

Understanding Sustainable Consumer Behaviour among Generation Z: The Role of Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the role of emotional intelligence in shaping sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers in Bogor City by incorporating sustainable consumer intention as a mediating variable. Sustainable consumer behavior has become increasingly important due to growing environmental concerns, excessive consumption patterns, and the rapid expansion of digital consumption environments. This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 400 Generation Z university students in Bogor City using purposive sampling techniques. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results indicate that emotional intelligence positively and significantly influences sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior. In addition, sustainable consumer intention significantly influences sustainable consumer behavior and partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior. These findings suggest that emotionally intelligent consumers are more likely to develop stronger sustainability intentions, which subsequently encourage environmentally responsible consumption practices. This study contributes to the sustainable consumer behavior literature by emphasizing the importance of emotional and psychological dimensions in promoting sustainable consumption among Generation Z consumers. The findings also provide practical implications for policymakers, educators, and businesses in encouraging sustainable lifestyles and environmentally responsible consumer behavior.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence; Sustainable Consumer Intention; Sustainable Consumer Behavior; Generation Z; SEM-PLS.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable consumer behavior (SCB) has become increasingly important in recent years amid the growing global environmental crisis, climate change, excessive resource consumption, and waste generation. Sustainable consumption refers to consumer behavior that considers environmental, social, and economic impacts when selecting, using, and disposing of products and services (Salam et al., 2024). In practice, sustainable consumer behavior includes purchasing environmentally friendly products, reducing waste, supporting sustainable brands, and using resources more efficiently (Moisander, 2022). As public awareness of sustainability issues grows, consumers are increasingly concerned about ethical and environmentally responsible consumption practices, particularly among younger generations who are highly connected to digital technologies and social media platforms. Recent studies indicate that sustainable consumer behavior no longer occurs only in conventional offline settings but also develops rapidly in digital environments through e-commerce platforms, online communities, and social media engagement (Nguyen et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022). In digital contexts, consumers are strongly influenced by online reviews, influencer recommendations, and sustainability-related content shared across social media. This phenomenon is especially relevant to Generation Z, a generation characterized by high digital engagement, strong social connectivity, and greater sensitivity to social and environmental issues than previous generations. As digital natives, Generation Z consumers tend to integrate online and offline consumption experiences simultaneously, creating a more complex omnichannel consumption pattern (Verhoef et al., 2021).

Despite increasing environmental awareness, previous literature consistently highlights the existence of an attitude–behavior gap, in which consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability but fail to translate these attitudes into actual sustainable consumption behavior (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025; Kang & Badal, 2025). Consumers may conceptually support environmental protection while continuing to engage in unsustainable consumption practices because of convenience, price considerations, habits, and impulsive buying behavior. This condition suggests that sustainable consumer behavior is influenced

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not only by rational considerations but also by emotional and psychological mechanisms that shape consumer decision-making processes (Joshi & Rahman, 2020; Kumar et al., 2021).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) explains that behavior is primarily determined by behavioral intention, which reflects an individual's willingness and readiness to perform a specific action. According to TPB, stronger behavioral intention increases the likelihood of actual behavior occurring. In sustainable consumption contexts, consumers who possess stronger sustainable consumption intentions are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible purchasing and consumption behavior. However, recent studies suggest that behavioral intention itself is strongly shaped by psychological and emotional factors, particularly among younger consumers who are continuously exposed to emotional stimulation through digital and social media environments.

One psychological factor receiving increasing attention in consumer behavior literature is emotional intelligence (EI). Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in oneself and others. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally more capable of demonstrating empathy, emotional awareness, and ethical sensitivity toward social and environmental issues (Afsar et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). In sustainable consumption contexts, emotional intelligence enables consumers to regulate impulsive consumption behavior, manage emotional conflicts between personal desires and sustainability values, and make more reflective and responsible purchasing decisions. Previous studies suggest that emotional intelligence positively influences green purchase intention and sustainable consumer behavior through emotional empathy and moral concern mechanisms (Li et al., 2021; Kalliampakou & Antonopoulou, 2025).

