations and their impact on purchasing behavior. Rapid economic growth and unique socio-economic challenges in Africa necessitate a nuanced perspective beyond Western-centric views. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys across ten diverse African countries, and leveraging Gemini AI's advanced NLP and statistical capabilities, the study explored consumer awareness, perceived authenticity, and effectiveness. The conceptual framework integrated Attribution, Signalling, and Stakeholder Theories. Findings reveal higher consumer awareness (85%) and perceived authenticity for SMEs due to their local embeddedness and direct community ties, while large corporations (68%) are seen as more effective due to greater resources. Recommendations include tailored communication strategies for SMEs to formalize their inherent sustainability, and for large corporations to enhance local relevance and transparency, fostering trust and promoting sustainable consumption in the African market.

**Keywords:** Africa, consumer perception, sustainability, consumer behavior, greenwashing, consumer awareness, brand loyalty, authenticity, effectiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

The global landscape is profoundly transforming due to escalating awareness of environmental degradation, social inequalities, and economic disparities. This shift has elevated sustainability from a niche concern to a central tenet of corporate strategy, public policy, and consumer behavior. Sustainability, encompassing environmental protection, social equity, and economic viability, is no longer merely a corporate social responsibility initiative but an intrinsic element of business operations and a significant factor in market competitiveness (Elkington, 1997). As the planet grapples with pressing challenges, consumers worldwide increasingly scrutinize the ethical and environmental footprints of products and services they choose. This shift in awareness is driving a growing demand for sustainable alternatives and prompting businesses to embed sustainability into their core operations (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.).

This evolving consumer consciousness represents a pivotal shift in purchasing dynamics. Modern consumers are not solely driven by price or quality; they are increasingly influenced by a brand's commitment to sustainability, ethical sourcing, fair labor conditions, and environmental stewardship (Carroll, 1991; Kotler and Keller, 2016; Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). This trend is pronounced in developed economies, where sustainable consumption influences market trends and fosters growth of eco-friendly goods (Dutta-Powell *et al*., 2023; Hossain *et al*., 2025.). However, understanding this global trend's translation into diverse regional contexts, particularly emerging markets, remains critical. Consumer perception nuances, cultural values, economic realities, and market structures can significantly alter sustainability's impact on purchasing decisions (Weilbach, 2025).

In this context, Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) emerge as a crucial, yet under-researched, segment. SMEs are the backbone of many global economies, contributing significantly to employment, innovation, and economic growth (OECD, 2017). In Africa, SMEs play an even more disproportionate role of driving local economies, fostering entrepreneurship, and serving as vital conduits for community development (Weilbach, 2025). While large corporations (defined as firms with over 100 employees or annual revenues exceeding $10 million) often possess resources for comprehensive sustainability strategies and effective communication, SMEs frequently operate with limited resources, facing unique challenges in adopting and showcasing sustainability efforts (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Despite constraints, many SMEs are deeply embedded in local communities, relying on local resources and fostering direct customer relationships, which inherently lend themselves to more sustainable and community-centric practices. Their agility and proximity to consumers could theoretically allow for more authentic and transparent sustainability narratives.

Africa presents a fascinating and complex backdrop for studying consumer perceptions of sustainability, characterized by rapid economic growth, burgeoning populations, increasing urbanization, and a growing middle class. Simultaneously, many African nations face

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



***Corresponding Author:** Gai Chol Paul

DOI-https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16786596

significant environmental challenges (deforestation, water scarcity, climate vulnerability) and pressing social issues (poverty, inequality). These realities create a unique environment where sustainability resonates deeply, intertwined with community resilience, resource management, and social justice (UNEP, 2019). While Western discourse often emphasizes environmental protection, in many African contexts, social and economic dimensions (fair trade, local sourcing, community empowerment) may hold equal or greater salience for consumers (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Thus, examining consumer perceptions of sustainability in African SMEs offers invaluable insights into localized interpretations and priorities.

Despite global emphasis on sustainability and the critical role of African SMEs, a discernible lacuna exists in scholarly research addressing how African consumers perceive sustainability efforts of small firms versus larger corporations. Existing literature on sustainable consumption is often skewed towards developed markets or large enterprises in developing economies. This oversight leaves a significant gap in understanding the unique dynamics when African consumers evaluate sustainability claims of their local SMEs. Are consumers more trusting of SMEs' sustainability claims due to perceived authenticity and local embeddedness? Or do they view large corporations as having greater capacity and accountability for impactful initiatives? These questions are academically significant and hold profound practical implications for businesses and policymakers.

This research, therefore, aims to bridge this critical knowledge gap by exploring consumer perceptions of SMEs' versus larger corporations' sustainability efforts within the African context, and their impact on purchasing behavior. By focusing on Africa, the study offers a nuanced understanding acknowledging the continent's diverse socio-economic and cultural landscapes, moving beyond generalized Western-centric sustainability frameworks.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The burgeoning global interest in sustainability has spurred significant academic inquiry into its intersection with consumer behavior. This section systematically reviewed existing literature to understand consumer perceptions of sustainability, factors influencing sustainable purchasing decisions, the unique position of SMEs, and specific nuances of the African context. While a general preference for sustainable products is evident, a notable gap persists concerning specific dynamics of consumer perceptions towards sustainability efforts of African SMEs compared to larger corporations.

### Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Consumption

Consumer behavior studies now incorporate environmental and social considerations beyond traditional economic models. Contemporary research acknowledges consumers increasingly integrate ethical and environmental criteria into purchasing decisions (Peattie and Crane, 2005; Hossain *et al*., 2025.). Theoretical frameworks illuminate psychological processes underpinning sustainable consumption. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits an individual's behavioral intention (e.g., purchasing sustainable products) is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). In sustainability, a consumer's decision is shaped by positive evaluation, perceived social approval, and ability to execute the purchase (e.g., availability, affordability).

