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Research Article

The Emergence of Green Social Identity Amongst Indian Consumers: The Mediating Role of Environmental Factors and Sustainable Consumption Practices

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Abstract: This study examines the emergence of green social identity among Indian consumers by integrating social identity theory with perspectives from sustainable consumption, environmental awareness and everyday resourcefulness. Building on the manuscript's conceptualization of a hybrid green social identity, the study proposes that environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence and practical green resourcefulness contribute to green social identity, which in turn is associated with sustainable consumption behaviour. To operationalize the construct, a Green Social Identity Scale (GSIS) was developed around four theoretically grounded dimensions: environmental self-definition, social recognition and belonging, identity enactment, and hybrid practical green identity. The quantitative design is based on 420 Indian consumers and uses exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling with bootstrap mediation. The results indicate that all four antecedents are positively associated with green social identity, while green social identity shows a strong positive association with sustainable consumption behaviour. Bootstrap estimates indicate significant indirect effects of environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence and practical green resourcefulness through green social identity. The findings support the manuscript's central argument that Indian green consumption cannot be reduced to purely environmental motives; rather, it is shaped by identity, social validation and practical resourcefulness.

Keywords: Green Consumption, Green Social Identity, Environmental Awareness, Sustainability Awareness, Social Influence, Jugaad, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

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INTRODUCTION

The social act of consumption has always been an integral part of theorization in social sciences as it is crucial in understanding processes such as identity formation, social agency, and social relationships. Liberalism always celebrated the dominant idea of a sovereign consumer: the self-defining rational agent who chooses and whose autonomy is illustrated in market behavior [1]. Consumer culture showed the dominance of commercial culture with advertising, brands, and commodities over public life (ibid). In economics and market research, consumer choices are often treated as rational [2], but an interdisciplinary investigation can map networks of power and access and intertwined psychological and socio-cultural factors [4]. Hence, providing a more holistic picture of 'choice' [4]. The popularity of green consumerism started with the global agenda towards sustainability and sustainable consumption [4-7]. Concerns about global warming and ecosystem dilapidation have become increasingly critical [6]. But the concept of green consumption is an oxymoron itself. Green technically implies conserving environmental resources, while

consumption typically encourages their destruction. The dichotomy lies within the larger rubric of how social identity is performed. Giddens [8] calls this 'reflexive narrative of the self': a type of permanent identity crisis that is both nourished and assuaged by consumer culture. For instance, advertising gives customers maps of modernity and options but also enslaves them to multiple lifestyle depictions competing freely in the market and mediascape [9]. The manifestation of green social identity is also a project of the self, a persistent effort to contextualize self-coherence within a consistent narrative of who one is. This research conceptualizes green social identity as a notion of the self that presents the individual as an environmentally responsible consumer and is also validated by significant others [10]. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, here the term green integrates both the concepts of a) green consumption i.e. specific usage of specifically designed green products/services and b) sustainable consumption i.e. mindful consumption of resources [4].

The global discourse on sustainability, along with market capitalism, has already produced different green products. Mindful consumption of green products and services is believed to affect the environment and society to a lesser extent [3,5,11]. Green products and services can be defined as products and services whose design, configuration, and operation minimize the negative environmental impact across their entire life cycle and are sustainable for the long run [12]. Green consumption in India is growing as it has already emerged as a growing market for organic products, with a valuation of USD 762 million in 2025 [13]. Initiatives like Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) are India-led global mass movements for the promotion of sustainable lifestyles [14]. Along with these targeted government campaigns, increasing consumer demand for organic food and electric vehicles, removal of stigma around pre-owned or reusable products, trends like mindful fashion, and repeated awareness around corporate ESG disclosure mandates have manifested a social reality where issues of the environment are no longer concerns of the margin. The Indian urban consumer culture is already witnessing the change. Studies state that economic growth, rising purchasing power, and increasing awareness of the benefits of sustainable choices like healthier dietary options have propelled the production and consumption of green or organic products in India [3]. The digital connectedness amongst people has also acted as a catalyst in this boom [15]. The emerging scenario of green consumption in India is strongly influenced by lifestyle expectations, green marketing initiatives, and moral values. But it still remains a complex, heterogeneous, and class-specific adaptation. The paper therefore focuses on India's growing, heterogeneous consumer base in the world's largest democracy and the resulting formation of an emerging green social identity among Indian customers. The paper also proposes a concept of 'hybrid green' social identity based on the social reality of using a mixture of reasons for adopting green consumption, beyond purely conscious environmental ones. The results of the present research show that frequently mentioned reasons for green consumption like value-based buying, affordability, availability, social identity, status symbol, symbolic meaning, and social acceptance help explain why green products are selected. But these reasons often do not explain in depth how people operate beyond the conventional uses of those green products and services. To fill this research gap, and inspired by Kumar and Mukherjee [11]'s research, the present study introduces the concept of a mutually reciprocal, shared, and often implicit system of practical knowledge, "jugaad" that creates bridges through past lived experiences, observations, common sense, and simple rules that guide people in deciding what to consume and why. This gives rise to a hybrid green social identity in the Indian context.

Therefore, the central research question is: how does a green social identity develop amongst the mainstream Indian consumers, and what role do environmental and sustainability awareness factors play in mediating this emerging consumer culture? Methodologically, the paper uses quantitative research methods as elucidated in the ensuing sections.