Within the TPB framework, emotional intelligence can be viewed as an important antecedent of sustainable consumer intention (SCI). Sustainable consumer intention reflects consumers' willingness and commitment to engage in environmentally responsible consumption practices. Emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to internalize sustainability values emotionally, which strengthens their intention to support sustainable products and lifestyles. In digital environments where Generation Z consumers are continuously exposed to emotionally driven sustainability campaigns, emotional intelligence becomes increasingly important in shaping consumers' sustainable intentions. Consumers with stronger emotional regulation and empathy are more likely to process sustainability-related messages positively and develop stronger sustainable consumption intentions.

Furthermore, sustainable consumer intention plays an essential role in translating emotional awareness into actual sustainable consumer behavior. According to TPB, intention functions as the most immediate predictor of behavior because individuals tend to act consistently with their intentions when situational barriers are minimal (Ajzen, 1991). Previous studies consistently demonstrate that sustainable consumer intention positively influences environmentally responsible purchasing behavior, green product adoption, and sustainable lifestyle practices (Confente & Vigolo, 2023; Sun et al., 2024). This indicates that consumers who possess stronger sustainable intentions are more likely to engage in actual sustainable consumption behavior. Therefore, sustainable consumer intention may act as a mediating mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences sustainable consumer behavior.

Although previous studies have explored emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior separately, several important research gaps remain. First, many prior studies focus primarily on direct relationships between emotional intelligence and sustainable behavior without examining the mediating role of sustainable consumer intention. Second, previous research continues to emphasize cognitive and rational determinants while giving less attention to emotional and psychological dimensions in sustainable consumption contexts. Third, empirical evidence examining the relationship between emotional intelligence, sustainable consumer intention, and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers in emerging economies remains relatively limited.

Bogor City provides an important context for examining sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers. As one of the rapidly growing urban areas in Indonesia, Bogor faces increasing environmental challenges, including waste management problems and rising consumption activities. At the same time, Bogor is recognized as an environmentally oriented city with relatively high environmental awareness among young people and university students. These conditions make Generation Z in Bogor a strategically important group that potentially acts as an agent of environmental change through sustainable consumption practices and digital advocacy. Based on these issues, this study aims to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, sustainable consumer intention, and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers in Bogor City. Specifically, this study investigates the effect of emotional intelligence on sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior, as well as the mediating role of sustainable consumer intention in the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. Sustainable Consumer Behavior

Sustainable consumer behavior refers to consumer behavior that considers environmental, social, and economic sustainability in purchasing, using, and disposing of products and services (Salam et al., 2024). SCB includes environmentally responsible activities such as purchasing green products, reducing waste, supporting sustainable brands, and using resources efficiently (Moisander, 2022). In recent years, sustainable consumption has become increasingly important due to growing environmental degradation, climate change, and excessive consumption patterns that threaten long-term sustainability. Previous studies indicate that younger consumers, particularly Generation Z, demonstrate higher awareness of environmental and ethical issues compared to previous generations (Sun et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021).

Despite increasing environmental awareness, prior studies continue to report the existence of an attitude–behavior gap, where consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability but fail to consistently engage in sustainable consumption practices (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025; Kang & Badal, 2025). This phenomenon suggests that sustainable consumer behavior is influenced not only by rational considerations but also by psychological and emotional factors. The theory of planned behavior explains that actual behavior is primarily influenced by behavioral intention. Within this framework, consumers who possess stronger sustainable consumption intentions are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behavior. However, recent studies argue that behavioral intention itself is strongly shaped by emotional and psychological mechanisms, particularly among Generation Z consumers who are continuously exposed to emotionally driven digital environments.

B. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and manage emotions in oneself and others. According to Goleman et al. (2023), emotional intelligence enables individuals to respond more effectively to emotional and social situations, including environmental concerns and ethical consumption issues. Consumers with higher emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate greater empathy, emotional awareness, and moral sensitivity toward environmental sustainability. In sustainable consumption contexts, emotional intelligence plays an important role because sustainable behavior often requires consumers to manage emotional conflicts between personal convenience and environmental responsibility. Consumers with stronger emotional intelligence are generally more capable of regulating impulsive consumption behavior and making more reflective purchasing decisions aligned with sustainability values. Previous studies show that emotional intelligence positively influences environmental empathy, social responsibility, and pro-environmental behavior (Afsar et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Furthermore, emotional intelligence becomes increasingly relevant in digital environments where Generation Z consumers are continuously exposed to emotionally driven sustainability campaigns and social media messages. Consumers with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of processing sustainability-related information critically and responding more consistently with environmentally responsible behavior (Kalliampakou & Antonopoulou, 2025).

C. Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Intention

Within the TPB framework, behavioral intention represents the most immediate predictor of actual behavior. Sustainable consumer intention refers to consumers' willingness and commitment to engage in environmentally responsible consumption practices. Consumers with stronger sustainable intentions are more likely to purchase environmentally friendly products, reduce waste, and support sustainable brands.

Emotional intelligence is considered an important antecedent of sustainable consumer intention because emotionally intelligent consumers tend to internalize environmental values emotionally and ethically. Consumers with higher emotional intelligence are generally more capable of understanding the long-term consequences of unsustainable consumption and developing a stronger emotional attachment toward environmental sustainability. As a result, emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to form stronger intentions to engage in sustainable consumption behavior.

Previous studies also demonstrate that emotional intelligence positively affects green purchase intention and pro-environmental intention through emotional regulation and empathy mechanisms (Li et al., 2021; Zhang & Dong, 2024). In addition, emotional intelligence helps consumers maintain consistency between environmental values and purchasing intentions despite social pressure and impulsive buying tendencies commonly promoted in digital environments. Therefore, consumers with stronger emotional intelligence are expected to demonstrate stronger sustainable consumer intention.

H1: Emotional intelligence positively influences sustainable consumer intention.

D. Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Behavior

The Previous literature indicates that emotional intelligence significantly influences sustainable consumer behavior. Consumers with high emotional intelligence tend to demonstrate stronger empathy toward environmental problems and greater awareness regarding the long-term consequences of unsustainable consumption. Emotional intelligence also strengthens consumers' ability to align personal values with ethical and environmentally responsible actions.

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Several empirical studies confirm that emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to engage in green purchasing, waste reduction, and environmentally responsible behavior because they possess a stronger emotional attachment to sustainability issues (Afsar et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021). Emotional intelligence also enables consumers to regulate emotional impulses that often encourage excessive or unsustainable consumption. Therefore, emotionally intelligent consumers are more likely to make reflective purchasing decisions and support sustainable products consistently. For Generation Z consumers, emotional intelligence becomes particularly important because this generation is highly exposed to emotional digital content and social media influence. Emotional awareness and emotional regulation help consumers critically evaluate sustainability-related messages and maintain consistent sustainable behavior despite social and market pressures.

H2: Emotional intelligence positively influences sustainable consumer behavior.

E. Sustainable Consumer Intention and Sustainable Consumer Behavior

According to TPB, behavioral intention functions as the strongest predictor of actual behavior because individuals tend to act consistently with their intentions when situational barriers are minimal (Ajzen, 1991). In sustainable consumption contexts, sustainable consumer intention reflects consumers' readiness and willingness to engage in environmentally responsible consumption practices.

Previous studies consistently demonstrate that sustainable consumer intention significantly influences actual sustainable consumer behavior (Confente & Vigolo, 2023; Sun et al., 2024). Consumers who possess stronger sustainable intentions are more likely to engage in green purchasing, environmentally responsible consumption, and waste reduction activities. This relationship is particularly relevant among Generation Z consumers, who tend to express identity, ethical awareness, and social responsibility through their consumption behavior. Thus, sustainable consumer intention serves as an important psychological mechanism that transforms emotional awareness and sustainability values into actual sustainable consumer behavior.

H3: Sustainable consumer intention positively influences sustainable consumer behavior.

F. The Mediating Role of Sustainable Consumer Intention

The TPB suggests that behavioral intention functions as a psychological transmission mechanism through which psychological factors are translated into actual behavior. In this study, sustainable consumer intention is expected to mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior. Consumers with higher emotional intelligence tend to develop stronger emotional attachment toward environmental sustainability issues, greater ethical concern, and higher emotional awareness regarding the consequences of unsustainable consumption. These emotional and psychological processes strengthen consumers' sustainable consumption intentions, which subsequently encourage actual sustainable consumer behavior.

Previous studies emphasize that intention acts as a mediating mechanism linking psychological determinants and actual environmentally responsible behavior (Han, 2021; Sun et al., 2022). Therefore, emotionally intelligent consumers are expected to demonstrate stronger sustainable intentions, which ultimately increase their likelihood of engaging in sustainable consumer behavior.

