

RESEARCH

# Does AI-Driven Personalisation Create Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: Moderating Role of Level of Digital Awareness

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## ABSTRACT

**PURPOSE:** To explore the moderating effect of digital awareness on the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour.

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**DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH:** A quantitative methodology was adopted; a questionnaire was distributed to (463) consumers in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). SPSS was used to screen and process the primary data collected.

**FINDINGS:** Results indicated the acceptance of the study's hypotheses, arguing that AI-driven personalisation can create sustainable consumer behaviour through the moderating role of level of the digital awareness.

**ORIGINALITY/VALUE:** This paper empirically validates the results of previous researchers by demonstrating that increasing digital awareness can dramatically enhance the positive effect of AI personalisation on sustainable consumer behaviour.

**RESEARCH LIMITATIONS:** Results are limited to MENA consumers. Theoretical implications need longitudinal and multi-region validation.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:** To make consumer behaviour in MENA sustainable, brands ought to increase the levels of digital literacy among consumers and teach them the credibility of AI-based green recommendations.

**KEYWORDS:** *Personalisation; Sustainable Consumer Behaviour; Digital Awareness; Personalisation Accuracy; Perceived Usefulness; Trust of AI Recommendations; Interactivity.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Environmentally friendly customer behaviour is also expressed through a preference for eco-friendly products, e.g., biodegradable packaging or ethically sourced goods, and in backing brands with transparent supply chains. This trend is further enhanced by mobile technology, which allows consumers to investigate sustainability credentials immediately, according to (Shimul and Cheah, 2023).

Economic factors also contribute since value-oriented sustainable products are chosen by cost-conscious young adults, who prefer to be as pocket-friendly as possible and consider the ethical aspect of the issue (Anis *et al.*, 2023). The Uses and Gratifications Theory justifies this behaviour, as it suggests that consumers are actively trying to find brands, that satisfy the need for purpose-oriented consumption. Nevertheless, there are still obstacles, since greenwashing, which is deception regarding sustainability, can undermine credibility, which is why real corporate responsibility is necessary (Hornoiu *et al.*, 2024).

It is a trend that is being adopted by traditional ways of consumption with the trend setters in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) being young adults who are moving towards a path of sustainability. Since sustainability is emerging as a driver of purchase intention, companies should align or integrate real, transparent approaches to satisfy this changing consumer spirit (Gong *et al.*, 2023).

On another level, AI-driven personalisation may influence sustainable consumer behaviour by tailoring marketing to individual values and preferences. Bashynska (2023) notes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) leverages data analytics to deliver customised content, promoting eco-friendly products, services, and sustainable products that align with consumers' ethical priorities. In the MENA region, where consumers prioritise sustainability (Sadeh, 2025), AI-enhanced recommendations on platforms like Instagram or TikTok highlight environmentally responsible brands. The Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests consumers actively seek personalised, value-aligned content and making AI a powerful tool for fostering sustainable choices.

Mohamad *et al.* (2025) tried to determine the significance of AI in shaping sustainable consumer behaviour in Nigeria. The research data were obtained from a pre-tested, well-structured questionnaire to 320 respondents. Consumers assume that the impact of AI on consumer decisions is manifested in personalised recommendations on products and services but also assume that the level of impact that personalised recommendations have on the purchase decision of a product is relatively low.

Lata and Rana (2025) aimed to examine the effects of AI-based technologies on young consumers in their buying habits of sustainable products and services. The results of this research revealed themes as personalisation and customisation, social influence, promotion of sustainable practices and community engagement that shape the lifestyle of young consumers influence them to adopt sustainable practices.

Sharma and Sharma (2024) aimed to explore how AI can impact sustainable consumption behaviour and lifestyle choices of young consumers. The findings emphasise the need to adopt the concept of AI adoption in a moderate direction and emphasise the importance of aligning AI innovations with sustainability objectives. Cao and Liu (2023) in their paper used the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory to analyse the mechanisms of sustainable consumption behaviour among customers. The findings indicate the existence of a linkage between online green consumption and offline sustainable consumption behaviour.

