

# INTEGRATIVE REVIEW: RELATIONS BETWEEN SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

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**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic brought numerous reflections on sustainability in various sectors of society. In this scenario, sustainable consumption has gained prominence in some reflections. This scenario has also determined an important change in consumption habits towards a more sustainable consumption, causing people to reassess the real need to acquire less essential items and causing changes in their way of life. Rampant consumption ends up generating large quantities of waste, which is discarded in landfills, dumps or simply in nature, with part of it to stop in the oceans, thus generating a huge impact on the environment of the planet. The objective of this article is: to analyze through a literature review the relationship between sustainable consumption and conscious consumer. To this end, an integrative review was carried out based on a systematic search of the Scopus database. Results identified that research is emerging in the fields of Business, Management and Accounting Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Environmental Science, Social Sciences, Psychology, Medicine, Agricultural and Biological Sciences, Earth and Planetary Sciences, Energy, Engineering, which allows us to weaving the state of the art of the subject from the consulted database.

**Keywords:**

**Resumo:** A pandemia do COVID 19 nos trouxe inúmeros reflexões sobre a sustentabilidade nos diversos setores da sociedade. Esse cenário determinou ainda uma mudança importante nos hábitos de consumo para um consumo mais sustentável, fazendo as pessoas reavaliarem a real necessidade de aquisição de itens menos essenciais e provocando transformações no seu modo de vida. O consumo desenfreado acaba gerando grandes quantidades de lixo, que são descartadas diariamente em aterros sanitários, lixões ou simplesmente na natureza, fazendo com que parte deles acabam parando nos oceanos, gerando um impacto enorme no meio ambiente do planeta. Sendo assim o objetivo desse artigo é: analisar por meio da revisão de literatura as relações entre consumo sustentável e consumidor consciente. Para tanto, realizou-se a revisão integrativa a partir de uma busca sistemática na base de dados Scopus. Como resultado, identificou-se que a pesquisa emerge no campo das na área de Negócios, Gestão e Economia Contábil, Econometria e Finanças; Ciência ambiental; Ciências Sociais; Psicologia; Remédio; Ciências Agrárias e Biológicas; Ciências da Terra e Planetárias; Energia; Engenharia o que permite tecer o estado da arte do tema a partir da base de dados consultada.

**Palavras-chave:** consumidor consciente, consumo sustentável, revisão integrativa.



The current pattern of consumption in society functions, usually, as a manifestation of values and the social position of consumers. Quality of life and happiness have been increasingly related to material achievements, leading to a vicious circle: the individual works to consume more and more (Firat et al., 2013).

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Since the 19th and 20th centuries, with the beginning of the first Industrial Revolution, persons started to consume to have a social identity, to be part of a group and to create social links (More, 2000). But this consumption pattern is environmentally unsustainable, as the excessive use of natural resources and the large amount of waste generated increasingly contribute to environmental degradation (Hoekstra & Wiedmann, 2014). People are realizing, all over the world, based on the news on disasters that plague the environment and its impacts (such as the greenhouse effect, climate change, water pollution, and global deforestation, among others), that the actual form of economic production and consumption need to change drastically towards a more sustainable way. These issues were also thought in the globalized society where the pandemic that took over in the year 2020 (COVID-19), made many people rethink their way of living on planet Earth, adopting measures for sustainable consumption, which also implied in new behaviors of consuming in a more conscious way (Machado & Richter, 2020).

Conscientious consumer in this research is understood as a person who is in control of his actions towards consumption, i.e., a behavior that can be controlled when addressed along with awareness (Buğday and Babaoğlu, 2016). A conscious consumer is a consumer who is aware of his power of his market orientation. With this awareness, a conscious consumer shows himself with his behaviors, such as: opposition to excessive consumption, sustainable consumption behavior, the need to minimize toxic waste, economy in the use of resources, avoiding the use of luxury products, buying the products of companies that give more importance to social and environmental responsibility which benefits the society. This type of consumer avoids buying products of companies that harm the society, boycotting the companies that would lead him not to act in an ethical, ecological and socially responsible manner (Zureik and Mowshowitz, 2005).

