

Feeling younger and acting greener: The impact of subjective age on sustainable consumption

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Abstract

It is widely believed that younger generations are at the forefront of sustainability efforts. Given the significance of fostering greater consumer participation in sustainable consumption, this perception prompts an intriguing question: If consumers associate sustainability with younger individuals, can simply instilling a sense of youthfulness increase their engagement in sustainable consumption, regardless of their actual age? Building upon previous research on subjective age—that is, how old one feels—and consumer identity, we propose that consumers will gravitate towards sustainable products when they feel younger than older. This is because such products align well with their perceived age identity, creating a perception of fit. The findings across three studies provide converging evidence that simply making consumers feel younger can result in an increased preference for sustainable products. Study 1 demonstrated that feeling younger increased the selection of more sustainable products over less sustainable ones. Study 2 showed that this effect is mediated by the perceived fit. Study 3 further supported the underlying mechanism by revealing that the focal effect was mitigated when the association between sustainability and younger age was weakened. Study 4 replicated the focal effect in a consequential choice setting. Finally, Study 5 confirmed the proposed effect by using trait subjective age as a predictor.

KEYWORDS

green consumption, identity, perceived fit, subjective age, sustainability

1 | INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has become a paramount concern in today's global landscape, and younger generations are strongly interested in the sustainable movement. Gen Z (born roughly between 1997 and 2012) is often depicted in the media as the “sustainability generation” (Petro, 2021), with sustainability being their number one concern (Jahns, 2021). Compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers, Gen Z and Millennials (born roughly between 1981 and 1996) report having a

greater concern for and taking more actions towards climate change (Tyson et al., 2021). Also, compared to Baby Boomers, Millennials are twice as willing to change their consumption habits for the environment, such as paying a premium for products that feature sustainable ingredients or social responsibility claims and switching brands to purchase such products (NIQ, 2018).

This trend raises an interesting question. If younger individuals are more likely to engage in sustainable behaviors, would simply making consumers feel younger increase the likelihood of sustainable

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consumption regardless of their actual age? If so, why? To explore these questions, our research turns to the literature on subjective age, which refers to the age individuals feel and perceive themselves to be (Barak & Stern, 1986). Prior research has shown that having a lower subjective age (i.e., feeling younger) is associated with behaviors typically exhibited by younger individuals, such as showing more interest in fashion or new products (Lin & Xia, 2012; Stephens, 1991). Even a temporary activation of a younger age identity can prompt consumers to choose contemporary products over traditional ones (Amatulli et al., 2018). However, research has yet to examine the potential link between consumers' subjective age and sustainable consumption.

The present research investigates how a temporary decrease in subjective age influences consumers' preference for sustainable products. Building on prior research on consumer identity, which found that consumers are likely to be drawn to products that are consistent with their accessible identity (Aaker et al., 2001; Hong et al., 2000; Lau-Gesk, 2003; Shrum et al., 2013), we propose that consumers will prefer sustainable products when they perceive themselves as younger. This prediction is based on the premise that sustainability is more closely associated with younger than older individuals, thus creating a perceived fit between feeling younger and sustainable products.

Our research makes important theoretical contributions to the existing literature. First, it expands the subjective age literature in several ways. We build upon prior research connecting a younger subjective age with youthful behaviors (Amatulli et al., 2018; Lin & Xia, 2012; Stephens, 1991) and introduce sustainable consumption as an additional domain piqued when consumers feel younger. Also, while prior research has focused on the impact of feeling younger among older individuals (Amatulli et al., 2018), our research demonstrates that youthful feelings can influence adults of all ages. Furthermore, unlike previous research that did not specify the mechanism through which a younger subjective age increases younger thoughts or behaviors, our research suggests perceived fit as the underlying mechanism, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of subjective age's impact.