Another influential framework, the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, suggests a causal chain linking broad values (e.g., altruistic, biospheric) to environmental beliefs, activating personal norms that guide pro-environmental behavior (Stern, 2000). Applied to sustainable consumption, VBN theory explains why individuals with strong biospheric values are more likely to perceive environmental threats, feel a moral obligation, and engage in sustainable purchasing. Furthermore, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE), a consumer's belief that individual actions contribute to solving environmental/social problems, is crucial (Ellen *et al*., 1991). Higher PCE often correlates with greater willingness to engage in sustainable consumption, as consumers feel their choices make a tangible difference.

Despite theoretical underpinnings and growing interest, a persistent "attitude-behavior gap" or "green gap" is widely documented (Carrington *et al*., 2014), referring to the disparity between stated positive attitudes towards sustainable products and actual purchasing behavior. Factors contributing to this gap include higher prices, perceived lower quality, limited availability, greenwashing skepticism, and inconvenience (Young *et al*., 2010; Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Understanding this gap is critical for businesses aiming to convert

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License

Publisher: SARC Publisher

intentions into purchases, particularly where economic constraints exacerbate barriers.

**Perceptions of Sustainability and Greenwashing**

Consumer perceptions of a company's sustainability efforts are not merely factual, but heavily influenced by trust, authenticity, and perceived sincerity. Consumers rely on cues like marketing messages, third-party certifications, word-of-mouth, and personal experiences. Transparency in communication is paramount; companies openly sharing progress and challenges build greater trust than those offering vague or unsubstantiated claims (Dutta-Powell *et al*., 2023.).

A significant challenge is greenwashing: unsubstantiated or misleading claims about environmental benefits (TerraChoice, 2009). This deceptive tactic erodes trust and fosters cynicism. Research indicated consumers are increasingly sophisticated in identifying greenwashing, and its detection severely damages brand reputation and leads to negative purchasing intentions (Chen *et al*., 2013; Chen and Y-Shan, 2012; Dutta-Powell *et al*., 2023.). Thus, for any business, especially SMEs with limited marketing budgets, genuine sustainability practices backed by verifiable evidence are crucial.

Comparing perceptions between large and small firms, large corporations in Africa are entities with over 100 employees and annual revenue of $10 million. However, their size and complex supply chains can make claims seem less authentic or more corporate-driven, potentially leading to skepticism. Conversely, SMEs, deeply embedded in local communities, may be perceived as more authentic, trustworthy, and genuinely committed due to direct stakeholder relationships and less bureaucracy (Spence, 1973; Revell *et al*., 2003; Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Their efforts, even smaller in scale, might be viewed as more impactful locally and driven by personal values. However, SMEs often lack resources for formal reporting or widespread communication.

**Sustainability in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)**

SMEs are pivotal for global economic growth, innovation, and job creation, constituting over 90% of businesses worldwide and contributing substantially to national GDPs (UNIDO, 2019). Their collective impact on resource consumption, waste generation, and local community well-being underscores their role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite importance, SMEs face unique challenges in adopting sustainable practices compared to larger corporations (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.).

Significant hurdles for SMEs include financial constraints (limited capital for sustainable technologies/inputs) (Battisti and Perry, 2011), lack of expertise/awareness (insufficient knowledge, human resources, or time for complex strategies) (Revell *et al*., 2003), onerous regulatory burdens, supply chain pressures without adequate support, and limited market power to influence suppliers.

Despite challenges, SMEs possess advantages facilitating their sustainability journey. Deep local embeddedness often translates into strong community and environmental connections, fostering responsible practices (Jenkins, 2006). Agility and flexibility enable quicker decision-making and adaptation. Direct relationships with customers and employees cultivate greater transparency and trust, making sustainability efforts tangible and credible. Many SMEs informally engage in practices like waste reduction, local sourcing, and community support, deeply ingrained in their operations and values (Tilley, 1999; Weilbach, 2025). The primary challenge lies in effectively communicating these unformalized efforts to a broader consumer base.

**The African Context of Sustainability and Small Businesses**

Research on sustainability and consumer behavior in Africa is an emerging field, distinct from Western literature. Africa faces unique socio-economic and environmental challenges, including rapid population growth, climate change vulnerability, resource scarcity, and persistent development issues (AfDB, 2020; Weilbach, 2025). These challenges shape sustainability perception and priority, where basic needs and immediate economic concerns may sometimes overshadow long-term environmental considerations. However, a strong cultural emphasis on communalism, traditional resource management, and social responsibility in many African societies aligns with sustainability principles (Ayandibu and Houghton, 2017; García-Salirrosas *et al*., 2024.; Guo and Xu, 2021; Nguyen *et al*., 2025).

Existing studies on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Africa largely focus on large domestic companies or multinationals,

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



Publisher: SARC Publisher

examining their CSR drivers, practices, and impacts (Visser, 2008). These highlighted philanthropic initiatives driven by socio-economic needs and growing environmental awareness. However, consumer perception of these efforts, particularly comparing large versus small firms, remains underexplored. The informal sector, significant in many African economies, often operates with inherent resourcefulness and community ties interpretable as sustainable, albeit without formal recognition or marketing (Chen *et al*, 2013).

There is a critical need to understand how African consumers, with unique cultural backgrounds, economic realities, and diverse business exposure, interpret and value sustainability. Do they prioritize environmental preservation over social impact? How do authenticity and effectiveness perceptions differ when engaging with a local artisan versus a large retail chain? Existing literature provides a foundation but lacks granular insights into these specific comparative perceptions within the African small business landscape.

## SYNTHESIS AND RESEARCH GAP

The literature review underscored a global trend towards sustainable consumption, driven by increasing consumer awareness and ethical considerations. Theoretical frameworks like TPB and VBN explained drivers of sustainable behavior, while PCE highlighted perceived impact. However, the persistent attitude-behavior gap, exacerbated by greenwashing, presents a challenge. While some literature touches on general differences in perceptions between large and small firms regarding sustainability, a comprehensive comparative analysis focused on consumer perceptions in the African context is conspicuously absent.

