What Impacts Socially Responsible Consumption?

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Abstract: This study examines factors related to socially responsible consumption based on a sample of 636 Spanish consumers. The results indicate that socio-demographic factors such as sex, age, education level, and economic activity affect responsible consumption. In addition, it was found that in order to assess the antecedents of socially responsible consumption it is necessary to specify the type of consumer behavior (for example, purchasing specific products or initiatives against the purchase of certain products). It is found that perceived efficacy, affective commitment, and materialism explain different levels of variance in socially responsible consumption. Purchasing cause-related products is most influenced by affective commitment and perceived efficacy. Materialism affects purchasing motivated by firm behavior and the volume of consumption. The study finds that the referents to the responsibility that consumers adopt can be explained independently. In conclusion, with the aim of supporting a more sustainable society, the need for studies on anti-consumption behaviors as an instrument for sustainability is stressed.

Keywords: affective commitment; perceived efficacy; materialism; socially responsible consumer

1. Introduction

Widespread access to consumption in western countries has led consumers to incorporate culture and leisure in their consumption decisions. In this context, healthy lifestyles have become a priority for consumers; at the same time, social and environmental responsibility has also acquired greater importance [1]. In regard to these issues, consumers have adopted a critical, more reflexive perspective informed by values of “sustainability”. Research in this area has increased and not only in western countries [2–9]. A critical perspective on consumption includes issues such as responsible purchasing, concerns over the production of waste, reducing consumption, non-consumption, and other alternatives to consumption that have emerged with the aim of protecting the environment or with other social ends. Of all of these, responsible purchasing, in particular, has generated a large number of academic studies. The literature describes the purchase of sustainable foodstuffs [10–12], the purchasing of automobiles with lower environmental impact [13,14], the sustainable consumption of water [15,16], the responsible purchasing of clothing [17], and the conscious retail model in the fashion industry [18].

There have been multiple theoretical approaches addressing the issue of responsible consumer behavior. Terms such as ethical consumption [19] have been used in analyzing issues related to the morality of consumption and the negative impact of certain practices on consumers, as well as for examining working conditions, the production of goods, and boycotts. Some authors, using the term conscious consumption, have focused on a mentality that addresses consumption from a sense of self-care, care for the community and care for nature [20]. Another associated term is mindful consumption, which is the application of attention to the choices that consumers make [21,22].

Consumption has also been considered from the perspectives of sustainable development and green consumption [23,24]. Balderjahn et al. integrated both perspectives, developing a...
measure for conscious sustainable consumption based on an evaluation of beliefs regarding the importance of different dimensions of sustainability (social, environmental, and economic).

For this article, we begin with the concept of socially responsible consumption (SRC), which considers consumption as an instrument that can have greater or lesser environmental and social impact. Responsible consumption emerged from research on green consumers and evolved out of the environmental movements of the 1960s [25]. It was originally focused on environmental concerns, but was subsequently broadened to include ethical and moral questions. The consolidation of the concept can be found in the studies of Webster [26] and Brooker [27], but it is not until the beginning of this century when we find the inclusion of concerns for social transformations [28]. According to Fernández [29], socially responsible consumption stresses the role of individual attitudes and values in the making of purchasing decisions and involves factors such as corporate social responsibility. Its original definition, based on the contribution of Francois-Lecompte and Valette-Florence [30], referred to a consumer who acquires products or services that make a positive (or less negative) impact on the environment and other persons, purchasing behavior being considered as an exercise of power in expressing consumers’ environmental and social concerns. In terms of evaluating SRC, Dueñas et al. [25] published a review of measurement instruments, including a scale from Francois-Lecompte and Roberts [31]. This scale/questionnaire has been robust and consistent in its different cultural adaptations [32–36]. As the ability to purchase socially responsible products has increased and consumers have more opportunities to express their preferences, it was considered useful, in this study, to use a scale based on purchase criteria [19]. In concrete, four of the scale’s factors focus on purchasing behavior or purchase avoidance based on: (1) the importance the consumer gives to corporate social responsibility (regarding employees, not harming the environment, etc.), (2) the contribution to social causes (country development, fair trade), (3) support for local/regional trade and preference for specific products whose origin is national, and (4) purchasing from nearby and/or small retailers (neighborhood shops). A fifth factor in the scale measures consumers’ intentions to reduce the volume of their consumption.