Second, we contribute to the literature on consumer identity and sustainable consumption by introducing subjective age as a unique driving factor. Unlike prior research that predominantly focused on the role of pro-environmental identity in sustainable actions (Bartels & Hoogendam, 2011; Juhl et al., 2017), our research demonstrates that an identity seemingly unrelated to sustainability, namely age identity, can still exert influence on sustainable consumption.

The demand for sustainable practices is increasing in various sectors of society (Steffen et al., 2015). Marketing and consumer research are vital in implementing these practices, driving the transition toward a more sustainable economy (Kotler, 2011; Mick, 2006). By examining the role of subjective age, we offer a unique perspective that can contribute to advancing sustainability efforts in the consumer market.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 | Subjective age

Subjective age, indicating how young or old a person feels (Amatulli et al., 2018; Barak & Stern, 1986), is essential to one's age identity (Kaufman & Elder, 2002). Researchers often use a single-item scale asking, "How old do you feel now?" (Kotter-Grühn et al., 2016), with responses provided in years to an open-ended question (e.g., "35" indicating feeling 35 years old). Various continuous scales are also used, such as a 100-point scale that ranges from "extremely young" to "extremely old" (Park et al., 2021).

While people often feel older than their actual age in their early years, they feel increasingly younger than their actual age beyond their mid-twenties (Montepare & Lachman, 1989; Rubin & Berntsen, 2006). This tendency to feel younger is a global phenomenon (Barak et al., 2001; Barak, 2009), and this trend intensifies with each passing year (Wettstein et al., 2023). The correlation between subjective and chronological age is surprisingly weak, ranging from 0.26 to 0.42 (Kastenbaum et al., 1972), suggesting the influence of various factors on one's self-perceived age.

Several factors influence subjective age. These include physical health (Mathur & Moschis, 2005; Westerhof et al., 2003), cognitive functioning (Hughes & Lachman, 2018), socio-demographic (Guido et al., 2018; Sherman et al., 2001), psychological (Kornadt et al., 2018), and behavioral factors (Mathur et al., 2014). Initially considered an individual trait stable over time and across situations, subjective age is now seen as a malleable construct varying with situational contingencies. It can fluctuate day-to-day according to daily health (Kotter-Grühn et al., 2015) or sense of control (Bellingtier & Neupert, 2020). Contextual influences are also important. For example, older adults felt younger when told they performed better than their same-aged peers on a hand-grip strength test (Stephan et al., 2013). Conversely, they felt older after reading in small, blurry fonts (Eibach et al., 2010) or engaging in memory tests (Hughes et al., 2013). More relevant to the marketing context, older adults felt younger after envisioning contexts associated with hedonic rather than utilitarian goals, such as physical locations, social references, or various product categories (Guido et al., 2014).

Subjective age carries significant implications. Generally, younger subjective age is associated with benefits commonly related to youth. These include improved physical and mental health, cognitive function, life satisfaction, resilience to stress, and even a reduced risk of mortality for middle-aged and older adults (Alonso Debreczeni & Bailey, 2021; Stephan et al., 2018; Westerhof & Barrett, 2005; Westerhof et al., 2014). In the marketing context, feeling younger is associated with a tendency to think and behave similarly to younger people (Peluso et al., 2020). For example, those who feel younger tend to exhibit greater interest in fashion products (Lin & Xia, 2012) or new products (Stephens, 1991). Even a momentary decrease in subjective age can prompt consumers to think and act as younger individuals would. For example, when feeling younger, older adults preferred contemporary rather than traditional products (Amatulli

et al., 2018) or performed better on a handgrip strength test (Stephan et al., 2013). However, the precise underlying mechanisms connecting decreased subjective age and its effects remain unclear. Table 1 provides an overview of prior research examining the malleability of subjective age and its downstream effects.

Taken together, subjective age represents a promising yet relatively unexplored research area, providing a distinctive perspective for observing consumer behavior. Our study seeks to investigate the influence of feeling younger within the context of sustainable consumption, targeting adults of all age groups and delving into the underlying mechanisms.

