



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identifying Factors Affecting Ethical Consumption among Customers: Evidence from Iraq

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 16, 2024	<p>This research endeavor aimed to discern the principal determinants that impact customers' behavior when engaging in ethical consumption. A thorough examination was carried out on 45 academic papers. For selecting the articles to be reviewed, only articles published in journals that were in English and had been published between 2018 and 2024 were considered from among the articles related to the field of ethical consumption. The data that followed was carefully examined. The outcomes of this scrutiny were systematically classified into four distinct categories: Environmental and Social Awareness, Personal Values and Commitment, Attention to the facts, desire to know,, and Lifestyle and Habits. These delineated categories shed light on the intricate web of interconnected factors that mold ethical consumption decisions, encompassing the significance attributed to environmental preservation, human rights advocacy, product integrity, and societal obligations. Moreover, it was discerned that personal values, familial inclinations, and peer pressure exert notable influence in this realm. The conclusions drawn from this investigation offer invaluable insights for enterprises, policymakers, and individuals desiring to foster sustainable and ethically sound consumption practices.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Identifying the factors that impact ethical consumption among customers holds paramount importance for various significant reasons within consumer behavior analysis. The existing gap between people's ethical beliefs and their actual buying habits is often influenced by many factors, such as price, quality, taste, brand image, and convenience. Exploring these factors can help bridge this gap, as explained by Berki-Kiss and Menrad (2022). This profound comprehension plays a pivotal role in empowering marketers to formulate more robust strategies that resonate with the values and

driving forces of consumers, encompassing aspects like green consumption values, consumer knowledge, attitudes, and emotions, all of which wield a substantial influence on the inclination to procure ethically sound products, as expounded by Hussain & Dar (2021). Moreover, an in-depth acknowledgment of factors such as social desirability bias and individual orientations like person orientation (PO) and thing orientation (TO) can furnish valuable insights into the intricate landscape of ethical consumer behavior, as posited by Joshi & Singh (2021) and Mehfooz Khan & Siddiqui (2019). The considerations extend to environmental concerns, social value, and the aspiration for elevated social status, all of which emerge as pivotal drivers motivating ethical consumption, particularly in burgeoning markets where ethical products are still in the nascent stages of emergence, as noted by Romoñi-Maniu (2021). By assimilating a comprehensive understanding of these diverse factors, enterprises can tailor their marketing endeavors to cater to distinct consumer segments, thereby facilitating a more efficacious promotion of ethical products and fostering the adoption of sustainable practices.

Furthermore, the ramifications of hedonic and utilitarian motivations on purchasing behaviors, spanning cognitive, affective, and impulsive dimensions, underscore ethical consumption's intricate nature and the necessity for precision-targeted marketing approaches, as delineated by Budhathoki (2019). Lastly, the escalating cognizance surrounding ethical consumption and its profound impact on consumer conduct underscores the criticality of ethical marketing practices. It underscores the imperative for corporations to embrace environmentally conscious initiatives to align with consumer expectations, as advocated by Barati Teimouri (2021). In essence, identifying these multifaceted factors is fundamental for nurturing a more sustainable economic framework and elevating the prevalence of ethical consumption among customers, as Ghali (2021) underscored. In this study, our goal is to answer the question, what factors affect ethical consumption according to previous studies conducted between 2018 and 20224?