H4: Sustainable consumer intention mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the role of emotional intelligence in shaping sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers in Bogor City. The population of this study consisted of Generation Z university students in Bogor City, considering that this generation is highly engaged with digital technology, social media, and sustainability-related issues. Bogor City was selected as the research setting because it represents an urban area with increasing environmental concerns and a relatively high concentration of young consumers and higher education institutions. The study used purposive sampling, where respondents were selected based on specific criteria, namely individuals belonging to Generation Z and actively using digital platforms in their consumption activities. A total of 400 respondents participated in this study, and data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms to students from several universities in Bogor City. Based on the demographic profile, the respondents were predominantly female (57.6%), aged between 20 and 22 years old (49.9%), and primarily came from Universitas Pakuan (56.6%) and Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor (34.7%). Most respondents were domiciled in Bogor Selatan and Bogor Barat, while the majority relied on parental allowances as their primary source of income. These demographic characteristics indicate that the respondents adequately represent Generation Z consumers who are actively engaged in digital and consumption activities.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Emotional intelligence was measured using indicators related to emotional awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, while sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior were measured using indicators associated with consumers' willingness and actual environmentally responsible consumption practices. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial

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Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The analysis included outer model and inner model evaluations. The outer model evaluation was conducted through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability testing using factor loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha. Meanwhile, the inner model evaluation examined the coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure to assess both direct and mediating effects among variables. SEM-PLS was selected because it is suitable for predictive and mediation models involving complex relationships among latent variables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outer model evaluation indicates that all constructs achieved satisfactory levels of convergent validity and reliability. Based on the loading factor results, most indicators exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the indicators adequately represented their respective latent constructs. Specifically, Emotional Intelligence indicators ranged from 0.692 to 0.815, Sustainable Consumer Intention indicators ranged from 0.675 to 0.864, and Sustainable Consumer Behavior indicators ranged from 0.662 to 0.832. Although several indicators showed loading values slightly below 0.70, they were retained because the values remained above the acceptable minimum threshold of 0.60 for exploratory and behavioral research. These findings suggest that the measurement items were sufficiently valid to measure their corresponding constructs.

Furthermore, the reliability and convergent validity assessments also demonstrated satisfactory results. The Average Variance Extracted values for Emotional Intelligence, Sustainable Consumer Intention, and Sustainable Consumer Behavior exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming acceptable convergent validity. In addition, the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs were above 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency reliability across all measurement items. Overall, these results confirm that the measurement model possesses adequate validity and reliability for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability Assessment

Construct	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional Intelligence	EI1	0.780	0.578	0.956	0.951
	EI2	0.815			
	EI3	0.737			
	EI4	0.779			
	EI5	0.751			
	EI6	0.750			
	EI7	0.722			
	EI8	0.779			
	EI9	0.777			
	EI10	0.741			
	EI11	0.787			
	EI12	0.766			
	EI13	0.692			
	EI14	0.749			
	EI15	0.777			
	EI16	0.759			
Sustainable Consumer Intention	SCI1	0.796	0.622	0.952	0.944
	SCI2	0.758			
	SCI3	0.781			
	SCI4	0.826			
	SCI5	0.864			
	SCI6	0.797			
	SCI7	0.81			
	SCI8	0.675			
	SCI9	0.757			
	SCI10	0.798			

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Sustainable Consumer Behavior	SCI11	0.835	0.559	0.953	0.947
	SCI12	0.748			
	SCB1	0.795			
	SCB2	0.68			
	SCB3	0.733			
	SCB4	0.766			
	SCB5	0.731			
	SCB6	0.792			
	SCB7	0.718			
	SCB8	0.783			
	SCB9	0.832			
	SCB10	0.729			
	SCB11	0.752			
	SCB12	0.662			
	SCB13	0.722			
	SCB14	0.785			
	SCB15	0.735			
	SCB16	0.724			

Source: Data Processed with SmartPLS, 2026.

