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Living With Less for a Better Planet: Empirical Insights into Minimalism, TPB Constructs, Collectivist Culture and Sustainable Consumption Behaviours

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Abstract
Amid escalating environmental challenges and shifting consumer values, understanding the psychological and cultural drivers of sustainable consumption has become imperative. This study examines the impact of minimalism on sustainable consumption behaviors among Generation Z consumers in China, utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) constructs: attitude towards behavior, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social expectations as driving mechanisms. However, a clear research gap exists in understanding how minimalism, as a lifestyle orientation, interacts with cultural values such as collectivism to shape sustainable consumption behaviors among Generation Z consumers. Motivated by the underexplored role of minimalism in shaping pro-environmental choices, the study further examines the moderating effect of collectivist culture on these relationships. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, and data were collected from 455 respondents using systematic random sampling in the Province, China. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. The findings reveal that minimalism has a significant and positive influence on sustainable consumption behaviors. In addition, the TPB construct, comprising attitude towards behaviour, perceived behavioural control, and perceived social expectations, significantly influences sustainable consumption behaviours. Additionally, collectivist cultural orientation was found to strengthen the impact of minimalism on sustainable consumption behaviours. The study is unique in integrating minimalism and collectivist culture within the TPB framework, offering novel insights applicable to the tourism and services sectors, where sustainable consumption choices are increasingly vital. Policy implications underscore the need for culturally grounded sustainability campaigns, minimalist education in youth-targeted programs, and supportive infrastructure to encourage low-consumption lifestyles. The study offers a novel and empirically grounded contribution to sustainable consumer behaviour literature and serves as a benchmark for future cross-cultural and longitudinal research.

Key Words: collectivist culture, minimalism, sustainable consumption behavior, Theory of Planned Behavior, Generation Z

JEL Classification: D12, M16, Q56

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the urgency of achieving sustainability has intensified globally, compelling individuals, institutions, and policymakers to rethink patterns of production and consumption (Owusu et al. 2024; Sedlák and Krajčík 2025). At the heart of this paradigm shift lies sustainable consumption—defined as the use of goods and services that satisfy basic needs while minimizing environmental degradation, social inequalities, and economic inefficiencies (Coote 2021; Koch et al. 2025). In response to the escalating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, Habib et al. (2021) revealed that the majority of global consumers now express a willingness to modify their consumption behaviors to support environmental goals. This behavioral transition represents more than a normative ideal; it is a strategic imperative for meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, as well as SDG 13 on Climate Action (Bonnedahl, Heikkurinen, and Paavola 2022; Kour 2024). Despite growing policy attention, the translation of pro-environmental intentions into actual sustainable behaviors remains inconsistent, unevenly distributed, and under-theorized.

While a growing body of literature has examined the antecedents of green purchasing (Baltacı, Durmaz, and Baltacı 2025; Beuria, Kondasani, and Mahato 2024), ethical consumption (Djafarova and Foots 2022; Halibas et al. 2025), and low-carbon lifestyles (Cai et al. 2022; Sampene et al. 2024), relatively limited scholarly attention has been given to the role of minimalism as a determinant of sustainable behavior. Minimalism emphasizes sufficiency over excess and mindfulness over impulse, making it a potentially powerful behavioral antecedent for sustainability transitions (Nguyen and Tran 2025; Song and Zhang 2025). However, despite its conceptual alignment with sustainability principles, minimalism remains an under-explored construct within mainstream environmental behavior research, particularly in terms of how it translates into sustainable consumption actions. Minimalism is more than an aesthetic or a trend; it reflects a deeper psychological and value-based orientation toward simplicity, voluntary restraint, and personal fulfillment beyond material accumulation (Beuria, Kondasani, and Mahato 2024; Nguyen, Tran, and Adomako 2025). Yet, its potential as a catalyst for sustainable consumption has received little empirical validation. The theoretical and empirical ambiguity surrounding minimalism's behavioral outcomes highlights a critical research gap especially in developing regions where sustainability imperatives intersect with cultural, economic, and infrastructural constraints. Thus, investigating how minimalism influences sustainable behavior within culturally embedded contexts is both timely and necessary. To address this gap, the present study integrates the theory of planned behavior (TPB)-Ajzen (1991) to uncover the cognitive mechanisms through which minimalism affects sustainable consumption behavior. TPB posits that individual behavior is shaped by three psychological drivers: attitude toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms (Sampene et al. 2022). By framing minimalism as an antecedent that influences these components, this study positions TPB as a valuable explanatory framework for understanding these phenomena. In doing so, it extends TPB's application beyond generic behavioral contexts into lifestyle-driven domains, where internalized values such as simplicity and anti-materialism act as catalysts for environmentally responsible action (Beuria, Kondasani, and Mahato 2024; Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024). Prior research supports the use of TPB in predicting green purchasing and recycling behaviors (Hassan, Mahmood, and Khakwani 2025; Ngo, Nguyen, and Phan 2025), yet few studies have incorporated lifestyle orientations like minimalism into the TPB structure. To structure the inquiry and guide the empirical investigation, the following four research questions are posed:

1. How does minimalism influence sustainable consumption behavior?
2. What is the effect of minimalism on TPB elements such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control?
3. To what extent do TPB elements such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control affect sustainable consumption behavior?

4. How does collectivist culture moderate the relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behavior?

These questions emerge directly from the identified literature gaps and theoretical propositions, offering a comprehensive roadmap for model testing, theoretical validation, and contextual generalization.

This study focuses specifically on Generation Z consumers in China (Gen Z), a cohort uniquely positioned at the intersection of rising environmental awareness, digital nativity, and evolving cultural values (Halibas et al. 2025). Gen Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, is characterized by its tech-savviness, strong social consciousness, and shifting consumption patterns that increasingly prioritize sustainability and ethical considerations (Ivasciuc et al. 2025; Nikodemska-Wołowik, Bednarz, and Foreman 2019). To achieve the study's objectives, a cross-sectional survey design was employed, targeting Generation Z consumers in China, who represent a key demographic driving emerging patterns of sustainable consumption. The collected data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique, which is particularly suitable for examining complex relationships among latent constructs such as minimalism, attitude, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social expectations. This methodological framework enabled a robust evaluation of the hypothesized relationships and the moderating effect of collectivist culture on sustainable consumption behaviors. As the largest consumer segment emerging in the Chinese market, Gen Z plays a crucial role in shaping future sustainability trends. Their openness to lifestyle experimentation, coupled with their exposure to global discourses on minimalism, makes them an ideal population for examining how minimalist values influence sustainable consumption behavior. Moreover, China's collectivist cultural foundation provides a fertile context for investigating how collectivist orientation moderates this relationship (Tan et al. 2021). By centering the research on Chinese Gen Z consumers, the study responds to calls for more culturally and generationally diverse samples in sustainability research. Also, the paper enhances the practical relevance of its findings for policymakers, educators, and marketers seeking to foster sustainable consumption in one of the world's most influential consumer markets.

The integration of minimalism, TPB components, and collectivist culture into a single model makes a significant contribution to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it expands TPB by incorporating a lifestyle orientation (minimalism) as a distal antecedent and a cultural dimension (collectivist culture) as a contextual moderator. This dual extension addresses a common critique of TPB, namely that it overlooks broader lifestyle and cultural influences on behavior formation. Practically, the model provides policymakers and marketers with insights into promoting sustainable behavior through culturally resonant strategies. For example, promoting minimalist consumption in collectivist societies may benefit from leveraging group-based appeals, social endorsement, and moral framing, rather than focusing solely on individual agency or environmental concern. This research also responds to the growing scholarly call for cross-disciplinary frameworks that bridge psychological, cultural, and lifestyle perspectives in sustainability science. By centering the inquiry on minimalism and collectivism, this study foregrounds the value-laden nature of sustainable consumption. It underscores the importance of aligning behavioral interventions with both personal values and societal expectations. This repositioning holds strong implications for SDG-aligned policy interventions that aim to foster long-term behavioral shifts rather than short-term compliance.