As a result, the shape of the worldwide economy needs to change from a traditional linear economy, that generates large amounts of waste and residues that will no longer have any use at all, being dumped in landfills, dumps or simply in nature, to a circular economy model in which residues are efficiently reused in new production processes, thus not generating greater impacts on the environment (Jørgensen & Pedersen, 2018). The linear economy generates an increasing scarcity of resources, since no type of waste is reused, new raw materials are always needed to manufacture more products, which increases pollution and generates greater human and environmental vulnerability to this pollution, something that no longer happens in the circular economy model. People need to become aware of this fact and start changing their habits in favour of more sustainable way of consuming. And politics needs to support this movement towards a more sustainable world with appropriate changes in legislation, in addition to effective oversight and punishment (Behrens et al., 2007; Stahel, 2016; Virlanuta et al., 2020).

Thus, the objective of this article was to analyze the relationship between sustainable consumption and conscious consumer on the basis of a literature review. To this end, the article is structured in five sections, besides this introductory section, with the research procedures being described in the following section. The third section presents in detail the bibliometric results from the scenario of scientific publications resulting from this area, the largest database (Scopus) of abstracts and citations from peer-reviewed scientific literature. The fourth section explains the search for articles, the analysis and their discussion. The fifth section deals with relations between conscious consumers and sustainable consumption and the sixth section deals with final considerations, preceding the references that were used throughout the article.

## SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Sustainable consumption appears as one of the alternatives to solving environmental problems caused by current patterns of production and consumption of goods. Sustainable consumption is characterized by the consumption of goods and services that consider and respect natural resources, that meet the needs of present generations without compromising the needs of future generations. It consists of the procurement of goods and services that meet people's basic needs, prioritizing the minimization of environmental degradation (OECD, 2008; UN, 2015).

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (Rio 92), the theme of the environmental impact of consumption has emerged as an environmental policy issue related to sustainability proposals. During the UN Conference on Sustainable Development ("Rio + 20") in the year 2012, the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption (GRF-SPaC) was launched, joining different organizations, researchers from all over the world. This document was the result of research and its applications in the transition to more sustainable production and consumption systems (Vergragt et al., 2014). Sustainable Development Goal 12 (SDG 12) of the Agenda 2030 deals with "responsible consumption and production" in favor of worldwide sustainable development, is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2015 (UN, 2015).

The concept of "sustainable consumption" has been constructed from the term "sustainable development", released by Agenda 21, a document that brings the main actions to be taken by governments in order to ally the countries' needs for growth with the maintenance of environmental balance. Among the main topics of this paper is the need for changes in consumption patterns, leading to the conclusion that either consumption patterns change or there will be no more natural resources to ensure people's right to a healthy life (Clark, 2007; Frick et al., 2015). And politics needs to support this movement towards a more sustainable world with appropriate changes in legislation, in addition to effective oversight and enforcing the law (Behrens et al., 2007; Stahel, 2016; Virlanuta et al., 2020).

Sustainable consumption goes beyond the so-called "green consumption", which consists of consumers' choice of environmentally friendly products, from production to disposal (Lorek & Spangenberg, 2014). In other words, green consumers are encouraged to exchange one brand for another, while sustainable consumption is an objective to be achieved through collective actions and political, economic and institutional changes that prioritize the reduction and modification of consumption patterns and not just a product substitution (Souza et al., 2019).

Some key features are hereby indicated, that should be part of any sustainable consumption strategy. Sustainable consumption, to be true, 1) must be part of a sustainable lifestyle in a sustainable society; 2) must contribute to our capacity for improvement, as individuals and as society; 3) must require justice in access to natural, economic and social capital for present and future generations; 4) must be consistent with the conservation and improvement of the natural environment; 5) must entail a process of learning, creativity and adaptation; and 6) material consumption must become less and less important in relation to other components of happiness and quality of life (Da Silva, 2009).

Conscious consumption involves, among others, the following actions by the consumer: 1) buying what you really need; 2) thinking before buying, how the waste/product will be discarded later; 3) reducing waste and residues; 4) separating waste and residues generated at home and in companies; 5) reusing organic waste; 6) reusing recyclable waste; 7) reducing the use of plastic-based items; 8) refusing non-biodegradable materials; and 9) consuming water, energy and chemicals responsibly (Ciasullo et al., 2017).