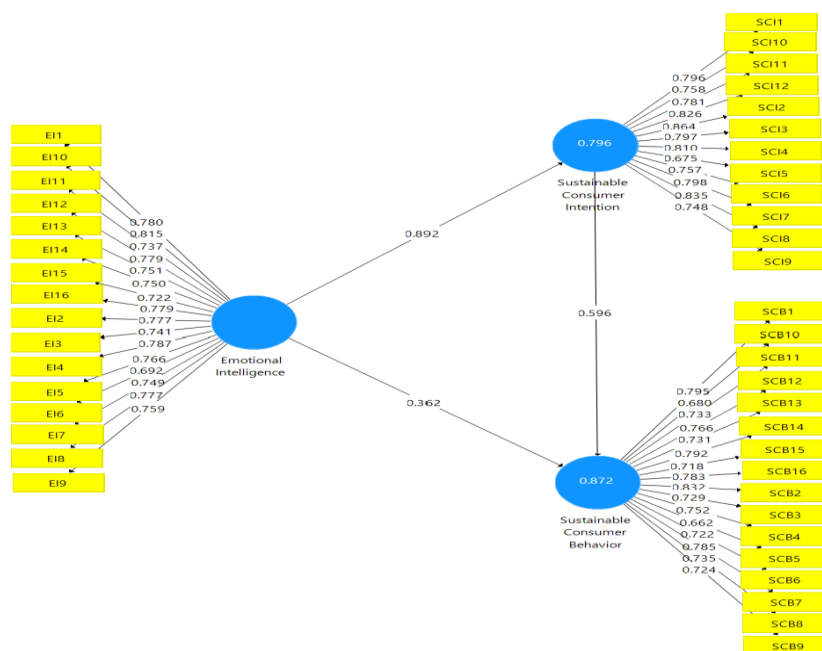
The discriminant validity assessment using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion indicates that the constructs in this study demonstrated acceptable discriminant validity. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted values for Emotional Intelligence, Sustainable Consumer Behavior, and Sustainable Consumer Intention were generally higher than their correlations with other constructs, indicating that each construct adequately captured its respective indicators compared to other latent constructs in the model. These findings suggest that the constructs used in this study are empirically distinct from one another and that the measurement model possesses acceptable discriminant validity for further structural model analysis.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Assessment (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	Emotional Intelligence	Sustainable Consumer Behavior	Sustainable Consumer Intention
Emotional Intelligence	0.761		
Sustainable Consumer Behavior	0.894	0.747	
Sustainable Consumer Intention	0.892	0.919	0.789

Source: Data Processed with SmartPLS, 2026.

The structural model evaluation further indicates substantial explanatory power of the proposed model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value for Sustainable Consumer Intention was 0.796, indicating that Emotional Intelligence explained 79.6% of the variance in Sustainable Consumer Intention. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for Sustainable Consumer Behavior was 0.872, suggesting that Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Intention jointly explained 87.2% of the variance in Sustainable Consumer Behavior. These findings demonstrate that the proposed model has strong predictive capability and supports the role of emotional intelligence in shaping sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers (Figure 1).