The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical proposition that minimalism operates indirectly by shaping attitudes, enhancing perceived behavioral control, and influencing perceived social expectations toward sustainable consumption. From a policy perspective, the results underscore the importance of culturally aligned strategies for promoting sustainable consumption. For example, in collectivist societies, campaigns that frame minimalism as a socially responsible and community-endorsed practice are likely to gain more traction than those focusing on individual gains. The study also suggests that promoting minimalist values through education, media, and social influence mechanisms can serve

as an indirect lever for achieving broader sustainability goals. These implications align with the SDGs and support the design of localized, culturally adaptive sustainability interventions.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical framework and development of hypotheses; Section 3 outlines the research methodology; Section 4 discusses the empirical results; Section 5 provides the discussion of key findings; and Section 6 concludes with the study's implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

2. Theoretical basis and hypothesis

2.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour

This study is theoretically anchored in the TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991), which provides a robust framework for understanding how individual cognitive factors influence behavior. According to TPB, three primary determinants of attitude towards behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, jointly predict an individual's behavioral intention, which in turn influences actual behavior (Duong, Le, and Ha 2021; Sampene et al. 2022). In the context of this research, minimalism is introduced as an antecedent influencing these core TPB components. Specifically, individuals who embrace minimalist values are likely to form positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption, perceive greater behavioral control in simplifying their lifestyles, and become more responsive to perceived social expectations aligned with eco-conscious norms. This aligns with prior studies showing that value-driven lifestyles such as minimalism can enhance pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024; Nguyen and Tran 2025). The study further incorporates collectivist culture as a moderating variable, recognizing that cultural orientations significantly shape the strength and direction of TPB pathways. In collectivist societies, individuals are more influenced by group norms and social cohesion, which may amplify the effects of attitudes, perceived control, and social norms on sustainable behavior (Su'un et al. 2018; Yang et al. 2024). Thus, by integrating minimalism and cultural context into the TPB framework, this study offers a culturally sensitive and psychologically grounded explanation of sustainable consumption behavior, addressing calls for more nuanced, contextually relevant applications of TPB in sustainability research (Beuria, Kondasani, and Mahato 2024; Jain, Gupta, and Verma 2024).

2.2 Minimalism and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Minimalism, as a lifestyle and value orientation, has increasingly been associated with sustainable consumption behavior in contemporary environmental and consumer research. At its core, minimalism encourages intentionality in consumption, prioritizing necessity over abundance and discourages material excess, which aligns with the principles of sustainability (Beuria, Kondasani, and Mahato 2024; Lee and Furukawa 2025). The minimalist approach, characterized by reduced acquisition, decluttering, and emphasis on non-material sources of well-being, inherently supports environmentally conscious decision-making (Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024). By adopting minimalist values, Martin-Woodhead (2022) reported that individuals limit their ecological footprints and also reconsider their roles as consumers within a broader societal and environmental context. This shift in consumer mindset from materialism can promote patterns of sustainable consumption that favor durability, ethical sourcing, and reduced waste. Thus, minimalism acts as a psychological and behavioral mechanism that facilitates the transition toward more sustainable consumption practices (Rasheed and Balakrishnan 2024). Prior studies have demonstrated that minimalism motivations can encourage more deliberate and reflective consumption behaviors, thereby reducing the demand for overproduction and environmentally harmful consumption (Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024; Mishra et al. 2025; Nguyen and Tran 2025). Moreover, an earlier analysis by Jain, Gupta, et al. (2024) suggested that minimalists tend to perceive sustainable consumption as both a

constraint and a liberating practice that aligns with their desire for simplicity, mindfulness, and life satisfaction. Accordingly, minimalism fosters reductions in material consumption and also supports the development of a consumer identity that is more compatible with sustainability ideals.

H1: Minimalism has a positive and significant effect on sustainable consumption behavior.

2.3 Minimalism and Theory of Planned Behaviour component

2.3.1 Minimalism and Attitude Towards Behavior

Minimalism as a lifestyle encourages individuals to reflect critically on their consumption patterns, fostering more intentional and value-driven decisions (Yadav and Kar 2025). Central to this practice is the development of positive attitudes toward sustainable behaviors, such as reducing unnecessary purchases and choosing environmentally responsible alternatives . According to Ajzen (1991), attitude towards behavior refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing a particular behavior. Individuals who internalize minimalist values are more likely to view sustainable consumption as both beneficial to the environment and personally fulfilling, aligning their consumption with deeper goals such as well-being, simplicity, and self-development (Mishra, Moharana, and Chatterjee 2024). Prior research suggests that adopting minimalist practices, such as voluntary simplicity and anti-materialism, reinforces favorable evaluations of environmentally conscious behaviors (Rasheed and Balakrishnan 2024; Wang, Howard, and Zhong 2025). Thus, individuals who engage in minimalism are likely to develop a stronger and more favorable attitude towards sustainable consumption, which in turn enhances their intention to adopt such behaviors (Druică, Ianole-Călin, and Puiu 2023; Rasheed and Balakrishnan 2024).

H2: Minimalism a positive and significant influence on attitude towards sustainable consumption behavior.

2.3.2 Minimalism and Perceived Behavioral Control

Minimalism also appears to influence individuals' sense of agency in adopting sustainable consumption behaviors. Within the TPB, perceived behavioral control reflects an individual's belief about their capacity to perform a behavior, which can be shaped by experience, access to resources, and confidence in their abilities (Cammarata et al. 2024). As minimalists engage in practices that reduce consumption, limit unnecessary expenditures, and intentionally shape their environments, they may gain a stronger sense of control over their consumption decisions(Parvatiyar and Sheth 2023). In addition, Blackburn et al. (2024) found that individuals practicing minimalism reported increased confidence in their ability to live sustainably, particularly through careful budgeting, refusing excessive consumption, and making proactive environmental choices. Furthermore, this perceived control is often grounded in intrinsic motivations, as minimalism encourages autonomy and self-determination, both of which are key to enhancing behavioral control (Polisetty, G, and Pahari 2025). Therefore, individuals who adhere to minimalist principles may experience heightened behavioral control, which in turn strengthens their intention to engage in sustainable practices.

H3: Minimalism has a positive and significant influence on perceived behavioral control over sustainable consumption behavior.

2.3.3 Minimalism and Perceived Social Expectations

In addition to shaping personal attitudes and control, minimalism may also influence how individuals perceive social pressures and expectations surrounding consumption. TPB defines subjective norms, or perceived social expectations, as the belief that significant others think one should engage in a behavior (Maleknia, Hălălişan, and Maleknia 2025). As people increasingly recognize and admire low-

waste, anti-consumption, and environmentally responsible lifestyles, those who adopt a minimalist approach may feel socially supported in their consumption choices (Mishra, Moharana, and Chatterjee 2024). Moreover, Pangarkar et al. (2021) revealed that minimalists often act as visible role models who challenge mainstream consumer norms by demonstrating alternative, sustainable ways of living, thereby influencing peers and communities. Through such social signaling, minimalists can generate normative cues that reinforce sustainable behavior within their social networks. As a result, individuals embedded in minimalist or sustainability-conscious groups may perceive stronger social expectations to engage in sustainable consumption (Karpova, Hodges, and Williams 2024). Accordingly, minimalism promotes internal motivations and also reshapes external normative pressures, making individuals more receptive to perceived social expectations regarding sustainability (Nguyen and Tran 2025; Rasheed and Balakrishnan 2024).

H4: Minimalism a positive and significant influence on perceived social expectations regarding sustainable consumption behavior.

2.4 TPB and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

2.4.1 Attitude toward the Behavior and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Attitude toward the behavior, conceptualized as the degree to which an individual holds a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of a specific action, has consistently emerged as a critical determinant of sustainable consumption behavior (Ajzen 1991; Kour 2024). In the context of sustainability, a positive attitude can be shaped by beliefs about the environmental benefits of reduced consumption, the ethical sourcing of products, or the health advantages of organic goods (Baltacı, Durmaz, and Baltacı 2025). Empirical studies demonstrate that individuals with strong pro-environmental attitudes are more likely to engage in behaviors such as purchasing eco-friendly products, reducing waste, and conserving energy (Puđak, Šimac, and Trako Poljak 2025; Shah and Asghar 2024). Furthermore, the internalization of green values and moral responsibility enhances the evaluative valence toward sustainable consumption, reinforcing the intentionality to act. For instance, Chakraborty et al. (2024) found that travelers with favorable attitudes toward eco-tourism were more likely to adopt sustainable travel behaviors. Hence, when consumers view sustainable consumption as personally rewarding, socially desirable, or aligned with their self-identity, their behavioral intentions are more likely to translate into action.