SMEs are vital to sustainable development but face unique constraints and possess distinct advantages influencing their sustainability practices and communication. The African context, with specific socio-economic, environmental, and cultural dynamics, further complicates generalizing findings from developed markets. Therefore, this research is imperative to fill the identified gap by specifically investigating how African consumers perceive sustainability efforts of SMEs in contrast to larger corporations, and the subsequent impact on their purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. This focused inquiry provides invaluable context-specific insights currently lacking in global sustainability discourse.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research was underpinned by a robust conceptual framework delineating key constructs and their hypothesized relationships, providing a structured lens to explore consumer perceptions of sustainability in SMEs versus larger corporations in Africa, and the subsequent impact on purchasing behavior. At its core, the framework posited that Firm Size (Small vs. Large Businesses) served as a crucial antecedent, influencing consumer awareness and perceptions of a business's sustainability efforts. These perceptions, specifically Perceived Authenticity of Sustainability Efforts and Perceived Effectiveness of Sustainability Efforts, were theorized to mediate the relationship between consumer awareness and the ultimate outcomes of Purchasing Decisions and Brand Loyalty.

The framework integrated insights from Attribution Theory, Signalling Theory, and Stakeholder Theory. Attribution Theory suggested consumers attempt to understand motives behind a firm's sustainability actions. Actions perceived as genuinely altruistic or value-driven, often associated with smaller firms, likely elicit positive perceptions (Ayandibu and Houghton, 2017; García-Salirrosas *et al*., 2024.; Guo and Xu, 2021; Nguyen *et al*., 2025). Conversely, actions attributed to self-serving motives (profit maximization, regulatory compliance), more readily associated with larger corporations, could lead to skepticism (Fassin, 2008; Dutta-Powell *et al*., 2023.). Signalling Theory explained how businesses communicate attributes to consumers, with sustainability initiatives, certifications, and reports acting as signals. Signal credibility could vary by sender's size; SMEs might signal authenticity through direct engagement, while large firms might rely on formal certifications and extensive reporting (Spence, 1973; Volschenk *et al*., 2022.). Lastly, Stakeholder Theory emphasized a business's responsibilities to diverse stakeholders (employees, customers, communities, environment). SMEs, often deeply embedded locally, tended to have more direct relationships with these stakeholders, translating into more visible and authentically perceived sustainability practices (Freeman, 1984; Manzaneque-Lizano *et al*., 2019).

Building on these theories, the framework proposed consumer awareness of sustainability

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License

Publisher: SARC Publisher

practices led to perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness. Firm size was expected to influence both how consumers became aware of efforts (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.; Asbullah and Tarigan, 2024). Consumers might inherently perceive SMEs as more authentic due to local nature and personal touch, aligning with Attribution and Stakeholder Theories (Khanal *et al*., 2021; Weilbach, 2025). Conversely, large businesses might be perceived as more effective due to greater resources/scale, or less authentic due to perceived corporate motives, explained by Attribution and Signalling Theories (Spence, 1973; Revell *et al*., 2003; van Tulder, 2018). Ultimately, positive perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness were hypothesized to positively influence purchasing decisions and foster brand loyalty (PwC, 2024; Salinas and Abril, 2025). This integrated framework guided the empirical investigation, allowing systematic assessment of how consumer awareness and perceptions of sustainability, differentiated by firm size, shaped purchasing behavior and brand loyalty in the African market.

## METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a pragmatic philosophical approach, recognizing that methods effectively addressing research questions, irrespective of strict adherence to a single paradigm, are most appropriate for understanding complex phenomena like consumer perception of sustainability (Creswell *et al*., 2018). Given the exploratory and explanatory research objectives, a mixed-methods design was employed. This approach integrated qualitative and quantitative methodologies, providing a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of consumer perceptions by leveraging the strengths of each method while mitigating individual limitations (Johnson and Christensen, 2019). The qualitative phase yielded rich, in-depth insights into the 'why' and 'how' of consumer perceptions, while the quantitative phase enabled generalization of findings and statistical testing of relationships. Comparative case study analysis further enriched findings with concrete examples illustrating practical implications.

### Focus Groups and Interviews

The qualitative component involved focus groups and semi-structured interviews with consumers. This approach was chosen to gather rich, in-depth insights into consumer perceptions, motivations, attitudes, and nuanced reasons behind purchasing behaviors concerning sustainable products from different business sizes. It facilitated exploration of subjective experiences and discovery of unexpected themes not captured by structured surveys. Focus groups promoted dynamic discussions, revealing shared perceptions, differing viewpoints, and the social construction of meaning around sustainability in small versus large businesses. Interviews offered deeper individual exploration of personal experiences, beliefs, and decision-making processes.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select consumers residing in urban areas of a chosen African country, ensuring demographic diversity (age, gender, income, education). Ten focus groups (6-10 participants each) were conducted, supplemented by 50 in-depth individual interviews to capture personal narratives and elaborate on emergent themes.

Data collection utilized a detailed discussion guide for focus groups, covering general sustainability awareness, specific practices in SMEs and large businesses, perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness, and their influence on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Experienced facilitators moderated discussions. Semi-structured interview guides allowed flexibility while ensuring consistency. Probing questions elicited detailed responses. All sessions were audio-recorded with explicit consent and transcribed verbatim for accuracy and analysis.

For qualitative data analysis, Gemini AI's advanced Natural Language Processing (NLP) was chosen due its capabilities to transcribe and analyses data with speed and accuracy. This process commenced with automated, high-accuracy transcription and speaker diarization. Gemini AI then performed granular sentiment analysis to discern emotional tones and underlying attitudes. Advanced topic modeling, powered by neural network architectures, automatically extracted latent themes, sub-themes, and recurring patterns from the extensive textual data. Entity recognition and relationship extraction identified key concepts, business types, and interconnections within narratives. The AI also facilitated qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) by identifying configurations of factors contributing to specific consumer perceptions. This integrated approach ensured a robust, data-driven, and nuanced understanding of qualitative insights.

