

## Barriers to sustainable consumption: A value-action gap analysis in the home furnishing sector

### Sürdürülebilir tüketime yönelik engeller: Ev mobilyası sektöründe değer-eylem boşluğu analizi

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#### Abstract

Consumers' awareness of sustainable consumption has been increasing, yet purchasing behaviour across product categories remains inconsistent. This discrepancy, defined as the value-action gap, reflects the disconnect between sustainability orientations and actual consumer behaviour. The primary aim of this research is to examine the extent to which purchasing behaviour is related to sustainability perceptions and to identify the structural barriers shaping this relationship in the home furnishings and home accessories sector, a high-involvement product category characterised by substantial financial commitment and strong economic and structural constraints. The study employs a secondary research design using data from a large-scale multinational consumer survey. The analysis draws on 4,511 online survey responses from consumers in 9 countries. The findings reveal a pronounced value-action gap between consumers' prioritisation of sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour. Perceived high prices emerge as the primary barrier, followed by low trust in sustainability claims and limited information and product accessibility.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Consumption, Value-Action Gap, Sustainable Purchasing Behaviour, Home Furnishing Sector

**Jel Codes:** M31, Q56, Z13

#### Öz

Tüketicilerin sürdürülebilir tüketime yönelik farkındalıkları artmasına rağmen, farklı ürün kategorilerindeki satın alma davranışları sürdürülebilirlik açısından tutarlı değildir. Bu durum, sürdürülebilirliğe yönelik yönelimler ile fiili tüketici davranışları arasındaki kopuşu ifade eden değer-eylem boşluğu kavramı ile tanımlanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, satın alma davranışlarının sürdürülebilirlik algularıyla ne ölçüde ilişkili olduğunu incelemek ve yüksek katılım düzeyi, yüksek finansal yükümlülükler ile güçlü ekonomik ve yapısal kısıtlarla karakterize edilen ev mobilyası ve ev aksesuarları sektöründe bu ilişkiyi şekillendiren yapısal engelleri ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmada, çok uluslu bir perakende ortamında yürütülen geniş ölçekli bir tüketici anketinden elde edilen verilere dayanan ikincil bir araştırma tasarımı kullanılmıştır. Analizler, dokuz ülkeden toplanan toplam 4.511 çevrimiçi anket yanıtı üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, tüketicilerin sürdürülebilirliğe attikleri önem ile fiili satın alma davranışları arasında belirgin bir değer-eylem boşluğu bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Algılanan yüksek fiyatlar temel engel olarak öne çıkarken, sürdürülebilirlik iddialarına yönelik düşük güven ile sınırlı bilgi ve ürünlere erişim de sürdürülebilir satın alma davranışını engelleyen diğer önemli faktörler olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürdürülebilir Tüketim, Değer-Eylem Boşluğu, Sürdürülebilir Satın Alma Davranışı, Ev Mobilyası ve Ev Aksesuarları Sektörü

**JEL Kodları:** M31, Q56, Z13

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## Introduction

Sustainability has become a central concern in contemporary consumer research due to increasing environmental degradation, climate change, and natural resource depletion. While prior research consistently demonstrates that consumers report high levels of awareness and positive attitudes toward sustainability (Barr, 2006; Chauhan, 2020), this awareness does not consistently translate into actual purchasing behaviour. This inconsistency is conceptualised as the value–action gap, defined as the misalignment between sustainability-related values and real consumption practices (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

In the context of consumption, sustainability should not be understood merely as a value or attitude, but as a purchase-stage perception shaped by structural and situational constraints. Prior studies demonstrate that economic feasibility, trust in sustainability claims, and access to reliable information function as key barriers that filter sustainability perceptions into actual purchasing behaviour (Gadenne et al., 2011).

These barriers become particularly salient in high-involvement product categories, where purchasing decisions involve high financial commitment, perceived risk, and long-term usage expectations. The home furnishing sector represents a paradigmatic case of such consumption contexts, where functional performance, durability, and economic considerations dominate decision-making, relegating sustainability to a secondary evaluative criterion (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Xu et al., 2020a). As a result, consumers with strong sustainability concerns might hold back from choosing sustainable products in the home furnishings category if they see them as costly or uncertain.

More recently, the literature has proposed that a more comprehensive perspective on sustainable consumer behaviour may be advanced by recognising that it is increasingly embedded in everyday life (Barr et al., 2005; Collins, 2015). This means that household-level dynamics, collaborative decision-making procedures, and life-cultural compatibility considerations decisively impact upon or impede pro-sustainable behaviour. Such considerations strongly apply to furniture consumer behaviour, as it is directly associated with household identity and character, as well as lasting comfort. Taking a broader perspective, the extent of the value-action gap may vary across divergent institutional contexts. It has been shown that in emerging countries, considerations of heightened price-sensitivity, reduced institutional trust, or structural market barriers imply an even wider value-action gap between considered sustainable behaviour at the point of sale and associated actual consumer behaviour (Schäfer et al., 2011).

In this regard, the present study highlights that the specific context of Türkiye is highly significant for investigating the value–action gap in sustainable consumer behaviour. Current studies highlight that, alongside relatively high consumer awareness of sustainability, sustainable consumer behaviour remains incomplete and selective among Turkish consumers (Eryiğit et al., 2025). Within the existing context of ongoing economic sensitivity, concerns about the credibility of consumer information on sustainability, and the concurrent lack of sufficient information on credible, verifiable sustainable consumer products, there appears to be a continued presence of substantial behavioural barriers. Within this behaviour-related ambience, there seems to be a continued scarcity of direct empirical research on specific sectors and high-involvement consumer behaviour categories, namely home furnishings, related to the broader topic of sustainable consumer behaviour practices among consumers based in Türkiye. In line with this setting, the research paper will investigate the problem of the existing value–action gap within the broader topic of sustainable consumer behaviour practices, with specific emphasis on the home furnishings and home accessories sector, alongside the specific context of Türkiye. The home furnishing sector was selected as the research site for the study due to its representativeness of an environment of high involvement, high cost, and low purchase frequency, in which purchase decisions are affected by financial risk, durability, and usage over long periods of time (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Xu et al., 2020a; Ponder, 2013). Sustainability attributes in such an environment tend to be perceived as secondary to functional and financial attributes. They may also tend to be credence attributes in purchase decisions, as customers may perceive them as difficult to evaluate and thus rely more on trust and transparency in providing adequate information (Xu et al., 2020b; Harju, 2022). In line with this understanding, the current investigation challenges the assumption of a direct, linear relationship between sustainability perception and sustainable purchasing behaviour. Instead, it utilises a model of sustainable purchasing behaviour that focuses on economic, trust-related, and information-related barriers to understanding sustainability orientations. In exploring economic, trust, and information-related barriers for home furnishing/home accessories businesses, this investigation seeks to shed light on how sustainability orientations are affected by real-world market conditions at the point of purchase.