2.2 | Sustainable consumption and identity

Sustainability is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to

meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 27). More specifically, it concerns the impact of human actions on the environment (Stern, 1997). A growing awareness that humans as decision-makers should carefully consider the environmental consequences has led to a more intention-oriented definition. From this perspective, sustainable behavior can be best described as actions undertaken to benefit the environment (Stern, 2000). Within consumer research, sustainable behavior often takes the form of sustainable consumption, such as purchasing green products over non-green products (Brough et al., 2016; Newman et al., 2014). Given the significant impact of consumption on sustainability, consumer research plays a crucial role in understanding and promoting sustainable practices.

Early research on sustainability in the marketing domain primarily focused on characterizing the “green consumer” segment (Anderson & Cunningham, 1972). However, recent studies have shifted their attention toward exploring psychological and situational factors that

TABLE 1 Previous research on the malleability of subjective age.

Citation	Participants	IV	Key findings
Eibach et al. (2010)	Middle-aged and older adults	Experiencing visual disfluency (vs. fluency) Highlighting generation gaps (vs. control)	Participants felt older and more strongly endorsed age-stereotypic attitudes.
Weiss and Lang (2012)	Older adults	Exposure to negative (vs. positive or neutral) age stereotypes	Participants felt older.
Hughes et al. (2013)	Older adults	Subjective age measurement after (vs. before) memory test	Participants felt older.
Stephan et al. (2013)	Older adults	Receiving positive (vs. no) performance feedback on a handgrip strength task	Participants felt younger and performed better in the subsequent handgrip strength task
Guido et al. (2014)	Older adults	Contexts associated with hedonic (vs. utilitarian) goals	Participants felt younger.
Amatulli et al. (2018)	Older adults	The presence of younger (vs. older) individuals in a shopping context	Participants felt younger and were more likely to choose contemporary (vs. traditional) products.
Geraci et al. (2018)	Older adults	Subjective age measurement after (vs. before) cognitive tests	Participants felt older.
Caspi et al. (2019)	All adults	Subjective age measurement after (vs. before) technology use	Older participants felt older.
Park et al. (2021)	Younger and middle-aged adults (18–60)	Contrast with younger (vs. older) self or others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants felt older and engaged in more prosocial behavior. • This effect was mediated by felt responsibility.
Septianto and Kemper (2021)	All adults	Contrast with younger (vs. older) others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For altruistic claim, participants felt older and were more likely to choose organic option; for egoistic claim, this effect was reversed. • This effect was mediated by compassion and anger.
Current research	All adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast with older (vs. younger) self • Writing about things that make them feel younger (vs. older) • Imagining feeling younger (vs. control) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants felt younger and were more likely to choose sustainable products. • This effect was mediated by perceived fit.

drive sustainable consumption (Errmann et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Trudel, 2019; White et al., 2019). Consumers' identity, in particular, plays a crucial role in guiding sustainable actions. Identifying oneself as an "organic consumer" or a "green consumer" can predict the purchase of organic products (Bartels & Hoogendam, 2011). Also, reinforcing a pro-environmental identity or engaging in sustainable behavior at a given moment can increase the likelihood of similar actions in the future because people strive to act consistently with their self-concept (Juhl et al., 2017; Van der Werff et al., 2014). Sometimes, a self-concept unrelated to sustainability can also motivate sustainable consumption because consumers associate green products with specific traits. For example, the common cognitive association between environmental consciousness and femininity can lead male consumers to avoid eco-friendly options to preserve their masculine identity (Brough et al., 2016).

Taken together, identity serves as a significant factor in determining sustainable consumption. Sustainable behavior is generally influenced by one's self-identification as an environmentally conscious individual. However, limited evidence also suggests that identities that may seem irrelevant to sustainability (e.g., gender identity) can impact sustainable behavior. Our investigation aims to explore another scenario in which consumers' identity unrelated to sustainability influences sustainable consumption, namely age identity.

