



WOMEN'S HOUSEHOLD INVOLVEMENT AND DECISIONS ON GREEN CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

This article presents a conceptual inquiry into gender and green consumption with a focus on how social constructions position women as household managers and how this shapes the purchase of environmentally friendly products. The paper argues that women's everyday decisions about food, cleaning agents, and household supplies are embedded in gendered divisions of labour, unequal control over financial resources, and normative expectations about care for family health and nature. Green consumption is described as part of domestic routines rather than a purely individual lifestyle choice, influenced by marketing discourses that celebrate women as guardians of the home and the earth. The discussion highlights tensions between moral expectations directed at women and the structural limits they face when prices, time constraints, and information asymmetries restrict choices. By linking household decision making, gendered identities, and market representations, the article outlines a conceptual frame that can guide future empirical research and help policymakers and businesses design more gender aware approaches to sustainable consumption in everyday life.

Keywords: gender, women, green consumption, household management, social construction, environmental marketing, sustainable purchasing.

Introduction

Changes in household consumption patterns in this century have been significantly influenced by a growing awareness of environmental vulnerability and the limitations of natural resources. Products that claim to be environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, easily recyclable, or produced through more ethical production processes are increasingly present on store shelves, digital platforms, and promotional materials. In public spaces, issues such as global warming, plastic pollution, and ecosystem degradation have become part of everyday conversations, both within families, communities, and the media. However, behind this shift lies a social process that shapes how consumption decisions are made and who is considered responsible for managing household expenditures. In many societies, the division of domestic labor still tends to direct women toward the roles of shopping managers, kitchen managers, and guardians of the continuity of daily family needs (D'Souza & Taghian, 2017). This position places women at the intersection of economic demands, cultural values, and moral encouragement to be more sensitive to environmental issues in every purchasing decision. This phenomenon is also often associated with how communication regarding sustainability and green marketing can influence consumer awareness of the importance of protecting the environment through the choice of products used (Essa & Mardikaningsih, 2021).

Social constructions regarding masculinity and femininity also influence how society interprets environmental concern (Dzialo, 2017). Stereotypes that associate women with gentleness, care, and closeness to nature frequently appear in public discourse, both through advertisements, media narratives, and informal conversations. Meanwhile, men are often portrayed as more closely related to the realms of production, technology, and economic performance. Within the household framework, such divisions lead to the assumption that women are more closely involved with activities such as choosing food ingredients, cleaning products, and other household equipment that may influence the environmental footprint of the family. This construction does not arise naturally but is nurtured by traditions, education, and everyday social practices that place the management of consumption as part of women's responsibilities. Understanding these social roles is also related to how individual behavior is shaped by values, norms, and habits that develop within society (Darmawan, 2013).

The development of environmental movements and green marketing increasingly utilizes the image of women as both targets and drivers of more ecologically conscious consumption (Fontes et al., 2021). Campaigns for environmentally friendly household products often portray the figure of a mother caring for children, maintaining household cleanliness, and making purchasing decisions while considering the future of the planet. Such portrayals convey the message that a good woman is one who is able to combine domestic responsibility with ecological awareness. On the one hand, this narrative encourages the emergence of a new identity for women as agents of change in consumption. On the other hand, there is a risk of excessive moral burden when the responsibility for protecting the environment appears to be placed on women's shoulders through shopping choices, while other structural dimensions contributing to environmental damage receive less attention. Efforts to protect the environment actually require the involvement of many parties, including local communities that possess knowledge and social practices supporting environmental sustainability (Nurmalasari & Nuraini, 2021).

Within the household sphere, decisions to purchase environmentally friendly products are often the result of informal negotiations among family members (Wang, 2016). Women, particularly those fulfilling the role of housewives, are frequently in the position of balancing considerations of price, quality, convenience, and ecological claims. The decision to choose biodegradable detergents, reusable shopping bags, or organic food, for example, cannot be separated from budget calculations and the responses of other family members to changes in habits. Children may demand products that are more attractive in terms of lifestyle, while partners may hold different views regarding the importance of environmental commitments. Amid these various considerations, women often function as interpreters of environmental values within the limits of real family space and resources, making green consumption decisions a reflection of complex negotiations. In addition, purchasing decisions in everyday life are often influenced by psychological factors and consumption habits that develop within the social environment of society (Darmawan & Gatheru, 2021).