H5: Attitude toward the behavior has a positive and significant relationship with sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.4.2 Perceived Behavioral Control and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to perform a behavior, considering both internal factors (skills, confidence) and external constraints (availability, affordability) (Fawehinmi et al. 2024). In the domain of sustainable consumption, PBC is particularly relevant, as sustainable choices often require additional resources, effort, or knowledge. Prior research has confirmed that consumers are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption when they believe they have control over their purchasing decisions and have access to green products (Jia et al., 2024). In addition, Salleh et al. (2024) found that perceived behavioral control significantly predicted intentions to buy eco-friendly products among Indian consumers. Similarly, consumers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to overcome perceived barriers such as price premiums, lack of product information, or limited availability (Phan and Pham 2023). As such, enhancing consumers' perceived ease and capability to act sustainably can play a critical role in shaping sustainable consumption outcomes.

H6: Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant relationship with sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.4.3 Perceived Social Expectations and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Perceived social expectations, often operationalized as subjective norms within the TPB framework, reflect the perceived social pressures to engage or not engage in a given behavior (Partonezhad et al. 2025). In the realm of sustainable consumption, these social influences can stem from peers, family, media, or broader cultural narratives (Lu and Park 2025). Studies indicate that individuals are more likely to engage in green behaviors when they perceive strong social endorsement or normative expectations from significant others (Xu, Qian, and Ling 2025). Moreover, the increasing visibility of sustainability-related movements, such as zero-waste lifestyles, ethical fashion, and plant-based diets, further intensifies the normative landscape shaping consumer choices (Veress, Kiss, and Neulinger 2024). These normative signals can legitimize and reinforce sustainable behaviors, especially among consumers who seek social belonging or identity expression.

H7: Perceived social expectations have a positive and significant relationship with sustainable consumption behaviour.

2.6 The moderating effect of Collectivist Culture

Cultural values play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior, especially in the context of lifestyle-driven practices such as minimalism and sustainability (Nguyen and Tran 2025). Collectivist cultures, which emphasize group harmony, social obligation, and conformity to shared norms, can significantly influence how individual value systems such as minimalism translate into observable behaviors like sustainable consumption (Czerniawska, Czerniawska, and Szydło 2021; Yeo, Lee, and Lee 2025). In collectivist societies, individuals are more likely to act in ways that align with the expectations and values of their community. Ong & Koay (2025) asserted that when minimalism is socially valued or supported by in-group members, individuals may experience greater encouragement to practice sustainable consumption as a way of reinforcing their social identity and group affiliation. Prior studies have shown that cultural orientation can moderate the impact of personal values on pro-environmental behavior, where individuals embedded in collectivist cultures tend to exhibit stronger consistency between values and behavior, particularly when social validation is present (Davari, Nosrati, and Kim 2024; Nosrati, Kim, and Leung 2023; Yang et al. 2024). Therefore, it is expected that collectivist culture strengthens the influence of minimalism on sustainable consumption by reinforcing the alignment between personal and collective values.

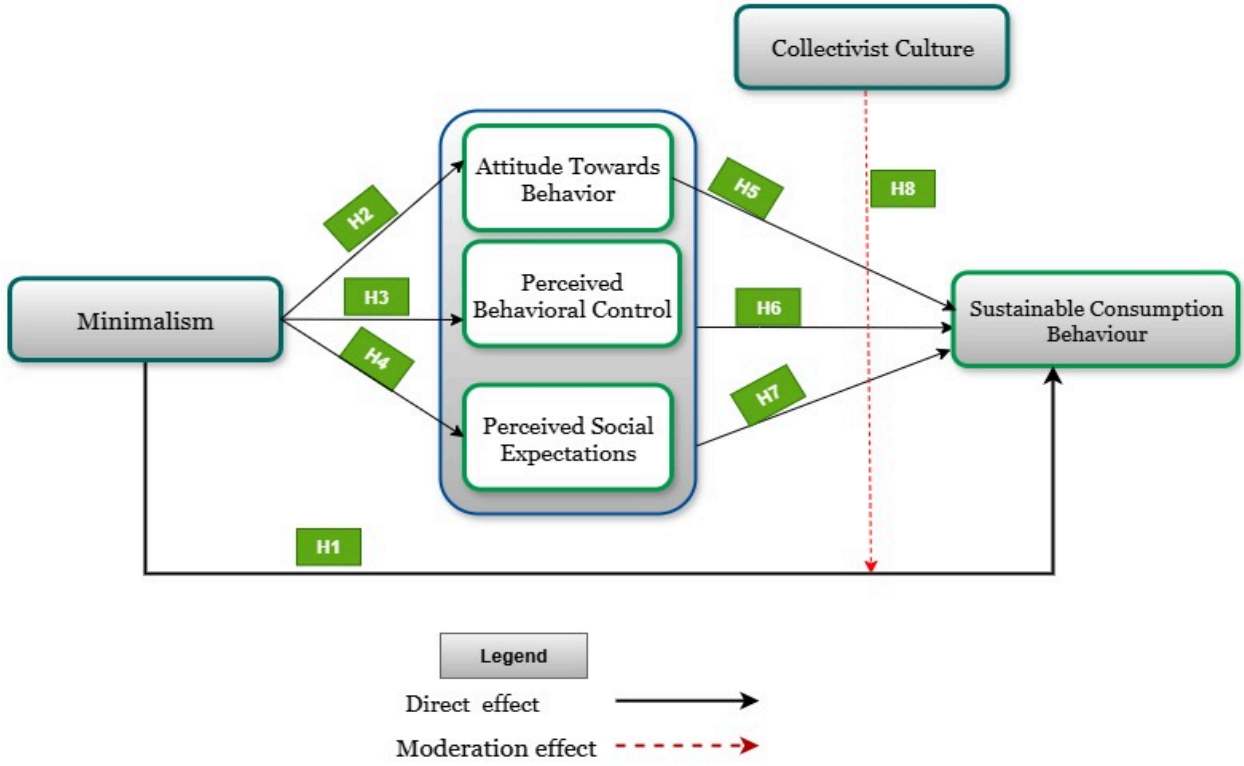
Furthermore, Nguyen & Tran (2025) demonstrated that collectivist culture enhances the normative pressures that shape behavior, potentially amplifying the internalization of minimalist principles when they are congruent with social ideals.. Shah & Asghar (2024) confirmed that in societies where modest living, environmental protection, and intergenerational responsibility are culturally endorsed, individuals who adopt minimalist lifestyles may feel more empowered and socially supported in their sustainable consumption decisions. Conversely, in less collectivist or more individualistic settings, the same minimalist values may be perceived as countercultural or lacking in social reinforcement, thereby weakening their behavioral impact. Research by Liu et al. (2025) suggests that collectivism heightens sensitivity to group norms and facilitates pro-social and future-oriented decision-making, both of which are essential for driving sustainability-oriented behaviors. Accordingly, the moderating role of collectivist culture can be seen as a cultural lens that either facilitates or constrains the behavioral expression of minimalism in the sustainability domain.

H8: Collectivist culture moderates the relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behaviour, such that the relationship is stronger for individuals with higher collectivist cultural orientation.

2.7 Conceptual model

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model proposing that minimalism influences sustainable consumption behavior both directly and indirectly through TPC indicators, which in turn affect sustainable consumption behavior through attitude towards behavior, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social expectations, with collectivist culture moderating the strength of this relationship.

Figure 1. **The conceptual model**



Source: own elaboration.

3. Methods

3.1 Study sample and data collection process

This study targeted Generation Z consumers in China, including individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, given their significant and growing influence on global consumption trends. With an estimated $360 billion in purchasing power, Generation Z represents a pivotal cohort for understanding shifts toward sustainable consumption (Ivasciuc et al. 2025; Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024). Their tech-savviness, distinct preferences, and value-driven behaviors make them an ideal population for examining the influence of minimalism on sustainable consumption patterns (Teng and Wu 2025). Importantly, experts forecast that by 2026, Gen Z will constitute the largest consumer segment globally, warranting urgent research to decode their behavioral intentions and decision-making processes (Jain, Joy, and Sharma 2024). Based on these considerations, individuals aged 18 years and above from Generation Z were selected as the eligible population for this study.