3 | CURRENT RESEARCH

The present research proposes that when consumers perceive themselves as younger, they are more likely to choose more sustainable products because such products align well with the activated younger age identity.

Identity plays a pivotal role in shaping and directing consumer behavior, influencing a vast array of consumer decisions such as accessory selection (Berger & Ward, 2010), charity selection (Shang et al., 2008), office decor preferences (Gosling et al., 2002), and brand preferences (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Among the multiple identities they possess, consumers are more likely to respond positively to stimuli that resonate with their currently accessible identities (Aaker et al., 2001; Hong et al., 2000; Lau-Gesk, 2003). Consumers are drawn toward products that reflect their identity because they innately seek coherence, meaning, and control (Heine et al., 2006; Swann, 2012). The desire to maintain positive self-views leads consumers to perceive identity-consistent information as more relevant than identity-inconsistent information (Wheeler et al., 2005). The consumption of products that align with one's identity may serve as a signal not only to others but also to themselves (Gosling et al., 2002; Shrum et al., 2013).

Building on this logic, we expect that feeling younger will motivate consumers to evaluate information consistent with a youthful identity more favorably. Existing research on subjective age supports this prediction, suggesting that feeling younger can lead consumers to think and behave as younger individuals might (Peluso et al., 2020). Empirical evidence from past studies indicated a

correlation, wherein older consumers with lower subjective age are more likely to engage in purchasing behaviors typically associated with a younger demographic, such as an interest in fashion items (Lin & Xia, 2012) and newer products (Gwinner & Stephens, 2001; Stephens, 1991). Furthermore, Amatulli et al. (2018) showed that even momentary activation of a younger identity can increase the preference for contemporary products over traditional ones among older adults.

The underlying premise of our proposal is that sustainable products align with a youthful identity due to a strong association between younger individuals and sustainability. This association is primarily based on the observation that younger people are more actively engaged in environmental concerns and sustainable actions compared to older individuals. Gen Z and Millennials demonstrate heightened concern for climate change and actively participate in climate action by discussing the issue, engaging with climate-related content on social media, and showing a willingness to make sacrifices, such as giving up fossil fuels and gas-powered cars (Tyson et al., 2021). Younger generations also have a greater inclination toward sustainable consumption. For instance, 75% of Millennials are willing to change their purchasing habits to favor eco-friendly products (NIQ, 2018). Similarly, compared to older generations, younger individuals are more willing to pay a premium for sustainable products and consider corporate sustainability contributions when making product or service choices (Yamane & Kaneko, 2021). The media further reinforces the association between younger individuals and sustainability by frequently highlighting this connection to consumers (e.g., Jahns, 2021; Petro, 2021; Ro, 2022).

Due to the cognitive associations between sustainability and younger age, we predict that consumers may be more likely to engage in sustainable consumption when they feel younger than older. Formally stated:

H1. Consumers will prefer sustainable products when they feel younger compared to when they feel older.

We further propose that the perceived fit between consumers and the sustainable options drives the effect. The extent to which individuals perceive a product to align with their self-concept has been widely recognized as a key determinant of consumer behavior (Sirgy, 1982). Consumers tend to choose products that they believe fit or match their self-image, as this compatibility provides a sense of authenticity and self-affirmation (Swaminathan et al., 2009). Perceived fit plays a vital role in consumer purchase decisions. For example, lonely consumers may choose minority-endorsed products because they feel that these products align with their feelings of loneliness in private consumption contexts (Wang et al., 2012). Similarly, consumers evaluate corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts more positively when they perceive a stronger fit between their values or lifestyles and such activities (Lee et al., 2012). Additionally, consumers feel a stronger connection to brands associated with their ingroups compared to outgroups because they perceive a greater fit with these brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Therefore, we hypothesize that perceived fit will mediate the relationship between subjective age and the preference for sustainable products. Specifically, feeling younger is expected to increase the perceived fit with sustainable products, thereby increasing the likelihood of choosing such products.