This paper makes three significant contributions to the existing literature. First, it applies the study of the value-action gap to the relatively unexamined area of home furnishing consumption, a high-involvement, ecologically significant product category. Second, it develops a barrier-based conceptual structure for analysis, one that considers a combination of economic, trust, and information barriers, rather than solely attitude-based barriers. Third, it offers empirical data from the emerging market of Türkiye, adding context-specific insights to the literature on sustainable consumption. Building on this framework, the present study conceptualises sustainable consumption through a barrier-based value-action gap model, in which economic constraints, trust-related factors, and information accessibility operate as structural filters between sustainability perceptions and purchasing behaviour. This approach operationalises sustainability not as an abstract value but as a decision-stage perception embedded in real market conditions.

Therefore, this study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How well are perceptions of sustainability converted into actual buying behaviour in the home furnishings industry?

**RQ2:** What economic, trust-related, and information-based barriers exist to the transformation of perceptions on issues related to sustainability, and how do these appear in the Turkish market?

The purpose of this study is not to offer a new theory but to refine the value-action gap literature by operationalising sustainability as a concern for purchase-stage perceptions and by understanding how structural barriers filter these perceptions into action.

## Literature review

### Sustainable consumption

Initial research on sustainable consumption often problematised a relationship between sustainability attitudes and behaviours on an individual values and awareness basis. However, in a move that challenges such a one-way understanding, several studies have indicated that a positive sustainability attitude is often not an accurate predictor of sustainable behaviour on a consumer level (Barr, 2006; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Recent literature has thus started to focus on many other factors.

Within this paradigm, consumption behaviour is situated within the context of routines, social values, and material conditions (Barr et al., 2005; Gadenne et al., 2011), rather than being considered the product of intentional human decision-making. Sustainability values must be continually reassessed in the context of society, where a range of other competing values, such as convenience, comfort, time, and economic viability, often trump sustainable concerns (Collins, 2015). Reassessing the sustainable values associated with consumption patterns helps consider how sustainable value judgments are superficially supported by surface-level actions. Notably, existing theory distinguishes low-involvement consumption habits (for example, conserving energy or engaging in sustainable practices such as recycling) from major purchases involving products with considerable financial burdens and risk considerations (Gilg & Barr, 2005). As a result, sustainable consumption patterns can be understood as combinations of habitual behaviours and non-daily purchase decisions. Notably, for the present research study, it is clear that it is necessary to reevaluate sustainable values as they pertain not solely to value preferences or decisions, but specifically to constraints at the point of consumption.

### Sustainability perception, values, and consumer attitudes

Many studies have shown that consumer attitudes towards sustainability and environmentally friendly products are generally optimistic. Awareness of the environment, health, and ethics positively influences the assessment of sustainability attributes (Barr, 2006; Gadenne et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the behavioural relevance of these attitudes is inconsistent, especially in relation to the significant involvement categories. It was proven that the self-relevant, personal aspects of products, such as quality, longevity, security, or long-term benefits, have a greater influence on consumer purchasing decisions than the environmental-altruistic attribute of the product (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Xu et al., 2020a). Customers' favourable sustainability attitudes, in this manner, tend to lead to an assessment of moral support or good intentions, rather than behaviour, further discrediting the relationship between attitude and behaviour (Biswas, 2017). Within the scope of furniture shopping, this phenomenon becomes even more evident. High financial outlays, long-lasting use, and a significant risk of performance-related purchases render the sustainability attribute of chairs, tables, or other furniture negligible, hence their indirect influence on the purchasing process, being conditioned upon functional, economic, or performance-related attributes of the item in question (Ponder, 2013; Xu et al., 2020b). Even if those favourable attitudes towards sustainability-based attributes emerge, they become secondary to

customers' health, ergonomics, or durability. Moreover, recent marketing studies underscore that affective and experiential cue, such as emotionally engaging sustainability communications, can increase sustainability attitudes but often cannot overcome structural barriers at the point of purchase (Yu, Zhong, et al., 2024; Yu, Zhang, et al., 2024; Liebl, 2025; Dangelico et al., 2025). This supports the argument that positive sustainability perceptions are necessary but not sufficient for sustainability behaviour. This argument is consistent with value-based consumer behaviour theory, which holds that personal values influence purchase evaluations only when they are reinforced by contextual relevance and product-specific utility (Vinson et al., 1977). In line with it, sustainability should not be treated as an attitude or a value, according to the conceptualisation of the present research, but as a perception at the point of purchase.

### **The value-action gap in sustainable consumption**

The value-action gap refers to the systematic difference between the stated values consumers hold for sustainability and the actions they undertake (Barr, 2006; Chauhan, 2020). There is solid empirical evidence that this gap is driven, not by a lack of awareness and concerns, but by the structure of consumption practices.

