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Afro-Culture Sustainable Consumption Framework: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Literature on the influence of the African culture (Afro-culture) on sustainable consumption behaviour was reviewed to establish the underlying Afro-culture framework. The study objective was to use PRISMA as the guideline for a systematic literature review. The selection criteria included original empirical studies from 2019 to 2024 yielding 37 articles. Analyses of the selected articles revealed that Afro-culture and its dimensions, namely, collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concerns, play a leading role in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour. Effective sustainable consumption promotional strategies in Africa should incorporate Afro-culture collectiveness, concern for family, friends, peers and environmental concern, reflected in local customs and taboos. However, the two main weaknesses of existential studies are that they are based on individualistic Western models, often condemned for disregarding the holism in Afro-culture and predominantly focussing on South African consumers. Therefore, there is a gap between studies investigating sustainable consumption based on holistic Afro-culture models and those in other African countries. The value of this study is that it proposes how Afro-culture and its dimensions, collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concern, should be integrated to establish Afro-sustainable consumption.

Keywords Sustainable consumption, African culture (Afro-culture), collectivism, in-groups, environmental concern

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Introduction

The global economic and social growth experienced during the last century pales compared to the environmental degradation linked to human activities, which threatens current and future generations (United Nations, 2023). Considering the high level of environmental degradation, the earth's natural resources may not be able to sustain the increasing population by 2050 (UN Environment Programme, 2023). In response to this threat, researchers (Alo & Arslan, 2023; Ur-Rahman et al., 2023) have noted that policymakers, businesses, academics, and consumers are developing strategies to minimise environmental degradation. More importantly, the United Nations 2030 Agenda propounded the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 which focuses on sustainable consumption and production. SDG12 seeks to minimise the negative influences of consumption and production systems on the environment while promoting quality of life for current and future generations (UN Environment Programme, 2024). Among academia, the interest has been from Western perspectives (Dunlap & Van-Liere, 2008; Maloney & Ward, 1973; Meadows et al., 1972; Thompson & Barton, 1994; Weigel & Weigel, 1978) while those on emerging markets became noticeable after 2015 (Alo & Arslan, 2023; Damiyano et al., 2023; Epprecht, 2021). As a result, contemporary models of sustainable consumption have largely been influenced by Western perspectives while neglecting the peculiarity of emerging markets such as the African context. Contemporary sustainability consumption models can be designated as either psychologically grounded, sociologically grounded, or structurally grounded. These are based on the dominant social paradigm perspective (DSP). The DSP, according to Platje et al. (2024), is founded on the dominance of humans over nature, having solutions to problems through technology, free market, and political freedom. Subsequently, Bohme et al. (2022) observed that contemporary sustainability models are mechanistic, regarding the world as individualistic, materialistic, and competitive. They regard sustainable consumption as a linear process and an individual problem. This reductionism and centrism, according to Simmonds (2024) fails to address the root causes of unsustainable consumption. Studies (Alo & Arslin, 2023; Loewenson et al., 2021) note that these fail to address the systematic nature of problems encountered in sustainable consumption. Contemporary sustainability models disregard the context such as the influence of customers' culture on their sustainable consumption behaviour. Therefore, they are unsuitable in holistic societies such as the African culture (Afro-culture) (Gebru & Wako, 2022).

Culture is the values, practices and beliefs that are shared and passed through generations on how they perceive and respond to actions and environments (Smith & Bond, 2019). According to Vighnesh et al. (2023) culture influences the way people think, use resources and their attitude towards environmental issues. Therefore, the interaction between humans and their environment is predicated on culture (Tam & Milfont, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that culture shapes individuals' and groups' behaviour towards the environment (Arshed et al., 2022; Cetiner & Yenilmez, 2021). For instance, unlike Western culture, African culture venerates nature and once an animal, tree, mountain, or forest is venerated, it should be protected and preserved rather than killed or destroyed thus supporting sustainable consumption (Kuditchar, 2022). Collectivistic culture cultivates responsibility to the environment hence promoting sustainable consumption more than individualistic culture (Khan