To ensure methodological rigor, data were collected using a cross-sectional survey design between May and July 2025. A systematic random sampling approach was adopted and integrated with a mall-intercept technique to recruit participants from diverse socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds

(Kazemi, Ganji, and Na'ami 2023). This combined method was chosen to mitigate selection bias and achieve heterogeneity in the sample, echoing best practices suggested by earlier studies (Kazemi, Ganji, and Na'ami 2023; Mughal et al. 2022). Survey administration was scheduled across various time slots, including weekdays and weekends, to accommodate the differing availability of working individuals, students, and others. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and each participant received a small incentive in the form of a mobile top-up voucher, thereby ensuring adherence to the ethical standards of informed consent and confidentiality. Participants were excluded if they had previously completed a similar survey to avoid duplication.

Moreover, to ensure clarity and appropriateness, the survey instrument was initially developed in English and then carefully translated into Chinese by a bilingual researcher. Prior to full-scale deployment, the questionnaire underwent pretesting to verify the accuracy, coherence, and contextual relevance of the items. The final instrument was designed to collect data on the study's core constructs, including minimalism, attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, social expectations, and sustainable consumption behavior, as well as demographic information about the participants. Each survey package contained a brief cover letter explaining the study's purpose, assuring participants of confidentiality and anonymity, and offering a summary of the study's findings as a token of appreciation. To reduce the risk of common method bias, procedural remedies were integrated throughout the design of the questionnaire, following the guidance of (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Items measuring independent and dependent variables were distributed across different sections to obscure any predictable patterns and mitigate respondents' ability to infer hypothesized relationships. Clear and concise language was employed to enhance participant engagement and minimize confusion.

3.2 Sample size determination

Determining the appropriate sample size for this study followed the Cochran (1977) formula for estimating sample size for unknown population proportions as depicted in Equation 1:

$$n = Z^2 \cdot \frac{P(1-P)}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

Where: n is the required sample size, Z is the z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level (typically 1.96 for 95%), p is the estimated proportion of the population (commonly 0.5 when unknown), and e is the margin of error (expressed as a decimal).

We therefore calculate the sample size as displayed in Equation 2:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025} = 384.16 \quad (2)$$

This calculation yielded a minimum required sample size of approximately 384. However, to enhance the power and generalizability of the findings, a final sample size of 455 valid responses was achieved, exceeding the recommended threshold for statistical significance. This larger sample strengthens the reliability of the structural modeling results and increases confidence in generalizing the findings to the broader Gen Z population.

3.3 Profile of participants

Table 1 provides a comprehensive demographic profile of the 455 Generation Z respondents surveyed in China. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 52.1% female and 47.9% male participants. In terms of age, the majority fell within the 21–23 age group (40%), followed by those aged 18–20 (34.9%) and 24–26 (25.1%). Regarding education, a significant portion were undergraduates (65.1%), while 20% held postgraduate qualifications and 14.9% had a high school education. Monthly spending patterns revealed that 34.9% of respondents spent between 1000 and 2000 CNY, with 29.9% spending between 2001 and 3000 CNY, and only 10.1% spending less than 1000 CNY. A notable 69.9%

resided in urban areas, and 78% identified themselves as students, followed by 14.9% who were part-time employed and 7% who held full-time roles. Finally, online shopping was the dominant purchasing channel (74.9%), indicating the digital orientation of this cohort, while 20% shopped in-store and 5.1% used a combination of channels. These insights highlight the digital-savvy, education-driven, and urban-centric profile of Chinese Gen Z consumers.

Table 1. **Demographic information of respondents**

Demographic Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	218	47.90
	Female	237	52.10
Age Group	18-20	159	34.90
	21-23	182	40.00
	24-26	114	25.10
Education Level	High School	68	14.90
	Undergraduate	296	65.10
	Postgraduate	91	20.00
Monthly Spending (CNY)	<1000	46	10.10
	1000-2000	159	34.90
	2001-3000	136	29.90
	>3000	114	25.10
Residence	Urban	318	69.90
	Rural	136	29.90
Employment Status	Student	355	78.00
	Part-time employed	68	14.90
	Full-time	32	7.00
Shopping Channel	Online	341	74.90
	In-store	91	20.00
	Mixed	23	5.10

Source: own elaboration.

3.4 Measurement of constructs

To empirically validate the proposed conceptual model, this study employed standardized and pre-validated measurement scales for all constructs. The survey items were adapted from prior literature and measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The study employed a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions and behavioral intentions, consistent with prior research in consumer behavior and sustainability domains (Aluko 2025; Owusu et al. 2024, 2025). The five-point scale was selected because it strikes a balance between measurement precision and respondent comprehension, reducing cognitive fatigue and enhancing reliability. This format allows participants to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement while maintaining clarity, simplicity, and comparability with similar empirical studies in the sustainable consumption literature. Each latent variable demonstrated strong internal consistency and convergent validity, as evidenced by satisfactory Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and variance inflation factor (VIF) scores reported in Table 2. The scale development process ensured conceptual alignment, clarity of items, and reliability of responses. All constructs meet the psychometric criteria, affirming the suitability of the measurement model for further structural analysis.

3.4.1 Minimalism

Minimalism was operationalized using a seven-item scale developed by Kang et al. (2021), which captures individuals' efforts to simplify their lives by intentionally reducing consumption. A representative item includes, *"I prefer owning fewer possessions to simplify my life."* The construct achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.889, CR of 0.915, and AVE of 0.644, indicating excellent internal consistency and convergent validity.

3.4.2 Perceived social expectations

Perceived social expectations were measured using a five-item scale adapted from Nguyen and Tran (2025), which assesses the normative influence of peers and societal expectations on sustainable behavior. A sample item is, *"I feel social pressure to make sustainable purchase choices."* The construct yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.800, CR of 0.858, and AVE of 0.508.

3.4.3 Attitude towards behavior

This variable was assessed using a six-item scale adapted from Nguyen and Tran (2025), which reflects individuals' positive or negative evaluations of engaging in sustainable consumption. An illustrative item reads, *"I believe acting sustainably is the right thing to do."* The construct demonstrated strong psychometric properties with an alpha of 0.816, CR of 0.864, and AVE of 0.515.

3.4.4 Perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control was measured using a six-item instrument from Nguyen and Tran (2025), designed to gauge respondents' perceived ease or difficulty in adopting sustainable behaviors. A sample item is, *"I am confident in my ability to consume sustainably."* The scale reported $\alpha = 0.832$, CR = 0.874, and AVE = 0.504.

3.4.5 Sustainable consumption behaviour

Sustainable consumption behavior was captured using a seven-item scale derived from Mishra et al. (2025), which reflects daily practices aligned with environmental responsibility. A typical item is, *"I actively seek environmentally friendly alternatives when shopping."* The construct showed strong reliability with $\alpha = 0.864$, CR = 0.904, and AVE = 0.613.

3.4.6 Collectivist Culture

Collectivist culture was operationalized using six items, based on Nguyen and Tran (2025), which focused on prioritizing group values and cooperation over individual interests. A representative item includes, *"I contribute actively to group efforts and cooperation."* This construct yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.811, CR of 0.869, and AVE of 0.512.

3.5 Analytical process

The analytical approach employed in this study was PLS-SEM, which was executed using SmartPLS 4.0 software. PLS-SEM is particularly well-suited for testing theories and making predictions in complex models that incorporate both latent constructs and multiple indicators (Hair, Howard, and Nitzl 2020). It allows for the simultaneous analysis of measurement and structural models, making it a robust tool for handling reflective constructs with non-normal data distributions and moderate sample

sizes (Hair, Howard, and Nitzl 2020; Manley, Hair, et al. 2021). Given the exploratory nature of this study and the inclusion of moderating variables, PLS-SEM provided the flexibility needed to estimate path coefficients, assess construct reliability and validity, and evaluate the strength and significance of hypothesized relationships (Ebhota, Hongxing, and Sampene 2024; Pasaribu et al. 2021). Moreover, PLS-SEM offers advantages such as handling multicollinearity, accommodating small to medium samples without requiring strict normality assumptions, and yielding high statistical power. The bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was applied to test the significance of direct, indirect, and moderating effects, ensuring the reliability of inferences drawn from the data (Khan, Hussain, and Sampene 2023; Owusu et al. 2024). The PLS-SEM technique was applied due to its suitability for complex models involving multiple latent constructs and smaller sample sizes. This method assumes linear relationships among variables and requires adequate indicator reliability and validity. It consists of two components the measurement model, which assesses construct reliability and validity, and the structural (path) model, which examines hypothesized relationships (Sarstedt et al. 2020).