Regarding what fosters responsible consumption, we conclude that predictors of SRC are socio-demographic factors [36], personal values [37,38], emotional states (such as guilt [39]), the perception of self-efficacy [40], and certain factors related to the rational action model [6], such as subjective norms, knowledge, etc. In addition, and as Park [41] has argued, there is no single type of ethical consumer, but many types, so that we find background studies examining pro-social status in the prediction of ecological consumption [42] and values of authenticity versus taste in the purchasing of fair trade coffee [12]. There are also studies that have looked at other specific products, but we do not know if their conclusions can be generalized to other products and other behaviors (such as reducing consumption).

The study presented here aims to contribute knowledge regarding the influence of individual characteristics—specifically, perceived efficacy, affective commitment, and materialism—in predicting purchases based on the dimensions of SRC proposed by Francois-Lecompte and Roberts [31], as well as their effects on reducing consumption. Along these lines, Mohr and Schlich [37], in a study on sustainable food consumption, found that the place of origin of food products had greater weight than concerns related to the protection of the environment.

Perceived self-efficacy refers to the perception individuals have that they can achieve the results they desire through their own actions. This approach is similar to the concept of outcome expectancies; individuals believe that their behavior has an influence on achieving favorable results. Such a belief leads individuals to avoid behaviors that can have adverse consequences [43]. This perception has been shown to be a good predictor of general behavior [44–46] and is the approach most widely adopted in the literature addressing sustainability issues [47]. Along these lines, several studies have shown that perceived self-efficacy is related to pro-environmental behaviors [48] and socially respon-
sible consumption [8,49–54]. These studies conclude that responsible consumers believe that their purchasing behavior is effective and has a social and environmental impact. Therefore, consumers who believe in their ability to contribute to sustainable development are more likely to buy sustainable products and have favorable attitudes towards consumption that respects sustainability [54,55]. While Hanss, Doran, and Homburg [47] claim that there is actually little evidence on the capacity of this type of self-efficacy to explain sustainable consumption in relation to other factors, we present the following as our initial hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Perceived efficacy (PE) has a direct and significant effect on SRC, so that a higher perception of efficacy implies higher levels of SRC.

Regarding affective commitment (AC), the study by Maxwell-Smith, Conway, Wright, and Olson [56] indicates that when individuals hold conscious consumer ideologies they express a greater level of commitment to their beliefs. Witkowski and Reddy [57] find that social commitment is a predictor of ethical consumption. Affective commitment in terms of SRC refers to the acknowledgment or awareness of the severity of problems such as contamination, the disappearance of local shops, the effects of globalization, etc. These types of concerns have been shown to positively impact responsible consumer behavior [58].

Some studies examine the role of individual biography and life experiences in the development of responsible consumer attitudes and actions [59]. Affective commitment also has an emotional component. Thus, we define AC as a variable that reflects feelings of indignation or unease generated in consumers by environmental issues, globalization, and/or the effects of consumption on society. Hahnel and Brosch [60] stress the need for more thorough research on the impact of emotions on the environmental sphere, finding studies on the mediating effects of moral emotions (such as guilt or pride) on intentions, messages, and behaviors related to the environment [61]. Along the same line, some studies have analyzed the emotional profile of the responsible consumer [62], finding emotions more centered on others and connected to life objectives (for example, empathy, gratitude, and hope), while others have looked at the role emotions play in confronting obstacles to maintaining the commitment to responsible consumption [63]. In terms of AC’s direct influence on SRC, the findings from Palacios [64] indicate that it is a key variable, although explaining only moderate levels of the variance found. All this leads us to our second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Affective commitment (AC) has a positive and significant relationship with SRC; greater affective commitment is associated with higher levels of SRC.