Historically, ethical consumption has been prevalent in earlier centuries as well, but the concept of green consumption first appeared in the 1970s in the United States. Green consumption appeared in marketing literature via Fisk's [16] Theory of Responsible Consumption, Henion & Kinnear's Ecological Marketing [17], and Kardash's idea of the "Ecologically Concerned Consumer" [18]. Initially, scholarly interest focused purely on energy use and consumer behavior around recycling and energy saving. Gradually, the field recognized green consumption as a business opportunity and expanded further research [19]. In the Indian context, scholarly works on green consumerism employ theories from fields of marketing and psychology, for instance, popular theories like the theory of planned behavior and the Value-Belief-Norm model in innovation resistance theory [11,20]. The paper addresses a research gap, which is the lack of integration of a sociological perspective with existing psychological-marketing research to develop a fuller understanding. The sociological perspective delineates that social identity is never a simple internal trait that produces a certain behavior but rather is manufactured through social interactions, institutionalized by an audience, and is unevenly distributed across social strata.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Background

The discourse on green consumption is wide-ranging, yet an apparent gap remains: what are the relevant factors that influence a consumer's attitudes and behaviors towards pro-environmental consumption? Multiple studies have suggested that to resolve this gap, multidisciplinary analysis is needed (Ikram et.al, 2026). This research integrates multiple theories from Sociology and Psychology into marketing and management studies to develop a holistic picture. This section first contextualizes the concept of social self by underlining the theoretical foundation using theories of

sociology and market psychology. It then explains the key construct, i.e. green social identity, through the perspective of management and marketing studies and in the Indian context before developing the study's hypotheses in a rationally aligned manner.

Theoretical Foundation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Social Identity

Several important studies have theorized on social identity. Social identity theory, a psycho-sociological perspective, highlights the self as a multi-dimensional entity with roles attached to value-based specific identities that ultimately dictate personal behavior through a self/peer verification system [21,22]. The crux of identity theory is that individuals are energized to act in ways that are compatible with the values and meanings associated with their key identities. When a self-starts associating with a particular identity, behaviors start aligning with that identity. For example, someone who considers themselves a 'vegan' may mould their dietary pattern around that identity. Hence, people with an environmentally responsible self-image may consume more green products and services [23-25]. Similarly, Charles Horton Cooley's "looking glass theory" states that our self-identity is influenced by how we think others perceive us. In the green consumption context, people are more likely to consume responsibly if they perceive that others view this behavior as a superior choice.

Management and Marketing Perspectives on Green Identity

Marketing and consumer behavior perspectives help to make sociological self-identity measurable and actionable at the stage of micro decision making. The Value Belief Norm Theory [26] is one of the most widely used theories to understand pro-environment purchases. It states that green purchases follow a causal chain of value-based events. The sequence usually starts with individuals processing core values in the form of biospheric (environment-based), altruistic (society/people based), or egoistic (self-based) motivations. These motivations guide them into developing awareness around ecological degradation and the fact that human actions affect the environment. Feeling responsible for the situation and wanting to prevent those harms prompt certain pro-environment choices in consumption. Another research study building on Stern's model highlights that post-materialist values affect environmental concern and perceived threat, and hence influence willingness to sacrifice [27]. This gives rise to pro-environmental behaviors. In the Indian context, awareness of the ecological worldview and consequences often dictates personal norms and individual behaviors. A parallel body of work uses the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to analyze green consumer behavior in India [11]. The theory of Planned Behaviour highlights that a person's action is influenced by their set of intentions. A few of the dominant intentions are: individual attitude, social pressure, and perceived behavioral control. The modified TPB model worked well for the Indian demographic. The research findings showed a non-linear relationship amongst the independent variables and the dependent variable (green consumerism) of the modified Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model. Perceived behavioral control is also one of the important independent factors guiding Indian consumers towards green consumerism (ibid). An increasing body of studies in marketing use pro-environment self-identity as a mediating factor along the key measurable nodes of altruistic value, egoistic value and social consumption motivation [28]. An interesting research insight has also come up from green social identity marketing studies. Three experimental studies have been conducted in India to investigate how the exclusionary politics of green marketing propel consumer rejection of sustainable products moderated by identity congruence [29]. There have been instances where the social aspirations of emerging youth demographics have led them to reject green consumerism due to low relatability. Using Social Aspiration Theory and Social Identity Theory, the research explores the psychology behind status-driven anti-green consumption (ibid). This study further corroborates statements of Anantharaman [30-31] and Baviskar [32], as illustrated in later sections, that green consumption has not been accepted homogeneously by all due to various mismatches in the alignment of mutual goals.

Management theories and perspectives have further institutionalized the dialogue on sustainable consumption in organizations of all sizes, with stringent government mandates. This has not only legitimized the need for green products and services but also forced people to think in terms of carbon footprint, recyclability, the circular economy, product life-cycle, and sustainable consumption. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) agendas and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures largely put firms as custodians of legitimate 'green' labels. One example is the popularity of India's ecomark label as a certificate to ensure pro-environment [33]. India as a country is consciously developing the cultural, economic, social, and physical infrastructure of building a pan-India green social identity through 'Pro Planet People' schemes [34]. This helps in creating a base for the subsequent individual and group green social identities. Institutional theory [35] grounds this behavior and explains how individuals, social groups, governments, and organizations maneuver around prevailing social norms, values, and routines. They use the term Isomorphism to describe the inherent tendency of organizations, in this case, to align with ESG and government mandates, in the same line of work to function and operate alike as they conform to similar societal pressures.

Green self-Identity as a Mediating Factor in Risk Society

For Anthony Giddens, the construction of self-identity in the post-modern era is an exercise of self-reflexivity which is mediated through navigating multiple choices around lifestyle, life-decisions and consumption patterns. Green consumption is one of the multiple lifestyle choices for an urban Indian consumer, who is digitally connected to a similar like-minded cohort, to construct a comprehensible biography of the self. Ulrich Beck's theory of risk society aligns with this construction of self-identity in a highly industrialized society. According to him, in postmodern industrialized society, people are increasingly concerned about the looming uncertainties of life like environmental and health risks. To mitigate this unpredictability of postmodern living, people try to control their risk exposures by being mindful and ethical in their everyday life decisions. Beck calls this subpolitics. People are no longer waiting for big political decisions to happen in parliament or in other authority structures; instead, they manufacture what is morally right for them in mundane micro places like a supermarket. The rise of green consumerism and green social identity can be seen as a way for ordinary people to mitigate environmental risks.