4. Results and analysis

4.1 Examination of potential bias, construct validity, and reliability testing

To ensure the methodological rigor of the research, a multi-step process was adopted to assess potential biases, verify construct validity, and evaluate the reliability of the measurement instruments (Kwasi, Li, and Esther 2024; Li et al. 2024). A preliminary pilot study was conducted with a sample of respondents to identify and address ambiguities or misinterpretations in the survey items. This process allowed for refinement of the instrument, thereby enhancing the clarity, precision, and overall content validity of the items. Furthermore, to mitigate the influence of social desirability and other response biases, the anonymity of participants was explicitly emphasized in the cover letter accompanying the survey. In addressing concerns related to common method bias, statistical techniques were employed. Specifically, Harman (1976) used a single-factor test as a diagnostic tool to determine whether a substantial amount of variance could be attributed to a single factor. The test results indicated that the first factor accounted for only 28.70% of the total variance, which is significantly below the commonly accepted threshold of 50%, suggesting that common method variance does not pose a serious threat to the validity of the findings. In addition to this procedure, the instrument design incorporated a variety of scale formats and item wording strategies to further reduce the likelihood of systematic response patterns. These combined efforts provide confidence in the psychometric properties of the instrument, supporting the reliability and internal consistency of the constructs measured in the study.

4.2 Assessment of measurement model

Table 2 presents the evaluation of the measurement model, confirming the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the study. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), rho_A, and composite reliability (CR), with all values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair, Howard, and Nitzl 2020), indicating high reliability. The Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.800 (Perceived Social Expectations) to 0.889 (Minimalism), while CR values ranged from 0.858 to 0.915, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. The average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded the 0.50 benchmark, ensuring adequate convergent validity (Manley, Jr, et al. 2021), with values such as 0.644 for minimalism and 0.613 for sustainable consumption behaviour. Moreover, variance inflation factor (VIF) values for individual items were examined to assess the presence of multicollinearity. All VIF scores were below the critical threshold of 5.0 (Hair, Howard, and Nitzl 2020), suggesting no problematic multicollinearity among the items. These results collectively confirm the robustness of the measurement

model, indicating that the constructs are measured reliably and without significant redundancy across indicators.

Table 2. **Test for measurement model**

Construct	Measurement Item	VIF	Factor Loading
Minimalism (Kang, Martinez, and Johnson 2021) $a = 0.889;\ rho_a = 0.891; CR = 0.915; AVE = 0.644$			
	I make a conscious effort to avoid clutter in my surroundings.	2.572	0.756
	I prefer owning fewer possessions to simplify my life.	2.814	0.833
	I critically assess whether I need something before making a purchase.	2.236	0.805
	I find contentment in a simple lifestyle with minimal distractions.	1.846	0.794
	I avoid making impulsive or unnecessary purchases.	2.046	0.800
	I aim to purchase only items that serve a lasting purpose.	2.102	0.813
	I try to live a life based on needs rather than wants.	2.807	0.706
Perceived Social Expectations (Nguyen and Tran 2025) $a = 0.800;\ rho_a = 0.812; CR = 0.858; AVE = 0.508$			
	My peers believe I should engage in environmentally responsible actions.	2.745	0.771
	I feel social pressure to make sustainable purchase choices.	1.914	0.855
	Friends and family expect me to support eco-friendly initiatives.	1.392	0.741
	There is a strong societal push for sustainability around me.	2.001	0.729
	I think others around me value environmentally conscious consumption.	1.777	0.828
Attitude Towards Behavior (Nguyen and Tran 2025) $a = 0.816;\ rho_a = 0.823; CR = 0.864; AVE = 0.515$			
	I believe acting sustainably is the right thing to do.	2.772	0.827
	Choosing eco-friendly products is important to me.	1.812	0.818
	I have a positive view of people who prioritize the environment in their choices.	1.192	0.792
	I feel good about making environmentally sound decisions.	2.248	0.767
	I consider sustainability when evaluating products or services.	2.664	0.785
	I believe that living sustainably enhances quality of life.	1.765	0.812
Perceived Behavioral Control (Nguyen and Tran 2025) $a = 0.832;\ rho_a = 0.837; CR = 0.874; AVE = 0.504$			
	I have the resources to make environmentally responsible choices.	1.400	0.880
	I am capable of consistently living in an eco-conscious way.	1.013	0.803
	I find it easy to apply sustainability to my daily lifestyle.	1.920	0.852
	I am confident in my ability to consume sustainably.	3.204	0.818
	I have enough knowledge to make informed, sustainable decisions.	2.239	0.817
	I believe I can overcome barriers to living more sustainably.	2.238	0.860
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour (Mishra et al. 2025) $a = 0.864;\ rho_a = 0.861; CR = 0.904; AVE = 0.613$			
	I actively seek environmentally friendly alternatives when shopping.	2.583	0.819

	I support brands that reflect ecological and ethical values.	2.937	0.766
	I avoid buying items with excessive packaging.	2.504	0.842
	I reduce the consumption of non-sustainable goods.	2.718	0.869
	I choose transportation options that reduce environmental harm.	1.199	0.861
	I prefer local or regional products to reduce my carbon footprint.	1.707	0.850
	I adopt daily habits that contribute to sustainability.	2.242	0.862
Collectivist Culture (Nguyen and Tran 2025) $a = 0.811;\ rho_a = 0.845; CR = 0.869; AVE = 0.512$			
	I prioritize group needs even over personal preferences.	2.880	0.717
	I contribute actively to group efforts and cooperation.	1.294	0.892
	I willingly help others without expecting anything in return.	1.460	0.897
	I prefer actions that benefit the group as a whole, even if I receive less in return.	1.425	0.706
	I believe sharing and mutual aid are vital in community life.	1.372	0.752
	I enjoy being part of teams that work toward common goals.	1.897	0.740

Source: own elaboration.

Moreover, Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations, a robust measure for assessing discriminant validity in the measurement model. Discriminant validity evaluates the extent to which constructs that are supposed to be unrelated are indeed distinct from one another. According to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values should be below 0.90 to confirm adequate discriminant validity, and a more conservative threshold of 0.85 is often used to enhance rigor.

Table 3. **HTMT – Matrix**

Variables	Attitude Towards Behavior	Perceived Behavioral Control	Collectivist Culture	Minimalism	Perceived Social Expectations	Sustainable Consumption Behaviour
Attitude Towards Behavior						
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.648					
Collectivist Culture	0.821	0.636				
Minimalism	0.591	0.117	0.529			
Perceived Social Expectations	0.410	0.727	0.636	0.736		
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour	0.399	0.518	0.787	0.827	0.664	

Source: own elaboration.

Additionally, Table 4 presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion, a classic approach to evaluating discriminant validity in structural equation modeling. According to this method, for adequate discriminant validity to be established, the square root of each construct's AVE, shown along the diagonal in bold, must be greater than the correlations (off-diagonal values) between that construct and all other constructs in the model (Fornell and Larcker 1981). As shown in Table 4, each diagonal value (representing the square root of AVE for each construct) exceeds the corresponding inter-construct correlations in its row and column. This reinforces the robustness of the conceptual framework and supports the argument that the measured variables reliably represent different theoretical constructs in the study.

Table 4. **Fornell-Larcker criterion**

Variables	Attitude Towards Behavior	Perceived Behavioral Control	Collectivist Culture	Minimalism	Perceived Social Expectations	Sustainable Consumption Behaviour
Attitude Towards Behavior	0.802					
Perceived Behavioral Control	0.570	0.713				
Collectivist Culture	0.746	0.816	0.718			
Minimalism	0.547	0.891	0.930	0.710		
Perceived Social Expectations	0.876	0.628	0.916	0.766	0.783	
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour	0.876	0.802	0.726	0.650	0.731	0.715

Source: own elaboration.