This study is designed to delineate the various factors that impact ethical consumption by meticulously examining the available literature. The research endeavors to make significant contributions and address the existing gaps in the literature on this subject matter in the following manner: Research Contribution The primary contribution of this research lies in its endeavor to enhance the comprehension of ethical consumption patterns by meticulously scrutinizing the prevailing literature and pinpointing the pivotal factors that wield influence over consumers' decisions when it comes to ethical purchasing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical consumption pertains to the deliberate and conscientious process through which individuals make decisions regarding the acquisition or avoidance of goods and services, a process rooted in moral principles, cultural inclinations, and specific lifestyle preferences rather than being solely driven by financial motives, as highlighted by Lewis and Potter (2013). This phenomenon is underpinned by a myriad of intrinsic drivers, such as environmentally friendly consumption values, consumer expertise, attitudes, and emotions, all of which play a pivotal role in shaping the inclination towards procuring products that are ethically produced, as expounded by Berki-Kiss and Menrad (2022). The scope of ethical consumption is expansive, encompassing a diverse array of commodities and concerns, ranging from issues of fair trade, ecological sustainability, to social well-being, and is intricately intertwined with the societal and economic milieus within which consumers are situated, as posited by Rohmana (2021). Furthermore, ethical consumption is heavily influenced by religious and cultural ideologies, as exemplified by the Islamic moral code of consumption ethics, which underscores principles of equilibrium, equity, and the rejection of excessive consumption to foster societal welfare and spiritual contentment, as elucidated by Fenwick (2022).

This multifaceted phenomenon of ethical consumption entails positive dimensions, such as economic advancement, and negative dimensions, including instances of exploitation and avarice, thereby

giving rise to significant ethical dilemmas concerning accountability and independence in consumer behaviors, as discussed by Komninou (2023). Ethical consumption practices extend beyond mere acts of supporting or abstaining from specific products but encompass a broader spectrum of consumer behaviors that reflect political involvement and democratic participation, as articulated by Backović and Petrović (2021). The pivotal role played by sociotechnical frameworks, incorporating technological advancements, cultural norms, market dynamics, and regulatory mechanisms, cannot be overstated in comprehending the underlying structural determinants that influence patterns of ethical consumption among individuals, as emphasized by Karimzadeh and Boström (2022). In regions characterized by developing economies, ethical consumption is frequently steered by religious beliefs and a propensity for frugality. This underscores the imperative to grasp the diverse motivations prevalent across various societies. Effectual communication strategies and a commitment to transparency regarding the ethical aspects of products are indispensable in aligning consumer perceptions with ethical standards, thereby fostering enduring social transformations, as underscored by Hasan et al. (2023). Ethical consumption emerges as a complex interplay between individual motivations, cultural norms, and structural frameworks, collectively shaping conscientious consumer conduct.

Limitations of the previous studies

A notable limitation in the current body of literature is that most studies concerning ethical consumption have been carried out in developed nations, thereby creating a conspicuous void in the comprehension of ethical consumption behaviors exhibited by consumers in developing nations. On the other hand, a prevalent issue within ethical consumption studies is the reliance on theoretical frameworks rather than empirical research. This deficiency in empirical data hinders the comprehensive understanding of the determinants that mold decisions related to ethical consumption.

Although the significance of situational factors is acknowledged, their exploration remains incomplete in the existing research. This lacuna underscores the necessity for further investigations to shed light on how situational factors, such as the restricted availability of ethical products, impact the decisions concerning ethical consumption. In addition, Post-purchase elements, including emotions like guilt, are acknowledged as influential factors; however, their exploration in the existing body of research is not exhaustive. This gap underscores the urgency for additional studies to unravel the mechanisms through which these factors sway decisions regarding ethical consumption. Finally, the prevailing research predominantly concentrates on the attitudes and intentions of consumers, neglecting the intricate facets of consumer behavior. This gap accentuates the exigency for further research endeavors aimed at unraveling consumers' decision-making processes and how these processes shape decisions related to ethical consumption. In conclusion, the overarching goal of this study is to bridge these gaps by conducting a comprehensive examination of the existing literature and delineating the key factors that impact decisions related to ethical consumption.