H2. The effect of subjective age on the preference for sustainable products will be mediated by perceived fit.

Our predictions were formulated based on the cognitive association between sustainability and the younger generation, enabling consumers to perceive a stronger alignment with sustainable products when they feel younger. If our argument holds, this effect should diminish when the link between sustainability and youth weakens. Without such association, feeling younger may not prompt consumers to perceive a fit with sustainable products, potentially limiting its impact on sustainable consumption. Indeed, in real-world scenarios, circumstances may arise where this connection wanes. For instance, if consumers discover that older individuals engage in pro-environmental behaviors as much as younger ones, it could weaken the mental association between youthfulness and sustainability. In such cases, consumers may not perceive sustainable products as congruent with their identity even when they feel youthful.

Study 3 tests this hypothesis by manipulating the strength of the association between sustainability and the younger generation. We predict that the effect of feeling younger will be evident when sustainability's association with the younger generation is strong but not when this association is weak.

H3. When the association strength between sustainability and youth is weak (vs. strong), the impact of feeling younger on the preference for sustainable products will be mitigated.

4 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

The following sections detail a pilot study and five main studies testing our hypotheses. The pilot study validates our assumption that consumers hold cognitive associations between sustainability and the younger generations. Study 1 then demonstrates that a temporary decrease in subjective age (i.e., feeling younger) increases the preference for more sustainable products over less sustainable ones. Study 2 delves deeper into the underlying mechanism, demonstrating that perceived fit mediates this effect. Study 3 further confirms our conceptual model by revealing that the positive impact of a younger age identity is lessened when the association between sustainability and younger age is weakened. Study 4 tests the proposed effect in a consequential choice setting. Finally, Study 5 examines whether the focal effect is confirmed by using trait subjective age as a predictor. Figure 1 illustrates the overall theoretical framework of this research.

In our experiments, the terms “younger” and “older” subjective age do not necessarily imply that participants feel younger or older than their chronological age. Instead, these terms are used in comparisons within the study design. Studies 1 through 3 examine consumers' sustainable consumption behaviors when they feel younger compared to when they feel older. Study 4 compares sustainable choices when consumers feel younger to those with a control condition. While these studies operationalize subjective age as a state, Study 5 treats subjective age as a trait variable.

We determined the sample size with the G*Power program (Faul et al., 2007). Based on the criteria (i.e., effect size $f = 0.25$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $1 - \beta = 0.80$), we determined that a minimum sample size of 64 per cell was required. Therefore, we aimed for at least 80 observations in each experimental condition. To accommodate variations in study design, we opted to establish a minimum sample size rather than a fixed number. Also, as we implemented a writing task to manipulate