Together, Giddens and Beck contextualize green social identity as a societal reflexivity about emerging social problems like ecological degradation and contamination of resources through everyday consumption practices.

Contextualizing green Consumerism in Indian Culture

Indian culture has always celebrated the spirit of sustainability through 'simple living and high thinking'. Traditionally, it has encouraged recycling, reusing, frugality, and mindful/ judicious use of resources [36] through collectivist stances and religious prescriptions. Sociologically, this matters because key social institutions like family, religion, kinship, and caste networks help develop the identity of the conscious consumer through socialization. Sustainable consumption has never been just a Western-imported ethical idea. Also, the production processes and lifestyle practices of certain subaltern communities and indigenous groups have been more sustainable than those of globally established commercial production houses because they rely heavily on recycling, resourcefulness, and nature-based products. For instance, indigenous brewing is more environmentally sustainable than commercially produced alcohol [37]. Therefore, the Indian Knowledge system not only develops social integration, cultural identity, and inclusivity but also contributes to judicious resource use, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience [38].

In the Indian context, consumer sustainability is a hybrid construct guided by a mixture of reasons, not just pure environmentalism. The paper uses the term hybrid green social identity to describe this. A consumer can choose to consume sustainably in various ways. For example, a consumer may not buy energy-saving LED bulbs but instead always switch off the lights before leaving any room, as highlighted in Sharma *et al.* (2019). Here, even though the action is different, the motivation is the same, i.e. to act sustainably. Often, people end up doing what is most practical and affordable in everyday economic affairs. In India, resourcefulness, or the act of "jugaad" (the art of working within resource constraints with quick-fix solutions and innovativeness)[39,11], has long been revered in everyday work, postcolonial management practices, and mass consumption. Jugaad culture in India is a flexible, frugal approach to everyday problem-solving using local, limited resources and is the bedrock of grassroots sustainability. By challenging the idea that green products must be expensive, jugaad promotes a circular economy through homely efforts, instinctive reuse, upcycling, and low-tech involvement. Further, Piwowar-Sulej *et al.* [40] show that green innovation is more likely to be accepted with enthusiasm when personal motivations are supported by situational, practical, and social conditions and resources of everyday life. Thriving on the social reality of resource scarcity, it encourages broader psychological changes by promoting a culture of repair instead of buying and replacing. Thus, it raises the need-versus-necessity debate in green consumerism in Indian everyday economic realities.

Green consumerism in India is largely a booming urban phenomenon influenced by the growing middle class, youth demographics, and rising awareness of climate change. It operates at the intersection of conventional resourcefulness, modern market capitalism, and marketing. The Indian scenario highlights that the emerging green social identity is not a ubiquitous, homogeneous development. Research works of Anantharaman [30,31] and Baviskar [32] and their idea of a 'bourgeois environmentalism' depict green consumerism as a project of English-speaking, dominant caste, essentially an aspirational new middle class, urban consumers who have the privilege of choosing their consumption patterns based on ethical and moral commitments and not on economic necessity. On the other hand, as explained in Chaudhuri's [37] work on the stigmatization of indigenous brewing culture by the urban marketing-capitalistic nexus, similar pro-environment practices (like recycling and growing their own food) among working-class Indians and the urban poor are often looked down upon as a culture of poverty. In the contemporary green consumption market, millets are hailed as super-nutritious foods, but the same have been relegated to cycles of stigmatization as the food of the 'poor' or 'backward' by a large section of the Indian population [41,42]. Marginal communities are often not recognized as environmental agents. Pierre Bourdieu's [43] concept of distinction helps analyze the nonuniform green social identity in India. For Bourdieu, consumption choices are not merely mechanisms for need gratification but also a marker of distinction and access to membership in an

exclusionary social group. These social groups use difference and distinction to maintain and reproduce their class positions in an already heavily stratified society. People have economic (material/financial resources), cultural (education, taste), and social (connections, affiliations) capital at their disposal to build their social identity around it. These social identities are necessary for performance in an internalized, class-based 'feel for the game' that other valued peers recognize as legitimate or illegitimate within a given social strata/group. Anantharaman's [30,31] and Baviskar's [32] narration of a bourgeois environmental identity manifests these Bourdieu-ian social identities through the availability of certain capitals among aspirational urban Indian consumers.

Therefore, any holistic understanding of the emergence of green social identity in India must view it through a sociologically informed lens of urban-class-caste hierarchy.

Hypothesis Development

The proposed model places green social identity at the center of the transition from environmental and social conditions to sustainable consumption. This is consistent with identity-based accounts of pro-environmental action, which suggest that people are more likely to act consistently with identities that are meaningful to the self and socially embedded [10,24]. It also follows recent evidence that green self-identity can function as a mediating mechanism between antecedent motivations and sustainable consumption behavior [28].

- **H1:** Environmental awareness is positively associated with green social identity
- **H2:** Sustainability awareness is positively associated with green social identity
- **H3:** Social influence is positively associated with green social identity
- **H4:** Practical green resourcefulness (jugaad-oriented sustainability practices) is positively associated with green social identity
- **H5:** Green social identity is positively associated with sustainable consumption behavior
- **H6:** Green social identity mediates the relationships between environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence, practical green resourcefulness and sustainable consumption behavior

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework proposed to explain the emergence of green social identity among Indian consumers. The framework positions Green Social Identity (GSI) as the central mediating construct linking environmental and social factors with sustainable consumption behaviour. Four antecedent factors: environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence, and practical green resourcefulness (jugaad) are proposed to contribute to the development of green social identity. In turn, green social identity is expected to influence consumers' sustainable consumption behaviour.