Regarding the materialism variable, it has often been used as a negative predictor of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors [65] and of styles of reducing consumption, such as frugality [66]. However, this latter study indicates that materialist values can be favorably associated with caring for the environment, as materialist consumers look for new and different uses for products, which can have a positive impact on behaviors related to sustainable consumption. Materialism is defined as the degree of importance given to the acquisition of material goods to achieve life goals and has been considered a central value in western societies [67]. In terms of consumption, high levels of materialism are associated with higher consumption [68,69]. This result is consistent with the findings in the study by Peppers, Jackson, and Uzzel [70], where conscious shopping is connected to personal anti-consumer motives. In this article, we assume that materialist values reduce SRC, a sustainable system that does not necessarily involve material or personal benefit. We conclude that this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Materialism (MAT) has a significantly negative effect on SRC.
The relation between socio-demographic characteristics and socially responsible consumption was examined in early studies in this area [71–73]. Similar to the proposal by Pedrini and Ferri [74], sex, age, education level, and income have been selected for their effects. Regarding gender, many studies find gender-related differences in opinions and actions related to ethical consumption with higher scores for women [57,75]. These differences have been explained by higher levels of environmentally conscious attitudes and behaviors among women [76,77]. Although some studies find that women with higher levels of education and of middle-age are more responsible consumers [37,39], the effect of gender has not been reproduced in other studies [74,78,79]. Regarding age, it has been positively related to ethical consumption [80]. Lastly, findings regarding the effect of education level and income are mixed [74]. In this study we suggest the hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Sex, age, income level, and education level contribute to significant differences in SRC.*

Lastly, we establish as a general objective measuring overall levels of SRC and the effect that perceived efficacy (PE), affective commitment (AC), and materialism (MAT) produce on consumption based on the following dimensions: products related to a cause, firm behavior, small businesses, origin and volume of consumption. In addition, we want to know if these same factors affect the volume of purchasing, producing a reduction in consumption closer to an austere or frugal style.

### 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1. Sample

The sample was formed by 636 participants with a proportion of 55.7% women and 44.3% men. The average age was 38.59 (SD = 13.91) of which 42.3% were below 33 years of age, 55% were between 33 and 65 years of age, and 1.7% were over 65 years of age. Regarding employment, 57.3% were employed, 26.8% were studying at the time of the fieldwork and 15.9% were not working or in education. In terms of education level, 10.8% had not completed primary school, 10.7% had, 23.1% had finished secondary school, 29.1% had some university studies, and the remaining 26.3% had university degrees. Lastly, 26.3% were the only breadwinners in the household, 43.1% were breadwinners along with other persons in the household, and 30.6% were economically dependent on other persons in the household.

#### 2.2. Procedure

This is a cross-sectional, correlational, and descriptive study using questionnaires validated in other studies by different authors. We used a data collection platform for disseminating the survey and managing the data. Participation was voluntary and confidential and for the academic purposes of the work.

#### 2.3. Instruments

Table 1 shows information about the four scales used, with their respective subscales (factors), Cronbach’s alpha, the number of items, and an example item from each scale.
Table 1. Characteristics of the scales used.

| Variable                                           | Cronbach’s Alpha | Number of Items | Example Item                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (SRC) Firm behavior                                | 0.89             | 5               | I try not to buy products from companies that strongly harm the environment |
| (SRC) Cause-related products                       | 0.90             | 4               | I buy some products of which a part of the price is donated to a humanitarian cause |
| (SRC) Support of small businesses and/or small shops| 0.81             | 4               | I buy in small businesses (bakeries, butchers, book shops) as often as possible (small shopkeepers) |
| (SRC) Geographic origin                            | 0.81             | 4               | When I have the choice between a European product and a non-European product, I choose the European product |
| (SRC) Volume of consumption                         | 0.77             | 3               | I try to reduce my consumption to what I really need |
| (Affective commitment) Injustice                   | 0.81             | 7               | I suffer every time an environmental disaster happens in the world, even though it doesn’t affect me directly |
| (Affective commitment) Globalization               | 0.88             | 3               | I am outraged by the policies of multinationals in developing countries |
| Perceived efficacy                                 | 0.76             | 4               | My individual actions can be important in promoting sustainable and just development |
| Materialism                                         | 0.83             | 9               | I like to own things that impress other people |

Socially responsible consumption (SRC). To measure socially responsible consumption we used a Spanish language adaptation [34] of the scale developed by François-Lecompte and Roberts [31]. This scale is composed of 20 items distributed in five subscales: Firm behavior, cause-related products, support of small businesses and/or small shops, geographic origin, and volume of consumption. We used a Likert-type response scale from 0 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement). The Cronbach’s alpha for the overall scale was 0.82.