Building on the above argument, current research aimed to explore the moderating effect of digital awareness on the relationship between AI-Driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour. Aspects of AI-Driven Personalisation taken into consideration included personalisation accuracy, perceived usefulness, trust in AI recommendations, explainability of AI, interactivity, and alignment with personal values.

The study was based on achieving the following objectives and hypotheses (H):

Examine the influence of AI-driven personalisation on sustainable consumer behaviour among MENA consumers.

Investigate the moderating role of digital awareness in strengthening the relationship between AI-driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour.

Clarifying the relationships between these variables was achievable as per the objectives.

**H1:** AI-Driven Personalisation has an influence on sustainable consumer behaviour.

**H2:** Digital awareness moderates the relationship between AI-Driven Personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Sustainability in Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be defined as the act of people choosing, purchasing, consuming, or disposing of goods or services. Weniger *et al.* (2023) note that it includes psychological, social, and economic elements of purchase intention based on personal preferences, peer influence, and digital platforms. According to Dias *et al.* (2023) the effects of digital marketing include the shift in consumer behaviour were social media and content customisation control perceptions and preferences especially among young adults.

Sustainability of consumer behaviour can be considered as the inclination towards the environmental, social, and ethical considerations in consumption as highlighted by Zaman and Kusi-Sarpong (2024). With values of environmental responsibility and ethical consumption, consumers are increasingly seeking value-congruent brands that demonstrate social responsibility.

The trend of sustainable consumer behaviour has been on the increase in the last ten years and especially among consumers. Digital awareness and access to information through such platforms as TikTok and Instagram makes consumers eager to research the sustainability credentials, as proposed by Hael *et al.* (2024). Mobile technology allows for immediate access to reviews and environmentally friendly campaigns, enhancing sustainable decisions. This trend is described by the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which suggests that consumers use digital content to satisfy purpose-driven consumption (Štofejšová *et al.*, 2023; Mohamad *et al.*, 2025).

## AI and Personalisation

According to Nwana *et al.* (2025); the introduction of AI has transformed the marketing field and made it possible to create an unparalleled degree of personalisation that has a significant effect on consumer behaviour and establish a more sustainable environment. Developed at the end of the 20th century, AI was a development from simple algorithms into highly advanced machine learning models in the 2010s due to the growth in data processing and computing capabilities. As Vallabhaneni *et al.* (2024) stated, AI has become a part of digital marketing by the 2020s, using extensive data to analyse consumer preferences and behaviours and demographics in real time.

The personalisation provided by AI revolutionises the marketing content by offering personalised experiences that appeal to individual consumers. Compared to traditional mass advertising, AI uses predictive analytics and cookies to create targeted messages, product recommendations, and advertisements based on users' interests, as Victor-Nyebuchi (2025) confirmed. Indicatively, social media such as Instagram and Tik Tok utilise AI to make feeds that display items that align with the values of users, such as eco-friendly items, and directly impact their purchase intentions.

According to Alghaswyneh (2025), this personalisation has had a major effect on consumer behaviour, especially among the young adults in the MENA region since they are focused on sustainability. AI-based personalisation is sustainable because it reduces unnecessary marketing. Brands can reduce resource-intensive broad campaigns by focusing only on relevant audiences, consistent with eco-conscious intentions.

## Personalisation Accuracy

Raji *et al.* (2024) noted that accuracy in personalisation is the degree to which AI systems customise their recommendations, advice, or suggestions in accordance with personal preferences, behaviour and needs. With the framework of sustainable consumer behaviour, AI tools can suggest consumers more sustainable options when the accuracy of the AI tools in estimating the preferences of an eco-friendly product or behaviour is high.

## Perceived Usefulness

According to Acikgoz *et al.* (2023), perceived usefulness is the sense of value that consumers attach to recommendations or suggestions made by the AI in assisting them to accomplish their goals. Regarding sustainability, consumers are more likely to accept AI-related proposals when they perceive the physical effects, such as waste reduction, energy-saving, or environmentally conscious behaviour.

## Trust of AI Recommendations

Nizette *et al.* (2025) noted that one of the vital considerations in deciding whether consumers will accept or act on AI suggestions is trust. Unless a person has faith that AI is offering proper, objective, or moral advice, they are less willing to act on the advice, particularly when making serious choices in life such as buying environmentally friendly goods.