The framework extends the conventional understanding of green consumption by moving beyond the assumption that environmentally responsible consumption is driven solely by environmental concern or awareness. Instead, it conceptualizes green consumption as an identity-based and socially embedded process. Environmental and sustainability awareness provide cognitive foundations for environmentally responsible choices, while social influence reflects the role of family, peers, significant others and wider social networks in shaping the meaning and recognition of green behaviour. Practical green resourcefulness captures the everyday ways in which consumers incorporate sustainability through reuse, repair, frugality, repurposing and locally feasible solutions. This dimension is particularly relevant to the Indian context and corresponds with the paper's conceptualization of a hybrid green social identity.

Green social identity is therefore conceptualized as more than an individual's private belief about environmental responsibility. It incorporates self-definition, social validation, identity enactment and practical/hybrid expressions of sustainability. Once environmental responsibility becomes incorporated into an individual's identity, consumption practices are expected to become more consistent with that identity. This proposition is consistent with social identity perspectives, which suggest that individuals tend to behave in ways that are congruent with identities that are meaningful to them [22], as well as research demonstrating the relevance of green self-identity to pro-environmental and green purchasing behaviour [24,28].

Accordingly, the framework proposes that green social identity mediates the relationship between the identified environmental and social antecedents and sustainable consumption behaviour. The framework thus provides the basis for empirically examining whether environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence and practical green resourcefulness contribute to sustainable consumption directly through the development and enactment of a socially meaningful green identity.

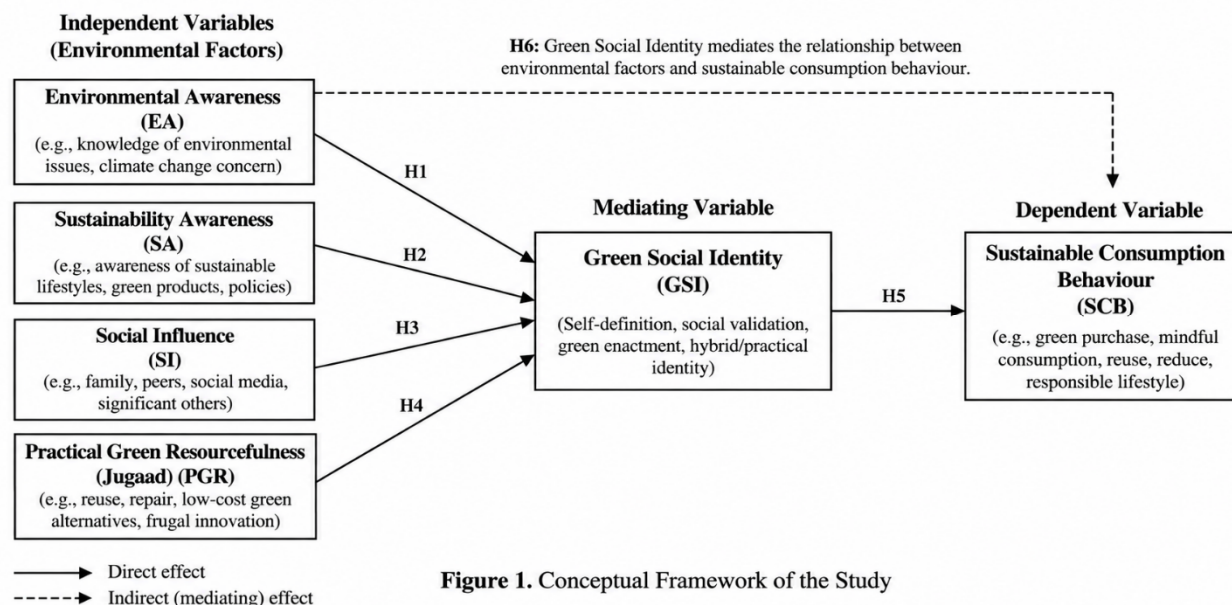


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sample

The study was structured as a cross-sectional quantitative investigation of Indian consumers. For this manuscript-development version, a dataset of 420 valid responses was used. The intended empirical study recruited adult consumers who had purchased, used, reused, repaired or deliberately avoided products on sustainability or environmental grounds within the preceding six months. A geographically diverse urban sample was proposed, with respondents drawn from major Indian metropolitan contexts. The questionnaire was administered online after informed consent was obtained. Responses with substantial missing data and straight-line response patterns were removed before analysis.

Measurement Development and Scale Construction

The study developed a Green Social Identity Scale (GSIS) because the construct examined in the manuscript was broader than conventional green self-identity. Item generation followed the staged logic recommended for scale development: construct definition, literature-based item generation, expert review, pre-testing, EFA, CFA and reliability/validity assessment. The initial pool contained 24 items derived from the manuscript's conceptualization and informed by the literature on green self-identity, social identity, sustainable consumption and practical resourcefulness. Six subject-matter experts reviewed the items for wording, relevance and redundancy. A pilot group of 60 consumers was then used for cognitive pre-testing. For the illustrative psychometric analysis, the 420 cases were randomly divided into an EFA subsample ($n = 210$) and a CFA/structural-model subsample ($n = 210$).

The final GSIS contained 16 items across four dimensions: (1) Environmental Self-Definition (ESD), (2) Social Recognition and Belonging (SRB), (3) Green Identity Enactment (GIE), and (4) Hybrid Practical Green Identity (HPG). The fourth dimension was particularly aligned with the manuscript's argument that sustainable consumption in India could be expressed through affordable, resourceful and everyday practices rather than through the purchase of premium green products alone. The scale was reflective and used a five-point Likert response format (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree).