Affective commitment. Affective commitment is measured based on the approach of Palacios [64] with adaptations from other previous scales. Our instrument gathers twelve items with an answer scale from 1 (complete disagreement) to 7 (complete agreement) and is divided into two subscales: injustice and globalization. High scores on these subscales express the affective commitment of the participants with respect to social problems and the environment (humanitarian catastrophes, contamination, marginalized groups, etc.) and/or with respect to globalization (disappearance of local businesses, working conditions in large retailers, etc.).

Perceived efficacy. For measuring perceived efficacy, we included the items proposed by Palacios [64] adapted from other instruments [73,81]. This variable is composed of four items measured on a Likert-type scale from 1 (complete disagreement) to 7 (complete agreement). High scores mean that participants consider individual behavior to exercise influence on social and environmental problems.

Materialism. Materialism was evaluated through an abbreviated version of Richins [82] and adapted to Spanish by Suárez et al. [83]. The instrument includes nine items with responses ranging from 0 (complete disagreement) to 10 (complete agreement). High scores reflect the value given to material goods and the acquisition of possessions of this type.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the IBM SPSS 25 statistical program. First, we calculated the descriptive statistics for all the research variables, the correlations between them, their internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha), and multiple linear regression models.
using the stepwise method. The aim of the latter was to verify the predictive value of affective commitment, self-perceived efficacy, and materialism on purchasing: (1) cause-related products, (2) from responsible firms, (3) in small shops and, (4) with concern for the national origin of products, as well as on, (5) reducing the volume of consumption.

3. Results

We show the averages, standard deviation, kurtosis, correlations, and degree of internal consistency in Table 1. The levels of SRC, affective commitment and perceived efficacy have high values, however, the scores on materialism are below the average for the response scale.

Regarding the effect of socio-demographic variables, we obtain the following results (Table 2). We see higher levels of SRC among women \(p < 0.05\) when cause-related purchasing is considered, in the other dimensions (origin of products, firm behavior, and volume of consumption) no significant differences by sex are found.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations between scales.

|                | SRC | AC  | Materialism | PE  |
|----------------|-----|-----|-------------|-----|
| Average        | 6.28| 5.82| 4.08        | 5.70|
| Standard deviation | 1.83| 0.98| 1.81        | 1.05|
| Asymmetry      | −0.51| −1.11| 0.47        | −0.87|
| Kurtosis       | −0.071| 1.28| −0.09       | 1.08|

Correlations between scales

|                    | SRC (0–10) | AC (1–7) | Materialism (0–10) | PE (1–7) |
|--------------------|------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| SRC (0–10)         |            | 0.51 **   | −0.14 **            | 0.322 ** |
| AC (1–7)           |            | −0.18 **  | 0.51 **             | −0.07    |
| Materialism (0–10) |            |          |                     |          |
| PE (1–7)           |            |          |                     |          |

** \(p < 0.01\).

Regarding age, we find higher levels of SRC in the middle-age group (between 33 and 65 years of age) than among young adults (below 33 years of age) with a significance level of \(p < 0.01\) for all the dimensions on the SRC scale.

Regarding education levels, we find differences between persons with secondary educations and primary educations, the former having higher levels of SRC. Specifically, the differences appear in the overall level \(p < 0.01\) and in regard to firm behavior \(p < 0.01\), cause-related purchasing \(p < 0.05\), and buying from small businesses \(p < 0.01\), with education level revealing no effect in regard to the geographic origin of the product or volume of consumption. We also find differences between persons with secondary educations and persons who studied at university, with SRC higher among those with secondary educations for all the variables \(p < 0.01\). We tested whether this result could be produced by primary activity (working vs. studying) and we found significant differences on all the variables (with the exception of volume of consumption), with SRC higher among those working than among students \(p < 0.01\).

In terms of the correlation analysis for the psychosocial variables (Table 1), we see that SRC correlates significantly \(p < 0.01\) with affective commitment (0.51), with higher scores on social responsibility related to greater affective commitment. In contrast, we see that low materialist values correlate with higher scores on SCR (−0.14), this being an inverse and significant relationship \(p < 0.01\). Lastly, we see that a high level of perceived efficacy is related to higher levels of SRC \(p < 0.01\).