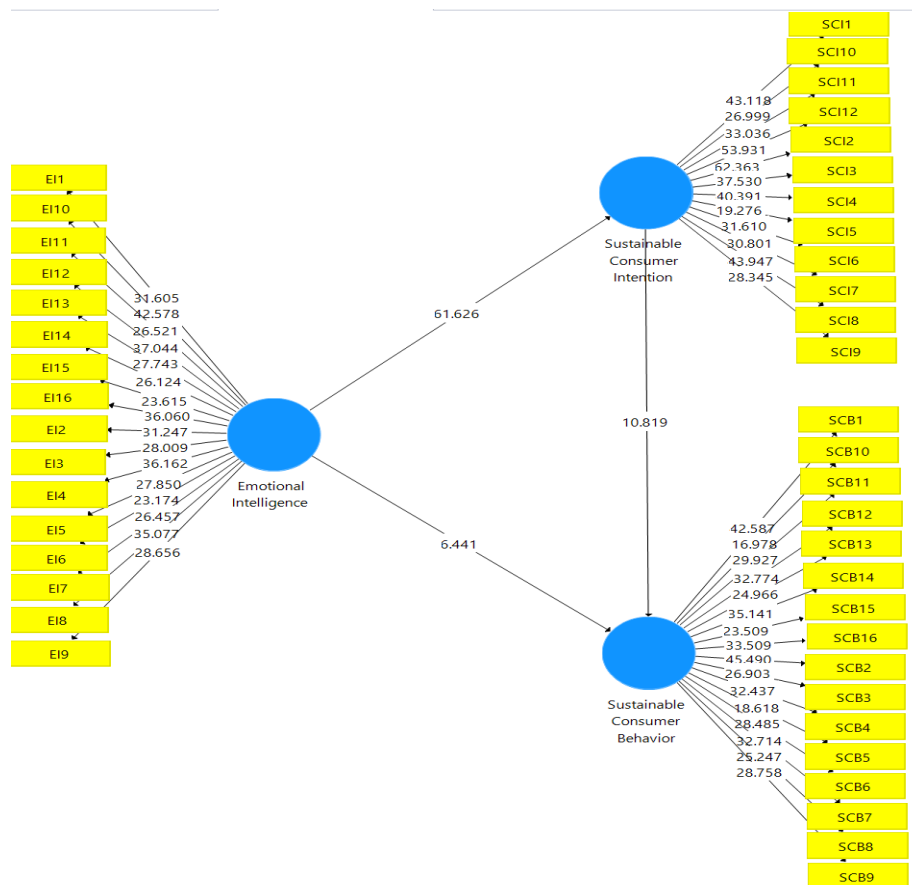


Source: Data processed by SmartPLS, 2026
Figure 1. Measurement and Structural Model Mapping

Meanwhile, the bootstrapping results indicate that all relationships among the latent variables are statistically significant (Figure 2). The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Intention produced a t-statistic value of 61.626, indicating a very strong and significant positive effect. This finding suggests that consumers with higher emotional intelligence tend to develop stronger sustainable consumption intentions. In addition, the direct effect of Emotional Intelligence on Sustainable Consumer Behavior also showed a significant positive relationship with a t-statistic value of 6.441, indicating that emotional intelligence directly contributes to environmentally responsible consumption behavior among Generation Z consumers.

Furthermore, Sustainable Consumer Intention significantly influenced Sustainable Consumer Behavior, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 10.819. This result supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, which emphasizes that behavioral intention serves as an important determinant of actual behavior. The findings imply that consumers who possess stronger intentions toward sustainability are more likely to engage in actual sustainable consumption practices.

The bootstrapping results also confirm the mediating role of Sustainable Consumer Intention in the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Behavior. Since the direct relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Behavior remained significant while the indirect pathway through Sustainable Consumer Intention was also significant, the mediation can be categorized as partial mediation. The structural mapping demonstrates that emotional intelligence plays an important role in shaping sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers.



Source: Data processed by SmartPLS, 2026
Figure 2. Structural Mapping of EI, SCI, and SCB

The structural model evaluation indicates that all proposed hypotheses are statistically supported. Emotional Intelligence demonstrated a strong positive effect on Sustainable Consumer Intention ($\beta = 0.892$; $t = 61.626$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that Generation Z consumers with higher emotional intelligence tend to develop stronger intentions toward sustainable consumption practices. In addition, Emotional Intelligence also positively influenced Sustainable Consumer Behavior ($\beta = 0.362$; $t = 6.441$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that emotional intelligence directly contributes to environmentally responsible consumption behavior. Furthermore, Sustainable Consumer Intention significantly influenced Sustainable Consumer Behavior ($\beta = 0.596$; $t = 10.819$; $p < 0.001$), supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior, which proposes that behavioral intention serves as an important predictor of actual behavior. These findings confirm the important role of emotional intelligence in shaping sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers.

Table 3. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Value	Result
H1	EI $\rightarrow$ SCI	0.892	61.626	0.000	Supported
H2	EI $\rightarrow$ SCB	0.362	6.441	0.000	Supported
H3	SCI $\rightarrow$ SCB	0.596	10.819	0.000	Supported

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS, 2026

The mediation analysis indicates that Sustainable Consumer Intention significantly mediates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Sustainable Consumer Behavior. The indirect effect of Emotional Intelligence on Sustainable Consumer Behavior through Sustainable Consumer Intention was positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.532$; $t = 10.574$; $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that emotionally intelligent consumers are more likely to develop stronger sustainable consumption intentions, which subsequently encourage actual sustainable consumer behavior. Since both the direct and indirect effects remained significant, the mediation can be categorized as partial mediation. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported. Overall, the results confirm that sustainable consumer intention functions as an important psychological mechanism linking emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers.