METHODOLOGY

The ongoing research constitutes a qualitative investigation grounded in the fundamental principles of the interpretive paradigm, which serves as the overarching framework guiding the study. The methodology adopted in this research involves utilizing a thematic analysis approach, a systematic and rigorous method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. The most relevant articles related to the present research, which were in English and had been published in reputable journals, were reviewed by searching for articles related to the keyword "ethical consumption". To limit the number of articles in the Google Scholar search engine, the time period from 2018 to 2024 was considered. The primary themes encapsulating the various factors influencing ethical consumption behavior have been unearthed and delineated through a meticulous coding process. The intricate process of thematic analysis is meticulously detailed in Table 1, providing a

comprehensive overview of the analytical steps undertaken. Initially, the salient sentences within the selected articles were pinpointed to lay the foundation for subsequent analysis. Subsequently, secondary codes were derived from these key sentences, forming the basis for further exploration. By interlinking the related codes, overarching sub-themes emerged, further categorized into four distinct main theme categories, offering a structured framework for analysis and interpretation.

The initial phase of the analysis involved immersing oneself in the 45 identified articles, and meticulously reading and reviewing each publication to gain a profound understanding of the content therein. Following this data familiarization stage, significant statements and phrases pertaining to the factors influencing ethical consumption were systematically identified and coded, marking the inception of the analytical process. The ensuing phase entailed a meticulous search for themes, whereby the initial codes were scrutinized and consolidated to delineate potential sub-themes encapsulating the core ideas embedded within the data. Subsequently, a rigorous review and refinement of these sub-themes were conducted to ensure their fidelity and distinctiveness, thereby enhancing the robustness of the analysis. By meticulously defining and naming themes, four overarching theme categories were delineated based on the emergent patterns discerned within the data, thereby providing a coherent framework for organizing the findings.

The credibility of the research findings was rigorously assessed in accordance with the criteria espoused by Guba and Lincoln (1994), encompassing dimensions such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This comprehensive evaluation framework served as a cornerstone for ensuring the robustness and trustworthiness of the research outcomes. By meticulously adhering to the thematic analysis approach, the study systematically unraveled and classified the key determinants underpinning the implementation of green marketing strategies, drawing upon a detailed scrutiny of the 45 pertinent articles. In line with the principles delineated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), the data underwent a stringent authentication process to gauge the reliability and validity of the research outcomes, thus bolstering the credibility of the study.

To fortify the authenticity and rigor of the research outcomes, the extracted codes were scrutinized by a panel of esteemed experts in the field of marketing, seeking their expert evaluation of the accuracy and coherence of the coding process. The qualitative data analysis, imbued with nuanced meanings and insights, was further scrutinized and refined through in-depth discussions with five proficient experts well-versed in qualitative analysis techniques. Moreover, to ensure the auditability of the data collection process and the inference of study results with a consistent lens, the study meticulously adhered to Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step analysis process, thereby fortifying the robustness of the analytical framework. Expert opinions were also sought to expound on the underlying themes and thematic clusters embedded within the study results, drawing upon the insights and expertise of seasoned professionals in the field (Morrow et al., 2015). Lastly, to mitigate bias and uphold impartiality throughout the research process and in the ensuing results, the researcher endeavored to engage with the qualitative data presented in the articles realistically, thereby ensuring the verifiability and integrity of the study outcomes.

Table 1 : Coding process in the thematic analysis process

Initial concepts	Sub-themes	Main themes	(number) Sources
Environmental concerns (concern about water resources, air pollution, soil pollution, global warming, living species, etc.)	Prioritizing Environmental Conservation in Consumption Behavior		1.Nie et al., 2021 2.Askholm & Gram-Hanssen, 2022 3.Touchette & Nepomuceno, 2020