4.3 Analytical process and test for goodness of fit

Table 5 provides a comprehensive assessment of the model's explanatory power and predictive relevance. The R^2 value for Sustainable Consumption Behaviour stands at 0.945, indicating that the independent variables collectively explain 94.5% of the variance in the dependent variable—a strong indication of model robustness. Similarly, high R^2 values for Perceived Behavioral Control (0.777) and Perceived Social Expectations (0.593) reflect substantial explanatory power for these constructs. The F^2 values also confirm medium to large effect sizes, especially for Minimalism (0.712) and Perceived Behavioral Control (0.652), demonstrating their significant contributions to the model. The Q^2 values for all constructs are above the 0.30 threshold, confirming the model's strong predictive relevance. Moreover, model fit indices, such as NFI (0.968), RMSE (0.029), and RMS_theta (0.007), all meet or surpass the recommended benchmarks. The Goodness of Fit (GOF) score of 0.632 further affirms the overall model adequacy. Collectively, these statistics provide compelling evidence of a well-fitting and predictive structural model.

Table 5. **Test for model fitness**

Variables	R^2	F^2	Q^2
Minimalism	-	0.712	0.389
Attitude towards behavior	0.309	0.447	0.342
Perceived behavioral control	0.777	0.652	0.376
Perceived social expectations	0.593	0.538	0.331
Collectivist culture	–	0.224	0.309
Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.945	0.828	0.418
Fitness of the Model	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	
RMS_theta	0.007		
NFI	0.962	0.968	
RMSE	0.030	0.029	
Goodness of Fit (GOF)	0.632		

Source: own elaboration.

4.4 Hypothesis testing

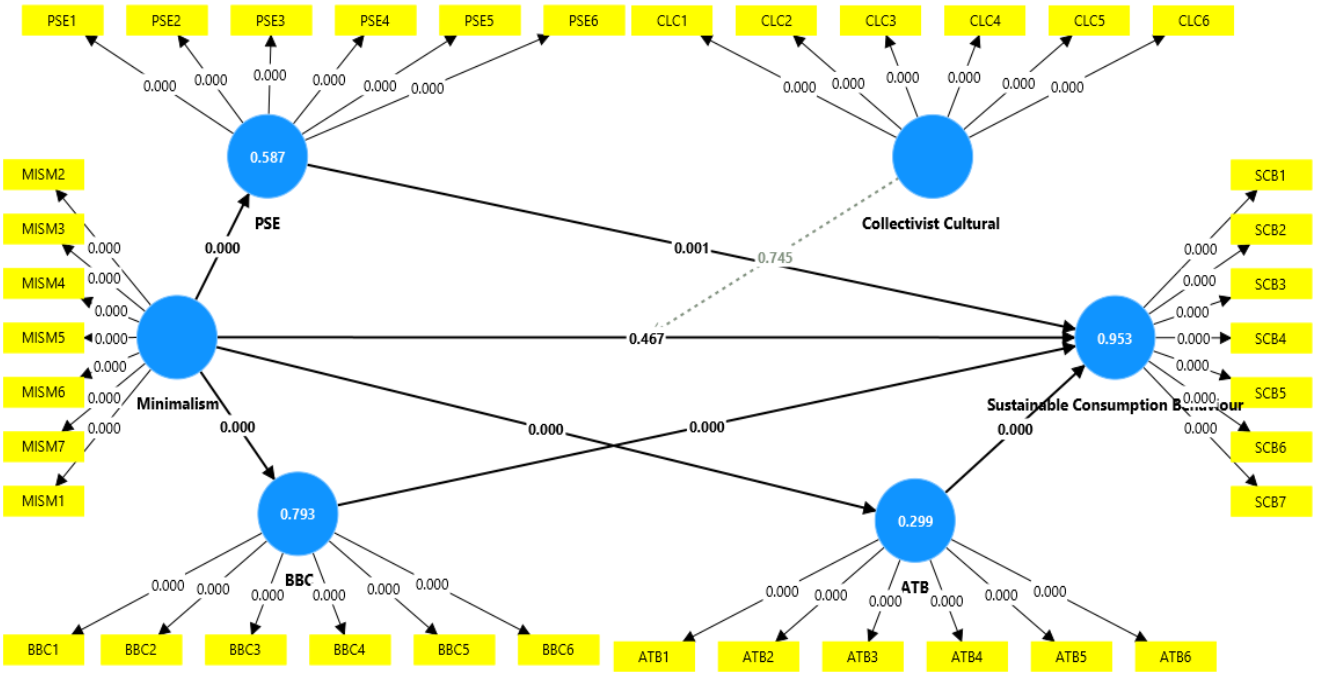
The structural model was assessed using PLS-SEM with a bootstrapping procedure to evaluate the significance of hypothesized paths. Bootstrapping, a resampling method, enabled the estimation of standard errors, t-values, and p-values for each structural path coefficient (β). As shown in Table 6 and Figure 2, all direct hypotheses were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), with beta values indicating the strength of the relationships between the variables. Minimalism had a strong direct effect on sustainable consumption behavior (H1: $\beta = 0.954$, $t = 28.539$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its critical influence. Minimalism also significantly influenced attitude towards behaviour (H2: $\beta = 0.603$, $p = 0.000$), perceived behavioural control (H3: $\beta = 0.595$, $p = 0.000$), and perceived social expectations (H4: $\beta = 0.557$, $p = 0.000$). The TPB variables also had robust effects on sustainable consumption: attitude (H5: $\beta = 0.881$, $p < 0.001$), perceived behavioral control (H6: $\beta = 0.771$, $p < 0.001$), and social expectations (H7: $\beta = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the moderating effect of collectivist culture on the relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behavior was significant ($\beta = 0.224$, $t = 30.035$, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating that cultural values intensify the positive effect of minimalism on sustainable consumption. These statistically significant beta values and p-levels confirm both the strength and validity of the proposed relationships in the structural model.

Table 6. **Findings of the research hypothesis**

	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values	Decision
Direct Relationship					
H1: Minimalism -> Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.954	0.033	28.539	0.000	Supported
H2: Minimalism -> Attitude Towards Behavior	0.603	0.040	15.155	0.000	Supported
H3: Minimalism -> Perceived behavioral control	0.595	0.077	1.231	0.000	Supported
H4: Minimalism -> Perceived Social Expectations	0.557	0.021	26.821	0.000	Supported
H5 Attitude toward the behavior -> Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.881	0.010	92.278	0.000	Supported
H6: Perceived behavioral control -> Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.771	0.011	72.797	0.000	Supported
H7: Perceived social expectations -> Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.695	0.052	13.809	0.000	Supported
Moderating Relationship					
Collectivist culture x Minimalism -> Sustainable consumption behaviour	0.224	0.105	30.035	0.000	Supported

Source: own elaboration.

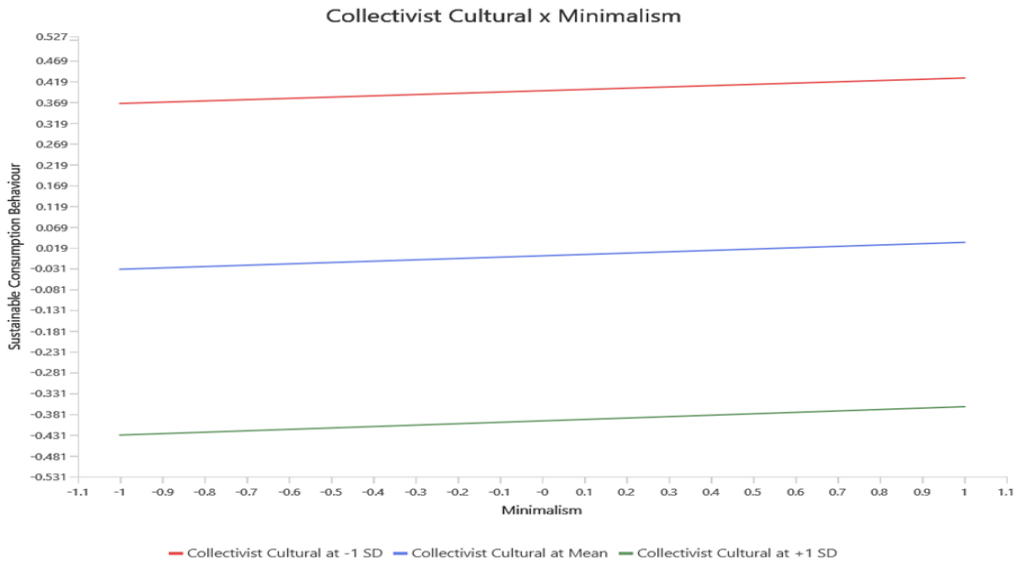
Figure 2. **Outcome of structural model**



Source: own elaboration.