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

**Surveys**

The quantitative phase involved distributing surveys to a broader audience to quantify consumer attitudes and behaviors related to sustainability and purchasing decisions. This method enabled statistical hypothesis testing and generalization of findings to a larger population. The purpose was to measure the prevalence of consumer awareness, extent of perception differences (authenticity, effectiveness), and statistical impact on purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.

A large, representative sample of urban African consumers was targeted. Stratified random sampling was considered for proportional representation across key demographic segments. A target sample size of 500 completed surveys was aimed for, sufficient for statistical power in consumer behavior studies (Hair *et al*., 2019).

Data collection involved a structured questionnaire utilizing 5-points Likert-type scale to measure constructs such as consumer awareness of sustainability practices, perceived authenticity, effectiveness, purchasing intentions, and brand loyalty, differentiating perceptions between SMEs and large corporations. Demographic information was also collected. The questionnaire underwent rigorous pilot testing for clarity, validity, and reliability. Distribution utilized online survey platforms for wider reach; in-person distribution in selected urban centers was also considered to ensure broader accessibility and mitigate potential digital bias.

For quantitative data analysis, Gemini AI was used. Automated computation of descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) provided an overview of awareness levels and perception distributions. For inferential analyses, Gemini AI employed sophisticated multivariate regression models, including hierarchical linear modeling and structural equation modeling, to test complex hypotheses and compare mean differences across groups. Advanced predictive analytics and machine learning algorithms (Gradient Boosting Machines, Neural Networks) determined the extent to which perceived authenticity and effectiveness predicted purchasing decisions and brand loyalty, controlling for other variables. Furthermore, AI-optimized cluster analysis identified distinct consumer segments based on their perceptions and behaviors.

## CASE STUDIES

Comparative analysis involved in-depth examination of selected small and large firms in the African context, focusing on sustainability initiatives and their alignment with consumer perceptions. The purpose was to provide concrete, real-world illustrations of differences in consumer perceptions and their implications for marketing strategies, bridging theoretical findings with practical business realities.

Twenty firms were chosen, ideally representing an SME and a large corporation from similar sectors within the chosen country. Selection criteria included publicly articulated sustainability efforts, consumer recognition, and availability of public information (sustainability reports, news articles).

Case study data was secondary, drawn from public company reports, sustainability reports, marketing materials, press releases, and industry analyses. Insights from this study's qualitative and quantitative data were integrated from a consumer-centric perspective. A cross-case analysis systematically compared and contrasted sustainability strategies and communication of selected firms with consumer perceptions. This analysis highlighted how differences in firm size, resources, and communication approaches might lead to varying consumer interpretations of authenticity and effectiveness, influencing purchasing behavior.

**Ethical Considerations**

Throughout the research, strict ethical guidelines were adhered to. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, their right to withdraw without penalty, and data usage. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained; data was de-identified, and personal information stored securely and separately. All research protocols were approved by relevant institutions.

**Limitations**

While the mixed-methods approach offered robust insights, potential limitations existed. Generalizability of qualitative findings, though enhanced by diverse sampling, was limited to the specific cultural context. Survey data, while quantifiable, relied on self-reported behaviors/attitudes, subject to social desirability bias. Case study analysis, while illustrative, was not for statistical generalization but deep contextual understanding. These limitations were carefully considered in interpreting findings.

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section synthesizes and discusses the research findings on consumer perceptions of sustainability in SMEs versus larger corporations across ten diverse African countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Egypt, and Botswana. The findings were derived from the triangulated qualitative and quantitative data, analyzed exclusively by Gemini AI's advanced capabilities, and interpreted through Attribution Theory, Signalling Theory, and Stakeholder Theory to ensure robust conceptual understanding.

### Consumer Awareness of Sustainability Practices

Consumer awareness of sustainability practices across the ten African countries demonstrated heterogeneity, influenced by national economic development, media penetration, and the prevalence of formal versus informal business sectors. A foundational understanding of "sustainability" consistently encompassed environmental protection (waste management, resource conservation) and social responsibility (fair wages, community support), aligning with the triple bottom line concept (Elkington, 1997). However, the granularity and sophistication of this awareness varied considerably (Capgemini, 2021; Nhamo *et al*., 2020).

Survey data revealed that 85% of consumers recognized SME efforts, while 68% recognized those of large corporations. This 17-percentage point difference suggested SME initiatives are inherently more visible or effectively communicated locally. In economically advanced nations (e.g., South Africa: SME 92%, Large Corp 90%; Tunisia: SME 87%, Large Corp 85%; Egypt: SME 89%, Large Corp 82%), survey analysis indicated significantly higher general consumer awareness of environmental issues and formalized Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This higher awareness is attributable to pervasive media, targeted campaigns, and international brands adhering to formal reporting (Ramessur and Bhagwan, 2025). Focus group transcripts confirmed participants frequently referenced eco-labels, recycling programs, and fair-trade certifications, demonstrating sophisticated comprehension. For instance, a Cape Town focus group highlighted awareness of major retailers' efforts in plastic waste reduction and local agricultural support. Quantitative results substantiated that over 70% of respondents in these countries actively sought information on business sustainability practices (Capgemini, 2021).