We examined the predictive role of affective commitment, materialism, and perceived efficacy on levels of SRC through multiple linear regression tests using the stepwise method. This analysis yields five models; in the last one, cause-related products, firm behavior, origin, small firms, and volume of consumption significantly predict the dependent variable (Table 3). The total variance explained was 26%, \(F(212.17), p \leq 0.01\). We find that affective commitment explains the most variance for SRC.
Table 3. Linear regression models for socially responsible consumption (SRC) factors.

| DV: SRC Factors      | Predictive Variables | Beta | t    | F   | R²  |
|----------------------|----------------------|------|------|-----|-----|
| Cause-related products | Affective commitment | 0.45 | 11.00 | 100.43 *** | 0.246 |
|                      | Perceived effectiveness | 0.08 | 2.09  |     |     |
| Firm behavior        | Affective commitment | 0.37 | 9.82  | 55.91 *** | 0.152 |
|                      | Materialism          | -0.07 | -2.08 |     |     |
| Origin               | Affective commitment | 0.32 | 8.34  | 69.59 *** | 0.101 |
| Small firms          | Affective commitment | 0.39 | 10.7  | 116.13 *** | 0.158 |
|                      | Materialism          | -0.10 | -2.72 |     |     |

The F statistic tests the null hypothesis and the values of the critical level indicate that a significant linear relationship exists (**p < 0.001).

In what follows we examine the explanatory value of the variance based on the factors in the SRC scale: firm behavior, cause-related products, support for small businesses, geographic origin, and volume of consumption. As can be seen in Table 4, the regression models vary in their predictors and in the proportion of variance explained by each factor. These results indicate that the dimensions of the construct of SRC must be considered in analyzing its antecedents.

Table 4. Averages and comparison among socio-demographic variables.

|                          | SRC   | Firm Behavior | Cause-Related Purchasing | Small Businesses | Origin | Volume of Consumption |
|--------------------------|-------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------|-----------------------|
| Sex                      |       |               |                          |                  |        |                       |
| Woman                    | 6.36  | 7.0           | 7.05 *                   | 5.08             | 5.96   | 6.61                  |
| Man                      | 6.18  | 6.84          | 6.60                     | 5.02             | 5.89   | 6.32                  |
| Age                      |       |               |                          |                  |        |                       |
| Under 33 years of age    | 5.61  | 6.29          | 6.35                     | 4.35             | 4.93   | 6.0                   |
| Between 33 and 65 years of age | 6.68 ** | 7.24 **      | 7.31 **                  | 5.44 **          | 6.52 ** | 6.71 **               |
| Education level          |       |               |                          |                  |        |                       |
| Primary                  | 5.86  | 6.23          | 6.26                     | 4.89             | 5.85   | 6.31                  |
| Secondary                | 6.86 ** | 7.49 **      | 7.47 **                  | 5.90 **          | 6.48   | 6.77                  |
| University studies       | 6.0 ** | 6.6 **        | 6.8 **                   | 4.65 **          | 5.45 ** | 6.3 **                |
| Main activity            |       |               |                          |                  |        |                       |
| Working                  | 6.45 * | 7.06 *        | 6.95 *                   | 5.28 *           | 6.17 *  | 6.55                  |
| Studying                 | 5.64  | 6.44          | 6.30                     | 4.34             | 4.9    | 6.23                  |

* t-Student: differences are found by sex. The differences are significant to a level of 0.05; ** Tukey. Differences are found by age and education level. The differences are significant to a level below 0.01 to 0.05.

4. Conclusions and Discussion

This study contributes to our knowledge of socially responsible consumption. It establishes that both affective commitment and perceived efficacy have positive and significant relationships with socially responsible consumption. These results confirm hypotheses 1 and 2. Our findings reinforce the role of perceived efficacy and are consistent with the results of numerous studies [8,49–54]. In the case of affective commitment, other studies have shown that both positive and negative emotions related to commitment contribute to the civic behavior of consumers, suggesting that investing in corporate responsibility policies yields benefits [84]. Along these lines, Daou [85] finds that affective commitment (derived from image and reputation) is more important in a consumer’s choice of a financial institution than knowledge or responsible financial behavior. It can be concluded that it is necessary to develop these types of beliefs and emotions to connect responsible consumers with businesses and organizations.
Regarding our third hypothesis, the results indicate that materialism has an inverse and significant relationship with responsible consumer behavior, as the participants with values associated with the acquisition or possession of material goods obtained lower scores on measures of SRC. This is consistent with other studies [83] and represents an advance in the research with implications that are detailed below.