The performance of companies is also essential in the search for sustainable consumption. The acceleration of this transformation process has been driven by higher consumer attention, as well as heightened social and governmental pressure. One of the positive effects of the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has been to raise the awareness of larger parts of the society and also companies to sustainability issues. Although the first repercussions more commonly associated with the word "sustainable consumption" relate to the environment and the social area, the subject also has everything to do with governance and investments in companies (Folger-Laronde et al., 2020). Best environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices are increasingly valued in companies. In addition to contributing to a more ethical, healthy and fair world, they are associated with benefits such as cost reduction, robustness and resilience, benefits that are more than welcome in the pandemic context (Amel-Zadeh & Serafeim, 2018).

ESG fund managers, choose companies to invest in, giving prestige to those with good levels of corporate governance, that stand out for their social and environmental responsibility, and that seek long-term corporate sustainability (Dimson et al., 2020). Companies that address ESG issues are better prepared to deal with changes in production and consumption patterns by using natural resources more efficiently and mitigating the negative impacts of their products and services on the environment (Fatemi et al., 2018). And consumers, increasingly aware of the issues of environmental impacts and, thus, of sustainability, are choosing more and more products from companies that have a major cooperate social and environmental responsibility (Wells et al., 2011).

To this end, companies should adopt certain measures, such as: 1) considering environmental aspects and not only economic ones in the manufacture of products; 2) practicing the maximum reduction in the consumption of energy and natural resources and in the generation of waste during manufacturing processes; 3) reducing their carbon footprint; 4) advertising not aimed at stimulating consumerism; 5) developing sustainable consumption practices within the company itself (Petrini & Pozzebon, 2009). They should also, as much as possible: take advantage of natural light, turn off corridor lights, avoid paper printing, eliminate the use of disposable glasses, among others. This set of actions are responsibilities to be assumed and implemented by all actors involved in this process and therefore contribute significantly to changes in production and consumption patterns, stimulating more sustainable habits (Esposito et al., 2018).

Governments have a responsibility to develop public policies and educational programs to raise awareness and encourage sustainable consumption, implement the circular economy, support research aimed at developing clean technologies, develop and regulate laws, norms and guides that promote changes in consumption patterns, launch edicts for the purchase of sustainable products, care for and preserve biodiversity and the environment as a whole, among other actions (Safarzyńska, 2013; Buchmann-Duck & Beazley, 2020). After all, based on the environmental concerns worldwide, sustainable consumption issues are becoming much more prominent than before on public and political agendas (Spaargaren & Mol, 2008).

In other words, sustainable consumption must be economically viable, socially just, and meet the basic needs of human beings in all nations. It involves all sectors, from individuals to small, medium, large and multinational companies, and also governments. Sustainable consumption implies consuming in a way that takes into account the environmental and social impact, without being able to compromise the consumption of future generations (Clark, 2007).

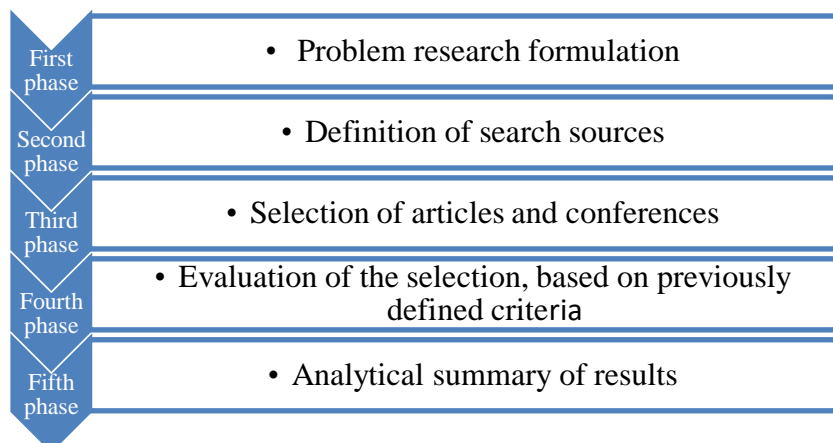
## METHODOLOGY - INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