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et al., 2024). In support of this, research (Long et al., 2024; Pelau et al., 2020; Shavitt & Barnes, 2020) reported that culture is critical in promoting sustainable consumption. Subsequently, international institutions (United Nations, 2019; World Bank Group, 2024) now integrate culture in promoting sustainable consumption. According to Zheng et al. (2021), the holistic nature of culture helps in identifying the opportunities and challenges of addressing sustainable consumption. Therefore, effective culturally sustainable consumption strategies can be developed that empower the community to be in control of their destiny and reduce conflict within and between communities (Wuchu et al., 2021). Given the importance of culture on sustainable consumption, many authors (Khan et al., 2024; Ur-Rahman et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2021) have expressed concern over the sparsity of research. Notably, studies (Maduku, 2024; Shavitt & Barnes, 2020) have observed that most existential cross-cultural studies on sustainable consumption have focused on Western and Asian countries, leaving emerging African markets behind. To address this gap, the present study synthesised knowledge from existing studies to (i.) determine whether African culture (Afro-culture) influences sustainable consumption and (ii.) identify underlying mechanisms that influence sustainable consumption. However, the complexity of sustainable consumption in African culture, according to Walsh et al. (2020) requires a holistic relational approach. The relational view connects humans and non-humans through principles of good life, tangible and intangible relationships. The relational view of African sustainable consumption emphasises eudemonic values (Walsh et al., 2020). The main challenge in developing a relational Afro-culture sustainable consumption framework is the vagueness and broad conceptualisation of the term sustainable consumption (Zheng et al., 2021). Sustainable consumption is interchanged with terms such as pro-environment, environmental concern, adoption of renewables, green consumption, ethical consumption, sustainable lifestyle, organic consumption, and many others. To acknowledge these, this study will consider the Oloveze et al. (2023) definition where sustainable consumption is an umbrella term that includes enhancing the quality of life, resource efficiency, using renewable energy, minimising waste, recycling, and ecological sensitivity. A relational view guided the elucidation of an Afro-cultural sustainable consumption framework.

Relational embodiment model

According to Walsh et al. (2020), the relational view connects humans and non-humans through tangible-intangible relationships and principles of a good life. The relational view emphasises eudemonic values, which Shin et al. (2022) explain as being long-term intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the view of Walsh et al. (2020) a key feature of the relational view is embodiment. The embodiment theory foregrounds that human knowledge and experience are anchored in bodily states, particularly brain processes. Brain processes include motor systems, introspection, motivation, and cognition as well as sensory systems. Bodily movements and physical position can consequently alter how one thinks, makes decisions and draws conclusions and there is a bidirectional link between cognition, emotion, behaviours, and bodily states (El-Khoury et al., 2022). Merleau-Ponty (1962) posits that embodiment is such that there is hardly any separation between bodily and intelligent conduct. The body adapts to the intended meaning, thus having embodied consciousness. Therefore, in embodiment, experience and spatial environments are inseparable and configure each other (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Bohme et al. (2022) explain that the self is shaped by experiences which in turn depend on the body and emotions. Relational embodiment theory is further supported by the constructivist theory which propagates that individuals obtain knowledge through interaction with the world; therefore, consciousness transcends the brain-body-world (environment context) (Thompson & Varela, 2001). According to Kupers (2020), Relational Embodiment Model is the notion that humans and non-humans' existence depends on their continuous exchange and co-creation of environment such that care for others is care for oneself.

Research methodology

A systematic literature review was undertaken to determine if Afro-culture influences sustainable consumption, to identify underlying Afro-culture mechanisms that determine sustainable consumption and ultimately to develop an Afro-sustainable consumption framework based on the Relational Embodiment Model. The Preferred Reported Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 were used in data collection based on stages by Page et al. (2021). The relational embodiment approach was used as the guide in building an Afro-cultural sustainable consumption framework.

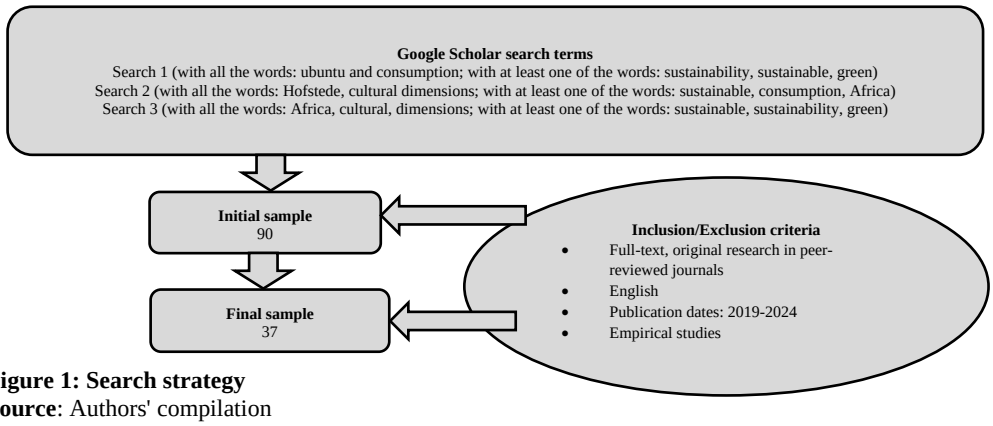

Figure 1: Search strategy
Source: Authors' compilation

Sustainable consumption or related terms are covered in various disciplines; therefore, articles were searched from Google Scholar which according to Gusenbauer & Haddaway (2020) is the most comprehensive database. The search was done between 12 and 16 August 2024 as shown in Figure 1 with the stated inclusion and exclusion criteria for the articles to ensure rigour, update, and transparency in the screening process. Figure 1 indicates that the initial sample of data was 90 articles which were reduced to 37 articles through rigorous screening and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Data analysis