## Explainability of AI

Kim *et al.* (2023) noted that explainability can be described as the capacity of AI systems to provide the reasoning behind their recommendations in a clear and understandable manner. With regards to sustainability, the consumer might be reluctant to implement AI-based recommendations because they lack the understanding of why those products or practices are more acceptable to the environment.

## Interactivity

Petrescu *et al.* (2024) argued that AI systems can be interactive, allowing the user to interact with the system in a two-directional communication process so that the user can give feedback or raise queries on the recommendations that the AI system gives. This creates a feeling of control and participation, which can be important in influencing sustainable behaviours.

## Alignment with Personal Values

Shen *et al.* (2025) stated that AI systems that support the personal values of a consumer, including ethical consumption, environmental responsibility, or social good, should be more likely to induce sustainable behaviour. When AI recommendations are made based not only on the preferences of the consumer, but also on their environmental or social values, this creates a sense of alignment. As an example, an AI that suggests eco-friendly items or brands dedicated to social responsibility will appeal to users interested in sustainability when making purchase decisions.

## Digital Awareness

Tolegenov *et al.* (2024) stated that digital awareness can be defined as the awareness of consumers and their ability to operate within the digital sphere and technology, has a significant influence on consumer behaviour, especially in young adults (Wahyudi and Sudarmiati, 2024). Digital awareness enhances interaction with personalised and sustainable content in the MENA region where young adults are very tech-savvy, as

noted by (Chawla and Joshi, 2021). Highly digital consumers can clearly comprehend AI-powered recommendations, differentiating between genuine environment-friendly brands and greenwashing (Efendioğlu, 2024). Ease of communication with e-commerce integration and mobile-first marketing that highly influence the purchasing decisions are also achievable through digital awareness. Individuals who are very savvy with mobile platforms will be able to browse pricing, reviews, and promotions in real time, which creates impulsive and informed buying behaviour (Fazel, 2024).

In this research, we hypothesise that digital awareness moderates the relationship between AI-driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour by enhancing consumers' ability to engage with tailored, eco-friendly content. AI personalisation leverages data analytics to deliver customised recommendations, promoting sustainable products that resonate with consumers' values. However, digital awareness—consumers' understanding of digital tools and platforms—amplifies this effect. High digital awareness enables them to navigate AI-driven recommendations effectively, discerning authentic eco-friendly brands from greenwashing, as cautioned by Islam *et al.* (2025).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory supports this, suggesting digitally aware consumers seek personalised content aligning with their ethical priorities, strengthening sustainable purchase intentions. Conversely, low digital awareness may weaken this relationship, as consumers might overlook or misinterpret AI-tailored sustainable options. Thus, digital awareness acts as a critical moderator, enhancing the impact of AI-driven personalisation on sustainable consumer behaviour by empowering informed, value-driven choices in a digitally connected world.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

Quantitative methodology was adopted to collect primary data for analysis purposes. It was seen that quantitative methodology was best suited as it can help in collecting primary data from a larger sample size. A questionnaire was designed for the data collection process. The questionnaire appeared on a 5-point Likert scale, with statements regarding the dimensions of study (personalisation accuracy, perceived usefulness, trust of AI recommendations, explainability of AI, interactivity, alignment with personal values), in addition to the dependent variables (sustainable consumer behaviour) and the moderating variable (digital awareness). The scale adopted was based on (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neutral, 4 agree, and 5 strongly agree). The questionnaire was uploaded online through Google Forms to collect data from participants. An electronic consent form from participants was retrieved through a consent checkbox.

Population of study consisted of consumers within MENA region. A convenient sample of (600) individuals was chosen to respond to the online questionnaire through sending the link to social media platforms. After this process, we were able to retrieve (436) properly filled questionnaires which indicated a response rate of (72.6%) considered statistically acceptable. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to deal with the collected primary data. Frequencies and percentages were adopted to analyse demographics. The questionnaire’s reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha, and the alpha coefficients of all variables exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70.

Ethical approval was obtained. Informed consent was collected electronically via Google Forms. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with no personal identifiers recorded. Data were used solely for research purposes, in full compliance with confidentiality requirements and the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Demographic Results

It was noticed that the majority of respondents were males forming 67.4% of the total sample who held a bachelor’s degree forming 51.4% with an income of more than \$ 2000, forming 43.85% of the total sample.