As a method of searching scientific literature, a systematic search in an online database was used, followed by an integrative analysis of the results. For this purpose, the five steps of Torraco (2016) we used in the present work, elaborated during the integrative literature review described below, involving 5 phases (Machado et al., 2020): The first phase is the formulation of the problem, which aims to trace the interconnections between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption. The second phase is the definition of sources and search for results. Both need to be comprehensive, but with a specific focus, considering that scientific research in databases is a transparent and reproducible process. The third phase is the selection of papers and/or conferences related to the identified problem, according to several eligibility criteria, such as defined timeline, specific sources, keywords, and others. The fourth phase is the evaluation of the selection, an evaluation of the quality and the degree of integrative revision, which depends on the sample: including sources, methods, and instruments. Finally, the fifth phase is translated into the process of synthesis with a qualitative and narrative analysis aimed at qualitative and quantitative studies. The overview can take the form of a table or a template to present the results. The main method that can be used is data reduction, data display, data comparison, completion design and verification (Whittemore & Knafel, 2005).

The integrative revision contributes to the systematic visualization of the state of the art (Machado et al., 2020) on the subject of research and its timeline up to the level of production by area, avoiding minimizations or repetitions of studies.

The organization of the research divided into five phases is illustrated in figure 1 below:

**Figure 1-** Organization of the research into five phases



Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

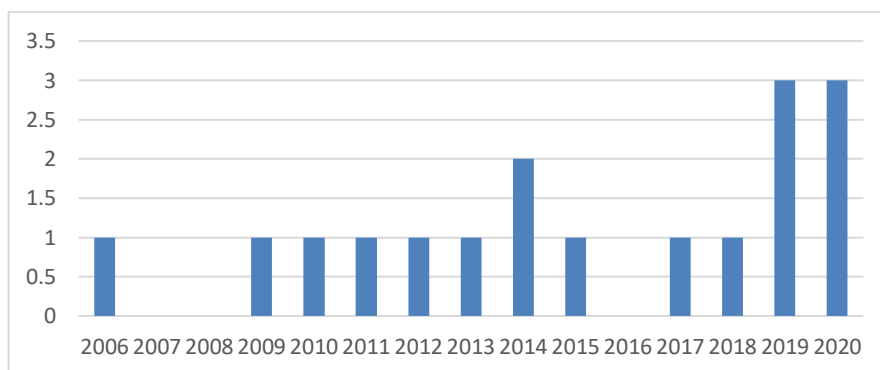
The first phase is the “formulation of the search problem” that guides this study. This will answer the question: what is the relationship between a conscious consumer and sustainable consumption? To answer this question, a survey was conducted on the database, which began in 2000 and ended in January 2021.

In the second phase, called "definition of search sources", several criteria were defined for the selection of the search, such as the delimitation of the search base. The Scopus electronic database ([www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)) was chosen, which is considered relevant due to the number of abstracts and indexed references in the peer-reviewed journals, as well as its impact on the academic area in the interdisciplinary field, which was the area of study of the present search.

Considering the issue of the problem, the third phase is the selection of scientific papers and conferences, which delimits the search terms or expressions: "sustainable consumption" AND "conscious consumer". Variations in the expressions adopted for the search are presented in a broader context, in the same proposal, because a concept depends on the context to which it is related and on its historical trajectory and conceptual analysis. As a basic principle of the search, we choose to insert the terms and expressions in the fields "Title", "Summary" and "Keyword". No restrictions of time, language and area of knowledge or any other restrictions were allowed.

In the fourth phase, the evaluation of the selection, based on previously defined criteria, identified a total of 18 papers published in peer-reviewed journals. The first record of a scientific paper is from 2006, with 1 (one) publication. In the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 only one article was published in each of these years. In the years 2014 and 2015, there were retrieved 2 (two) and 1 (one) publications in the area, respectively. One publication per year was found in the years 2017 and 2018. The years 2019 and 2020 each registered 3 (three) publications in this area. In 2007, 2008 and 2016, no scientific publications were found in this area. This frequency shows a certain discontinuity and lack of research in the area. For better visualization, Graphic 1 was prepared.

**Graphic 1** – Distribution of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals per year



Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

It was identified that these papers were written by 51 authors, affiliated to 31 different institutions 118 keywords were used to identify and index the publications, which are distributed in 10 different areas of knowledge. Table 1 presents the result of the data collection in a general analysis of the results obtained in the Scopus database.