RefWorks was used to manage the bibliography. Microsoft Excel was used in the review, management of the literature, extracting the data and doing the theme analysis. The first stage of the screening process involved article selection based on entered search terms as suggested by Hiebl (2023). Following Jidong et al. (2024) advice on improving data quality, the two authors were independently involved in screening the articles based on their titles, keywords, and abstracts and consensus was sought for discrepancies through discussions. The next stage involved reading the full-text article. The selection criteria were based on the articles being in English, full text, original and peer-reviewed, published between 2019 and 2024. However, Hughes et al. (2021) article was considered on the basis that it is the main study for internationally funded research by leading scholars, editors and reviewers in the field that produced eight journal articles. After this, a consensus was reached for an initial sample of 90 articles. Further screening was done. Articles were excluded if they were not on African culture sustainable consumption, sustainability, green marketing, and related areas. Furthermore, only empirical studies were considered and excluded reviews, conceptual papers, and dissertations. A consensus was reached between the authors on the final sample of 37 articles. The 37 articles were used to describe the relationship between African culture (Afro-culture) and its dimensions with sustainable consumption. Selected articles were inserted in RefWorks to detect and delete duplicates. An Excel sheet listed the articles based on authors' names, titles, abstracts, journals, country of study, research methodology and findings. Thereafter, the articles were categorised based on (a) Afro-culture on sustainable consumption (b) Afro-culture dimensions on sustainable consumption namely (i) collectivism on sustainable consumption (ii) in-groups on sustainable consumption (iii) environmental concern on sustainable consumption. At this stage articles with similar themes and concepts were grouped and coded appropriately. To reduce subjectivity according to Hiebl (2023), the authors worked independently before seeking consensus on the final list.

Results

The screening of articles resulted in a final sample of 37 articles which gave four themes.
The relationship between the variables and authors from the systematic literature review is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of relationships between variables and authors

Relationship variables	Authors	No. of articles
Afro-culture on sustainable consumption	Aworh, 2023; Khadda et al., 2022; Bisschoff et al., 2023; Burton & Hahn, 2023; Capstick et al., 2022; Chikosha & Potwana, 2021; Chipango & To, 2024; Chopera et al., 2022; de Freitas et al., 2020; Dorsamy & Govender, 2023; Engelke et al., 2024; Fatoki, 2023; Fullerton et al., 2023; Hlophe & Ellis, 2023; Hughes et al., 2021; Kamau & Mwaigi, 2023; Kirsten & Biyase, 2023; Koloba, 2020; Kutama & Deliwe, 2023; Maduku, 2024; Magano et al., 2023; Makhitha, 2024; Mbokane & Modley, 2024; Mkhize & Ellis, 2020; Mkhize & Ellis, 2024; Nash et al., 2020; Ndofirepi & Matema, 2019; Njoh et al., 2019; Okoro & Anichebe, 2020; Omar & Hasanujzaman, 2023; Pacho & Batra, 2021; Sedita et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021; Zaher, 2023; Zheng et al., 2021	37
African collectivism on sustainable consumption	Khadda et al., 2022; Burton & Hahn, 2023; Chipango & To, 2024; Chopera et al., 2022; de Freitas et al., 2020; Fatoki, 2023; Kamau & Mwangi, 2023; Makhitha, 2024; Njoh et al., 2019; Sedita et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021; Zheng et al., 2021	13
In-groups on sustainable consumption	Khadda et al., 2022; Bisschoff et al., 2023; Burton & Hahn, 2023; Chipango & To, 2024; Chopera et al., 2022; de Freitas et al., 2020; Fatoki, 2023; Maduku, 2024; Mamau & Mwangi, 2023; Makhitha, 2024; Njoh et al., 2019; Sedita et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021; Zheng et al., 2021	15
Environmental concern on sustainable consumption	Bisschoff et al., 2023; Burton & Hahn, 2023; Capstick et al., 2022; Chikosha & Potwana, 2021; Chipango & To, 2024; Chopera et al., 2022; Dorsamy & Govender, 2023; de Freitas et al., 2020; Fatoki, 2023; Hlophe & Ellis, 2023; Hughes et al., 2021; Kamau & Mwangi, 2023; Koloba, 2020; Kirsten & Biyase, 2023; Kutama & Deliwe, 2023; Maduku, 2024; Magano et al., 2023; Mkhize & Ellis, 2020; Mkhize & Ellis, 2023; Ndofirepi & Matema, 2019; Njoh et al., 2019; Pacho & Batra, 2021; Sedita et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021; Zheng et al., 2021	26