Practice-based studies illustrate the importance of understanding that the decisions on issues of the 'sustainability' kind are necessarily framed by a social or household setting, in which 'collective patterns of doing things and common interests may counterbalance the interests of the individual in the matter of the planet' (Collins, 2015). Moreover, the size of the value-action gap varies across types of behaviour. On the one hand, the 'least costly and least effort-consuming behaviour change, the adoption of low-cost/effort actions, proves generally easier' (Barr et al., 2005). On the other hand, the relationship between a higher-cost, higher-risk purchase of consumer goods and services and the underlying attitudes, in particular, the relationship between the higher gap and the particular attitude of the kind in question, specifically the attitude of the kind 'green', is strongest in the case of durable goods (Gilg & Barr, 2005). For example, in the case of higher involvement products like furniture, findings consistently support the notion that, in the absence of pro-environmental attitudes, the consequential purchase behaviour has very limited direct effect' (Xu et al., 2020a). Instead, the degree of perceived behavioural control, willingness to pay, and perceived risk are significant determinants of the decision-making process (Xu et al., 2020a). Sustainability-related assessments are 'symbolically meaningful but lack enough functional relevance' with the 'consequential' effect of failing to motivate purchase in real-life marketplace conditions' (Gilg & Barr, 2005). On a more general level, recent studies have questioned the assumption of a straightforward relationship between attitudes and behaviour and have advocated adopting a contextual or situational approach as a better way to grasp the concept of sustainable consumption.

### **Barriers to sustainable purchasing behaviour**

#### **Price perception and economic constraints**

Price perception is considered one of the most fundamental constraints on sustainable consumption. Even consumers with conservation attitudes have a low willingness to pay regarding the price premium associated with sustainable consumption (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Wang et al., 2019). At the boundary, economic feasibility is a significant factor in sustainable consumption. Price awareness associated with furniture purchases outweighs moral awareness, thereby exacerbating the value-action gap (Xu et al., 2020a). The economic uncertainty associated with consumers drives them to prioritise the current primary gain, leading them to consider sustainable consumption performance solely when economic feasibility is maintained (Carrigan & de Pelsmacker, 2009).

#### **Trust, credibility, and greenwashing**

Besides cost factors, trust regarding sustainability information is one of the most significant factors in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. The lack of confidence in certifications and labels, as well as in sustainability communication within the organisation, affects consumer self-efficacy and perceived control (Liebl, 2025; Xu et al., 2020b). When trustworthy information is scarce, sustainability information is often a concern, especially when clarity about use over time is lacking for certain product groups. Abstract or piecemeal information about sustainability is hard to convert into tangible decision-making, particularly when sustainable products are not easily accessible (Frederiks et al., 2015). All these factors work cumulatively, further hardening present behavioural rigidity even among consumers with positive perceptions of sustainability. The body of evidence indicates that economic, trust-related, and information-related factors serve as screening devices through which perceptions of sustainability must pass.

### **Information, accessibility, and behavioural barriers**

The home furnishing industry is a specific context that provides a unique setting to analyse aspects of information, accessibility, and behavioural barriers that explain value-action gaps. High involvement, low frequency, and high monetary investments associated with furniture consumption amplify risk considerations to a great extent, leading to decisions that include sustainable attributes side by side with, but not exclusive to, other attributes such as functional, experiential, and economic benefits, rather than serving as a primary basis (Xu et al., 2020a). Findings indicate that green furniture products are commonly assessed in terms of self-centred benefits, such as health, safety, and longevity, primarily as a means to a health-related goal. At the same time, environmental impacts are viewed as a secondary attribute (Xu et al., 2020b). Furthermore, the attributes associated with sustainability have been perceived as credence attributes, difficult to verify, and thus rely heavily on trust, trustworthiness, and/or third-party sources (Harju, 2022).

Even with the presence of more sustainable options, like refurbished, second-hand, or circular business models for furniture, their adoption has been limited by aspects concerning behaviour and context, which pertain to cleanliness, possession, attachment, as well as perceptions of quality, as indicated in Gullstrand Edbring et al. (2016), Slaton et al. (2024) and Mishra et al. (2025). Such information and access barriers specific to the sector further contribute to the persistence of the gap between value and action among consumers of furniture products. Recent evidence further suggests that pro-circular consumer profiles are shaped by personal norms and perceived responsibility, which influence openness to circular furniture consumption (Arias et al., 2022).

### **Sustainability in the home furnishing sector**

A study on emerging economies reveals that economic sensitivity, institutional trust, and market structure significantly mediate evaluations for sustainability issues (Schäfer et al., 2011). Consumers in emerging markets are generally exposed to higher price volatility, product unavailability, and a less supportive regulatory framework than those in developed markets, further widening the gap between value and action. In the Turkish setting, previous research shows that levels of awareness of sustainability are quite high, while levels of sustainable consumer behaviour are selective and sporadic (Eryiğit et al., 2025). Due to economic circumstances and a lack of confidence in the accuracy of sustainable claims and products, sustainable behaviours are primarily driven by the purchasing occasion. Although sustainable consumption has attracted increasing attention in recent years, few studies examining sectors or barriers in the Turkish context have examined high-involvement categories such as home furnishings. This highlights the need for studies encompassing economic, trust, and information barriers.

### **Literature summary and research gap**

There has been a growing trend in sustainable consumption studies from an individual, value-related nature to a context- and practice-related one (Collins, 2015; Gadenne et al., 2011). The need for sustainability has ceased to be the inevitable outcome of a positive attitude towards the environment (Barr et al., 2005). There is recognition that even though sustainable attitudes may be deeply ingrained in society, their application in terms of actual behavioural outcomes is limited.

The value-action gap is a prominent and persistent problem in the existing literature, as it fails to translate sustainability and consumption orientation into actual buying actions and habits. A considerable body of evidence indicates that value-action gaps are less about a lack of environmental care and more about barriers and distrust (Sheoran & Kumar, 2020; Barr, 2006; Chauhan, 2020). The degree of consumer engagement within the consumption occasion affects the above-mentioned dynamic. In a product context involving a significant financial outlay and calculated risk, environmental aspects remain insignificant and are not specific to many purchasing decisions. This has been explicitly and consistently noted in the home furnishings industry, where furniture consumption exhibits low repetition, high risk perception, and strong performance expectations. In this context, sustainability aspects remain in a mediating role in relation to a purchasing decision, influencing perceptions of functional and economic value rather than serving as a key purchasing driver (Wang et al., 2025). There has also been empirical confirmation in relation to the manifestation of consumer attitude in favour of more sustainable furniture products in the marketplace, in which purchasing behaviour remains economically limited and pessimistically affected by sustainability concerns and product durability and performance concerns (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Liebl, 2025; Chen & Laksitamas, 2024). Besides these product-specific factors, the literature emphasises the importance of trust, information, and social factors in maintaining the value-action gap.