**Table 1** - General bibliometric data obtained from the Scopus database

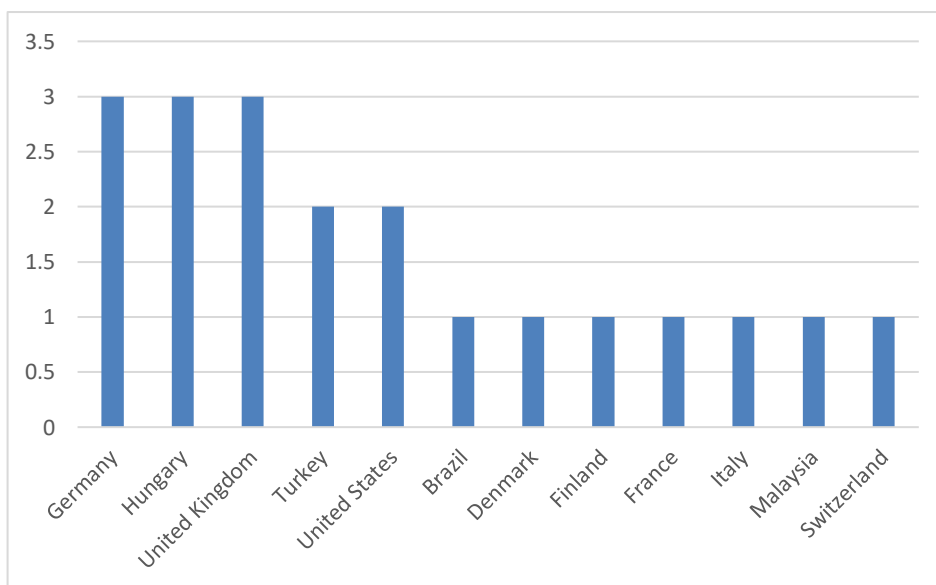
Database terms	Scopus
Search terms	<b>""sustainable consumption" AND "conscious consumer""</b> .
Search fields	<b>"title", "abstract", "keyword"</b>
Total number of scientific articles recovered	<b>18</b>
Authors	<b>51</b>
Institutions	<b>31</b>
Countries	<b>12</b>
Key words	<b>118</b>

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

The first scientific article was published in 2006 and explains that the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption is clearly connected to the direct marketing of alternative agri-food networks in promoting the choice of points of sale for local and organic products (Seyfang, 2006).

Analyzing the 18 papers, one can see a wide list of authors, institutions and countries that stand out in this research field regarding the results of the search for scientific articles based on the key words: "sustainable consumption" and "conscious consumer". The analysis of the countries with the highest number of publications in the area, are Germany, Hungary and United Kingdom, with an average of 15% of all publications, each with a total of 3 papers. Secondly, Turkey and United States stand out with 10% of publications each (2 papers). Graphic 2 shows the main countries involved:

**Graphic 2** - distribution of published scientific articles by country



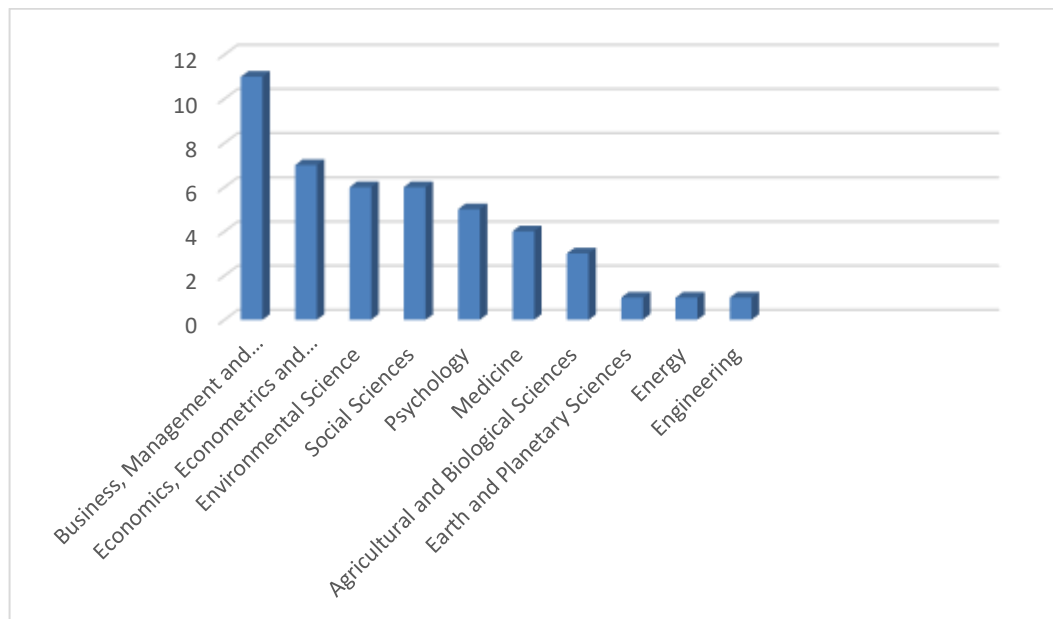
Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