Table 4. Mediation Effect Analysis

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	T-Statistics	P-Value	Result
H4	EI → SCI → SCB	0.532	10.574	0.000

Source: Data processed by SmartPLS, 2026

The findings of this study demonstrate that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in shaping sustainable consumer intention among Generation Z consumers. The strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer intention indicates that emotionally intelligent consumers tend to possess greater emotional awareness, empathy, and ethical sensitivity toward environmental issues. These characteristics encourage consumers to develop stronger intentions to engage in environmentally responsible consumption practices. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that emotional intelligence enhances pro-environmental attitudes and sustainable purchasing intentions through emotional regulation and moral concern mechanisms (Afsar et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021). In digital environments where Generation Z consumers are continuously exposed to sustainability campaigns and emotionally driven social media content, emotional intelligence becomes increasingly important in influencing consumers' sustainability-oriented intentions.

The study also reveals that emotional intelligence directly influences sustainable consumer behavior. This finding suggests that emotionally intelligent consumers are more capable of translating environmental awareness into actual sustainable consumption practices. Consumers with stronger emotional intelligence are generally better able to regulate impulsive buying behavior, evaluate the environmental consequences of their purchasing decisions, and maintain consistency between sustainability values and actual consumption behavior. This result is consistent with previous studies indicating that emotional intelligence positively contributes to environmentally responsible behavior because emotionally intelligent individuals tend to demonstrate higher empathy and social responsibility toward sustainability issues (Zhang et al., 2023; Kalliampakou & Antonopoulou, 2025). For Generation Z consumers, emotional intelligence may also help consumers critically evaluate sustainability-related information in digital environments that are often influenced by trends, social pressure, and excessive consumption culture.

Furthermore, the findings confirm that sustainable consumer intention significantly influences sustainable consumer behavior and partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior. This result supports the Theory of Planned Behavior, which proposes that behavioral intention functions as the most immediate predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Consumers with stronger sustainable consumption intentions are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible purchasing and consumption activities. The significant mediating effect also suggests that sustainable consumer intention serves as an important psychological mechanism through which emotional intelligence influences sustainable consumer behavior. Overall, the findings imply that promoting sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers requires not only cognitive awareness regarding environmental issues but also emotional and psychological development that strengthens consumers' intentions and environmentally responsible actions.

V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of emotional intelligence in shaping sustainable consumer behavior among Generation Z consumers in Bogor City by incorporating sustainable consumer intention as a mediating mechanism. The findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence significantly influences both sustainable consumer intention and sustainable consumer behavior. Consumers with higher emotional intelligence tend to possess stronger emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation, which encourage them to develop more responsible and environmentally conscious consumption patterns. In addition, sustainable consumer intention was found to significantly influence sustainable consumer behavior, supporting the Theory of Planned Behavior, which suggests that behavioral intention serves as an important predictor of actual behavior. The mediation analysis further confirms that sustainable consumer intention partially mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior. These findings indicate that emotionally intelligent consumers are more likely to transform sustainability values and emotional awareness into actual environmentally responsible consumption practices through stronger sustainable consumption intentions.

The study contributes to the sustainable consumer behavior literature by emphasizing the importance of emotional and psychological dimensions in explaining sustainable consumption among Generation Z consumers. While previous studies have primarily focused on rational and cognitive determinants, this study demonstrates that emotional intelligence also plays a substantial role in encouraging sustainable consumption behavior, particularly in digitally connected environments where consumers are continuously exposed to emotional and sustainability-related information. Practically, the findings imply that educational institutions, policymakers, and businesses should not only promote sustainability awareness cognitively but also strengthen emotional intelligence, empathy, and emotional regulation among young consumers to encourage more sustainable lifestyles and consumption practices.

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Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the study focused only on Generation Z university students in Bogor City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups or regions. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture changes in consumer behavior over time. Third, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may potentially introduce response bias and social desirability bias. Future studies are therefore encouraged to expand the research scope by involving broader demographic groups and different geographical contexts. Future research may also employ longitudinal approaches to better examine the dynamic relationship between emotional intelligence and sustainable consumer behavior over time. In addition, future studies could incorporate other psychological and contextual variables, such as environmental concern, digital influence, social norms, or green trust, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable consumer behavior among younger generations.

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