Source: Authors' compilation

From Table 1, all 37 articles have the theme of Afro-culture on sustainable consumption. The second most popular theme was environmental concern on sustainable consumption which had 26 articles. In-groups on sustainable consumption had 15 articles. Collectivism on sustainable consumption had 13 articles. These results show that the relationship between Afro-culture, environmental concern, in-groups, and collectivism with sustainable consumption has been growing from an African perspective, hence there is empirical evidence to support the discussion.

However, there is still a gap from a consumer perspective as some of the articles are from non-marketing areas. Moreover, none of the articles discusses African ubuntu which according to many authors (Aworh, 2023; Imafidon, 2022; Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019) is the basis of the African culture. Therefore, in addition to the sparsity of global research for culture on sustainable consumption as lamented by Ur-Rahman et al. (2023), it is worse for African ubuntu culture on sustainable consumption as there is no single study on this area among contemporary researchers. Table 2 shows the authors, African countries under study in three-letter codes (international countries are highlighted), research focus or culture dimensions, research approach (qualitative research is highlighted) and the relationship between variables.

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Table 2: Summary of African countries and study focus

	Author	African countries under study	Focus/Dimensions	Research approach	Relationship of variables
1	Aworh, 2023	Africa in general	African foods and sustainability	Qualitative	Related
2	Bisschoff et al., 2023	Saf & Usa	Five-factor-model on customer-citizenship	Quantitative	Significant
3	Burton & Hahn, 2023	Saf & Gbr	Self-construal on repurposed clothing	Quantitative	Significant
4	Capstick et al., 2022	Saf, Bra, Chn, Dnk, Gbr, Ind & Pol	Pro-environment on wellbeing	Quantitative	Significant
5	Chikosha & Potwana, 2021	Zim	Consumer perceptions on green purchase- intention	Quantitative	Significant
6	Chipango & To, 2024	Zim	Experts-Community view	Qualitative	Western vs Relational
7	Chopera et al., 2022	Zim	Facilitators-barriers to traditional foods	Quantitative	Significant
8	De Freitas et al., 2020	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on green behaviour	Quantitative	Significant
9	Dorsamy & Govender, 2023	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on green buying	Quantitative	Significant
10	Engelke et al., 2024	Saf	Hofstede-dimensions on sustainability	Quantitative	Significant
11	Fatoki, 2023	Saf	Value-attitude and theory-of-planned-behaviour on green products	Quantitative	Significant
12	Fullerton et al., 2023	Saf, Kor & Usa	Hofstede-dimensions on green behaviour	Quantitative	Significant
13	Garcia-Navarro et al., 2022	Mar & Sen	Culture-dietary habits on health-promotion	Qualitative	Related
14	Hlophe & Ellis, 2023	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on sustainability	Quantitative	Significant
15	Hughes et al., 2021	Saf, Bra & Chn	Sustainable-consumption, altruistic, self-expression and health-concern	Quantitative	Significant
16	Kamau & Mwangi, 2023	Ken	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on green buying	Quantitative	Significant
17	Khadda et al., 2022	Dza, Mar & Tun	Socio-demographic factors on organic consumption	Quantitative	Significant
18	Kirsten & Biyase, 2023	Saf	Socio-demographic factors on sustainable consumption	Quantitative	Significant
19	Koloba, 2020	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on environmentally friendly products	Quantitative	Significant
20	Kutama & Deliwe, 2023	Saf	Consumer awareness five-factor-model	Quantitative	Significant
21	Maduku, 2024	Saf	Environmental concern on sustainable consumption	Quantitative	Significant
22	Magano et al., 2023	Saf	Drivers of food choice	Qualitative	Culture, health, price, availability & appeal
23	Makhitha, 2024	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on green purchases	Quantitative	Significant
24	Mbokane & Modley, 2024	Saf	Green consumerism in youths	Quantitative	Significant
25	Mkhize & Ellis, 2020	Saf	Ecological consciousness among South-African consumers	Quantitative	Moderate, Low
26	Mkhize & Ellis, 2024	Saf	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on organic consumption	Qualitative	Related
27	Nash et al., 2020	Saf, Bra & Chn	Environmental issues and culture	Qualitative	Related
28	Ndiferepi & Matema, 2019	Zim	Theory-of-reasoned action on green purchase	Quantitative	Significant
29	Njoh et al., 2019	Cmr	Culture on sustainability	Qualitative	Related
30	Okoro & Anichebe, 2020	Nga	Maintenance culture on sustainability	Qualitative	Related
31	Omar & Hasanujzaman, 2023	Dza, Egy, Eth, Gha, Mar, Nga, Rwa, Saf, Tza, Uga, Zmb, Zim & 87 non-African	Hofstede-dimensions on renewable-energy consumption	Quantitative	Significant
32	Pacho & Batra, 2021	Tza & Dnk	Theory-of-planned-behaviour	Quantitative	Significant
33	Sedita et al., 2022	Dza, Ago, Cpv, Egy, Gha, Mar, Nga, Saf, Tza Zmb & 72 non-African	Hofstede-dimensions on sustainability	Quantitative	Significant
34	Wang et al., 2019	Ken & Tza	Theory-of-planned-behaviour on organic purchase	Quantitative	Significant
35	Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021	Cmr	African culture and sustainability	Qualitative	Related
36	Zaher et al., 2023	Egy, Mar, Nga, Saf & 83 non-African	Hofstede-dimensions on sustainability	Quantitative	Significant
37	Zheng et al., 2021	Bfa, Dza, Egy, Eth, Gha, Lby, Mar, Nga, Rwa, Saf, Tun, Tza, Uga, Zmb & 82 non-African	Cultural theories on sustainability	Quantitative	Significant