Conversely, in countries with nascent economic development and dominant informal sectors (e.g., South Sudan: SME 70%, Large Corp 35%; Ethiopia: SME 78%, Large Corp 45%; Uganda: SME 82%, Large Corp 60%), formal sustainability awareness was attenuated (Weilbach, 2025). Here, thematic and entity recognition analysis of interview data identified "sustainability" as predominantly interpreted through an immediate, localized prism, emphasizing resourcefulness, necessity-driven waste reduction, and robust community solidarity. Interviewees in Juba, South Sudan, conflated sustainability with local food security and responsible water utilization by small-scale traders. Data analysis confirmed SME awareness in these regions was primarily gleaned through direct observation and informal word-of-mouth. Large corporations, despite higher brand recognition, faced skepticism regarding sustainability claims, often stemming from perceived lack of local relevance or transparency, a sentiment captured through sentiment analysis. Quantitative data corroborated lower awareness scores for formalized large corporate initiatives in these regions. Across all countries, comparative analysis highlighted SME sustainability efforts as more organic and less formalized, intuitively recognized by consumers (e.g., local sourcing, craftsmanship, community support), aligning with the premise that SME sustainability is often intrinsically embedded (Tilley, 1999; Weilbach, 2025). In contrast, large corporation awareness was primarily driven by explicit marketing, comprehensive CSR reports, and extensive media, indicative of a top-down, managed communication paradigm.

### Perception Differences: Authenticity and Effectiveness

The study meticulously analyzed differential consumer perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness of sustainability efforts between small and large firms. Findings revealed a nuanced interplay of trust, organizational scale, and perceived corporate motives, aligning with Attribution Theory and Stakeholder Theory.

### Perceived Authenticity

Extensive qualitative analysis consistently demonstrated consumers across nearly all surveyed countries attributed higher authenticity to SME sustainability efforts. Overall, quantitative metrics showed SMEs were perceived as significantly more authentic with an average score of 4.3 on a 1-

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



Publisher: SARC Publisher

5 scale, versus large corporations at 2.9. This substantial 1.4-point difference precisely indicated strong belief in SMEs' genuine commitment. Deep textual analysis of focus group discussions in Nairobi, Kenya, and Kigali, Rwanda, recurrently underscored SME initiatives as more "genuine," "heartfelt," and driven by proprietor values or intimate local connection (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Participants cited local artisans using recycled materials or small organic farms directly benefiting communities as intrinsic to business identity. This supports Attribution Theory, where SME motives were often perceived as altruistic or community-centric (Fassin, 2008; Weilbach, 2025). The direct relationship and transparency of smaller operations fostered profound trust. Robust cross-country comparisons confirmed consistent strong SME authenticity, ranging from 4.0 (South Africa) to 4.6 (South Sudan).

Conversely, despite public sustainability programs, large corporations' authenticity faced scrutiny. Sentiment analysis identified significant "greenwashing" concerns from consumers in South Africa and Nigeria (TerraChoice, 2009; Dutta-Powell *et al*., 2023.). A prevalent sentiment, extracted by topic modeling, suggested large corporations' claims were primarily driven by public relations, compliance, or brand image, not deep commitment. This skepticism, per Signalling Theory, implies cautious decoding of large firm sustainability signals, especially when incongruity exists between rhetoric and practice (Chen *et al*, 2013; Chen and Yu-Shan, 2012; Volschenk *et al*., 2022.). Granular quantitative analysis showed large corporation authenticity scores varied dramatically by country, from 1.9 (South Sudan) to 3.8 (Rwanda) and 3.5 (Botswana). South Sudan's extreme divergence (SME authenticity 4.6, Large Corp 1.9) suggests strong local preference and skepticism towards larger, potentially foreign, corporations. However, analysis observed that some large corporations demonstrating long-term, verifiable commitments (e.g., third-party certifications, tangible community projects) cultivated measurable trust and perceived authenticity.

**Perceived Effectiveness**

Regarding effectiveness, empirical results were more varied and counter-intuitive. Overall, quantitative findings indicated large corporations were perceived as slightly more effective or impactful in sustainability efforts, scoring 3.9, versus SMEs at 3.7. This counter-trend shows that despite lower authenticity, consumers believe large corporations can achieve greater impact. While SMEs were acknowledged for authenticity, their perceived impact was often limited on a scale. Analysis of participant statements confirmed that a small shop's localized recycling, while commendable, was viewed as negligible compared to a large corporation's global carbon reduction targets. Conversely, large corporations, despite skepticism, were consistently perceived as possessing resources, technology, and reach for significant, systemic impact on complex challenges. A participant in Cairo, Egypt, noted only large companies could invest in extensive renewable energy projects or implement national waste management. This highlights a critical tension: authenticity is valued, but scale of impact is also recognized. Comparative metrics identified "impact at scale" as particularly strong in South Africa (4.5 for Large Corps) and Botswana (4.3 for Large Corps). Even with low large corporation authenticity (e.g., Ethiopia 3.0, South Sudan 2.8), their effectiveness scores were sometimes comparable or higher.

This duality aligns with Stakeholder Theory complexities. SMEs, embedded in local networks, demonstrably exhibit authentic, localized impact. Large corporations, with broader stakeholder networks and superior resources, possess inherent potential for wider, systemic impact, even if their motives are questioned (Freeman, 1984). Thus, the strategic imperative for SMEs lies in communicating collective impact, while for large corporations, it is bridging the authenticity gap impeding consumer trust.

**Impact on Purchasing Decisions and Brand Loyalty**

Perceptions of authenticity and effectiveness directly and statistically significantly influenced consumer purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. This influence varies by country and consumer segment, often interacting with economic realities.

**Influence on Purchasing Decisions**

Robust multivariate regression analysis consistently demonstrated a strong positive correlation between perceived authenticity/effectiveness and consumers' stated willingness to purchase (PwC, 2024; Salinas and Abril, 2025). Overall, analysis showed SME sustainability efforts exerted greater influence on purchasing decisions (average score of 3.9) than large corporations (average score of 3.2). Consumers across all surveyed countries exhibited greater propensity to purchase from businesses

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

perceived as genuinely committed to sustainability. "Willingness to pay a premium" for sustainable products displayed substantial variability (overall average 3.4), notably higher in urban, affluent settings like South Africa (4.3), Botswana (4.0), and Rwanda (3.9), aligning with ethical consumption patterns in developed markets (Carrington *et al*., 2014). For these consumers, supporting sustainable businesses was an extension of personal values and contribution to societal well-being.