Initial concepts	Sub-themes	Main themes	(number) Sources	
The importance of supporting national production	The importance of focusing on human rights and altruism	Environmental and Social Awareness	4.Kosnik, 2018 5.Berkey, 2024 6.Hasanzade et al., 2022	
The importance of supporting national production	The importance of paying attention to product healthiness		7. Stoltenberg et al., 2022 5.Berkey, 2024 40. Smith (2018)	
Concern about human rights				
Commercial justice				
Attention to development and social responsibility Social network's effect	The significance of considering the ethical behavior of companies and brands		8. Karimzadeh & Boström, 2022 41. Nassani (2023) 34. Akintimehin, Phau et al., 2022 42. Yoon, 2020	
Attention to ethics in communication with customers				
Paying attention to maintaining product quality				
Honesty and transparency in the product production process				
Judging others			The importance of social and local regulations	9. Adil, 2022 10. Suddaby, 2019 7. Stoltenberg et al., 2022
Ethnic credibility				
Religious gatherings				
Local communities				
Easy payment Price Perceived income	The importance of simplicity and ease of the purchase process	11. Chang, 2021 12. Prasad & Mitra, 2022 13. Stringer, 2023 14.Dorsaf et al., 2020 43. Oke (2020) 45. Chowdhury, 2023		
Purchase from acquaintances	Maturity and personal moral commitment	Personal Values and Commitment	15. Berki-Kiss & Menrad, 2022 43. Oke (2020)	
Husband Children relatives	Ensuring family preferences		16. Chumsakwinit, & Laohavichien, 2021 17. García Ruiz & Rodríguez Lluesma, 2019	
Locally produced goods Handmade goods	Preference to use personal and familial products		18. Hussain & Dar, 2021 16. Chumsakwinit & Laohavichien, 2021	
Desire to be seen Being famous	The effect of influencers		19. Gentina et al., 2018 20. Ivaniushina et al., 2019 21. Nagarajan et al., 2022	
Discussions and exchange of opinions	Peer influence			
Satisfaction and persuasion of peers to buy				
Fear of criticism from peers				

Initial concepts	Sub-themes	Main themes	(number) Sources	
Showing successful examples and satisfaction from buying products				
Positive experiences with products and services	Brand and fame		22. Tofighi et al., 2020 23. Dalman et al., 2020 24. Lee & Jin, 2019	
Feeling of belonging to the brand				
Acquiring identity through a deep connection with the brand				
Sharing views, experiences, and opinions on social media	Social media advertising		25. Nabi et al., 2020 26. Qureshi & Gopal, 2023 27. Abner et al., 2020 28. Ryoo et al., 2024	
The impact of social advertising on consumer preferences				
Inclusion of ethical shopping values in advertising	Disregarding the product's quality	Attention to the facts and desire to know	29. Stiefenhofer & Zhang, 2022 30. Rasheed & Afzal, 2020 31. Saine et al., 2021 43. Oke, 2020	
Failure to pay attention to the production method and origin of goods	Lack of knowledge and deep understanding of the concept of ethical shopping			
Failure to pay attention to the label of goods				
Ignoring ethical consumption values				
Meaninglessness of ethical consumption				
Ignoring the disadvantages of products	Neglecting one's social responsibility			34. Akintimehin, Phau et al., 2022 44. Reczek, 2018
Ignoring the environment				
Ignoring the long-term consequences of unethical purchases				
Willfully ignorant memory is a coping mechanism for want/should conflict	Unawareness of one's role in social and environmental developments			35. De Jonge et al., 2020 36. Caldwell et al., 2020
Considering the problems to be bigger than one's ability to change				
Lack of necessary training				
Lack of belief in one's role in social developments	Purchasing Based on Immediate and Routine Needs		37. Mehfooz Khan & Siddiqui, 2019	
Buying without prior planning and decision				
Purchase without checking the goods	Habits	Lifestyle and Habits	38. Sacchi, 2018	
Reluctance to deep analysis				