Lack of transparency in certification systems, prevalence of greenwashing practices, and unclear marketplace conditions can all impact consumer trust and perceptions of factorial control (Xu et al., 2020a; Liebl, 2025). Conversely, consumer habits regarding consumption patterns and environmental values further contribute to maintaining these behavioural gaps (Gilg & Barr, 2005; Schäfer et al., 2012; Nye & Hargreaves, 2010). Despite these developments, substantial gaps persist in the existing body of research. First, beyond the value-action gap, the existing literature primarily focuses on low-involvement product categories, such as fast-moving consumer goods. Less attention has been paid to related research on durable product categories with varying levels of involvement, such as home furnishings (Kamarubahrin et al., 2025; Ponder, 2013). Secondly, the existing body of literature tends to focus primarily on either or both two aspects. As a result, very little has been explored or found useful regarding these factors. It explains how these factors work together as barriers against actual consumer purchases (Newton & Meyer, 2013; Biswas, 2017). Finally, country-specific literature can be expected from emerging economies as they grow in importance for sustainable consumption. This aspect of sustainable consumption can be expected to be significant. Yet it has not been fully incorporated into existing theoretical paradigms of sustainable consumption (Xu et al., 2020a; Schäfer et al., 2011).

Regarding Türkiye-specific sustainable consumption factors, some evidence suggests high environmental awareness and selective sustainable consumption patterns (Eryiğit et al., 2025). Finally, some recent studies conceptualise sustainable consumption as a multidimensional field of significant relevance. These studies emphasise the requirements of a comprehensive theoretical basis. Yet country-specific empirical studies are inadequate with respect to these comprehensive theoretical structures (Nascimento & Loureiro, 2024).

Table 1 summarises the key research gaps identified in the sustainable consumption literature and positions the present study's contribution accordingly.

**Table 1:** Summary of Identified Research Gaps in Sustainable Consumption Literature

Dimension	What the Literature Shows	Identified Gap	Contribution of the Present Study
Value-Action Gap	Sustainability attitudes often fail to translate into behaviour due to economic, behavioural, and social barriers.	Limited integration of multiple barriers within a single empirical framework	Examines economic, trust-related, and behavioural barriers simultaneously
Sectoral Focus	Extensive research on fast-moving consumer goods and food	The furniture sector remains underexplored despite its high environmental impact	Focuses explicitly on home furnishing consumption
Product Characteristics	Sustainability is evaluated alongside functional and emotional attributes	Limited understanding of how durability, health, and risk perceptions shape behaviour	Analyses sustainability perceptions within high-involvement durable goods
Geographical Context	Predominant focus on developed economies	Scarcity of emerging economies and country-specific evidence	Provides empirical evidence from the Turkish market
Methodological Focus	Strong emphasis on attitudes and intentions	Limited attention to barriers filtering attitudes into behaviour	Centres analysis on the intention-behaviour gap
Turkish Literature	High sustainability awareness reported	Lack of sector-specific, barrier-focused empirical studies	Addresses sustainable furniture consumption in Türkiye

**Source:** Created by the author.

The value-action gap is complex and multifaceted, as highlighted in Table 1, underscoring the need for empirical research that is sector-specific and barrier-focused. While specific factors like price sensitivity and consumer trust are well understood, they are rarely examined in a unified, sector-specific way for products with relatively high purchase prices and long product life cycles, which is why the home furnishings sector is especially affected by these factors.

The literature review is a synthesis of previous studies, selectively conducted to retain all sources cited.

## Methodology

### Research design

The research design utilised in the study is quantitative and cross-sectional, based on the value-action gap paradigm. The basic objective of the research is not to reveal instrumental processes, but rather to evaluate the extent to which perceptions of sustainability at the point of purchase are successfully

translated into behavioural manifestations, and the prominent barriers hindering this conversion in a high-involvement consumption scenario. As in other studies on the value-action gap paradigm (Barr, 2006; Chauhan, 2020), this study focuses on the gap between perceptions and behaviour rather than on intentions. The research approach taken in the study, in particular, is relevant in the household furnishing and home accessories industry, characterised by infrequent, high-stakes, and strongly structurally driven purchase decisions.

### Data source and sample

The empirical test data are secondary and obtained from an international consumer survey conducted by a global home furnishings retailer as part of its market research. The survey was conducted online and aimed at adults involved in household furniture and home accessory buying decisions. The dataset consists of 4,511 consumer survey responses from 9 countries, including Türkiye. All survey responses were anonymised before analysis and did not contain any personally identifiable data. The current research uses the dataset solely for academic purposes. The data set is large and enables descriptive, comparative, and multivariate analyses. The data set also allows cross-country comparisons and enables the Turkish scenario to be compared with other market scenarios.

### Data collection instrument and measurement variables

The collected data included several variables, all measured using closed-ended survey questions. The respondents used Likert scales in answering questions unless otherwise indicated.

(1) *Perception of Sustainability*: The measurement of perceptions of sustainability involved questions on the importance of minimising the impact of products on the environment, durability, recyclability, and use of sustainable materials.

(2) *Criteria for Furniture and Home Accessory Purchasing Decisions*: Several criteria regarded as significant in furniture and home accessory purchases were ranked, such as durability, quality, affordability, and comfort. The use of this measure ensures that sustainability purchasing considerations are easy to assign importance to.

(3) *Barriers to Purchasing Sustainable Products*: The barriers that exist in sustainable consumption were measured based on perceived cost, perceived trust in the sustainable nature of products, information gap, and unavailability of products. The measures include the key barriers that prevent the development of an intention to undertake sustainable behaviour.