Key

	Qualitative research
	Non-African countries

Source: Authors' compilation

As seen in Table 2, 26 out of 37 articles used the quantitative research method. Qualitative research was less popular among existential studies. This indicates a gap in the qualitative approach which according to Borgstede & Scholz (2021) is appropriate for cross-culture studies as it is culturally sensitive and reveals hidden concepts. Perhaps a mixed approach will help uncover some of the hidden motivations behind (un)sustainable consumption in Africa. Table 2 shows that 24 out of 37 articles had South Africa as a study area while only 11 articles focused on other African countries. This shows the importance of South Africa in providing knowledge on African sustainable consumption. However, more research needs to be done in other African countries for a true reflection of sustainable consumption in the continent. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that 17 out of 37 articles were based on Hofstede's dimensions and the Theory of planned behaviour. This highlights the importance of the two theories in contemporary research on sustainable consumption in Africa. However, there is a gap in studying sustainable consumption in Africa outside the two Western theories, which according to studies (Bohme et al., 2022; Gebru & Wako, 2022) are regarded as inherently lacking contextual appropriateness for the continent.

Discussion

The relationship between culture, Afro-culture dimensions namely, collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concern with sustainable consumption is discussed in this section.

Culture influence on sustainable consumption

International studies (Omar & Hasanujzaman, 2023; Zaher, 2023; Zheng et al., 2021) on European, Asian, and American countries showed that consumers' culture has a substantial influence on their sustainable consumption. Similar results were confirmed in African countries such as Morocco, Kenya, Cameroon, and Tanzania (Garcia-Navarro et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2019; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021). In the same vein, South African studies (Fatoki, 2023; Koloba, 2020; Makhitha, 2024) supported the influence of consumers' culture on their sustainable consumption. These results confirm that globally, consumers' culture plays a leading role in influencing their sustainable consumption behaviour. This symbiotic relationship between culture and sustainable consumption has been recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Bank which now incorporate culture when promoting sustainable consumption (United Nations, 2019; World Bank, 2024). In terms of cultural dimensions, the review has revealed that internationally (Europe, Asia, North and South America) multiple cultural

combinations influence sustainable consumption. Hofstede's dimensions of long-term orientation, restraint, individualism, low power distance and femininity proved empirically to influence sustainable consumption in international countries. In terms of long-term orientation, Khan et al. (2024) reported that it influences sustainable consumption in South Korea, Poland, and Russia. Contrary to these findings, Arshed et al. (2022) reported a long-term orientation to reduce sustainable consumption in their sample of 49 European, Asian, and American countries. Arshed et al. (2022) found restraint to play a leading role in sustainable consumption in the same list of countries. In contrast, Dangelico et al. (2020) study in the same regions reported indulgence rather than restraint influences consumers' sustainable consumption behaviour.