At a broader social structural level, public policies, cultural norms, and marketing practices influence the extent to which women have the space and support to choose environmentally friendly products (Smith, 2010). In

societies that still consider major financial decisions as the domain of men, women may face limitations in adopting green products whose prices are relatively higher. In other situations, women working in the formal sector must divide their attention between work demands and managing household consumption, leaving limited time to seek information about the environmental attributes of a product. Differences in social class, education level, and access to information also shape variations in how women perceive and practice green consumption. Therefore, the relationship between gender and green consumption requires an understanding that is sensitive to women's experiences within both social and domestic spaces simultaneously. This also highlights the importance of public policies capable of balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects in efforts to encourage sustainability practices within society (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021).

The emerging issue is that the social construction positioning women as household managers is often accompanied by the expectation that women will naturally become the primary drivers of green consumption. This assumption tends to overlook the reality that women do not always have full control over economic resources and strategic family decisions. In some cases, although women are responsible for managing daily needs, the final decision regarding the type of product purchased, especially those involving significant expenditures, remains in the hands of men (Stanley, 2015). In addition, the double burden between domestic and public work may reduce women's capacity to consistently select products based on environmental considerations. When these structural dimensions are ignored, the discourse of green consumption that highlights women risks reinforcing stereotypes without providing real support for empowerment. This situation is also related to social changes occurring in modern society, where various aspects of life, including gender roles, continue to undergo adjustments in line with technological developments and social dynamics (Darmawan et al., 2021).

Another issue relates to the way green marketing utilizes the image of women as guardians of the environment without always examining whether the ecological claims of products truly reduce environmental damage. Women, who are often inundated with moral messages regarding responsibility for family health and environmental preservation, become intensive targets of promotions for products labeled as green. In situations of unequal knowledge and complex technical information, women may become

trapped in consuming products that merely appear symbolically green (Grønhøj & Ölander, 2007). Social constructions that emphasize the morality of women's consumption can transform into psychological pressure when they feel guilty if they do not choose products claimed to be environmentally friendly, even though the family's economic conditions do not yet allow it. Thus, there is a tension between the normative ideal of green consumption and the social realities faced by women. In addition, urban dynamics and social inequality can also influence people's access to information and to products that are more environmentally friendly (Mardikaningsih, 2021).

The urgency of preparing a literature study on gender and green consumption lies in the need to reorganize the understanding of women's position within the discourse of sustainability. On the one hand, women are often praised as agents of change because of their proximity to domestic activities and the management of family needs. On the other hand, they face social, economic, and cultural structures that do not always provide space for autonomous and environmentally oriented decision making. A well-directed conceptual study can help unravel how social constructions positioning women as household managers shape consumption patterns, while also examining the limits and potential of these constructions for the development of more gender-just green consumption. Without a structured understanding, the discourse on women and green consumption risks becoming trapped in a romanticization that is insensitive to real conditions.

The purpose of this study is to develop a systematic conceptual description of the relationship between gender and green consumption by focusing on the social construction that positions women as household managers and its impact on purchasing decisions for environmentally friendly products. This paper aims to explain how the division of domestic labor and feminine stereotypes shape women's positions in consumption decision making, to describe how marketing discourse and environmental movements utilize the image of women, and to map the implications of gender justice within green consumption practices. From a theoretical perspective, this study is expected to contribute an analytical framework for gender and sustainability studies. From a practical perspective, this discussion is expected to provide guidance for policymakers and business actors in designing green consumption initiatives that are more sensitive to gender relations within the household.

Method

This study is a qualitative literature study used as the primary foundation for preparing this article. Snyder (2019) explains that a literature review can stand as an independent research methodology when it is conducted systematically, transparently, and directed toward clear objectives. In Snyder's view, researchers need to formulate research questions, criteria for selecting sources, and a synthesis approach from the outset. Mohajan (2018) emphasizes that qualitative methodology in the social sciences provides broad space for interpretation, so researchers must maintain clarity regarding their position and the limitations of their study. Within this framework, the author chose not to collect field data but instead to examine scholarly works discussing gender, green consumption, households, and environmental discourse, and then to assemble their conceptual findings into a coherent line of argument.

Frank and Hatak (2014) provide practical guidance on how to construct a high-quality literature review for the field of entrepreneurship, which can be extended to other social themes. They emphasize the importance of mapping the theoretical field, identifying major debates, and highlighting gaps in understanding that remain open. This guideline is adopted in the preparation of this article by grouping reference sources into several clusters, such as literature on gender construction within households, writings on green consumption behavior, and works that highlight green marketing and the representation of women. The author attempts to ensure that the discussion presented is not merely a list of citations, but rather a conceptual synthesis sufficient to address the research problem that has been established.