### Data analysis procedure

The data analysis process involved several steps to evaluate the value-action gap in terms of its presence and shape, as well as the barriers to sustainable purchasing behaviour. First, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate consumers' perceptions of sustainability, purchasing priorities, and barriers. Following this, comparative studies were conducted to explore differences across contexts, with reference to Türkiye, and to examine whether the value-action gap varies across institutional and economic environments. Third, a logistic regression analysis was conducted to examine the mediating effects of economic, trust-based, and information-based barriers on their predictive power for sustainable purchasing. This analytical technique was selected to examine the likelihood of a purchase being made sustainably, depending on perceptions of structural barriers, while accounting for demographic and country effects. This analytical approach, involving several steps, can be used to create a structured framework for testing the presence of a value-action gap and the process by which sustainability perceptions influence purchasing behaviour.

### Research hypotheses

Grounded in the literature, the present study formulates five hypotheses to explore the antecedents of the value-action gap in sustainable consumption.

Hypotheses:

Existing literature also shows that positive attitudes towards sustainability and perceptions do not guarantee that customers will engage in sustainable purchase behaviour, particularly in high-involvement consumption contexts (Barr, 2006; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Chauhan, 2020). Further, in-depth studies of real-life contexts have shown that situational factors can override sustainability considerations at the point of purchase itself (Barr et al., 2005; Gadenne et al., 2011). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H<sub>1</sub>**: *Consumers' sustainability perceptions do not translate directly into sustainable purchasing behaviour, indicating the presence of a value-action gap.*

Economic feasibility is a strong predictor of sustainable purchasing behaviour. Existing studies have suggested that even though consumers may have positive pro-sustainability predispositions, they may be unwilling to pay price premiums for sustainable products in certain high-cost product categories (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Wang et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2020a). In the case of durable products such as furniture, price sensitivity has been found to outweigh moral and environmental factors in decision-making (Carrigan & de Pelsmacker, 2009). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Perceived high prices negatively affect consumers' sustainable purchasing behaviour.*

Trust in sustainability-related information constitutes a key construct in the study of the behavioural relevance of sustainability perceptions. Previous studies have supported the argument that scepticism towards sustainability-related practices reduces consumers' perceived behavioural control regarding sustainability-related buying behaviour (Xu et al., 2020b; Liebl, 2025; Harju, 2022). In addition, the presence of greenwashing effects decreases the behavioural relevance of sustainability-related perceptions (Frederiks et al., 2015). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>3</sub>: Lack of trust in sustainability claims negatively affects sustainable purchasing behaviour.*

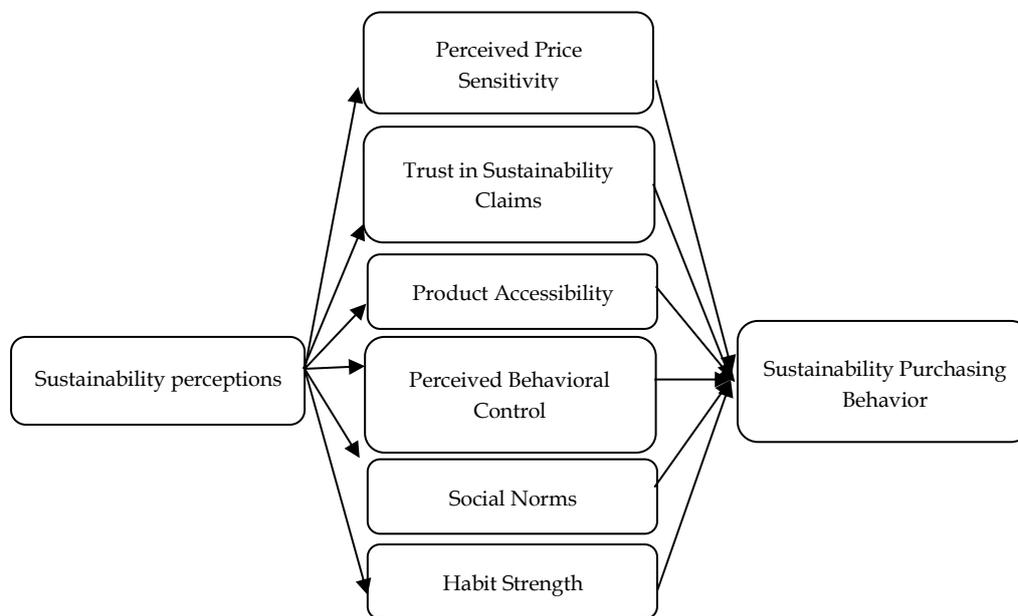
It is widely believed that information availability and product accessibility are key drivers of a more sustainable consumption pattern. When confronted with low levels of information availability and product accessibility for sustainable consumption, perceptions of sustainability are less likely to influence consumption behaviours (Frederiks et al., 2015; Xu et al., 2020a; Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016). The situation is more challenging for high-involvement product categories, including home furnishings. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Limited information and accessibility negatively affect sustainable purchasing behaviour.*

Research exploring emerging markets has identified the influence of economic sensitivity, institutional trust, and market structure on the mediation of sustainable consumption practices (Schäfer et al., 2011; Schäfer et al., 2012). In the case of Türkiye, the available literature has identified high levels of sustainability awareness, yet with selective and inconsistent patterns regarding the influence of economic sensitivity and trust (Eryiğit et al., 2025). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>5</sub>: The value-action gap among Turkish consumers is more pronounced compared to other country contexts.*

These hypotheses are visually represented in the conceptual framework provided in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Research Framework of Sustainable Furniture Consumption

**Source:** Created by the author.

This conceptual framework illustrates how perceptions of sustainability indirectly shape sustainable purchasing practices through a range of mediators and moderators. The framework integrates the principal barrier variables examined in this study, such as perceived price sensitivity, trust, and accessibility, with more subjective and situational variables, such as perceived behavioural control, social norms, and habit, to create a more accurate conceptual explanation of sustainable purchasing practices in high involvement purchasing contexts, such as the purchasing of furniture. Following the

approach to measurement in this study, sustainability-related assessments are measured through perceptions of sustainability rather than through abstract constructs of value and attitude. These constructs are included as broader theoretical contextual factors but are not directly operationalised in the present empirical model due to limitations in the secondary data.