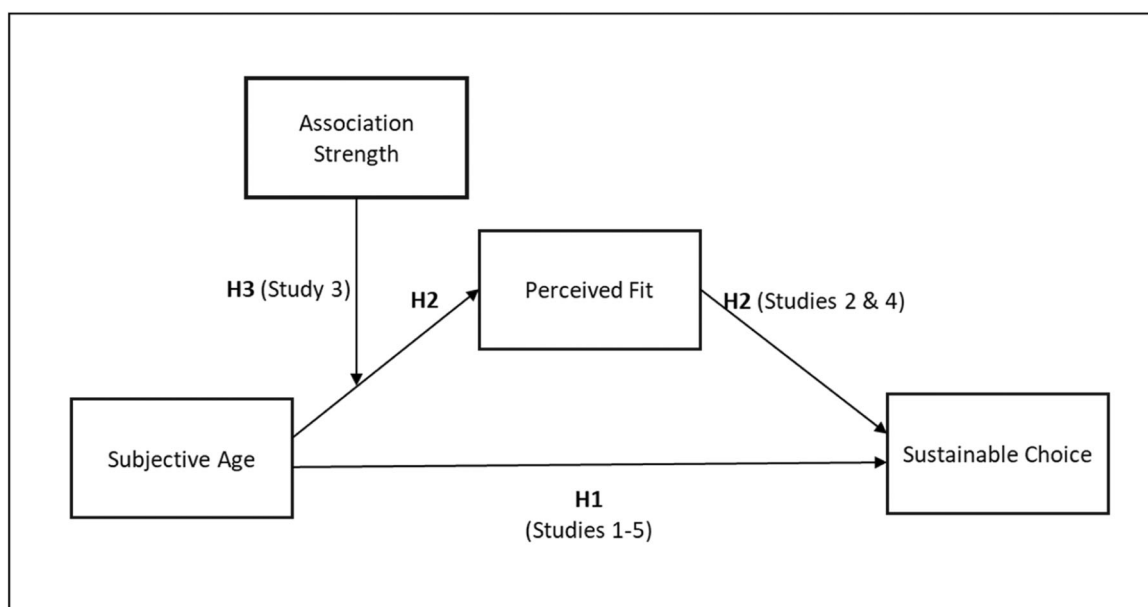


FIGURE 1 Overall theoretical framework.

subjective age in Studies 2 and 3, we planned to exclude participants who provided nonsensical responses (e.g., "Like, Nice, Well") or who spent an unusually long time on the writing task, using a cut-off of five standard deviations from the mean (Catapano et al., 2022). All data collection was conducted between February 2023 and May 2024. No participants participated in more than one study.

5 | PILOT TESTING

We conducted a pilot test ($N = 60$; $M_{age} = 36.98$, $SD = 8.76$; 33 female, 27 male) to validate our assumption about the association between sustainability and younger age, which underpins our theoretical argument. Three questions measured whether participants associated sustainability with younger or older generations: "Between older and younger generations, who is more interested in purchasing products that are sustainable?", "Between older and younger generations, who is more interested in protecting environment?", "Between older and younger generations, who is more active in engaging in sustainable actions?"; 1 = *definitely older generations*, 4 = *no difference*, 7 = *definitely younger generations*; $\alpha = 0.81$). As expected, sustainability was associated more strongly with younger than older generations ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.20$; $t(59)_{\text{differ from "4"}} = 10.79$, $p < 0.001$).

Although sustainability and prosociality are linked, they represent separate concepts (Gentile et al., 2009; Stern, 2000). Our theoretical framework focuses on the connection between younger age and sustainability specifically, rather than prosociality in general. To reinforce this premise, we conducted another test with a separate sample from the same population ($N = 60$; $M_{age} = 43.12$, $SD = 12.23$; 27 female, 33 male). Three questions measured whether participants associated prosociality with younger or older generations: "Between older and younger generations, who is more interested in donating to charity?", "Between older and younger generations, who is more interested in the well-being of others (e.g., local community, global community)?", "Between older and younger generations, who is more active in helping other people?"; 1 = *definitely older generations*, 4 = *no difference*, 7 = *definitely younger generations*; $\alpha = 0.78$). The analysis revealed that, unlike sustainability, prosociality was more closely associated with older than younger generations ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.17$; $t(59)_{\text{differ from "4"}} = -4.15$, $p < 0.001$).

Together, these findings validate our assumption that sustainability is uniquely associated with younger age.

6 | STUDY 1: FOCAL EFFECT

Study 1 examined whether feeling younger increases the choice of sustainable options using a 2 (subjective age: younger vs. older) between-subjects design. We predicted that participants in the younger subjective age condition would be more likely to choose sustainable options compared to those in the older subjective age condition.

6.1 | Method

We recruited 200 U.S. participants ($M_{age} = 41.73$, $SD = 12.41$; 107 female, 91 male, one nonbinary/third gender, one prefer not to say) from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and assigned them to conditions in a 2 (subjective age: younger vs. older) between-subjects design.

We followed the protocol of Park et al. (2021) to manipulate subjective age. In the younger subjective age condition, we instructed participants to think of themselves when they would be 80 and compare that to who they are right now. In the older subjective age condition, we asked participants to think of themselves when they were 15 and compare that to who they are right now.