Operationalization of the other Constructs

Environmental awareness captured awareness of ecological degradation and the environmental consequences of consumption. Sustainability awareness captured understanding of resource conservation, reuse, lifecycle consequences and long-term sustainable consumption. Social influence captured perceived expectations, approval and behavioural cues from significant others and relevant social groups. Practical green resourcefulness captured everyday repair, reuse,

repurposing, frugality and locally feasible solutions. Sustainable consumption behaviour captured acquisition, use, conservation and disposal practices. The structure was compatible with the literature's treatment of social influence, individual self and tangible everyday practices as important routes to sustainable consumer behaviour [25], while also reflecting Indian evidence on green awareness and interpersonal influence [44].

Analytical Procedure

The illustrative analysis proceeded in five stages. First, descriptive statistics and data screening were performed. Second, EFA with principal-axis factoring and oblique rotation was used to identify the latent structure of the new GSIS. Third, CFA was conducted to evaluate the measurement model using chi-square/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA and SRMR. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, while convergent validity was assessed through standardized loadings and average variance extracted. Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Fourth, correlations and structural paths were estimated. Finally, mediation was tested with 5,000 bootstrap resamples; an indirect effect was treated as statistically supported when its 95% confidence interval did not include zero. Bootstrap-based mediation was preferred because the sampling distribution of indirect effects need not be normal [45].

The quantitative model was specified as follows: Environmental Awareness, Sustainability Awareness, Social Influence and Practical Green Resourcefulness → Green Social Identity → Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, with direct paths from the four antecedents to Sustainable Consumption Behaviour retained to distinguish partial from full mediation.

RESULTS

Sample Profile

The illustrative dataset contains 420 respondents. The gender distribution is 203 women (48.3%), 203 men (48.3%) and 14 respondents who selected another/prefer-not-to-say category (3.3%). Educationally, 120 respondents (28.6%) are undergraduates, 234 (55.7%) are postgraduates and 66 (15.7%) hold doctoral/professional qualifications (Table 1).

Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Purification

The initial 24-item GSIS was subjected to exploratory factor analysis using principal-axis factoring with oblique rotation. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .951, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(276) = 4788.52$, $p < 0.001$, supporting the factorability of the 24-item correlation matrix. Four factors were retained on the basis of the scree plot, eigenvalues and theoretical interpretability. Eight items were subsequently removed because of low communalities, substantial cross-loadings or conceptual redundancy. The final 16-item solution explained approximately 72% of the common variance, with retained factor loadings ranging from 0.71 to 0.92. The four factors corresponded closely to the theoretically proposed dimensions: Environmental Self-Definition, Social Recognition and Belonging, Green Identity Enactment, and Hybrid Practical Green Identity (Table 2, Figure 2).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Quality

The CFA of the measurement model indicated acceptable-to-good model fit, with $\chi^2/df = 1.91$, CFI = 0.952, TLI = 0.944, RMSEA = 0.066 and SRMR = 0.049. Standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.700. For the four first-order dimensions of the GSIS, composite reliability ranged from 0.84 to 0.92 and AVE ranged from 0.57 to 0.740. The remaining study constructs also demonstrated acceptable reliability and convergent validity, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.82 to 0.94, composite reliability values ranging from 0.83 to 0.95, and AVE ranging from 0.56 to 0.69. HTMT values remained below 0.85, providing evidence of discriminant validity. These procedures follow established scale-development practice and the logic used in recent sustainable-consumption measurement research [46,47] (Table 3, Figure 3).

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The correlation matrix shows positive and statistically significant associations among all principal constructs. Green social identity is most strongly associated with sustainable consumption behaviour ($r = 0.698$, $p < 0.001$). It is also positively related to environmental awareness ($r = 0.469$), sustainability awareness ($r = 0.419$), social influence ($r = 0.401$) and practical green resourcefulness ($r = 0.452$), all $p < 0.001$ (Table 4).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

In the structural model, environmental awareness ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$), sustainability awareness ($\beta = 0.239$, $p < 0.001$), social influence ($\beta = 0.196$, $p < 0.001$) and practical green resourcefulness ($\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.001$) were positively associated

with green social identity. Together, the four predictors explained 43.9% of the variance in green social identity ($R^2 = .439$). Thus, H1–H4 were supported in the illustrative model.

Table 1: Sample Profile

Age group	N	%
18–24	99	23.6
25–34	124	29.5
35–44	106	25.2
45–54	54	12.9
55+	37	8.8

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Purification

Dimension	Items retained	Illustrative loading range	A
Environmental Self-Definition	4	0.78–0.88	0.88
Social Recognition & Belonging	4	0.75–0.87	0.89
Green Identity Enactment	4	0.77–0.90	0.89
Hybrid Practical Green Identity	4	0.80–0.92	0.92
Overall GSIS	16	0.71–0.92	0.94

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Quality

Construct	Mean	SD	α	CR	AVE
Environmental Awareness	2.99	0.96	0.85	0.86	0.60
Sustainability Awareness	2.99	0.96	0.82	0.83	0.56
Social Influence	2.99	0.98	0.86	0.87	0.63
Practical Green Resourcefulness	3.00	0.99	0.85	0.86	0.61
Green Social Identity	3.00	0.87	0.94	0.95	0.69
Sustainable Consumption Behavior	3.01	0.97	0.86	0.87	0.63