Initial concepts	Sub-themes	Main themes	(number) Sources
Reluctance to spend more energy on shopping			37. Mehfooz Khan & Siddiqui, 2019
Reluctance to change options			
Selection of high-quality products	Avoiding overconsumption and practicing moderation		7. Stoltenberg et al., 2022
Choosing products for longer use			Coffin & Egan-Wyer, 2022
Avoiding unnecessary purchases			8. Karimzadeh & Boström, 2022
Obsession with shopping			
Voluntary simplicity			
Shopping based on excitement and special discounts	Emotional Shopping Behaviors		Zollo, 2021
Buy based on the approval and opinion of others			37. Mehfooz Khan & Siddiqui, 2019
Buying based on imitation of others			38. Gayathree & Samarasinghe, 2019
Buying under the influence of advertising and marketing			Singh et al., 2018 39. Escadas et al., 2019

Based on this analysis, it can be said that the factors affecting ethical consumption are as shown in Figure 1:

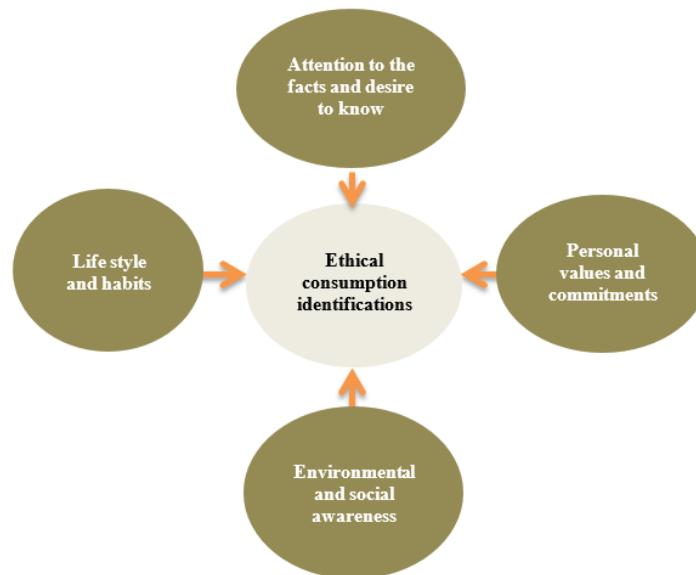


Figure 1: factors affecting ethical consumption

As Figure 1 shows, there are four factors affecting ethical consumption. Among them, lifestyle and habits encompass three key indicators:

Shopping behavior driven by immediate and routine necessities pertains to the inclination towards prioritizing immediate and routine needs rather than focusing on long-term sustainability and ethical

implications. For instance, consumers may opt for the most economical choice instead of selecting a more sustainable or ethically sourced product.

Habits: This aspect involves the fundamental actions and patterns influencing an individual's consumption behaviors. For instance, an individual accustomed to purchasing fast fashion items may persist in doing so despite being cognizant of the environmental and social ramifications.

Avoiding excessive consumption and practicing moderation: This factor entails a deliberate endeavor to steer clear of excessive consumption and embrace a more balanced approach. This may involve practices such as purchasing only essential items, minimizing waste, and adopting a minimalist way of life.

The second factor is attention to the facts and the desire to know. This factor encompasses four key indicators:

Neglecting the quality of products: This characteristic pertains to the inclination to disregard the quality of a product in lieu of other aspects like pricing or convenience. Consequently, this may result in disregarding the ethical ramifications of product manufacturing and distribution. **Inadequate awareness and comprehension of ethical Consumerism:** This attribute underscores the significance of education and consciousness in ethical purchasing behavior. In the absence of a clear grasp of ethical shopping principles, individuals might lack the drive to make sustainable and ethical decisions. **Failing to consider social obligations:** This trait accentuates the responsibility of consumers to address social and environmental issues through their consumption patterns. **Neglecting this duty can lead to a disregard for the moral implications of one's choices.** **Lack of realization regarding their impact on social and environmental progress:** This feature underscores consumers' need to acknowledge their influence on the surrounding world. Without this recognition, consumers may fail to grasp the significance of making ethical consumption decisions. These attributes, encompassing attention to detail and a thirst for knowledge acquisition, can significantly influence an individual's ethical consumption behaviors. For instance, an individual who overlooks product quality may prioritize convenience at the expense of sustainability, while someone uninformed about ethical shopping may lack the motivation to opt for responsible choices.