In many studies (Berrhoun et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2024; Moon et al., 2023) collectivism has been confirmed to promote sustainable consumption. Conversely, in other studies (Jung & Cho, 2023; Zhao et al., 2023) individualism instead of collectivism promotes sustainable consumption. The next dimension power-distance, according to Yan et al. (2021) influences consumers' sustainable consumption, with low-power-distance societies having greater sustainable consumption than high-power-distance societies. Omar & Hasanujzaman (2023) explain that low-power-distance promotes freedom and openness in developing sustainable consumption behaviour. An opposing assertion is from Khan et al. (2024) study which found that low-power-distance negatively influences fashion-sustainable consumption in Italy. In terms of masculinity, Zhao et al. (2023) explain that due to socialisation men and women have different values that are developed from a young age. Women are taught to be caring for the family from childhood while men are taught to be providers. Caring for the environment is related to family health hence women are more likely to care for the environment (Bloodhart & Swim, 2020; El-Khoury et al., 2022). In support of this assertion, studies (Li et al., 2022; O'Berry & Mancha 2021) reported that women are more likely to engage in sustainable consumption than male consumers. On the other hand, Dangelico et al. (2020) highlighted that depending on the context masculinity can have a direct effect on sustainable consumption. Therefore, consumers' social-psychological environment rather than masculinity/femininity determines their sustainable consumption (Bloodhart & Swim 2020).

Okyere-Manu et al. (2022) attribute mixed cultural dimensions influence on sustainable consumption to the learning process an individual goes through in their lifetime. They present that learning occurs from childhood through experiences and socialisation thereby establishing an enduring pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting in an individual's mind. Subsequently, individuals with cultural backgrounds supportive of sustainable consumption will remain supportive unlike those from unsupportive cultures (Ur-Rahman et al., 2023). Cultural background according to studies (Jung & Cho, 2023; Ur-Rahman, 2019) shapes consumer motivation which in turn influences sustainable consumption. Lema-Blanco et al. (2023) highlight that consumers respond favourably when there is congruence between their self-motivation and the product framing. Subsequently, framing for individuality appeals to individualistic consumers while identification with the community attracts collectivists. As a result of mediating factors such as socio-psychological background, context and self-motivation, there are contradictory results on the influence of cultural values on sustainable consumption (Arshed et al., 2022; Dangelico et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2024).

Afro-culture dimensions on sustainable consumption

Among African consumers, the study synthesis produced three themes of dimensions namely, collectivism, in-group, and environmental concern. These Afro-cultural dimensions relationship to sustainable consumption will now be discussed. Collectivism was found to promote sustainable consumption among African studies (Khadda et al., 2022; Njoh et al., 2019; Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021). This was also confirmed in South African articles (De-Freitas et al., 2020; Fatoki, 2023; Makhitha, 2024). According to Sedita et al. (2022), collectivism is the degree to which members of a group are integrated into groups. Authors (Burton & Hahn, 2023; Kyei-Nuamah & Peng, 2024) argue that African culture is collectivistic and is popularly known as ubuntu. According to Imafidon (2022) African ubuntu is based on the principle that "a person is a person based on other people". It is a relational concept based on the individual and the community anchored on community, interdependence, solidarity, equilibrium, and harmony. Following this, Shavitt & Barnes (2020) observed that collectivistic African consumers have interdependent self-construal and are interconnected and embedded with their in-groups. As consumers, they seek to meet expectations and build consensus with their in-groups. Based on the quest for interdependence and consensus, collectivists are likely to live in harmony with nature (Ur-Rahman et al., 2023). A stream of research (Booysen et al., 2021; Okyere-Manu et al., 2022; Ur-Rahman et al., 2023) has concluded that collectivists are altruistic hence they are more likely to be pro-social, eco-centric and support sustainable consumption.

Among African studies, the review has revealed that in-groups (family, friends, and peers) are critical in consumer sustainable consumption behaviour. This theme was more pronounced in African studies such as Chipango & To (2024) for Zimbabwe, Pacho & Batra (2021) on Tanzania, Wang et al. (2019) for Kenya and Wuchu & Ngwainbi (2019) on Cameroon. Similarly, in-groups were found to play a leading role in sustainable consumption among South African consumers. This was highlighted in South African studies such as Burton & Hahn (2023), Capstick et al. (2022), Crippen (2021), De-Freitas et al. (2020), Fatoki (2023), Maduku (2024) and Makhitha (2024). Thus, it can be concluded that family, friends, and peers among African consumers play a leading role in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour. According to Jiang & Wu (2022) this is based on that loyalty to family, friends and peers is a virtue in African collectivistic communities. These results are confirmed by authors (Almeshal & Almawash, 2023; Mang'unyi & Govender, 2019; Pristl et al., 2020) who indicated that social agents such as family, friends and peers exert great control in consumer behaviour. According to Ajzen (2020), consumers face societal pressure to perform a particular behaviour from their in-groups. The more approval that comes from their in-groups the more likely the behaviour (Bosnjak et al., 2020). Individuals trust those close to them and identify with them therefore are motivated to comply by their sense of belonging (Slocum et al., 2022). According to Chauke & Duh (2019) family, friends and peers are