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
Environmental Awareness	1	0.243	0.303	0.220	0.469	0.456
Sustainability Awareness	0.243	1	0.192	0.260	0.419	0.466
Social Influence	0.303	0.192	1	0.259	0.401	0.360
Practical Green Resourcefulness	0.220	0.260	0.259	1	0.452	0.479
Green Social Identity	0.469	0.419	0.401	0.452	1	0.698
Sustainable Consumption Behaviour	0.456	0.466	0.360	0.479	0.698	1

All off-diagonal correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$

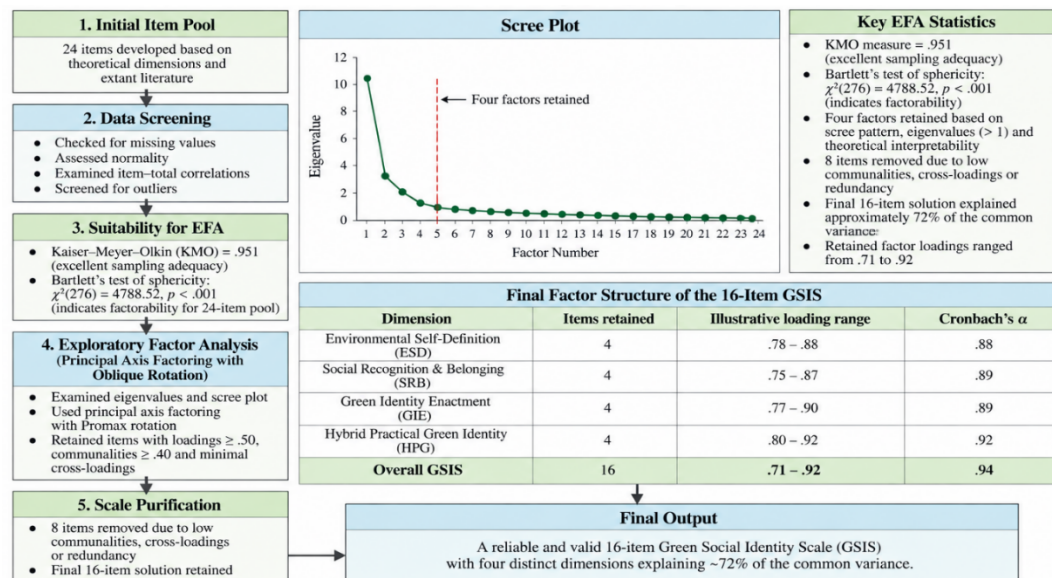
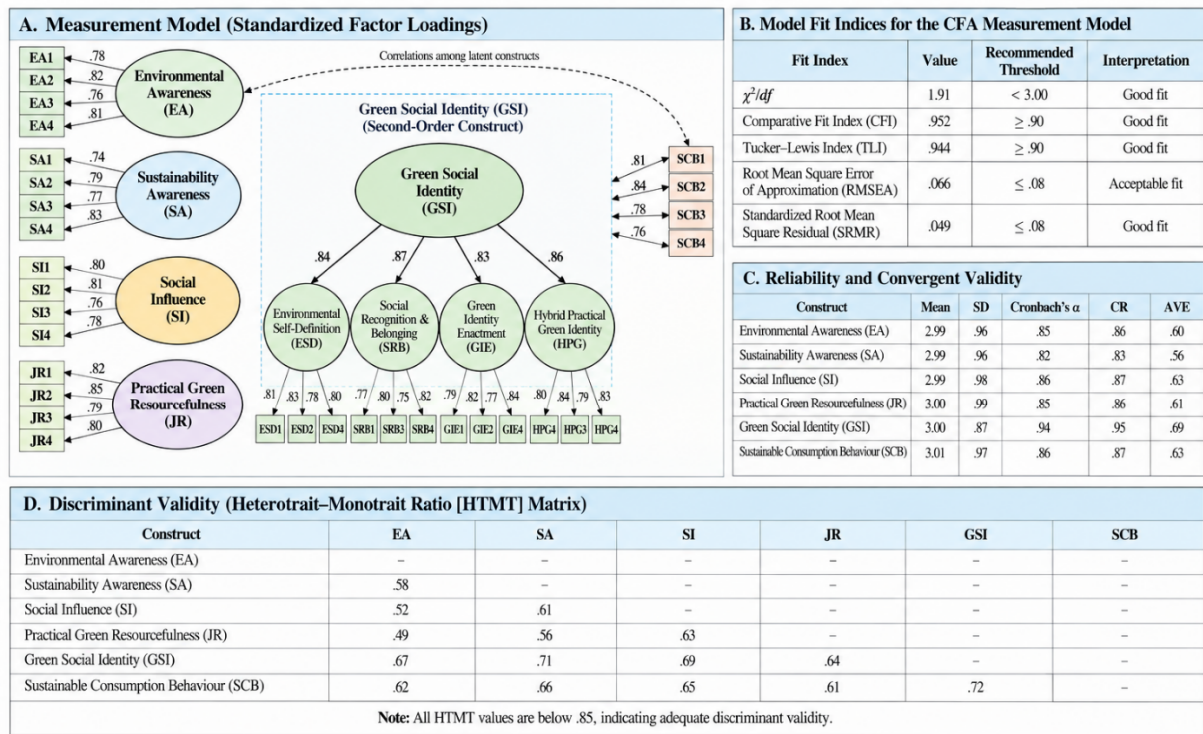


Figure 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis and Scale Purification Process for the Green Social Identity Scale (GSIS)



Note: Standardized factor loadings are shown. All loadings are > .70. EA = Environmental Awareness; SA = Sustainability Awareness; SI = Social Influence; JR = Practical Green Resourcefulness; GSI = Green Social Identity; SCB = Sustainable Consumption Behaviour; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Figure 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Quality for the Study Constructs