Brazil showed itself with only one publication in the area, which is equal to 5% of the total number of publications, indicating that the discussion is still innovative in the country.

The results of another analysis are related to the identification of outstanding authors in the area. It was observed that two authors can be called reference in the subject area, Ingo Balderjahn and Mathias Peyer, both with two publications in the area (Balderjahn et al., 2013, 2018).

From the bibliometric analysis, based on the set of scientific papers recovered in the Scopus database, it was possible to identify the areas of knowledge of all publications. Business, Management and Accounting stand out with an average of 25% of publications, followed by Economics, Econometrics and Finance with 16%, as shown in Graphic 3, below:

**Graphic 3 - Knowledge area of the journal**



Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

The fifth phase of the research referred to the formulation of the problem that guides this study. The purpose was to answer the research's theme question: What are the relations between conscious consumers and sustainable consumption?

Thus, the selection of articles was planned, and after analysis, 10 papers were selected for full reading. These were selected because they were freely accessible and adhered to the research theme: the relationship between sustainable consumption and conscious consumer. For each selected article, the following assumptions were used: the variables used in each article, the methods for analysis and the main results, thus establishing the following analytical table:



**Table 2 – Analytical phase**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Main results</b>
<b>2006</b>	Seyfang	Conscious consumer resistance? Local organic food networks versus the supermarkets	Discussion on the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption	Deductive method of analysis of the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption is clearly linked to "direct marketing".	The relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption is directly linked to the direct marketing of alternative agro-food networks in promoting the choice of their selling outlets for local and organic products.
<b>2011</b>	Reijonen	Environmentally friendly consumer: From determinism to emergence	Linking consumer awareness and sustainable consumption	Deductive method for the analysis of contemporary literature of the issues addressed in the article	The relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption is linked to three sources of determinism that are distinguished in the recent literature on green consumers: 1) cultural determinism, 2) psychosocial-demographic determinism and 3) calculative determinism
<b>2013</b>	Balderjahn, Peyer e Paulssen	Consciousness for fair consumption: conceptualization, scale development and empirical validation	Sustainable consumption and the meaning in consumer actions	Deductive method to analyze the meaning of sustainable consumption for consumers to act in an environmentally and socially responsible way	Sustainable consumption means that consumers act in an environmentally and socially responsible way. It also explains that there are few studies on conscious consumer and sustainable consumption.

<b>2014</b>	Lehota, Horváth e Rác	The effect of sustainability on the information search behavior of Hungarian consumers through the practice of food purchasing	Sustainable consumption through the practice of food purchasing	Deductive method of analyzing consumer behavior	The information-seeking behavior of Hungarian consumers committed to sustainable consumption through food shopping practice
<b>2017</b>	Kiss, Pataki, Köves e Király	Policy Lessons from two Participatory Systems Mapping Exercises in Hungary	Sustainable consumption	Deductive method to analyze sustainable consumption	Sustainable consumption is a complex phenomenon at the boundaries of different systems (ecological, economic, social), and requires theoretical approaches that do justice to its complex causality and dynamism. The research applied participatory systems mapping in order to define and identify system boundaries for sustainable consumption and discover perceived causal relationships between the determinants of sustainable consumption and the consumer.
<b>2018</b>	Balderjahn, Peyer, Seegebart, Wiedmann e Weber	The many faces of sustainability-conscious consumers: A category-independent typology	Sustainable consumer behavior	Deductive method for analyzing the sustainable consumption phenomenon	Sustainable consumption is not an "all or nothing" phenomenon because it encompasses several distinct patterns of behavior and types of consumption. The paper also points out that within companies it is possible to recognize various types of