The third factor is personal values and commitments. These factors encompass these indicators:

Maturity and personal ethical commitment: This trait underscores the significance of individual values and ethical principles in influencing decisions related to ethical consumption. Individuals with a robust ethical dedication are more inclined to prioritize ethical factors when making consumption choices.

Ensuring adherence to family preferences: This trait accentuates the impact of family in shaping decisions related to ethical consumption. Consumers might prioritize familial preferences over ethical considerations, disregarding the ethical ramifications of their choices.

Preferential use of personal and familial products: This trait highlights the importance of personal and familial connections in influencing consumption decisions. Consumers might opt for products endorsed by family members or those that are familiar, even if they do not necessarily align with ethical standards.

The influence of opinion leaders: This trait brings attention to the substantial influence that social opinion leaders can wield over decisions related to ethical consumption. Consumers could be swayed by the viewpoints and actions of opinion leaders, prompting a change in their consumption behaviors.

Impact of peer pressure: This trait stresses the role of social peer groups in shaping decisions related to ethical consumption. Consumers might be swayed by the behaviors and opinions of their peers, leading to a neglect of the ethical implications of their actions.

Brand recognition and prestige: This trait underscores the significance of brand image and prestige in influencing decisions related to ethical consumption. Consumers might prioritize renowned brands over lesser-known yet more ethical alternatives.

These attributes related to individual values and commitments can substantially affect an individual's decisions regarding ethical consumption. For example, an individual with a strong ethical dedication may prioritize ethical considerations over familial preferences, whereas someone influenced by social media may prioritize brand image over sustainability.

The last one is environmental and social awareness, which encompasses six factors:

Prioritizing Environmental Conservation in Consumption Behavior: This specific attribute underscores the significance of taking into account the environmental repercussions of consumption decisions. Individuals who place higher importance on environmental preservation are inclined to make ethical buying choices aimed at reducing harm to the environment.

The importance of focusing on human rights and altruism: This attribute underscores the importance of considering the societal implications of consumption decisions, especially regarding human rights and benevolence. Individuals who give precedence to these principles are inclined to endorse businesses and labels that adhere to ethical labor standards and make beneficial contributions to the community.

Paying attention to product healthiness: This attribute emphasizes the significance of taking into account the health and safety aspects of commodities. Individuals who place importance on the health value of products tend to opt for ethical substitutes that do not contain any detrimental chemicals or components.

The significance of considering the ethical behavior of companies and brands: This particular attribute emphasizes the significance of investigating and endorsing organizations and trademarks that exhibit ethical conduct in their activities and methodologies. Individuals who give precedence to this aspect are inclined to base their buying choices on a corporation's standing and dedication to ethical values.

The importance of social and local regulations: This particular attribute underscores the significance of social and local regulations in molding ethical consumer behavior. Individuals might be swayed by the existence or lack of regulations that support or deter ethical behaviors in the market.

The importance of simplicity and ease of the purchase process:

These characteristics highlight the importance of ensuring that ethical purchasing options are easily accessible and readily available. Consumers tend to opt for ethical choices more frequently when the procedure is uncomplicated and convenient.

The awareness of environmental and social aspects can notably impact an individual's decisions regarding ethical consumption. For example, an individual who values environmental preservation is more inclined to select eco-friendly products. In contrast, someone concerned with human rights may prioritize companies with fair labor practices.

Prioritizing factors affecting ethical consumption

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a structured decision-making method that prioritizes criteria and alternatives through a hierarchical framework. AHP is a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) technique developed by Thomas Saaty in the 1970s that begins by breaking down the decision

problem into a hierarchy, including the overall objective, criteria, and alternatives (Saaty, 2004). At this stage of the research, a questionnaire has been provided to Iraqi experts to identify the most important factor influencing ethical consumption, according to the knowledge of Iraqi consumer behavior. Interestingly, according to these managers, people's habits and lifestyles are the most important factors that lead them to ethical consumption.