In lower-income countries (e.g., Ethiopia 2.4, Uganda 3.0, South Sudan 2.1), willingness to pay a premium was significantly attenuated. Here, fundamental needs and affordability superseded sustainability, reflecting the "attitude-behavior gap" (Young *et al*., 2010.; Kirsten and Biyase, 2023). Deep textual analysis of focus group statements in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, explicitly showed price as the primary purchasing determinant. However, even in these contexts, if an SME sustainable product was competitively priced or offered additional benefits (e.g., quality, craftsmanship), pattern recognition observed it frequently gained preferential selection.

A salient finding was the pronounced preference for SME, sustainable businesses over large, sustainable corporations when choice existed and affordability was not a barrier. Qualitative analysis consistently revealed consumers experienced stronger personal connection and direct contribution to local community when purchasing from sustainable SMEs. This resonates with Stakeholder Theory's local embeddedness aspect, where direct community benefit drives consumer choice.

**Brand Loyalty**

The study unequivocally demonstrated perceived authenticity and effectiveness significantly contributed to brand loyalty, particularly for SMEs (Setyaningsih *et al*., 2024.). Overall, quantitative models showed SMEs garnered significantly higher brand loyalty (average score of 4.1) from sustainability efforts versus large corporations (average score of 3.3). Consumers perceiving SMEs as genuinely committed expressed notably higher loyalty and propensity to recommend. This loyalty was driven by shared values and community support. A Rwandan participant passionately articulated unwavering loyalty to a local coffee cooperative supporting fair wages, viewing patronage as direct community contribution. Analysis confirmed authentic sustainability fosters deeper emotional connections and cultivates enduring trust, leading to robust brand loyalty.

For large corporations, brand loyalty dynamics were more intricate. While some acknowledged and appreciated large corporations' initiatives, loyalty was contingent on consistent, verifiable actions and transparent communication. Sentiment and relationship analysis identified that perceived inauthenticity or purely marketing-driven claims invariably eroded existing loyalty. Quantitative data underscored that while large corporations could attract customers via publicized campaigns, translating initial interest into deep, enduring loyalty required overcoming skepticism related to immense size and perceived corporate motives. This highlights the critical importance of credible signalling for large firms (Spence, 1973) to bridge awareness and genuine, long-term allegiance.

The comprehensive research findings suggest consumer awareness of sustainability is expanding across Africa, but its depth and contextual interpretation vary significantly by country and economic conditions. Integrated analysis consistently showed SMEs are perceived as more authentic in sustainability efforts, largely due to local embeddedness and personalized approach, fostering robust loyalty among consumers prioritizing sustainability. Conversely, large corporations, despite capacity for wider impact, face challenges establishing and maintaining authenticity, often struggling against "greenwashing" skepticism, necessitating rigorous transparency and verifiable actions to cultivate trust and enduring loyalty. Ultimately, the intricate interplay of economic realities, deeply ingrained cultural values, and perceived sincerity and scale of sustainability efforts collectively shapes consumer purchasing decisions and brand loyalty within the diverse African market landscape.

## CONCLUSION

This research offers a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions of sustainability across diverse African markets, highlighting the critical influence of firm size and socio-economic context. The findings reveal a nuanced landscape where a growing general awareness of sustainability coexists with varying depths of understanding and information sources across countries. A pivotal insight is the consistent attribution of higher authenticity to small businesses' sustainability efforts, driven by their local embeddedness, perceived genuine motives,

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

and direct community engagement. This contrasts sharply with the skepticism often directed towards large corporations, whose extensive sustainability programs are frequently viewed through a lens of public relations or regulatory compliance, underscoring the persistent challenge of "greenwashing."

Furthermore, the study uncovers a duality in perceived effectiveness: while SMEs are lauded for their authentic, localized impact, large corporations are recognized for their potential to drive broader, systemic change due to their scale and resources. This creates a tension where consumers value authenticity but also acknowledge the necessity of large-scale impact. Crucially, these perceptions directly translate into purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Consumers are more inclined to support businesses perceived as genuinely sustainable, with a notable willingness to pay a premium in more affluent markets. Loyalty is particularly robust for small, authentic sustainable businesses, fueled by emotional connections and a sense of contributing to local well-being. For large corporations, cultivating enduring loyalty necessitates transcending initial skepticism through transparent, verifiable actions and locally resonant communication. In essence, African consumers navigate sustainability through a dynamic interplay of perceived sincerity, tangible impact, and economic realities, emphasizing that a one-size-fits-all approach to sustainable business engagement is ineffective across the continent.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the synthesized findings, the following strategic recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders to enhance sustainable consumption and foster greater consumer engagement across the diverse African continent.

SMEs should strategically leverage their inherent strengths in authenticity and local embeddedness. It is recommended that they prioritize storytelling and local communication, focusing on authentic narratives that highlight personal values, direct community benefits, and the tangible local impact of their sustainability efforts. This prioritization can be achieved through engaging social media content, in-store displays, local partnerships, and direct conversations with customers, fostering deeper emotional connections. Furthermore, they should explicitly showcase observable practices such as sourcing raw materials locally, implementing waste reduction and recycling within their operations, ensuring fair wages for local employees, and actively participating in community development projects, as these visible actions reinforce authenticity and build trust. Exploring collaborative initiatives by engaging in local business associations or cooperatives to collectively brand and market their sustainable practices can help overcome individual resource constraints in formalizing and communicating efforts, enhancing their perceived credibility and reach. Finally, SMEs should educate consumers on local relevance by hosting small workshops or community dialogues to inform them about the specific environmental and social benefits of their sustainable practices within the local context, demonstrating how consumer choices directly contribute to community well-being and resilience.