### Limitations of secondary data use

The application of secondary data in this investigation is characterised by significant methodological and epistemological shortcomings that need serious examination. As secondary data are primarily produced for market research purposes, this investigation has limited control over the precision of theoretical constructs in their empirical representation. In addition, survey data is subject to interpretive limitations, including social desirability bias and the tendency toward "attitudinal over-reporting," especially regarding perceptions of sustainability issues. The data, therefore, reflect perceived orientations and behaviours rather than actual consumption behaviours. Moreover, its cross-sectional design means that only possible relationships can be explored, but no attempt can be made to clarify underlying processes or to propose causes. In other words, no causal links can be assumed or implied. The value-action gap can only be understood structurally based on correlation. While these limitations do not undermine the analytical value of this investigation, they mark its epistemic limits and should therefore be explicitly addressed when using its results.

### Ethical considerations

The study uses an anonymous secondary survey dataset. It does not contain personal identifiers, and all analyses conducted with the dataset adhere to the ethical principles of handling secondary data in social science. Given the nature of the secondary dataset, obtaining ethical approval was not necessary.

## Results

Building on the value–action gap approach, this section will explore the extent to which actual purchase data in the home furnishing and home accessories industry reflect perceived sustainability. Rather than invoking a simplistic notion that a positive attitude towards sustainability will directly result in pro-sustainability behaviour, this research aims to close the existing gaps between perceived sustainability and actual purchasing behaviour. As shown in the conceptual framework of this research, the economic, trust-related, and informational barriers will be measured based on their role in aiding or hindering the conversion of perceived sustainability into purchasing behaviour. The research aims to identify major barriers and present a comparative analysis of outcomes to better evaluate the alignment or disparity between attitudes and purchasing behaviour. Since it pertains to the identification of major barriers, the data analysis uses logistic regression.

### Importance of sustainability in purchasing decisions

The results show that although consumer attitudes towards sustainability were mostly positive, sustainability attributes were not considered crucial buying factors in furniture purchases. In terms of decision-making, functionality, and financial aspects, obviously, they play a crucial role. Table 2 shows that durability was the most prominent purchase attribute, followed by product quality, price, and material quality. The environmental attributes related to reduced environmental harm were assigned lower scores, even though the attitudinal perceptions were affirmative. This highlights a clear divergence between sustainability self-perception and purchase attribute considerations, pointing towards an initial confirmation of the potential existence of a value-action gap in the home furnishings industry.

**Table 2:** Decision-Making Criteria in Furniture and Home Accessories Purchases

Decision Criterion	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Durability (Longevity)	38
High Quality	34
Affordability (Price)	31
Quality of Materials	30
Comfort	29
Lower Environmental Impact	14

The presence of the value–action gap is also evident in the mismatch between individuals' self-perceptions of sustainability and their actual behaviour in purchase decisions. According to Table 3,

nearly 60 per cent of respondents consider sustainability a significant component of their assessment. Yet only 25 per cent show a consistent purchasing trend toward sustainable furniture and home accessories. The tremendous incongruity between sustainability perceptions and actions provides empirical confirmation of the value–action gap, thus justifying Hypothesis 1.

**Table 3:** Illustration of the Value–Action Gap in Sustainable Consumption

Sustainability Perceptions	Percentage (%)
Consumers who report high sustainability perceptions	60
Consumers who consistently purchase sustainable products	~25

**Note:** The latter reflects a substantially smaller group, as indicated by the original study findings.

### Barriers to sustainable product purchases

The study discovers that high prices are perceived as the most conspicuous challenge to sustainable purchasing practices. A good number of respondents suggest that sustainable furniture products are perceived as more expensive, which inhibits their purchase despite their positive attitudes toward sustainability. As shown in Table 4 above, high prices were followed by product unavailability, scepticism toward sustainability assertions, and a lack of information. This indicator indicates that the gap between sustainability perception and purchasing practice is shaped by various economic and informational barriers, rather than by a deficiency in sustainability awareness. As such, the descriptive data offered initial confirmation for Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 above. A further regression test was used to investigate their effect on purchasing behaviour.

**Table 4:** Key Barriers to Sustainable Furniture Consumption

Barrier	Percentage (%)
Perceived high price	41
Limited availability of sustainable products	33
Lack of trust in sustainability claims	30
Insufficient information	26
Unclear product origin	23

The findings, reported in Table 5, show that perceived price sensitivity negatively influences the probability of sustainable purchasing. In contrast, trust in sustainable claims and accessibility are positive antecedents of sustainable purchasing behaviour. Such findings are robust to controls for individual and country-level variables, providing multivariate evidence to corroborate results and further verifying the significance of barriers to perceptions being translated into sustainable purchasing behaviour.

The results of the supplementary logistic regression are presented below and reveal the impact of the significant barriers on the probability of sustainable purchasing. Based on Table 5, it is evident that price sensitivity has a significant negative impact on the probability of performing sustainable purchasing ( $\beta = -0.38$ ,  $p < .01$ ), whereas trust in claims regarding sustainability ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and accessibility of products ( $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < .05$ ) have a significant positive impact on the probability of sustainable purchasing.

**Table 5:** Logistic Regression Predicting Sustainable Purchasing Behaviour (with Controls and Country Fixed Effects)

Predictor Variable	$\beta$ Coefficient	Std. Error	Wald $\chi^2$	p-value
Price sensitivity	-0.38	0.09	17.80	< .001
Trust in sustainability claims	0.34	0.08	17.23	< .001
Product accessibility	0.26	0.11	5.74	< .05
Age	0.02	0.01	3.84	< .05
Income level (ordinal)	0.14	0.06	5.44	< .05
Gender (1 = female)	0.08	0.07	1.30	n.s.
Country fixed effects	Included	-	-	-
Constant	-0.59	0.16	13.56	< .001

**Dependent variable:** Sustainable purchasing behaviour (1 = yes, 0 = no)

**Note:** Coefficients represent log-odds estimates. Positive coefficients indicate an increased likelihood of sustainable purchasing behaviour, while negative coefficients indicate a decreased likelihood.