highly influential in buying sustainable products, as they are in-group members who are more likely to be concerned about member's health. In this case, sustainable consumption brings social acceptance, a good image and improves status (Ur-Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, individual consumers are more likely to trust their in-groups on private health and environmental issues subsumed in sustainable consumption (Gunawan et al., 2023). Resultantly a corpus of studies (Harjadi & Gunardi, 2022; Kamau & Mwangi, 2023; Pristl et al., 2020; Muposhi & Musavengane, 2023) have supported the social exchange theory by confirming that family, friends, and peers influence consumers' sustainable consumption behaviour in exchange for rewarding relationships.

International studies have revealed that environmental concerns influence sustainable consumption (Hughes et al., 2021; Omar & Hasanujzaman, 2023; Sedita et al., 2022). Similar results were observed in African studies such as Chikosha & Potwana (2021) for Zimbabwe, Garcia-Navarro et al. (2022) on Morocco and Senegal, Njoh et al. (2019) for Kenya and Wang et al. (2019) on Kenya and Tanzania. In South Africa, similar themes are attained in studies such as Dorsamy & Govender (2023), Hlophe (2023), Magano et al. (2023) and Van-Norren (2022). These results reveal that among international, African, and South African studies environmental concern is important in building sustainable consumption behaviour. These results are supported empirically (Capstick et al., 2022; Fatoki, 2023; Koloba, 2020) as it was determined that environmental concerns influence sustainable consumption behaviour. Environmental concern according to Stern & Dietz (1994) has three groups of cultural values namely egoistic, altruistic and biospheric. Egoistic values are concerns about the impact of unsustainability on self, while altruistic values are concerns for others and biospheric values are concerns for nature (Zammitti et al., 2023). Therefore, consumers' environmental concerns according to Jia & Krettenauer (2019) are cultural values for self, others and nature that differ from culture to culture. Like Stern & Dietz above, Mkono (2019) considers African culture to be based on the tripartite relations between humans, non-humans, and spirituality. There is a contemporaneous relationship between the three elements such that collective aspirations take precedence over individual desires (Kyei-Nuamah & Peng, 2024). Van-Norren (2022) explains that in Africa one's personhood is defined as participation in the community. To manage the tripartite relationship Makaudze (2021) highlights that there is a culture symbolised by habits, customs, taboos, and religion. An example is habits and customs that forbid African hunters from killing pregnant animals and young animals. In Africa, there are sacred forests, animals, rivers, and mountains which one cannot willy-nilly exploit except under strict conditions thus conserving nature (Wuchu & Ngwainbi, 2021). Some taboos discourage the pollution of the environment and the killing of rare animals (Makaudze, 2021). Similarly, Okyere-Manu et al. (2022) note that the African totem system forbids one from eating a species named after their clan as there is a belief that they will invite misfortune on the clan. These restrictions are common in Africa and are based on species, their by-products and sometimes the consumers such as discouraging pregnant women from eating certain foods (Sinthumule, 2024). According to Sewenet & Schwarcz (2021), such restrictions protect the species, improve their utilisation efficiency, and contribute to the health of the consumers which are the core tenets of sustainable consumption.