4.5 Moderation effect of collectivist culture

Figure 3. **The moderating role of collectivist culture**



Source: own elaboration.

Figure 3 presents a graphical depiction of the moderating role of collectivist culture in the relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behaviour. The plotted interaction lines indicate that the positive influence of minimalism on sustainable consumption is strongest when collectivist cultural orientation is low (as shown by the steep red line at 1 SD). This pattern suggests that

individuals who are less influenced by collectivist norms are more likely to translate minimalist values into sustainable consumption actions. In contrast, strong collectivist orientations may attenuate this effect, possibly due to conformity to group preferences or social norms that do not prioritize minimalist ideals.

5. Discussion and research implication

5.1 Discussion and Theoretical Implications

The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behaviour among Gen Z consumers. This suggests that individuals who adopt minimalist values, characterized by intentional efforts to avoid clutter, reduce material possessions, and critically evaluate consumption choices, are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors. This result aligns with Kang et al. (2021), who noted that minimalism encourages simplicity and purposeful living, which in turn fosters environmentally mindful decisions. Similarly, previous studies have highlighted that minimalism serves as a psychological and behavioral foundation for resisting overconsumption and embracing sustainable alternatives (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2022; Mishra et al., 2025). The result contributes novel insight by empirically validating this relationship in the Chinese Gen Z population. Compared to findings from diverse jurisdictions, where minimalism is often driven by anti-consumerist movements Meissner, 2019), the current result reflects a shift among young Chinese consumers toward sustainability-driven consumption habits, possibly influenced by rising environmental awareness and national sustainability goals. Hence, the result affirms the TPB and also extends prior analysis to a new socio-cultural setting, thereby strengthening the cross-cultural applicability of minimalism as a driver of sustainability. The finding offers a partial solution to the challenges of overconsumption facing developing nations, suggesting that cultivating minimalist values among youth may support long-term behavioral shifts in favor of environmental preservation. However, while the significance is evident, further studies could explore whether such patterns persist across different life stages or income levels. Thus, the present study bridges a vital gap in the literature and reinforces the need to integrate minimalism more explicitly into environmental education and policy frameworks targeting youth populations.

Moreover, the study empirically confirmed that minimalism significantly predicts attitude towards behaviour (H2), indicating that individuals who embrace minimalist values tend to develop more favourable attitudes toward sustainable consumption. This supports the core tenets of the TPB, which asserts that attitude plays a fundamental role in shaping behavioural intentions. In this study, the minimalist participants expressed a belief that sustainable consumption is desirable and also ethically aligned with their values. This finding is consistent with Mishra et al. (2024), who observed that minimalists typically prioritize purpose-driven living and view sustainability as integral to personal well-being. Moreover, Sampene et al. (2023) found that pro-environmental values embedded in minimalist lifestyles enhance individuals' approval of environmentally friendly behaviors. The current study contributes novel insights by demonstrating that minimalism strengthens favourable attitudes even within a collectivist cultural setting, emphasizing the potential for minimalist values to enhance cognitive and emotional alignment with environmental goals.

Turning to Hypothesis 3, the study found a positive correlation between minimalism and perceived behavioral control. Thus, minimalism significantly boosts individuals' sense of capability and confidence in performing sustainable actions. This suggests that minimalists perceive themselves as having greater control over their consumption decisions, which is crucial for translating intentions into actual behaviour. The result is supported by findings from Cammarata et al. (2024), who noted that minimalist consumers often develop a sense of empowerment by simplifying their choices, thereby reducing psychological barriers to adopting sustainable practices. Similarly, Parvatiyar & Sheth (2023).

argued that minimalists are better equipped to overcome societal pressures and information overload, resulting in stronger perceptions of behavioral control. In confirming this relationship, the study reinforces the applicability of the TPB model in sustainability research. It contributes to the growing body of literature that frames minimalism as a psychological enabler of sustainable consumption.

Additionally, the study confirmed a strong connection between minimalism and perceived social expectations, thereby confirming Hypothesis 4. The results reveal that individuals with minimalist orientations are more responsive to social norms and expectations surrounding sustainability. This reflects a strong normative influence, where minimalists perceive those sustainable behaviours are socially endorsed or even expected within their peer groups or communities. The result echoes findings by Pangarkar et al. (2021), who highlighted that minimalists are often socially engaged and sensitive to environmental discourses within their social networks. Furthermore, Karpova et al. (2024) argued that minimalism enhances one's attunement to social narratives that favour ecological responsibility. This association may also reflect the broader cultural shift in which sustainability is becoming a collective aspiration, particularly among young people in rapidly urbanizing societies.

The results further provide strong empirical support for Hypothesis 5, indicating that attitude towards behaviour positively affects sustainable consumption behaviour. The inference is that when individuals develop favourable attitudes toward sustainability, they are significantly more likely to engage in responsible consumption choices. This outcome is consistent with the foundational assertions of the TPB, where attitude serves as a cognitive and affective evaluation of behaviour that guides intention and action. The study confirms this linkage among Gen Z consumers in China, suggesting that positive perceptions of sustainability, such as viewing eco-friendly consumption as morally right, socially rewarding, and personally fulfilling, can translate into concrete behaviors. This aligns with the findings of Baltacı et al., (2025), who demonstrated that consumers with positive environmental attitudes are more inclined to purchase green products in emerging economies. This study confirms that even in a rapidly developing, collectivist society, attitudinal alignment remains a crucial predictor. The findings advance the literature by confirming that fostering environmental attitudes through education, media, and peer influence is a vital step in promoting sustainable practices among young people (Puđak, Šimac, and Trako Poljak 2025; Shah and Asghar 2024).

Concerning hypothesis 6, the study also found a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and sustainable consumption behavior. This suggests that individuals who feel capable of engaging in sustainability-related actions, whether through access to green products, time to make informed choices, or confidence in their knowledge, are more likely to act on those intentions. This observation aligns with the findings of Fawehinmi et al. (2024), who demonstrated that PBC plays a pivotal role in shaping behavioral intention, particularly when consumers perceive fewer obstacles to adopting sustainable lifestyles. Similarly, Salleh et al. (2024) emphasized that higher levels of perceived control are linked to reduced psychological resistance, leading to more consistent environmentally friendly actions. In the present study, minimalists who felt they had control over their purchasing and lifestyle decisions were more effective at converting values into actions. This underscores the importance of not only educating consumers about sustainability but also ensuring that the structural and economic conditions such as product availability and affordability support their perceived control and behavioral consistency.

Furthermore, hypothesis 7 was also validated, confirming that social norms and perceived pressure from significant others positively influence sustainable consumer behaviour. This outcome reflects the social dimension of the TPB, which posits that individuals act in ways that gain social approval or align with societal expectations. In a collectivist setting such as China, where conformity to group values is culturally reinforced, this relationship becomes particularly pronounced. Lu & Park (2025) argued that in such societies, the perceived social imperative to act responsibly, especially in highly visible behaviors like consumption, can be a strong motivator. Additionally, Xu et al. (2025) highlighted the growing influence of peer pressure and social identity on green consumer choices, particularly among

younger generations. The present study extends these insights by showing that Gen Z consumers not only internalize social sustainability norms but also actively respond to them through their consumption behaviour. This finding contributes to the understanding that sustainability efforts targeting youth should leverage social influence channels such as influencers, peer networks, and community-based initiatives to enhance normative support for responsible consumption.

The study provided strong support for hypothesis 8, confirming that collectivist culture moderates the relationship between minimalism and sustainable consumption behaviour, such that the strength of the relationship varies depending on individuals' levels of collectivist orientation. Specifically, the interaction plot (Figure 3) revealed that the positive influence of minimalism on sustainable consumption behaviour is stronger among individuals with lower levels of collectivist culture. At the same time, this effect weakens as collectivist tendencies increase. This finding is theoretically significant, as it introduces cultural orientation as a boundary condition that shapes the behavioral outcomes of personal values, such as minimalism. While collectivist cultures typically emphasize harmony, shared responsibility, and group welfare Ong & Koay, 2025), the current results suggest that these values may sometimes dilute the individual expression of personal consumption philosophies, particularly when those philosophies, such as minimalism, diverge from collective material norms or mainstream consumer culture. The present findings align more closely with earlier analyses that demonstrated in strongly collectivist societies, individual lifestyle choices are often negotiated through group conformity and social approval (Davari, Nosrati, and Kim 2024; Nosrati, Kim, and Leung 2023; Yang et al. 2024). When minimalist values are not strongly embedded in the collective discourse, individuals with a high collectivist orientation may be less inclined to act on their minimalist beliefs, out of concern for social harmony or maintaining their status. By highlighting this complexity, the current study contributes a novel insight: cultural values do not uniformly amplify sustainability behaviours; instead, they can interact with personal value systems in nuanced ways, either reinforcing or constraining behavioural outcomes. This underscores the importance of tailoring sustainability interventions not only to personal motivations (like minimalism) but also to cultural conditions that mediate their effectiveness. The validation of H8 broadens the theoretical lens of TPB by incorporating cultural moderation and demonstrates that the interplay between personal values and socio-cultural orientations is critical in shaping sustainable consumer behaviour.