A separate pretest ($N = 160$, MTurk) validated the effectiveness of this manipulation. We asked participants to indicate how young or old they felt (1 = *extremely young*, 100 = *extremely old*). As expected, participants in the younger subjective age condition reported feeling younger ($M = 47.99$, $SD = 19.37$) than those in the older subjective age condition ($M = 59.15$, $SD = 21.49$; $F(1, 158) = 11.93$, $p < 0.001$). This effect persisted after controlling for chronological age ($F(1, 158) = 17.74$, $p < 0.001$).

In the second part of the survey, we asked participants to imagine themselves grocery shopping and select their preferred options from five pairs of grocery items. The five product categories were batteries, light bulbs, notebooks (Yan et al., 2021), garbage bags, and pens. Each pair consisted of one option that was more sustainable and the other that was less sustainable (see Appendix A for stimuli). We randomized the presentation order of the five pairs as well as the order of the two options within each pair.

Finally, we collected demographic information, debriefed, and dismissed the participants.

6.2 | Results

We created an index of sustainable choice by adding the number of selected sustainable options, ranging from 0 to 5. A one-way ANOVA revealed a predicted significant main effect of subjective age ($F(1, 198) = 5.65$, $p = 0.018$, $\eta^2 = 0.028$). As expected, participants chose more sustainable options when they felt younger than older ($M_{\text{younger}} = 3.93$, $SD = 1.29$ vs. $M_{\text{older}} = 3.46$, $SD = 1.50$). Figure 2 illustrates the share of sustainable product choices within each product category. Please see Web Appendix A for comprehensive statistical analyses for each product category.

Next, we examined whether this effect persisted after controlling for participants' chronological age and gender. Given the limited number of participants who identified as nonbinary and chose not to disclose their gender, we aggregated their responses under the male category (Vadakkapatt et al., 2022). As expected, the focal effect remained significant after controlling for chronological age and gender ($b = 0.467$, $SE = 0.199$, $t(196) = 2.348$, $p = 0.020$). Neither age ($b = -0.004$, $SE = 0.008$, $t(196) = -0.559$, $p = 0.577$) nor gender