### Questionnaire Analysis

Regarding the questionnaire, mean ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) were used to analyse the questionnaire variables, as shown in Table 1. It was noticed that all statements scored a mean that was higher than the scale mean of 3.00, indicating that all statements were positively received by respondents.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Analysis**

Statement	$\mu$	$\sigma$
Personalisation Accuracy	3.896	.846
Perceived Usefulness	4.087	.833
Trust of AI Recommendations	4.093	.811
Explainability of AI	4.108	.781
Interactivity	4.017	.779
Alignment with Personal Values	4.048	1.052
Sustainable Consumer Behaviour	4.031	.783
Digital Awareness	4.088	.938

Source: Measured by authors using SPSS

## Hypotheses Testing

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of AI-driven personalisation on sustainable consumer behaviour among consumers in the MENA region. This objective was achieved through multiple regression analysis (Table 2), which revealed a strong positive relationship ( $R = 0.835$ ,  $R^2 = 0.697$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results indicate that all six dimensions of AI-driven personalisation significantly influenced sustainable consumer behaviour, namely interactivity ( $\beta = 0.337$ ), explainability ( $\beta = 0.201$ ), trust ( $\beta = 0.192$ ), accuracy ( $\beta = 0.155$ ), usefulness ( $\beta = 0.090$ ), and value alignment ( $\beta = 0.070$ ). The statistical abbreviations used in this paper are defined as follows:

- $DR / \Delta R^2$ : Change in the Coefficient of Determination
- $B$  = Unstandardised Effect
- $\beta$  (Beta) = Standardised effect (used to compare predictors)
- $t$ : t-value (t-statistic)
- Sig.: Significance Level (p-value)
- $F$ : F-statistic
- $R$ : Multiple Correlation Coefficient

**Table 2: H1 Testing**

H1: AI-Driven Personalisation has an influence on sustainable consumer behaviour									
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		t	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup> (Coefficient of Determination)	F
	B (Unstandardised Regression Coefficient)	Standard Error of the Coefficient	Beta (β)						
1 (Constant)	-.034	.132			-2.56	.798	.835	.697	164.339
Personalisation Accuracy	.144	.037	.155		3.856	.000			
Perceived Usefulness	.085	.041	.090		2.083	.038			
Trust of AI Recommendations	.185	.050	.192		3.695	.000			
Explainability of AI	.202	.042	.201		4.757	.000			
Interactivity	.339	.033	.337		10.357	.000			
Alignment with Personal Values	.052	.025	.070		2.112	.035			

Source: Measured by authors using SPSS

The second objective of study was to investigate the moderating role of digital awareness in strengthening the relationship between AI-driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour. The objective was achieved as a significant moderator; digital awareness was established by hierarchical regression (Table 3). The inclusion of digital awareness (Step 2) added to the explanatory power by  $\Delta R^2 = 0.6\%$  ( $p = 0.004$ ), and the addition of the interaction term (Step 3) added to the explanatory power by  $\Delta R^2 = 0.4\%$  ( $p = 0.026$ ), demonstrating that the positive impact of AI-based personalisation on sustainable consumer behaviour is significantly enhanced by a higher level of digital awareness.

**Table 3: H2 Testing**

H2: Digital awareness moderates the relationship between AI-Driven Personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.812 <sup>a</sup>	.659	.658	.659	838.659	1	434	.000
2	.816 <sup>b</sup>	.665	.664	.006	8.214	1	433	.004
3	.818 <sup>c</sup>	.669	.667	.004	5.024	1	432	.026

Source: Measured by authors using SPSS

## DISCUSSION

The current research aimed to explore the moderating effect of digital awareness on the relationship between AI-Driven personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour. Primary data collected through a questionnaire were analysed using SPSS. The results of the analysis supported the two main hypotheses confirming that AI-driven personalisation has an influence on sustainable consumer behaviour and digital awareness moderates the relationship between AI-Driven Personalisation and sustainable consumer behaviour. Among the chosen variables of AI-driven personalisation, it was noted that interactivity scored the highest influence. Interactivity appeared as the strongest variable leading to sustainable consumer behaviour within the framework of AI-driven personalisation. It implies that consumers who can afford to engage with, respond to, or exert control over AI systems (e.g., through feedback, questions, preference customisation), are more likely to make sustainable decisions. Digital awareness creates active interaction with AI, which allows consumers to narrow down and tailor recommendations that resonate with their values. This is

consistent with Lata and Rana (2025), who argued that low digital awareness can limit the ability of the consumers to utilise AI systems optimally and reduce their impact on sustainable behaviours.