Result and Discussion

The social construction that positions women as household managers is rooted in the traditional division of labor that separates domestic and public spheres. The domestic sphere is associated with activities such as caregiving, cooking, cleaning, and managing daily needs, while the public sphere is often linked with productive market-oriented activities (Chatzidakis & Maclaran, 2020). The placement of women in the task of managing consumption makes them directly involved in the process of selecting goods and services that enter the household. From the perspective of green

consumption, this position provides women with greater opportunities to bring environmental considerations into everyday purchasing decisions. However, these opportunities come together with limitations determined by power structures within the household, social values regarding propriety, and the affordability of environmentally friendly products available in the market. Consumer decisions when choosing products are also often influenced by service quality and the shopping experience they encounter, including transactions through digital platforms (Fared et al., 2021).

Green consumption decisions are never purely a matter of individual preference, but rather the result of a series of social processes involving negotiations within the family and the influence of societal norms. Women who manage household shopping often face moral encouragement to choose products that are safe for family health and recommended for environmental preservation. At the same time, they encounter budget pressures, the preferences of other family members, and limited time to filter information (D'Souza & Taghian, 2017). In such circumstances, green consumption becomes a practice embedded in domestic routines, not always celebrated as a political act, yet rich in ethical meaning. Conceptual analysis of this practice needs to appreciate the everyday experiences of women who combine environmental concern with reproductive work that is often less visible. This shows that consumption decisions do not stand alone but are influenced by various social and economic factors as well as consumer experiences in interacting with the market (Negara et al., 2021).

The gender dimension in green consumption also appears in the form of stereotypes regarding environmental preferences and competencies. Women are often associated with emotional concern for nature, children, and future generations, as if such concern were inherently attached to feminine identity. Men are sometimes portrayed as less likely to prioritize environmental aspects in purchasing decisions because they are considered more focused on the technical function and economic performance of products. Such stereotypes help explain why many advertisements for green products, especially those intended for household use, are directed toward women (Fisher et al., 2012). However, these stereotypes may obscure real variations in practice, such as men who actively participate in managing green consumption or women who are not particularly interested in environmental issues due to other factors. Careful conceptual studies need to avoid excessive

generalization that reinforces rigid gender role divisions. In the business world, understanding consumer characteristics is important so that marketing strategies can be developed more appropriately and not rely solely on stereotypical assumptions (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2021).

The construction of women as guardians of the household and the environment creates space for the emergence of a new identity as ethical consumers. In this narrative, women who choose environmentally friendly products are seen as responsible, modern, and well-informed individuals. This identity can become a source of pride and social recognition, especially among middle-class groups who associate green lifestyles with certain moral status (Chatzidakis & Maclaran, 2020). However, there is also a problematic side when this identity requires financial capacity to access green products that are often more expensive. As a result, women from economically disadvantaged groups may feel marginalized or judged as less concerned about the environment simply because they cannot afford products with green labels. In this context, the discourse of green consumption has the potential to create new lines of division among women based on class and market access. Support from community economic institutions such as cooperatives and community organizations can also help expand people's access to various needs more fairly (Wiyandarini et al., 2021).

Within the household framework, women stand at the intersection of short-term and long-term interests. Short-term considerations include the need to provide affordable food, cleanliness, and comfort on a daily basis. Long-term considerations relate to the desire to protect family health and environmental sustainability for future generations (Peattie, 2010). Environmentally friendly products are often positioned as a bridge between these two types of interests, for example through claims of being safe for children's skin while also reducing waste. Women who manage consumption must weigh the extent to which such claims can be trusted compared with conventional products that are cheaper and have long been used. Uncertainty of information and the gap in technical knowledge between producers and consumers make the decision-making process complicated, even though it may appear simple on the surface.

The role of green marketing in shaping the representation of women is very strong. Many campaigns portray women as figures who shop while carrying reusable bags, organize kitchens without single-use plastics, and

teach children to sort waste (Brough et al., 2016). These representations can provide inspiration and behavioral models for some women. However, the use of such imagery also has the potential to reinforce the idea that activities such as sorting waste and managing the logistics of green consumption are natural responsibilities of women. Meanwhile, men often appear in advertisements as experts in green technology or leaders of sustainable companies. Such visual divisions symbolically extend the gender division of labor between technical and domestic spheres within environmental discourse.