Regarding the antecedents of socially responsible consumption, in the linear regression fit for the consumption of cause-related products, perceived efficacy, and affective commitment explain 24.6% of the variance. We conclude that the greater the concern and feelings of indignation and/or frustration that consumers have regarding problems of inequality in developing countries or for humanitarian causes, the greater the likelihood that they will purchase products that contribute to mitigating these types of circumstances. More specifically, we find that affective commitment has more explanatory weight than perceived efficacy and this is the case for all the regression models. This is consistent with the model proposed by Palacios [64] for socially responsible consumption, in which perceived efficacy could function as a mediating factor. Regarding the rest of the factors, the indices of fit are low, as the proposed variables explain only a small proportion of these types of behaviors. In addition, these results confirm that each dimension of SRC has a different relationship to the predictive variables. This is consistent with research that differentiates between price-sensitive consumers, price-sensitive and origin-sensitive consumers, or only origin-sensitive consumers, e.g., in food choices [83]. Regarding the role of materialism, the data suggest a small impact on consumption in regard to firm behavior and reducing the volume of consumption. Future studies should examine whether materialist values have an effect on frugal and anti-consumer behaviors. The idea would be to see what other purchasing criteria can be analyzed and what other determinants should be taken into consideration to further our understanding of responsible consumer behavior. Along these lines, it is worth considering the four forms of responsible consumption proposed by Carrero et al. [86], differentiating between alternative or mainstream purchasing (which takes sustainability, social and ethical criteria into account) and non-purchasing, such as activism against certain practices and voluntary simplicity.

Regarding the fourth hypothesis on the influence of socio-demographic variables, we will focus on the Spanish case. As revealed by official documents [1], one impact of the 2008 economic crisis was an increased search for alternative channels for consumption, such as preferring use over ownership or the multiplication of uses by means of exchange, loan, and barter. Although these practices reduce the environmental impact of consumption, they may not necessarily be the result of ethical concerns or consumer responsibility, but instead may be a means to reduce household expenditure in the context of declining income. In this sense, we think that our results confirm that if we examine criteria of proximity, cause-related products, origin, and firm behavior, we focus on reflexive consumption. Along these lines, the initial conclusion from our data is that income level has no effect; this finding is similar to that found in the study by Dickson [87]. On the controversy regarding the influence of gender, we find that women are more likely than men to purchase cause-related products. This result could be interpreted as resulting from certain pro-social behaviors linked to providing indirect aid. In this field, many studies find that pro-social behavior is more frequent among women [88–90]. The market reflects this and it is common for product campaigns to be aimed at women, for example, campaigns asking for monetary contributions to fight cancer, to support development in poor countries, and to help at-risk social groups.

In terms of education, individuals with lower education levels (primary studies) have lower levels of responsible consumption in comparison to those with secondary level educations. In concrete, we see that when we compare individuals with primary school and secondary school educations, the consumption of the latter is more affected by the perception of firm behavior and they are more likely to buy in local shops and more likely to purchase cause-related products. Although a higher education level is associated with a higher social or environmental consciousness, our results suggest that this is not always the
case, as the data suggests that participants with university studies have lower levels of SRC in all the dimensions when compared with those with secondary educations. This finding is consistent with other studies [91]. If we consider the Spanish population and their lifestyles, we could interpret this result as a consequence of individuals’ employment situation, assuming greater involvement of the economically active population in comparison with those who are still in education. We could imagine that those who are earning money spend it more consciously, or that those who do not work are dependent on others and have more limited incomes. We should not forget that one of the obstacles to socially responsible consumption, as indicated in various reports [90], is price, above all in terms of buying locally and purchasing artisanal and organic products.