5.2 Practical Implications

The findings from this study offer several meaningful and actionable implications for policymakers, government agencies, business communities, and stakeholders focused on sustainability. The first and most direct implication stems from the confirmation that minimalism has a significant influence on sustainable consumption behavior. This relationship suggests a need for policymakers and sustainability educators to reposition minimalism as a core component of national sustainability strategies, rather than a niche lifestyle. For example, national curricula in schools and universities could integrate minimalist education, not just as ethical consumerism, but as a structured module on intentional living, financial well-being, and environmental stewardship. Furthermore, public campaigns should highlight the environmental benefits of minimalism and also its alignment with long-term well-being, countering the dominant consumerist narrative. Governments can collaborate with non-profit organisation to create public minimalist hubs and community centres offering free workshops on decluttering, slow living, and conscious purchasing, particularly targeting urban youth who are most vulnerable to impulsive consumption driven by digital advertising.

The second implication arises from the strong linkage between minimalism and attitude toward sustainable behaviour. This finding underscores the need to shape consumer mindsets before behaviour can be changed effectively. Stakeholders in the advertising and marketing industries, especially those in the green brand sector, should reconsider how they design persuasive communication strategies. Rather

than merely promoting product features, marketing efforts should emphasize psychological and emotional dimensions of sustainable consumption, such as how it connects to identity, values, and long-term happiness. Local governments could fund behavioral design labs to collaborate with branding professionals, psychologists, and educators in crafting minimalist narratives that reshape consumer attitudes, particularly among Gen Z audiences. These narratives can be used in environmental campaigns, community-led art and media projects, and social media storytelling competitions. In doing so, sustainable consumption becomes an aspirational identity rooted not in sacrifice, but in intentional living. This strategic attitude-shaping effort would help create a new social norm in which responsible consumption is admired, not marginalized.

A third practical implication can be derived from the confirmed positive relationship between minimalism and perceived behavioural control. Businesses and community groups should not only promote a minimalist ideology but also enhance the structural conditions that make minimalist living easier and more accessible. For instance, businesses could create minimalist subscription services that provide rotating access to essential goods (such as clothing, tools, or electronics) without ownership burdens. Municipal governments can incentivize zero-waste stores, minimalist co-living spaces, and repair cafés where people are trained to reuse and fix items instead of discarding them. Additionally, integrating minimalist design principles in urban planning such as compact, functional living areas, walkable neighborhoods, and accessible low-consumption transport modes could significantly boost individuals' confidence in their ability to live sustainably. Such initiatives would translate internal perceived behavioural control into practical action, especially for consumers who aspire to minimalist lifestyles but face structural limitations.

The fourth implication stems from the influence of minimalism on perceived social expectations. The study demonstrates that minimalism is not an isolated practice but interacts closely with social influence and perceived group norms. Therefore, institutions, especially corporate and community leaders, have a critical role in publicly endorsing and modelling minimalist values to shift collective expectations. Businesses could, for example, establish "sustainability ambassador" programs within their teams, where employees are recognized for demonstrating minimalist consumption or sharing sustainable practices. Universities and city governments could host "minimalism festivals" that blend culture, education, and policy dialogue, thereby reframing minimalism as a community-based identity rather than a private choice. Religious and cultural organizations can also be engaged to contextualize minimalism in alignment with spiritual values such as humility, moderation, and social responsibility. By elevating minimalist behaviours into visible, aspirational group norms, such initiatives would strengthen social pressure in favor of sustainable lifestyles, which can ripple through broader population segments.

Ultimately, the significant moderating role of collectivist culture necessitates policies and interventions that are culturally embedded rather than universally applied. The study showed that individuals with stronger collectivist orientations are less likely to translate minimalist values into sustainable behaviours when the group does not support such values. Policymakers must recognize that sustainability messaging and interventions will be more effective when aligned with collective identity, communal goals, and social harmony. In practice, this could mean designing policies that reward group-level action rather than individual behaviour, for example, offering tax reductions or service credits to housing complexes, schools, or community organizations that collectively reduce consumption or meet sustainability targets. Businesses should also consider structuring loyalty or referral programs around group participation, encouraging consumers to engage others in minimalist practices. Moreover, digital platforms and community apps could incorporate collective tracking features, such as neighborhood carbon footprints or shared decluttering challenges, thereby making sustainability a communal and culturally resonant goal.

6. Conclusion, limitations and future outlook

6.1 Conclusion

This study offers a significant empirical contribution to the evolving body of knowledge on sustainable consumption by examining how minimalism influences environmentally responsible behaviours among Generation Z consumers in China, while incorporating the core dimensions of the TPB, comprising attitude towards behaviour, perceived behavioural control, and perceived social expectations. Using robust structural equation modeling techniques and validated measurement scales, the findings confirmed that minimalism is a potent driver of sustainable consumption behaviors, both directly and indirectly, through positive shifts in behavioral attitudes, increased personal agency in sustainable choices, and greater sensitivity to social expectations. Furthermore, the moderation analysis revealed that collectivist cultural orientation amplifies the link between these behavioural factors and sustainable consumption, suggesting that communal values can significantly strengthen pro-environmental practices. The insights gained extend the theoretical application of the TPB framework by integrating minimalism, a relatively underexplored psychological construct in consumer research and an emerging economy setting. In practical terms, the study highlights the need for policymakers, sustainability advocates, and business leaders to incorporate minimalist values and collectivist norms into the design of effective sustainability interventions targeting younger demographics. Although the cross-sectional design limits causal inferences, the findings provide a foundational reference point for future longitudinal or experimental research exploring minimalism and eco-conscious consumption across diverse populations. The present study advances the scientific understanding of sustainable consumption behavior by integrating minimalism into the TPB framework, thereby extending its explanatory power in the context of pro-environmental decision-making. Specifically, the findings provide empirical evidence that minimalism significantly enhances attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social expectations toward sustainable consumption. This integration underscores minimalism as not merely a lifestyle choice but a cognitive and cultural driver of sustainability-oriented actions. Moreover, by examining the moderating role of collectivist culture, the study introduces a novel cultural dimension that deepens the contextual applicability of TPB. Collectively, these insights enrich the theoretical discourse on consumer psychology and sustainability while offering a robust foundation for future research exploring value-based behavioral change in tourism, services, and broader consumption domains.

6.2 Limitations and future research directions

Despite the robust findings and theoretical contributions of this study, several limitations warrant acknowledgment and provide avenues for future research. First, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts causal inferences and overlooks potential changes in behaviour over time; future studies could adopt longitudinal approaches to assess the stability of the minimalist–sustainability relationship. Second, while the focus on Gen Z consumers in China offers valuable insights into a digitally active and environmentally aware cohort, the generalizability of the results to other age groups or national cultures remains limited. Comparative studies across generations and countries would enrich our understanding of cultural and generational dynamics. Third, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, despite anonymity measures. Subsequent research could incorporate behavioral tracking or mixed-methods designs to validate actual sustainable practices. Another key limitation of this study lies in its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to capture the evolution of behavioral intentions over time. Future research could adopt a longitudinal or qualitative approach to deepen theoretical insights and further advance the development of the TPB within the context of sustainable consumption. Furthermore, the study acknowledges certain methodological limitations associated with the use of PLS-SEM, including its sensitivity to model specification and reliance on linear relationships, which may constrain the detection of more complex or non-linear interactions among

constructs. Lastly, the current study focused primarily on collectivist culture as a moderator; however, future research could explore other contextual variables, such as income levels, digital literacy, or regulatory environments, that may interact with minimalism in shaping sustainable consumption behavior.

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