After identifying the options and criteria to be compared in the qualitative section, these factors should be compared two by two in terms of priority. This step is called pairwise comparison. In this step, the weight of each of the main criteria is determined by pairwise comparison of the main criteria based on the goal. Therefore, we must compare the criteria based on goals two by two (table 2).

Table 2: Pairwise comparison table of factors affecting ethical consumption in Iraq

pairwise comparison	Lifestyle and Habits		Attention to the facts and desire to know		personal values and commitment		Environmental and Social Awareness	
Lifestyle and Habits	1	1						
Attention to the facts and desire to know	5	8	1	1				
personal values and commitment	7	9	8	4	1	1		
Environmental and Social Awareness	7	8	8	7	8	9	1	1

The foundation of the hierarchical analysis process calculations relies on the initial judgment made by the decision maker, presented in the format of a matrix of paired comparisons. Consequently, any discrepancies or inaccuracies in comparing elements impact the outcome derived from the calculations. The inconsistency ratio indicates the extent to which the pairwise comparisons align with each other. Expert evaluators conduct pairwise comparisons, and the credibility of the comparison results hinges on the consistency of these evaluations.

Table 3: The weight obtained from the comparison of criteria

	lifestyle and habits	attention to the facts and desire to know	personal values and commitments	environmental and social awareness	weight
Lifestyle and Habits	0/30508	0/279	0/35	0/276	0/302
Attention to the facts and desire to know	0/19068	0/174	0/136	0/211	0/178
personal values and commitment	0/23729	0/348	0/272	0/272	0/282
Environmental and Social Awareness	0/26695	0/199	0/242	0/241	0/237

Table 4: The consistency rate among Indicators

Affecting factors	Weight
Lifestyle and Habits	0/302
Attention to the facts and desire to know	0/178
personal values and commitment	0/282
Environmental and Social Awareness	0/237
CI=	0/01131
n=	4

The inconsistency ratio indicates the degree to which the pairwise comparisons align with one another. Experts conduct these comparisons, and the reliability of their outcomes depends on their consistency. When the consistency ratio falls below 0.1, the comparisons are deemed acceptable. Conversely, if the ratio exceeds this threshold, a reassessment of the comparisons is warranted. In this case, the consistency index CI is calculated at 0/011, thus meeting the acceptable criterion.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to discern the determinants influencing ethical consumption among clientele in Iraq. The outcomes reveal that environmental and social consciousness, personal principles and dedication, focus on factual information, and thirst for knowledge, as well as lifestyle and routines, are substantial influencers. In particular, lifestyle and habits surfaced as the most pivotal factors in accordance with the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) technique.

Lifestyle factors and habits can profoundly impact an individual's ethical consumption decisions. For instance, individuals prioritizing immediate and routine needs may demonstrate reduced consideration for their consumption choices' long-term environmental and social consequences. Conversely, individuals who practice moderation and avoid excessive consumption are more inclined to make sustainable and ethical decisions.

The significance of lifestyle and habits as a predominant element implies that ethical consumption in Iraq is deeply ingrained in individuals' everyday behaviors and practices. This discovery aligns with the concept that habitual conduct strongly predicts consumer behaviors, suggesting that ethical practices integrated into a consumer's lifestyle are more likely to endure.