An analysis of the relationship between gender and green consumption needs to consider the interaction between patriarchal structures and household economic dynamics. In some families, although women manage daily shopping, decisions regarding major budget allocations remain in the hands of men. This limits women's flexibility to shift spending toward environmentally friendly products that may be more expensive. In addition, women who work outside the home also carry the dual burden of domestic and professional responsibilities, leaving very limited time to research products and design green consumption patterns (Ertemel & Turkoglu, 2017). In such circumstances, green consumption is often practiced only to the extent that products are easily accessible, the information is clear, and they do not significantly add complexity to domestic work. In other words, economic power structures and the division of labor strongly influence the concrete form of green consumption within households.

The relationship between environmental education and women's green consumption is also worthy of conceptual analysis. Women's involvement in community activities, religious study groups, social gatherings, and local organizations can become important channels for spreading green values. In many places, regular gatherings of women serve as spaces for exchanging information about products, recipes, and household habits considered healthier and more environmentally friendly (Fontes et al., 2021). Practices such as sharing plant seeds, homemade food recipes, or ways to reduce plastic waste often begin with informal communication. In this context, women's social networks function as an important medium for disseminating ideas of green consumption long before these ideas are formalized in policies or official programs.

The dimension of intersectionality adds depth to understanding women's involvement in green consumption. Women from different social classes, ethnic groups, age groups, and geographic regions experience relationships with green consumption differently. Middle-income urban women may associate green consumption with lifestyle choices, such as purchasing organic products in supermarkets or following minimalist trends. Women in rural areas with limited market access may have long practiced forms of consumption closer to sustainability principles, for example by reusing goods, growing some of their own food, and reducing dependence on packaged products (Fan & Joffre, 2020). However, such practices are rarely recognized as green consumption because they are not associated with labels and narratives of the modern market. A literature review that is sensitive to this diversity can avoid narrowing the meaning of green consumption to only certain shopping patterns.

Men's involvement in household green consumption often receives less attention, even though the success of strengthening such practices depends on the support of all family members. If green consumption is perceived as solely a women's agenda, there is a risk that men may feel no obligation to adjust their preferences and habits (Sakellari & Skanavis, 2013). For example, requests to reduce meat consumption, use shared transportation, or limit the use of air conditioning require behavioral changes from all members of the household. Women may initiate changes through the selection of food ingredients and household equipment, but without the willingness of men and boys to participate, the effectiveness will remain limited. Therefore, discussions on gender and green consumption should encourage reflection on how environmental responsibility can be shared more equitably within the household.

Normatively, green consumption is often associated with an ethic of care that emphasizes the values of empathy, attention to vulnerability, and responsibility across generations. These values, in many gender traditions, are associated with feminine traits, creating an alignment between the image of women and the ethics of environmental care (McCright & Xiao, 2014). This alignment can become a strength when encouraging women to expand their moral influence into the public sphere, for example through green consumer movements or environmental communities. However, when the ethic of care is attached too strongly to women, it can

obscure the fact that men also possess equal capacity and responsibility to develop ethical sensitivity toward the planet. Therefore, conceptual studies need to critically examine the ways in which the ethic of care is excessively attributed to a single gender.

Environmental policy discourse at national and regional levels increasingly uses the term sustainable consumption as part of development targets. However, the connection between such policies and the daily lives of women within households is not always explicit. Programs aimed at reducing plastic bags, managing waste, and improving energy efficiency often require changes in domestic habits that are largely carried out by women (Fan & Joffre, 2020). Without adequate infrastructure support, such as recycling facilities and good access to public transportation, the burden of implementing these policies can feel heavy at the household level. In this context, conceptual studies on gender and green consumption can help highlight the gap between policy language and the reality of household management, while also reminding policymakers that women should not be positioned as the primary implementers of policy without structural reforms that support them.

The relationship between religion, cultural values, and women's green consumption also provides a rich area of analysis. Many religious teachings and local traditions emphasize simplicity, avoidance of wastefulness, and responsibility for safeguarding the Earth. Women who act as the first educators for children at home often use these values to shape family habits (Hosseinnezhad, 2017). For example, encouraging family members to finish their food, reduce water waste, and share with neighbors in need. Everyday practices framed by such spiritual values can be understood as a foundation for green consumption that is not always expressed in the language of the modern marketplace. Recognizing this dimension helps prevent an overly technocratic understanding of green consumption and opens possibilities for approaches that are more sensitive to local wisdom.