					sustainability-conscious consumers with different expectations, attitudes and values, and to implement targeting strategies that are not based on the assumption of homogeneity
<b>2018</b>	Yarimoglu e Binboga	Understanding sustainable consumption in an emerging country: the antecedents and consequences of the ecologically conscious consumer behavior model	Conscious consumer and the relationship between conscious consumers	Deductive method to analyze the conscious consumer and the relations between conscious consumers	The antecedents of ecology in conscious consumer behavior and shows the relationship between conscious consumers and their behaviour at the time of purchase that most often opts for green purchase; in other words: based on sustainable consumption.
<b>2019</b>	Quoquab, Mohammad e Suka	A multiple-item scale for measuring "sustainable consumption behavior" construct: Development and psychometric evaluation	Consumers for sustainable consumption	Deductive method to analyze consumer perspective for sustainable consumption.	The development of a reliable and valid scale with desirable psychometric properties and sufficient level of reliability and validity to measure consumer perspective towards sustainable consumption.
<b>2020</b>	Rennollet, Schmidkonz e Kraf	The role of purpose in consumer choice: a comparison between baby boomers and millennials in Germany with a focus on sustainability	Sustainable and conscious consumption	Deductive method to analyze sustainable and conscious consumption	Purpose in consumer choice in Germany. It points out that a growing number of consumers around the world practice hyper-consumerism that prevents them from finding lasting happiness. Thus, it explains that we need to focus on

		and consciousness			sustainable and conscious consumption and put the role of purpose increasingly at the center of consumer choice
<b>2020</b>	Fogarass, Nagy- Pércsi, Ajibade, Gyuricza e Ymer	Relations between circular economic “principles” and organic food purchasing behavior in Hungary	Attitude towards choosing products	Deductive method to analyze consumer product choice to ensure a circular economy	The characteristics of the circular economy in consumers' product choice attitude towards food purchasing in Hungary

Source: Prepared by the authors (2021).

The articles presented in table 2, resulting from the survey response, address that the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption is directly linked to sales marketing (Seyfang, 2006), and is also connected to the green consumer in terms of: cultural determinism, psychosocial-demographic determinism, and calculative determinism (Reijonen, 2011).

Furthermore, the research also pointed out that sustainable consumption is understood as the act of consumers acting in an environmentally and socially responsible manner (Balderjahn et al., 2013), also shown by Lehota et al. (2014) who reported sustainable consumption by consumers through food purchasing practices.

The result of the analysis of the articles pointed out the following: for Kiss et al. (2017) sustainable consumption is a complex phenomenon at the borders of different systems (ecological, economic and social). Thus, sustainable consumption is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon because it encompasses several distinct behavioral patterns and types of consumption (Balderjahn et al. 2018). Conscious consumer behavior starts from the relationships between consumption and their behavior at the time of purchase that most often opts for green purchase, i.e. based on sustainable consumption (Yarimoglu and Binboga 2018). To measure the consumer profile for sustainable consumption, the development of a reliable and valid scale with desirable psychometric properties and sufficient level of reliability and validity is required (Quoquab et al., 2019). The research reported by Renollet et al. (2020) points to the need for sustainable and conscious consumption. With the development of a product choice attitude, consumers can promote green recovery through the circular economy (Fogarassy et al., 2020).

Further analysis, based on the integrative review, indicated several keywords throughout the retrieved articles. The word that was highlighted with 11 occurrences was "Sustainable Consumption" followed by "Sustainability" with 7 occurrences, "Sustainable Development" with 4, "Consumption Behavior" and "Marketing" with, both, 3 occurrences, "Confirmatory Factor Analysis", "Consumer Behavior", "Theoretical Study" and "Turkey", each with 2 occurrences. The referred words are highlighted in the tag cloud of figure 2:

Figure 2 – Tag cloud from the most published themes



Source: Prepared by the authors from the <<https://wordart.com/nwl5dq0aletg/nuvem-de-palavras>>.