The results of this research have been confirmed in previous studies. For example, it is in line with Schenk et al.'s (2021) research, which shows that lifestyle distinctiveness and modernity play an important role in determining ethical and fair consumption patterns and shows how broader lifestyle factors influence ethical consumption behaviors. In addition, it is also consistent with the research results of Morgan et al. (2016). They state that demographic characteristics and lifestyle preferences, such as youth, female gender, higher education levels, and participation in activities such as travel, volunteering, or charitable giving, prioritize environmental conservation, animal welfare, and responsibility. Social is relevant in consumer choice. On the other hand, it is also consistent with the studies of Yang and Kim (2023) and Broo et al. (2016). These studies have examined ethical consumption and lifestyle dynamics among women, showing that lifestyle categories such as adventurous, fashion-conscious, and do-it-yourself correlate with ethical consumption practices. They have emphasized the importance of lifestyle in the decision to consume ethically. This study, like those of Michaelis (2000) and Papaoikonomou (2013), emphasizes the complex interplay between lifestyles, routines, and ethical consumption and the need to incorporate broader lifestyle elements in examining ethical consumer behaviors.

Environmental and social awareness mirror the escalating global emphasis on sustainability and the well-being of others. Within the Iraqi context, this signifies a growing awareness among consumers regarding the repercussions of their consumption decisions on the environment and society.

Personal values and commitment underscore the significance of individual ethical standards and the determination to uphold them in purchasing choices. This element highlights the crucial role of internal moral compasses as motivators of ethical consumption.

The factor of attention to factual information and desire for knowledge emphasizes the value of well-informed decision-making. Consumers displaying a strong interest in comprehending the consequences of their purchases are more inclined to participate in ethical consumption.

Utilizing the AHP method to prioritize these influencers showcases a systematic methodology for comprehending consumer conduct. By quantifying the relative significance of each determinant, the AHP method furnishes a lucid hierarchy that can assist enterprises and policymakers in advocating for ethical consumption.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the discoveries of the study intimate that to nurture ethical consumption in Iraq, endeavors should focus on assimilating ethical behaviors into consumers' lifestyles and routines. Furthermore, enhancing awareness, reinforcing personal principles, and furnishing precise information can promote ethical consumer conduct.

This discourse amalgamates the research revelations and offers perspectives on the implications for Iraq's consumers, enterprises, and policymakers. It accentuates the interconnection of the identified influencers and their cumulative impact on ethical consumption trends.

Based on the findings of this study, it is proposed that an understanding of lifestyle and behaviors should be considered the primary determinant of ethical consumption, with initiatives aimed at embracing sustainable and conscientious practices in everyday life. This encompasses actions such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and selecting eco-friendly products. Concurrently, the significance of governmental intervention and educational efforts in cultivating a culture of ethical consumption cannot be overstated. Conversely, the value of accurate information and the quest for knowledge underscores the necessity for ongoing educational campaigns and awareness initiatives concerning ethical consumption. In this context, the government should stay abreast of current trends and optimal strategies in sustainable consumption to enable well-informed decision-making and citizen enlightenment. Personal ethical values and moral duties also wield considerable influence over ethical consumption decisions. Encouraging individuals to uphold ethical standards and guiding them towards ethical choices can yield a substantial impact. Furthermore, the pivotal roles played by the public, private, and media outlets should be underscored. Essentially, heightened environmental and social consciousness is imperative for ethical consumption, necessitating the demonstration of consumption repercussions to consumers and fostering a mindset that minimizes environmental harm while championing positive behavioral shifts. By embracing these suggestions, individuals can significantly advance ethical consumption practices in Iraq and contribute to a more sustainable and accountable future.

Research limitations

In this study, the use of only 10 Iraqi experts in the AHP analysis may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Iraqi population. In addition, selecting experts may introduce bias if they do not adequately represent the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the Iraqi context.

The study relies on self-reported data from experts, which may be subject to social desirability bias or inaccurate recollections.

On the other hand, the study provides a snapshot of ethical consumption factors at a specific time. Still, it does not account for potential changes over time due to Iraq's evolving social, economic, or political conditions.

Finally, the study may not capture the full range of ethical consumption practices and attitudes across different regions and communities within Iraq.

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