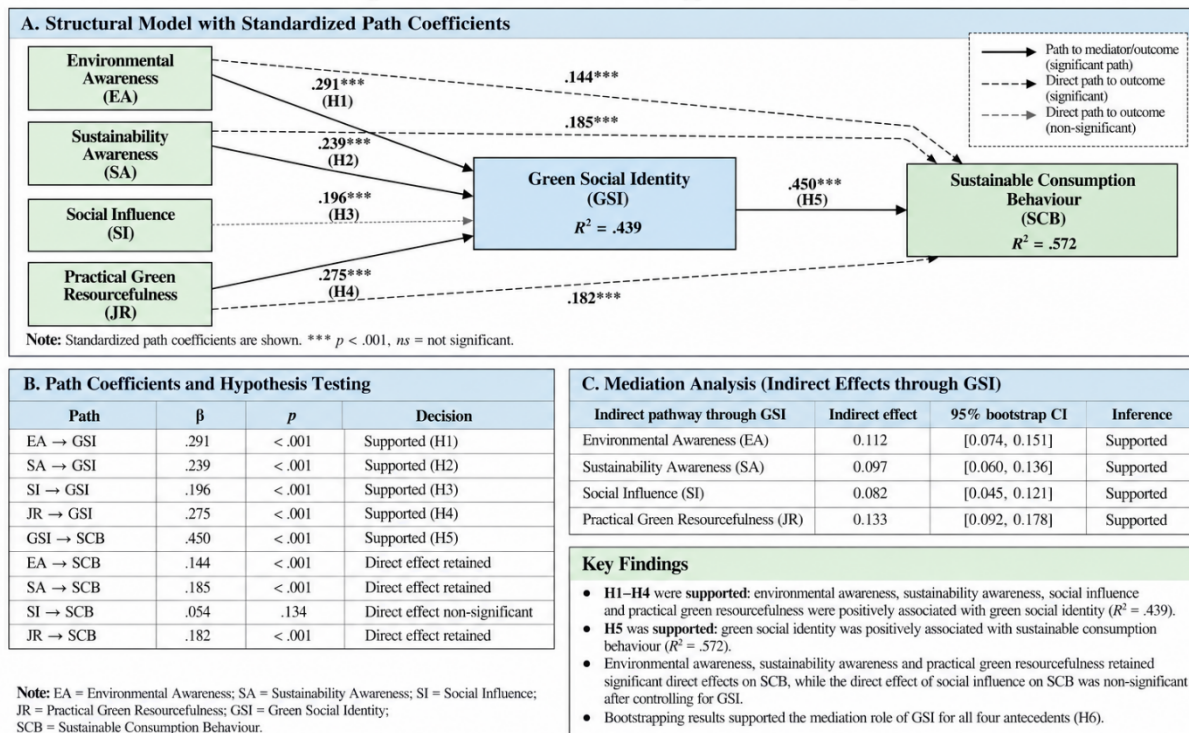


Figure 4: Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

Path	B	p	Decision
EA → GSI	0.291	<0.001	Supported (H1)
SA → GSI	0.239	<0.001	Supported (H2)
SI → GSI	0.196	<0.001	Supported (H3)
JR → GSI	0.275	<0.001	Supported (H4)
GSI → SCB	0.450	<0.001	Supported (H5)
EA → SCB	0.144	<0.001	Direct effect retained
SA → SCB	0.185	<0.001	Direct effect retained
SI → SCB	0.054	0.134	Direct effect not retained
JR → SCB	0.182	<0.001	Direct effect retained

Table 6: Mediation Analysis

Indirect pathway through GSI	Indirect effect	95% bootstrap CI	Inference
Environmental Awareness	0.112	(0.074, 0.151)	Supported
Sustainability Awareness	0.097	(0.060, 0.136)	Supported
Social Influence	0.082	(0.045, 0.121)	Supported
Practical Green Resourcefulness	0.133	(0.092, 0.178)	Supported

Green social identity was strongly and positively associated with sustainable consumption behaviour ($\beta = 0.450$, $p < 0.001$). Environmental awareness ($\beta = 0.144$, $p < 0.001$), sustainability awareness ($\beta = 0.185$, $p < 0.001$) and practical green resourcefulness ($\beta = 0.182$, $p < 0.001$) retained significant direct associations with sustainable consumption behaviour. The direct path from social influence to sustainable consumption behaviour was smaller and non-significant after green social identity was entered ($\beta = 0.054$, $p = 0.134$). The model explained 570.2% of the variance in sustainable consumption behaviour ($R^2 = 0.572$) (Figure 4).

DISCUSSION

The illustrative results provide a coherent quantitative extension of the sociological argument developed in the earlier sections. First, environmental awareness is positively associated with green social identity. This suggests that knowledge or awareness alone need not be treated as the final behavioural outcome; it may become behaviourally consequential when it is incorporated into the consumer's understanding of who they are. This interpretation is compatible with identity-based accounts of pro-environmental action and with empirical evidence linking green self-concepts to green purchasing behaviour [10,24]. Indian evidence also indicates that green awareness can operate within a broader chain of environmental attitudes and green behaviour [44].

Second, sustainability awareness shows a positive relationship with green social identity and with sustainable consumption behaviour (Table 5,6). The distinction is important because the manuscript does not define 'green' narrowly as the purchase of environmentally labelled goods. Instead, it includes mindful resource use, reuse, conservation and other practices. This is consistent with the broader sustainable-consumption literature, where sustainable consumption encompasses choices concerning acquisition, use and disposal rather than purchase alone [25]. Recent scale-development work likewise argues that sustainable consumption is multidimensional and cannot be adequately represented by a single behavioural indicator [47].