The original logistic regression model had an acceptable level of fit. However, the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  of 0.21 indicates that only about 21% of the variance in sustainable purchasing behaviour is accounted for by the model's predictors. The -2 Log Likelihood statistic for the model is 4821.34, and the accuracy is 68%.

To ensure the generalizability of these findings, a new logistic regression model was run, including demographic variables (age, income, and gender) and country fixed effects as covariates. The findings were invariant to changes in the models. Price-sensitivity remained a statistically significant negative predictor of sustainable purchasing practices ( $\beta = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). At the same time, trust and product accessibility were positive antecedents of sustainable purchasing practices ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and  $\beta = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , respectively). Including the control variables slightly improved the models' fitness, and the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  and percentage of correct classification increased to 0.26 and 70%, respectively.

#### Comparative analysis: Türkiye vs other countries

The comparative results reveal that, while there is general similarity in sustainability perceptions across countries, there are variations in barrier intensity. The Turkish consumer is found to be significantly price-sensitive and to have less trust in sustainability claims than consumers in other countries. Moreover, Turkish consumers experience limited access to sustainable furniture. These economic and institutional constraints, along with limited accessibility, are reflected in a heightened Value-Action gap, as illustrated in Table 6. The empirical findings from this comparative study verify Hypothesis 5 and establish the significance of economic and institutional factors in shaping how sustainability perceptions translate into sustainable purchases in an emerging market.

**Table 6:** Comparative Assessment of the Value-Action Gap: Türkiye vs Other Countries

Constraint Dimension	Türkiye	Other Countries
Price sensitivity	High	Medium
Trust in sustainability claims	Low	Medium / High
Accessibility of sustainable products	Limited	Moderate
Overall value-action gap	Pronounced	Moderate

#### Summary of hypothesis testing

Table 7 presents a synthesis of the empirical results relative to the formulated study hypotheses. Generally, the findings have already confirmed the study's theoretical assumptions about the existence and factors of the value-action gap. An assessment of sustainability beliefs does not imply sustainable purchasing practices; rather, feasibility, trust, and accessibility are the decisive factors in activating sustainability-oriented purchasing practices fostered by those beliefs.

**Table 7:** Synthesises the Study's Findings in relation to the Proposed Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description	Empirical Outcome
H1	Sustainability perceptions do not directly translate into purchasing behaviour.	Supported
H2	Perceived high prices negatively affect sustainable purchasing behaviour	Supported
H3	Lack of trust in sustainability claims negatively affects purchasing behaviour.	Supported
H4	Limited information and accessibility negatively affect purchasing behaviour.	Supported
H5	The value-action gap is more pronounced in Türkiye	Supported (comparative)

Source: Created by the author.

## Discussion

This study also validates the structural nature of the value-action gap in the context of high involvement in consumption. The value-action gap is not due to poor sustainability perceptions. Instead, it results from economic, informational, and institutional barriers to translating sustainability attitudes into action. Moreover, price sensitivity remains the primary value filter. This suggests that sustainability-driven consumption depends on a product's economic viability. Trust in sustainability-related product attributes and accessibility are facilitating conditions that impact the behavioural relevance of sustainability perceptions. These findings are consistent with the practice-theory of consumption. According to this theory, consumer behaviour is located in the structures and constraints of daily life rather than in consumers' attitudes and values (Barr et al., 2005; Collins, 2015). In this study, the practice-theory of consumption is extended by showing how the value-action gap leads to the suppression of sustainability-driven buying behaviour in the durable goods market. Moreover, the study reveals the behavioural relevance of sustainability perceptions in the home furnishing product category. In fact, the findings show sustainability perceptions as mere symbolic orientations. This is consistent with prior studies showing that sustainability is behaviourally effective only when functional considerations are present.

The findings of this study support an emerging body of research suggesting that sustainability orientation is not reflected in actual purchasing behaviour in the market for high-involvement and durable products. Similar findings have also been reported in recent studies on sustainable furniture communication and green retail contexts, where emotional engagement improves attitudes but does not fully eliminate structural barriers (Dang Longani & Sharma, 2024). The same value-action gap has been observed in studies on sustainable furniture consumption, in which economic feasibility, perceived risk, and functional performance considerations consistently outweigh other sustainability preferences (de Medeiros & Ribeiro, 2017; Xu et al., 2020a; Chen & Laksitamas, 2024). The dominance of price sensitivity, as found in this study, is also supported by previous research, which found that the willingness to pay a premium for green products is limited, even among consumers with a strong interest in sustainability (Wang et al., 2019; Carrigan & de Pelsmacker, 2009). Likewise, the importance of trust and information transparency is also supported by previous findings, which emphasised the limiting role of low institutional trust, greenwashing, and credence attributes of sustainability for consumers' buying behaviour for sustainable products and services (Xu et al., 2020b; Harju, 2022; Liebl, 2025). Together, these convergent findings strengthen the empirical validity of the study and situate its results within the broader literature on sustainable consumption and high-involvement durable goods markets.

### Theoretical implications

The conceptual framework on which the model draws provides a compact, manageable framework for studying the value-action gap in sustainable consumer behaviour, with a focus on the translation of perceptions of sustainability into action. At the same time, the findings show that this translation process is affected by a set of more complex psychological and contextual processes than those currently modelled. For example, constructs of perceived control, social norms, and habit, which are crucial within the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Social Practice Theory, also appear to be salient.

By incorporating these constructs, future studies could go beyond the direct relationship between perception and behaviour and explore the relationships among evaluations of sustainability, contextual structures, and internalised behavioural patterns. This would be an extension, as it would clarify why a favourable perception of sustainability does not necessarily lead to behaviour in contexts characterised by consumption involvement. In line with related literature on consumption behaviour of furniture, it is found that information deficiencies, accessibility, and behavioural considerations of risk, sanitation,

and perceptions of quality moderate the behavioural association of sustainability perceptions in high involvement settings (Xu et al., 2020a; Harju, 2022; Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016; Slaton et al., 2024).