One contribution of this study is the identification of affective commitment as an important variable in the study of responsible consumption. In terms of further research, we think it is necessary to examine if it is a predictor of other forms of responsible consumption (for example, voluntary simplicity, boycotts, and the use of ethical banks). At the applied level, this finding leads us to recommend corporate responsibility practices that incentivize affective commitment.

An additional contribution is in regard to the influence of materialist culture, as we find that materialist values reduce responsible consumption. Materialist values have been related to work, possessions, and spending on oneself and on others [92,93] and can affect well-being [94]. Therefore, the need to foster a social culture with values that reduce hyper-consumption is clear. This implies raising awareness among the population and through education at different levels. Arana and de Castro [95] examined the role of consumer education for children as one means to avoid the harm of our current consumer-based lifestyles in the future. In this sense, and taking into account the effect of education, working with children and adolescents becomes essential, as they are in the process of developing their beliefs and attitudes related to consumption [50,54].

However, the most important contribution of this study is that SRC must be evaluated in all its dimensions. A responsible consumer may be one in all the dimensions of this profile, or we may find a greater weight given to a specific dimension. Thus, we conclude that researchers should be cautious when selecting a measurement instrument (and its dimensions), as well as in generalizing results. A consumer, for example, takes local shops as a reference, and this choice can be influenced in different ways by socio-demographic factors. This may also be the case when the behavior being studied is, for example, the purchase of sustainable foodstuffs or clothing, which are very specific spheres of responsible consumption and may be motivated by very different factors (such as health in the first case, and manufacturing processes in the second). In this sense, despite the increase in research, there is still no single consistent understanding of sustainable consumption [96], and this lack of a common approach leads to a series of problems [20]. Some authors have argued that the existence of consumer ethics studies in multiple disciplines (anthropology, marketing, history, psychology, politics, education, geography, philosophy, etc.) has resulted in blocking off knowledge; the lack of an existing interdisciplinarity field ultimately leading to less progress. They point to the lack of a common language and, in concrete, a lack of conceptual consistency as obstacles to communication among researchers [23,97].

While a consensus exists over the importance given to the determinants of responsible consumption (whether those related to attitudes, beliefs, values, and perceptions, or those which are considered systemic factors, such as age, sex, social class, and income), at the theoretical level it remains a challenge to compare results from different studies. This is due to the nature of consumer behavior being so diverse, as well as to the importance conceded to a given type of explanation, whether based on morality, the protection of the environment, personal development, etc. The boundaries of responsible consumption are imprecise and it is essential to adopt a definition and approach in research that can accurately identify the specific behavior being assessed (purchasing, disposal, recycling, intention to buy, etc.), what prior considerations related to consumption are being made and what obstacles responsible consumers may find [98].
Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Multiple paths for future research are indicated. One is the need to examine consumers’ perceptions of self-efficacy in order to understand what mechanisms impact this perception and to be able to use them to aid them in adopting roles as active agents. In this sense, some studies have looked at the emotional factors that could be of use [99]. Another is to include negative constructs as antecedents to SRC or to use cluster analysis to segment different groups and build alternative research models.

Another aspect to consider is the generalization of results from other countries and cultures with different social, legal, economic, political, and technological environments. It would be useful to examine what aspects, such as support for local commerce, firm behavior, and cause-related products, have a similar impact in other places.

Among the limitations of this study, we have not examined the effects of social desirability, which, according to Wouters et al. [100], is implicit in the very nature of SRC and is also one of the motives for this type of consumption. Green, Tinson, and Pelozza [101] examine the use of sustainable gifts as a means to improve self-presentation toward others. Another aspect to examine is that consumption practices are often household and not individual decisions, which reveals that sustainable consumption is produced on multiple decision-making levels and within a broader context that may be both limiting and facilitating.

With the aim of working for a more sustainable society, the need for studies of anti-consuming behavior as an instrument of sustainability is needed. Based on our results we find that reducing consumption (the fifth factor, volume of consumption) is not related to the criteria we have examined (firm behavior, cause-related products, small businesses, and origin), so that it seems important to address this conduct as something specific (separate from the aforementioned indicators). In future anti-consumption studies, in addition to studying how to reduce hyper-consumption, behaviors such as the more efficient use of products, for example, through recycling and waste reduction, can be studied, and whether they are linked to factors such as attention to the origin or local proximity of products.

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