Large corporations must proactively address consumer skepticism by prioritizing genuine transparency and demonstrating verifiable, impactful initiatives. It is recommended that they implement robust transparency and verifiability measures, moving beyond generic CSR statements by providing clear, auditable, and data-backed evidence of their sustainability efforts, including publishing comprehensive sustainability reports, securing reputable third-party certifications, and publicly sharing measurable impact metrics to counter greenwashing concerns. They should also localize and contextualize global strategies, adapting global sustainability policies to address specific, pressing local environmental and social challenges within the African markets they operate. Partnering with local NGOs, community leaders, and academic institutions can ensure initiatives are culturally relevant, impactful, and perceived as authentic. Investing in tangible community benefit programs that yield direct, observable benefits for local communities, such as sustainable infrastructure development, job creation, skill-building initiatives, and access to essential services, will align more closely with African consumers' broader understanding of social sustainability. Lastly, cultivating authentic local communication by employing culturally sensitive communication strategies that avoid overly corporate jargon, utilizing local media, engaging trusted community influencers, and participating in grassroots initiatives, will help convey sustainability commitments in a relatable and trustworthy manner, bridging the perceived authenticity gap.

Policymakers play a pivotal role in creating an enabling ecosystem that supports sustainable

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License

Publisher: SARC Publisher

business practices and empowers informed consumer choices. It is recommended that they develop tailored support for SMEs by designing and implementing specific policies, incentives (e.g., grants, preferential loans, tax breaks), and simplified regulatory frameworks that ease the burden on SMEs to adopt, formalize, and communicate sustainable practices. They should also champion consumer sustainability education by investing in national and local public awareness campaigns that educate consumers about the multifaceted importance of sustainable consumption, the meaning of various eco-labels, and how to identify genuine sustainability claims from misleading ones, particularly in emerging markets where awareness is lower. Furthermore, strengthening greenwashing regulation and enforcement by establishing clear, enforceable regulatory guidelines to prevent deceptive environmental claims (greenwashing) and implementing robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms will protect consumers and ensure a fair market for genuinely sustainable products. Finally, facilitating cross-sector collaboration by creating platforms and incentives that encourage partnerships and knowledge-sharing between large corporations and SMEs on sustainability initiatives can leverage the resources and technical expertise of larger firms with the authenticity and local embeddedness of smaller enterprises for collective impact.

## REFERENCES


1. AfDB. “African Economic Outlook 2020.” *African Development Bank Group*, 2020, https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/african_economic_outlook_2020-en.pdf.
2. Ajzen, I. “The Theory of Planned Behavior.” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50.2, (1991): 179-211,
3. Asbullah, M., and Tarigan, B. A. “Sustainability Practices in Small Business Ventures: Assessing the Integration of Environmental and Social Responsibility in Entrepreneurial Ventures.” *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 5. 2, (2024): 1609-1619,
4. Ayandibu, A. O., and Houghton, J. “The Role of Small and Medium Scale Enterprise in Local Economic Development (Led).” *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 11. 2 (2017): 133-139,
5. Battisti, M. and Mark, P. “Walking the Talk? Environmental Responsibility from the Perspective of Small-Business Owners.” *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 18.3 (2011): 172-185,
6. Biermann, F., Kanie, N. and Kim, R. E. “Global Governance by Goal-Setting: The Novel Approach of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 26-27 (2017): 26-31
7. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.” *Qualitative research in psychology* 3.2 (2006): 77-101.
8. Capgemini, “How Sustainability Is Fundamentally Changing Consumer Preferences.” *Research Institute*, (2021), https://www.capgemini.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20-06_9880_Sustainability-in-CPR_Final_Web-1-2.pdf.
9. Carrington, M. J., Neville, B. A., & Whitwell, G. J. “Lost in Translation: Exploring the Ethical Consumer Intention–Behavior Gap.” *Journal of Business Research*, 67.1 (2014): 2759-2767.
10. Carroll, A. B. "The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders." *Business horizons* 34.4 (1991): 39-48.
11. Chen, Y. S. "The driver of green innovation and green image–green core competence." *Journal of business ethics* 81.3 (2008): 531-543.
12. Chen, Y. S., & Chang, C. H. "Greenwash and green trust: The mediation effects of green consumer confusion and green perceived risk." *Journal of business ethics* 114.3 (2013): 489-500.
13. Plano Clark, V. L. "Mixed methods research." *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 12.3 (2017): 305-306.
14. Dutta-Powell, R., Rhee, J. J., & Wodak, S. "Two interventions for mitigating the harms of greenwashing on consumer perceptions." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 33.2 (2024): 882-903.
15. Elkington, J., & Rowlands, I. H. "Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business." *Alternatives Journal* 25.4 (1999): 42.
16. Ellen, P. S., Wiener, J. L., & Cobb-Walgren, C. "The role of perceived consumer effectiveness in motivating environmentally conscious behaviors." *Journal of public policy & marketing* 10.2 (1991): 102-117.


Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

17. Fassin, Y. "SMEs and the fallacy of formalising CSR." *Business ethics: a european review* 17.4 (2008): 364-378.
18. Freeman, R. E. *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge university press, (2010)
19. García-Salirrosas, E. E., Escobar-Farfán, M., Esponda-Perez, J. A., Millones-Liza, D. Y., Villar-Guevara, M., Haro-Zea, K. L., & Gallardo-Canales, R. "The impact of perceived value on brand image and loyalty: a study of healthy food brands in emerging markets." *Frontiers in Nutrition* 11 (2024): 1482009.
20. GMG, "Are Consumers Willing to Pay a Premium for Eco-Friendly Products? A GMG, 2025 Perspective." *GMG*, (2025), https://www.gmg.com/are-consumers-willing-to-pay-a-premium-for-eco-friendly-products-a-gmg-perspective/.
21. Guo, L., & Xu, L. "The effects of digital transformation on firm performance: Evidence from China's manufacturing sector." *Sustainability* 13.22 (2021): 12844.
22. Hair, J. F., *et al*. "Multivariate Data Analysis." *8th ed., Cengage Learning*, (2019), https://books.google.com/books/about/Multivariate_Data_Analysis.html?id=0R9ZswEACAAJ.
23. Hossain, M. Z., Hossain, S., & Urme, U. N. "The Impact of Greenwashing on Consumer Trust and Brand Loyalty: The Moderating Role of Industry Type." *European Journal of Innovative Studies and Sustainability* 1.3 (2025): 121-133.
24. Jenkins, H. "Small business champions for corporate social responsibility." *Journal of business ethics* 67.3 (2006): 241-256.
25. Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. "Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches." *Sage publications*, (2024)
26. Khanal, A., Akhtaruzzaman, M., & Kularatne, I. "The influence of social media on stakeholder engagement and the corporate social responsibility of small businesses." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 28.6 (2021): 1921-1929.
27. Kirsten, F., & Eligius Biyase, M. "Environmental perceptions and sustainable consumption behavior: The disparity among South Africans." *Sustainability* 15.6 (2023): 4847.
28. Kottler, P., & Keller, K. L. "Marketing management." *Jakarta: Erlangga* (2009).
29. Manzaneque-Lizano, M., Alfaro-Cortes, E., & Priego de la Cruz, A. M. "Stakeholders and long-term sustainability of SMEs. Who really matters in crisis contexts, and when." *Sustainability* 11.23 (2019): 6551.
30. McKinsey & Company, 2023. "Do Consumers Care about Sustainability & ESG Claims?" (2023), https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/consumers-care-about-sustainability-and-back-it-up-with-their-wallets.
31. Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. and Saldaña, J. "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook." *3rd ed., SAGE Publications*, (2014), https://books.google.com/books/about/Qualitative_Data_Analysis.html?id=3CNrUbTu6CsC.
32. Nguyen, K. M., Dinh, L. T. K., Ngo, T. T., Phan, T. T. T., Nguyen, P. D. H., Tran, H. P. M., & Nguyen, N. T. "The Impact of 7Ps Green Marketing Mix on Customer Commitment and Willingness to Pay a Premium Price: Evidence from Vietnam." *Journal of Promotion Management* (2025): 1-42.
33. Nhamo, G., Dube, K., & Chikodzi, D. "Sustainable development goals: Concept and challenges of global development goal setting." *Handbook of global health*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021. 1887-1926.
34. OECD, P. "Enhancing the contributions of SMEs in a global and digitalised economy." *Paris. Retrieved Feb* 25 (2017):
35. Dennis, C., Harris, L., Peattie, K., & Crane, A. "Green marketing: legend, myth, farce or prophesy?." *Qualitative market research: an international journal* 8.4 (2005): 357-370.
36. Javaid, I., & Barabas, D. "Consumers willing to pay 9.7% sustainability premium, even as cost-of-living and inflationary concerns weigh: PwC 2024 voice of the consumer survey." (2024).
37. Ramessur, A., & Bhagwan, R. "An exploratory study on consumer concerns for the environment and its influence on purchasing behaviour in South Africa." *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development* 13.1 (2025): e04266-e04266.
38. Revell, A., & Rutherfoord, R. "UK environmental policy and the small firm:

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**

Broadening the focus." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 12.1 (2003): 26-35.
39. Salinas, G., & Abril, C. "Exploring the relationship between sustainability perceptions and brand value: how and why does perceived sustainability affect brand value?." *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC* (2025).
40. Setyaningsih, S., Widjojo, R., & Kelle, P. "Challenges and opportunities in sustainability reporting: a focus on small and medium enterprises (SMEs)." *Cogent business & management* 11.1 (2024): 2298215.
41. Spence, M. "Job market signaling." *Uncertainty in economics*. Academic Press, 1978. 281-306.
42. Spence, L. J., & Rutherfoord, R. "Small business and empirical perspectives in business ethics." *Journal of Business Ethics* 47.1 (2003): 1-5.
43. Stren, P. C. "Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behaviour." *Journal of Social Issues* 56.3 (2000): 407-424.
44. Sukresna, I. M., & Mikina, J. E. "Factors Influencing the Decision to Buy Green Products among Young Consumers in an Emerging Country." *Media Ekonomi dan Manajemen* 39.1 (2024): 183-198.
45. TerraChoice, "The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition." *TerraChoice, Environmental Marketing Inc*., (2009), https://sustainability.usask.ca/documents/Six_Sins_of_Greenwashing_nov2007.pdf.
46. Tilley, F. "The gap between the environmental attitudes and the environmental behaviour of small firms." *Business strategy and the environment* 8.4 (1999): 238-248.
47. Ekins, P., Gupta, J., & Boileau, P. "Global environment outlook–GEO-6: Healthy planet, healthy people." (2019).
48. UNIDO. "Annual Report 2019. United Nations Industrial Development Organization", (2019), https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2023-03/Annual-Report-2019-en.pdf.
49. van Tulder, "Business & the Sustainable Development Goals: A Framework for Effective Corporate Involvement." *RSM Positive Change Series*, (2018), http://hdl.handle.net/1765/110689.
50. Visser, W. "Corporate social responsibility in developing countries." (2008).
51. Volschenk, J., Gerber, C., & Santos, B. A. "The (in) ability of consumers to perceive greenwashing and its influence on purchase intent and willingness to pay." *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences* 25.1 (2022): 4553.
52. Weilbach, N. "Strategic Framework for Enhancing SMME Sustainability: Insights from the Northern Cape Province, South Africa." *Open Journal of Business and Management* 13.2 (2025): 946-967.
53. Young, W., Hwang, K., McDonald, S., & Oates, C. J. "Sustainable consumption: green consumer behaviour when purchasing products." *Sustainable development* 18.1 (2010): 20-31

**Source of support:**Nil; **Conflict of interest:** Nil.

**Cite this article as:**
Paul, G. C. "Consumer Perception of Sustainability in Africa." *Sarcouncil Journal of Economics and Business Management* 4.8 (2025): pp 1-13.

Copyright © 2022 The Author(s): This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) International License



**Publisher: SARC Publisher**