The second ranked factor was explainability of AI. Digital awareness helps consumers interact more effectively with AI-based recommendations by providing the rationale behind such recommendations. This elevates their trust in making a sustainable decision and causes an increase in behavioural conformity towards sustainability objectives. Sharma and Sharma (2024) supported this view, noting that for less digitally savvy customers, the absence of clear explanations in AI-powered sustainable recommendations, thereby limiting their behavioural impact.

The third ranked factor was scored AI Recommendations. Consumer behaviour is greatly driven by trust. Trust in the recommendations of AI is increased by the presence of digital awareness, especially about sustainable decisions, and results in more informed and confident decisions. Cao and Liu (2023) supported this view and added that trusting consumers will be more willing to interact with a sustainability-oriented product, whereas customers with low levels of digital awareness will be reluctant, and their sustainable consumer behaviours will be restricted.

With  $B = 0.155$ , personalisation accuracy came in the fourth rank. The success of AI personalisation is enhanced by the level of digital awareness since the more digitally aware consumers are, the better positioned they are to understand the accuracy of the personalisation and make more informed sustainable decisions. Nwanna *et al.* (2025) and Vallabhaneni *et al.* (2024) also added that when AI recommendations are perceived as correct and applicable, consumers tend to participate more in environmentally conscious suggestions resulting in increased sustainable consumer behaviour.

As for perceived usefulness, it scored as B value of 0.090. Consumers tend to consider AI-driven sustainable recommendations as helpful in achieving their environmental objectives when they have a high level of digital awareness, leading to a higher level of adoption of sustainable products and behaviours. Alghaswyneh (2025) and Ding *et al.* (2025) noted that the perception of the usefulness of these recommendations may decrease due to low levels of digital awareness and, consequently, reduces the rates of engagement and the frequency of sustainable behaviours.

The final rank in influence was held by alignment with personal values. The higher the digital awareness, the more consumers can think of AI-driven recommendations aligned with their personal values, enabling them to make more sustainable buying choices and behaviours. Victor-Nyebuchi (2025) argued that consumers may not

develop digital awareness, thus being unaware that AI is personally suggesting products that are environmentally friendly, creating a consumer behaviour that is less sustainable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The interactivity proved to have the most significant impact, so organisations are recommended to create AI systems, which enable two-way interaction.

Explainability and trust are ranked second and third, respectively, thus businesses need to ensure that AI systems can provide transparent and comprehensible explanations of why they are suggesting sustainable products.

Since digital awareness was established as a major moderator, organisations, policymakers, and sustainability activists ought to initiate specific digital literacy programmes.

## CONCLUSIONS

Current study confirms that a combination of these factors (personalisation accuracy, perceived usefulness, trust of AI recommendations, explainability of AI, interactivity and alignment with personal values) forms a potent structure through which AI can transform consumer behaviour sustainably.

Accuracy in personalisation ensures that the recommendations are applicable, perceived usefulness demonstrates the value of the eco-friendly decisions, trust ensures that customers feel confident about the recommendations, explainability enhances understanding, interactivity encourages greater involvement, and alignment with personal values ensures that the recommendations resonate with personal values. The combination of these aspects can bring AI to a point of seriously influencing more sustainable and ethical consumer behaviours.

Digital awareness is a key moderating condition that determines consumer interaction with AI-based personalisation for sustainable behaviour. It makes consumers more capable of comprehending, believing, and engaging with customised recommendations so that AI may be able to market sustainable decisions. Consumers with higher digital literacy are more likely to engage with AI-based sustainability content, resulting in stronger sustainable behaviours. On the other hand, low digital awareness impairs this process, reducing engagement and sustainable actions.

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