From a theoretical viewpoint, there appears to be a need to extend the current framework to a mediated or moderated path model to facilitate a more detailed explanation of the data findings concerning the value-action gap, while remaining theoretically and conceptually straightforward and unambiguous in its underlying assumptions and constructs. In this regard, a mediated or moderated path framework would also provide a more coherent means of explaining the theoretical constructs and assumptions underlying practice-based theories in general, and hence provide a more integrated approach involving both practice and behaviour theories in terms of explaining the underlying value-action gap in relation to consumer behaviour in a more detailed and in-depth way.

### **Methodological implications**

Methodologically, this research demonstrates the effectiveness of a barrier-based approach for investigating the value-action gap in sustainable consumption, particularly for high-involvement and durable goods. By translating the process of sustainability evaluation into sustainability perception at the point of purchase, this study prevents the misuse of abstract values or general attitudes towards sustainability, as opposed to the appropriateness of sustainability perceptions at the point of purchase, a problem highlighted in most attitude-based sustainability research (Barr, 2006; Gadenne et al., 2011). Moreover, the cross-sectional survey approach employed in this research enables the identification of a systematic association among perceptions of sustainability, barriers, and purchasing actions in a multinational setting. Cross-sectional survey designs do not support inferential research, such as determining the cause of a particular phenomenon. Still, they can efficiently uncover the gap between perceptions and actions, as well as support the balancing of economic, trust-based, or informational barriers in sustainable consumption research (Chauhan, 2020; Sheoran & Kumar, 2020).

In methodological terms, the simultaneous analysis of descriptive analysis and logistic regression results demonstrates the effectiveness of combining evidence derived from modelling frequencies with multivariate control. This approach aligns with a requirement in the existing literature to expand research on attitudes by focusing on structural/concurrent variables that modify behavioural outputs (Newton & Meyer, 2013; Biswas, 2017). Additionally, the stability of evidence across models indicates the absence of composition- or country-specific characteristics in the data, as the data reflects stable patterns. Cumulatively, the data demonstrate that, methodologically speaking, models based solely on attitudes or behavioural events tend to underestimate processes associated with the value-action gap. The methodological approach, utilising data from perception measures, provides a more suitable framework for capturing the behaviour-green evaluation paradigm in the realm of home furnishings, as supported by various existing studies (Xu et al., 2020a; Kamarubahrin et al., 2025). Recent reviews also underline that sector-specific sustainable consumption studies increasingly require integrative models combining behavioural, contextual, and product-level determinants (Han et al., 2025; Kaluvilla et al., 2025). Regarding the findings on policy implications, there is reason to believe that policies focused solely on sustainability awareness might perform poorly, especially for high-involvement products like domestic furniture. The findings indicate that policies regarding cost, trustworthiness, and accessibility may have better performance implications, especially in the context of Türkiye.

### **Sectoral implications and recommendations**

The findings of this study suggest that economic accessibility, trust, and product availability are hindering sustainable consumption in the home furnishings and accessories domain. Moreover, price sensitivity emerges as the major barrier, indicating that sustainability-oriented consumption in this domain can be achieved when products are priced competitively rather than presented as premium products. The lack of trust in sustainability claims underscores the need for transparency in verifying the information provided to consumers by industry participants. Another aspect of the limited availability of alternatives in the realm of sustainability is that sustainability must be incorporated into the main product offerings rather than presented as an alternative. Increasing the accessibility of sustainability products in stores could complement the behavioural relevance of sustainability perceptions.

### **Conclusion**

This research focuses on the gap between values and actions regarding consumer sustainability in household furnishings and accessories. The use of cross-national data in survey research reveals an insignificant relationship between consumer values regarding sustainability and their purchase of sustainability-produced goods, especially high-involvement goods.

The findings indicate that purchasing is mainly driven by price sensitivity, trust in sustainability claims, and the accessibility of sustainable products. Despite the established belief in the importance and need for sustainability in society, it only materialises in purchasing practices when economic feasibility is factored in. This is a clear indicator of a value-action gap emerging from structural impediments rather than a lack of awareness of sustainability. Cross-national differences indicate that this gap is relatively high in Türkiye, due to higher price sensitivity, lower reliance on sustainability as a purchasing argument, and reduced accessibility to sustainable furniture products compared to other countries.

By concentrating on the home furnishings industry, this research offers a specific contribution to the literature on sustainable consumption. The latter has tended to focus primarily on low-involvement products. The results of this research reveal that consumers rank sustainable factors as of secondary importance when it comes to non-disposable product types. The research generally indicates that promoting sustainable consumption of furniture products must start by overcoming marketplace barriers, rather than the emphasis in previous efforts on influencing consumer attitudes.

### **Limitations**

Despite the study's findings and contributions, several limitations remain, and these must be considered when drawing inferences from the results. One concern is that, while the analytical approach may be appropriate for understanding the findings on the most influential factors of misalignments in perceptions of sustainability and purchasing practices, it does not employ methods such as structural equation modelling. Further investigation might include developing the current framework to incorporate pathways influenced by perceptions of sustainability and practices within the value-action gap framework. The second methodological shortcoming in this study is its dependency on self-report data. While self-report data provide a broad basis for cross-country comparisons, they are more likely to be affected by social desirability bias in contexts where proper behaviour and environmental practices are emphasised. This limitation is also consistent with recent evidence showing that even environmentally concerned consumers may fail to act sustainably due to knowledge deficits and cognitive biases that affect behavioural judgement (Winterich et al., 2024). The reliance on self-report data in this study, therefore, poses a challenge, as this data type is highly susceptible to bias. Future research should therefore employ a mix of self-report and behaviour-focused methodologies or experimental approaches. The administration of scales that correct for social desirability biases in sustainability attitudes in this study would also reduce data biases. Despite the above challenges, this study offers valid cross-national findings about the structural value-action gap in relation to high-involvement consumption practices. The mixed-methods approach would also offer a more in-depth understanding of impact mechanisms through which sustainability perceptions influence behaviour and provide an explanation for the value-action gap.

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