Theoretical implications

In the view of Bohme et al. (2022) African ubuntu culture is an exemplar of Relational Embodiment. African ubuntu is African existentialism as it is their overarching philosophy (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019). The African ubuntu culture postulates that all humans, environment, and animals have a web of relationships such that they need each other to thrive, thus a Relational Embodiment (Imafidion, 2022; Taiwo, 2022). In consideration of the Relational Embodiment Model and the results of the extracted themes, Figure 2 provides a research conceptual framework for future research on sustainable consumption in Africa. Notably, the African culture was mainly considered in terms of the Hofstede-dimension and the Theory of planned behaviour, which is a Western approach to African culture. Therefore, there is a research gap in terms of considering the contextualized influence of African culture on sustainable consumption such as using African ubuntu culture. Researchers can test the relationship using African culture models. Furthermore, most articles used quantitative approaches, creating a research gap for qualitative approaches that are acclaimed for revealing hidden concepts. Moreover, most of the studies have been on South Africa with a few studies considering other African countries. Subsequently, a research gap in sustainable consumption in other African countries exists in terms of both Western and African models. Furthermore, Figure 2 supports Kyei-Nuamah & Peng's (2024) observation that Afro-sustainable consumption is anchored on African culture and its dimensions namely, collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concern. The Afro-culture sustainable consumption framework is presented in Figure 2. Figure 2 clearly shows that African culture and its dimensions namely, collectivism, in-groups and environmental concern play a leading role in influencing Afro-sustainable consumption behaviour. Studies (Bisschoff et al., 2023; Chipango & To, 2024; Zheng et al., 2021) have proved that culture in Africa led by South Africa determines sustainable consumption. Specifically, African cultural dimension collectivism has proved to have a relationship with sustainable consumption in Africa and South Africa (Khadda et al., 2022; Chopera et al., 2022; Wuchu & Ngainbi, 2021). Another African cultural dimension in-groups such as family, friends, and peers also play a leading role in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour (Burton & Hahn, 2023; Makhitha, 2024; Wang et al., 2022). Environmental concern as shown by African customs, taboos and totems has been observed to influence sustainable consumption behaviour (Hughes et al., 2021; Magano et al., 2023; Sedita et al., 2022). The study has revealed that the African worldview is a Relational embodiment as it is based on co-existence with nature, thus supporting sustainable consumption (Taiwo, 2022). African policymakers and business strategists should disassociate from the alien elitist Western approach based on individuality in promoting sustainable consumption and rather adopt the organic Relational Embodied African culture. They should formulate policies and strategies on sustainable consumption that encapsulate tenets of African culture such as collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concerns. According to Mpotaringa & Tichaawa (2024) policies and strategies should consider that African consumers are responsive to programmes that consider

communities and in-groups such as families, friends, and clansmen. Sustainable consumption programmes in Africa are more appealing if they incorporate local hierarchies, rituals, totems, and taboos. Therefore, sustainable consumption programmes such as waste management, recycling, adoption of renewable energy, green consumption, and sustainable living should have input, buy-in, participation and respect for local communities.

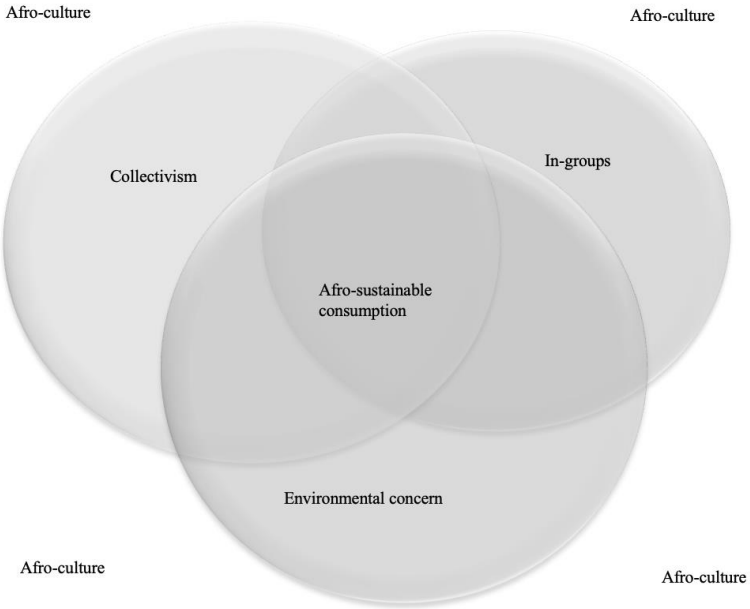

Figure 2: Afro-culture sustainable consumption framework
Source: Authors' compilation

Conclusion, future research, and implications

The systematic literature review provided a panoramic view of the relationships between African consumers' culture and its dimensions namely, collectivism, in-groups, and environmental concerns with their sustainable consumption behaviour. A synthesis of the 37 retained articles revealed that African culture and its dimensions play a leading role in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour. Notably, the African culture and its dimensions were considered under Western worldview. This leaves a research gap for studies based on contextually appropriate African culture models such as Ubuntu. More research needs to be done that considers other African cultural models and other African countries' contexts so that the results of the present study can be (in)validated. Furthermore, additional qualitative studies are required, as they may reveal underlying motivations for behaviour. More importantly, this review revealed research gaps and provides a reference point for researchers who may want to explore African sustainable consumption in different settings. From a practical perspective, the review shows that a buy-in decision in Africa is never an individual decision. Therefore, with a deeper understanding of African sustainable consumption, business strategists and policymakers should formulate strategies that address consumers' culture, collectiveness, the influence of family, friends, and peers as well as their inherent environmental concern reflected in customs and taboos.

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