Finally, looking for a qualitative analysis, it was realized that the debate between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption brings to light issues such as sustainability, green consumption, green purchasing and green behavior. These issues will be explained in the following chapter.

## RELATIONS BETWEEN CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

The concept of sustainability is related to quality of life, as Nkamnebe (2011) explains, "[...] a global approach to ensuring lasting well-being for the whole human race" (p. 222). Thus, the notion of sustainable consumption was initiated at the Oslo Symposium on Sustainable Consumption in 1994. The author suggested that the spectrum of sustainable consumption goes beyond direct consumption. It includes the entire consumption pattern of individuals and emphasizes improving quality of life of individuals without focusing on materialistic gains (Quoqab et al., 2019).

The conscious use of natural resources traces the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption, because according to Lee (2014) sustainable consumption is linked to the concern of the individual with the environmental aspect, and thus

these human beings make conscious choices in their personal consumption decisions. On the other hand, Hornibrook et al. (2013) referred to the appropriate use of goods and services that meet basic needs to ensure life quality.

Results indicated another relationship between sustainable consumption and the conscious consumer based on the perspective of responsible consumption of the individual. Consumers at the time of purchase should ask themselves the following questions: 1) Why to buy? 2) How to buy? 3) Who to buy from? 4) How to use? 5) How to discard? In addition, Seyfang (2005) explains that sustainable consumption by conscious consumers does not only take into account the impact of consumption on the environment, but also ensures the protection of the needs of future generations. Quoquab and Mohammad (2017, p. 120) provided an integrative definition of the relationship between conscious consumer and sustainable consumption:

It refers to the continuous act of controlling desire, avoiding extravagant purchases, and rationalizing the use of goods and services that satisfy basic needs. Sustainable consumption goes beyond environmental concern, guaranteeing and managing existing resources that not only meet current demand but also without compromising the needs of future generations. It guarantees at least three aspects: life quality, protection and preservation of the environment and maintenance of natural resources useful for future generations.

Kinnear et al. (1974) defined ecologically conscious consumers as people who care more about ecology and thus create sustainable consumption habits. They specified two dimensions of ecologically conscious behaviors, such as consumer attitudes, which should clarify the concern with ecology and shopping behaviors, which should be consistent with the ecological system. Environmentally conscious consumers are those who avoid buying environmentally harmful products (Roberts & Bacon, 1997).

With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world experienced economic and social fragility, which required people to make decisions and choices, regarding consumption. A rethinking process had to be done on what was really necessary to be acquired, i.e. focusing on the importance of actions with alternative approaches towards more sustainable results and lifestyle, when compared to the pre-pandemic period. (Folger-Laronde et al., 2020)

In that context, the purchase of ecological products became a social imperative to protect the world's limited resources. Unlike developed countries, consumers in emerging countries have recently begun to adapt to greener and more sustainable consumer behaviors. Today, consumers are deeply understanding the importance of sustainable consumption and are beginning to pay more attention to ecologically conscious behaviors to protect the environment. Analyzing consumers' intentions as well as purchasing behaviors and attitudes towards green products has become increasingly important to provide sustainable consumption everywhere in the world. Thus, when adopting the culture of conscious consumption, the person contributes to the rational use of natural resources, minimizing waste, pollution and especially negative impacts on the environment. It is therefore essential to find ways of meeting the needs of human beings without adversely affecting the planet, as well as the needs of future generations.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The mapping of scientific production related to the theme sustainable consumption and conscious consumer has allowed an integrative review that describes the main contemporary discussions and the intersection between the areas. As a result, research has been identified as emerging in the multidisciplinary field, crossing out discussions in the fields: Business, Management and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Environmental Science, Social Sciences, Psychology, Medicine, Agricultural and Biological Sciences, Earth and Planetary Sciences, Energy and Engineering.

Finally, it became evident that discussions on sustainable consumption and conscious consumption lack studies that focus on the characteristics of consumption and also on raising awareness about the use of natural resources.

The limitation found in this present work was the lack of scientific papers that explain the relationships between the themes discussed here. For future work, scientific studies are suggested to discuss through practical examples the relationship between the conscious consumer and sustainable consumption.

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