In the academic sphere, studies on gender and green consumption represent an intersection between consumption theory, gender studies, and sustainability theory. The concept of the rational consumer who is driven solely by price considerations and the technical quality of products becomes insufficient to explain household consumption patterns that are rich in values and emotions. Women as household managers often make decisions

by considering symbolic meanings, social expectations, and self-narratives as good mothers or responsible citizens (Strapko et al., 2016). Meanwhile, gender theory helps explain how patriarchal structures, constructions of masculinity and femininity, and power relations within families shape women's opportunities to adopt green practices. Combining these two perspectives opens a path to understanding green consumption as part of identity and power negotiations.

Market responses to the segment of female consumers interested in environmental issues have created new categories of specially packaged products. Labels, colors, and marketing messages are designed to attract women, for example by emphasizing softness, beauty, or maternal nuances in green products. On the one hand, this approach can help increase access to and interest in products that are objectively more environmentally friendly. On the other hand, such marketing practices may reinforce gender stereotypes that confine women to the domestic sphere (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2014). In fact, some green products aimed at women may encourage new forms of consumerism, for instance through the promotion of green goods that are not truly necessary. Careful analysis is therefore required to distinguish between green consumption that genuinely reduces environmental burdens and green consumption that is more symbolic in nature.

Generational change also influences the relationship between gender and green consumption (Shiel et al., 2020). Younger generations, both women and men, grow up with more intensive exposure to environmental information and digital technologies that facilitate access to product information. Young women living in large cities may have different views about the division of domestic labor and obligations related to green consumption compared with their mothers' generation. They may demand a more equal distribution of tasks and invite their partners to participate in environmentally friendly consumption decisions. At the same time, they are also confronted with consumerist lifestyle pressures on social media that may conflict with sustainability principles (Darmawan, 2020). These changes suggest that the social construction of women and green consumption is not static but continuously negotiated within family and public spaces.

In discussions of environmental justice, women are often identified as a group more affected by environmental degradation due to their involvement in managing household water, food, and energy (Menton et al.,

2020). This situation provides a moral basis for recognizing women's experiences as an important source of knowledge in designing green consumption policies. However, such recognition only becomes meaningful if it is accompanied by women's participation in decision-making at various levels, from the household to public institutions. Otherwise, women will continue to be positioned merely as implementers of policy at the household level without the opportunity to shape the policies that affect them. Therefore, gender-sensitive green consumption requires a connection between women's voices in private spaces and the formulation of environmental agendas in public spaces.

Through this conceptual discussion, it becomes clear that the relationship between gender, the social construction of women as household managers, and green consumption is a field of study rich with nuance (Godin & Longlois, 2021). Decisions to purchase environmentally friendly products cannot be separated from household power structures, cultural norms, gender identities, economic access, and the ways in which markets position women. A sharper understanding of these dynamics is important to avoid placing excessive moral burdens on women while also recognizing their potential as important agents of change in consumption patterns. Literature studies provide space to organize scattered ideas and arrange them into a framework that can serve as a foundation for future empirical studies as well as policy formulation.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from this conceptual discussion is that the relationship between gender and green consumption, particularly the involvement of women as household managers, is the result of complex and continually evolving social constructions. The positioning of women in the role of managing household consumption creates opportunities for them to guide households toward more environmentally friendly choices, but it also places them under moral pressure when economic and social structures do not provide sufficient support. Green marketing, the discourse of the ethics of care, and environmental policies often employ the image of women as the primary agents of change, while the dimensions of power and the distribution of responsibility among family members have not always been critically examined. Therefore, understanding green consumption will

become more comprehensive when gender relations, the division of domestic labor, and the diverse experiences of women across different classes, generations, and communities are taken into account.

The implications of this study highlight the importance of designing green consumption initiatives that consider gender justice and do not construct women as the sole bearers of the sustainability agenda within households. Policymakers, business actors, and civil society organizations are encouraged to develop programs that involve all family members, including men and boys, in actively participating in changes toward more sustainable consumption patterns. In the academic sphere, empirical studies examining real household practices across various social layers will be valuable for testing and enriching the conceptual framework presented in this article. For education and public campaigns, messages about green consumption should be designed to appreciate women's contributions without adding to the structural burdens they already carry, while simultaneously encouraging a more balanced distribution of responsibility in protecting the environment.

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