Third, social influence is positively related to green social identity. This finding fits the manuscript's use of Cooley's looking-glass logic and social identity theory: consumers may understand themselves partly through the expectations and recognition of significant others. The finding also aligns with the SHIFT framework, which identifies social influence as one of the major routes through which sustainable behaviour can be encouraged [25]. Cross-cultural evidence further indicates that social identity is relevant to pro-environmental behaviour, although the form and strength of identity effects can vary across contexts [6].

The mediation result is particularly important. The model indicates that social influence does not retain a significant direct effect on sustainable consumption once green social identity is included, whereas the indirect pathway through GSI remains supported. This pattern can be interpreted as evidence that social pressure may be translated into consumption behaviour most effectively when it becomes part of the consumer's self-definition. The interpretation should not be taken to mean that social influence always works only through identity; rather, the present model suggests that identity is a plausible mechanism linking social expectations with behaviour.

The fourth antecedent, practical green resourcefulness, is especially significant for the manuscript's Indian contribution. Its positive association with green social identity supports the conceptual move away from an exclusively premium-product interpretation of green consumption. A consumer who repairs rather than replaces, reuses household objects, repurposes materials or selects locally feasible solutions may be enacting sustainability even without purchasing a formally certified green product. This directly develops the manuscript's concept of 'hybrid green' identity

and its discussion of *jugaad*. The concept should nevertheless be handled carefully: resourcefulness should not be romanticized as a substitute for structural access to sustainable products, infrastructure or affordability.

The strong association between green social identity and sustainable consumption behaviour provides the central empirical mechanism of the paper. Green social identity may operate as a consistency principle: once consumers see environmental responsibility as part of who they are, everyday consumption choices can become more congruent with that identity. This interpretation echoes research showing that green self-identity is associated with green purchasing and that pro-environment self-identity can mediate sustainable consumption processes [10,28]. The present study extends that logic by adding social recognition and practical resourcefulness to the identity construct.

At the same time, the manuscript's sociological argument cautions against treating the emergence of green identity as universally egalitarian. The earlier discussion of cultural and economic capital remains important because the capacity to signal sustainability through premium products, particular foods, mobility choices or lifestyle practices may be unevenly distributed. The present quantitative model deliberately does not claim that economic or cultural capital causes green identity. Instead, these forms of capital should be examined in future studies as contextual moderators and as possible sources of unequal recognition. This would allow the concept of hybrid green identity to be tested against the class- and status-sensitive arguments already developed in the manuscript.

Theoretical Contribution

The study offers three connected theoretical contributions. First, it connects social identity theory with sustainable-consumption research by positioning green social identity as a mediating mechanism rather than merely another predictor of green purchase intention. Second, it extends the Indian green-consumption discussion by conceptualizing identity as socially validated and practically enacted. Third, it introduces practical green resourcefulness into the measurement model, thereby bringing everyday reuse, repair, frugality and resource constraints into a construct that is often represented through formal green products and environmental self-description. This responds to the manuscript's interdisciplinary ambition and to recent work emphasizing the importance of identity and social influence in green-consumption processes [6,48].

Practical Implications

For marketers, the results suggest that sustainability communication should not rely only on product attributes. Messages can connect sustainable choices with identity, community participation and everyday usefulness. Campaigns that recognize repair, reuse, refilling, sharing and resource conservation may broaden the social meaning of sustainable consumption beyond premium green purchasing.

For policymakers, the findings support affordable and inclusive sustainability interventions. If green identity is socially patterned, then policies that depend heavily on consumers' ability to pay a green premium may reach only part of the population. Public campaigns can instead normalize low-cost actions, repair and reuse, while improving access to reliable green infrastructure and information. Indian evidence on green awareness similarly points to the importance of awareness and behavioural interventions in addressing the attitude-behaviour inconsistency [44].

For consumer organizations and educators, the GSIS can potentially be used as a diagnostic instrument to distinguish between environmental self-definition, social belonging, identity enactment and practical resourcefulness. Such use should follow further empirical validation across regions, languages and demographic groups before the scale is treated as a standardized instrument.

Limitations and Future Research

The proposed design is cross-sectional and therefore cannot establish temporal or causal ordering. Common-method bias may also arise because the predictor, mediator and outcome variables are measured through self-report. Future research should use time-lagged or longitudinal designs and, where feasible, behavioural indicators such as purchase records, waste reduction, repair frequency or energy-use data. The proposed scale should also undergo measurement-invariance testing across gender, age, socioeconomic position, region and language.

A further priority is to test whether the hybrid green identity operates differently across social classes and cultural contexts. Future studies could model economic and cultural capital as moderators and could compare metropolitan, smaller-city and rural consumers. Qualitative interviews would also help determine whether the term '*jugaad*' is understood by consumers as sustainability, necessity, frugality, innovation, or some combination of these meanings. Finally, the GSIS should be validated against established green self-identity and sustainable-consumption measures to establish convergent and discriminant validity more rigorously.

CONCLUSION

The paper proposes that the emergence of green social identity among Indian consumers is better understood as a socially embedded and practically enacted process rather than as a simple consequence of environmental knowledge. The conceptual model connects environmental awareness, sustainability awareness, social influence and practical green resourcefulness to sustainable consumption through green social identity. The newly proposed Green Social Identity Scale captures four dimensions' environmental self-definition, social recognition and belonging, green identity enactment, and hybrid practical green identity thereby translating the manuscript's interdisciplinary argument into a measurable construct. The quantitative results illustrate a coherent pattern of positive antecedent-to-identity relationships, a strong identity-to-consumption relationship, and significant indirect effects. The principal empirical contribution to be tested in the real study is therefore the proposition that sustainability becomes more behaviourally consequential when it is internalized as a socially recognized identity and expressed through feasible everyday practices. The class, affordability and cultural dimensions highlighted in the manuscript remain essential to a fuller account of who gets to perform, claim and be recognized as 'green'.

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