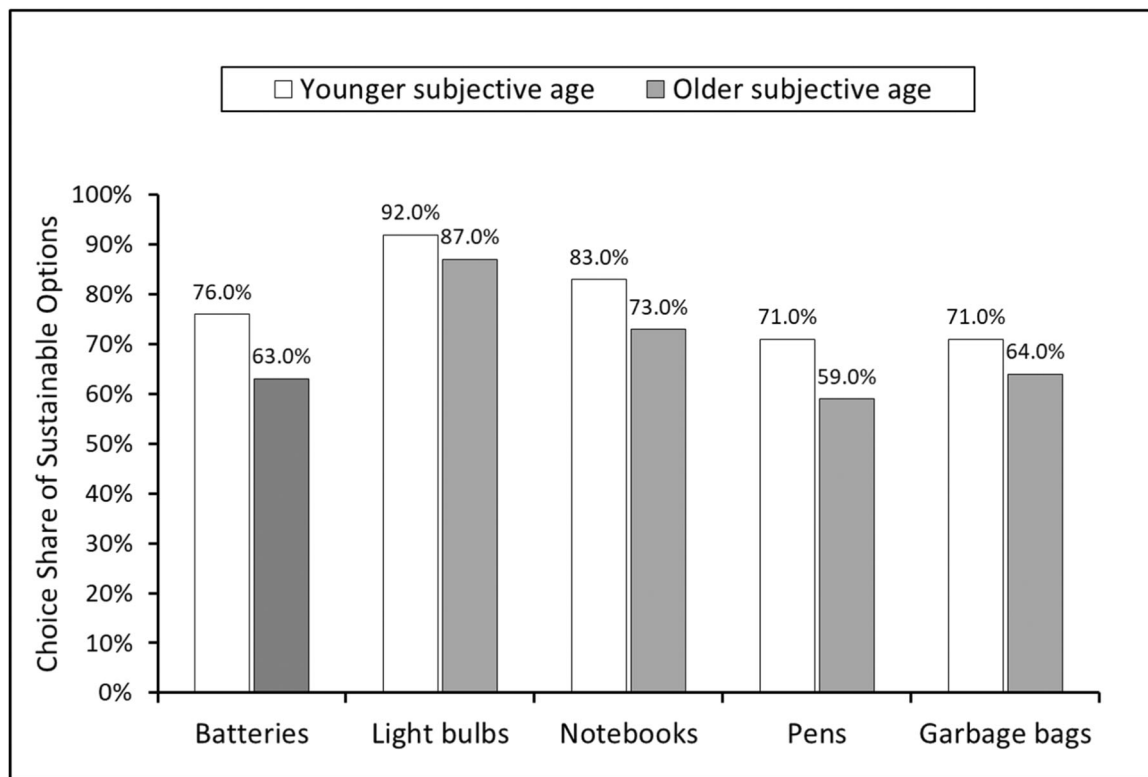


FIGURE 2 Study 1 results.

($b = -0.055$, $SE = 0.200$, $t(196) = -0.277$, $p = 0.782$) predicted the choice of sustainable options. Furthermore, this null effect of chronological age remained in a separate regression where chronological age was entered as the sole predictor of sustainable choice ($b = -0.004$, $SE = 0.008$, $t(198) = -0.523$, $p = 0.602$), further highlighting the importance of subjective age.

Thus, Study 1 offers preliminary evidence supporting our proposal that a momentary shift in subjective age influences the choice of sustainable products. Specifically, participants demonstrated a greater tendency to choose sustainable products when they felt younger compared to when they felt older.

7 | STUDY 2: SHOWING PROCESS BY A MEDIATION

Study 2 had two objectives. First, we aimed to investigate the mediating role of perceived fit. We predicted that the perceived fit would mediate the effect of feeling younger between consumers and sustainable products. Second, we sought to test the robustness of the findings from Study 1 by using a different manipulation of subjective age. Specifically, we employed a writing task, a method commonly used in previous research on consumer identity and mindset (e.g., Kim et al., 2019; Park et al., 2020; Reed, 2004). A successful replication of the previous results would provide convergent evidence for the proposed impact of subjective age on sustainable choice.

7.1 | Method

We recruited 161 U.S. participants ($M_{age} = 41.73$, $SD = 12.41$; 98 female, 58 male, four nonbinary/third gender, one prefer not to say) from MTurk and randomly assigned them to conditions in a 2 (subjective age: younger vs. older) between-subjects design.

First, we utilized a writing task to manipulate participants' subjective age. In the younger subjective age condition, we instructed participants to list three things that make them feel young and elaborate on one for about a minute. In the older subjective age condition, we instructed participants to list three things that make them feel old and elaborate on one for about a minute (adapted from Jiang et al., 2021).

A separate pretest ($N = 160$, MTurk) validated the effectiveness of this manipulation. After the writing task, we measured both chronological age ("How old are you?") and subjective age ("How old do you *feel* right now?"). For further validation, we also measured subjective age by asking participants to indicate how young or old they felt on a 100-point scale (1 = *extremely young*, 100 = *extremely old*; Park et al., 2021). Before the analyses, we excluded four participants who wrote nonsense responses (e.g., Like, Well, Great) to the writing task. Following a suggestion from Kotter-Gröhn et al. (2016), we computed proportional discrepancy scores (i.e., [subjective age - chronological age]/chronological age). These scores indicated the percentage by which respondents perceived themselves as younger (negative scores) or older (positive scores) compared to their actual age (e.g., -0.25 = feeling 25% younger

than actual age). As expected, a one-way ANOVA confirmed that participants in the younger subjective age condition felt younger ($M = -0.10$, $SD = 0.22$) than those in the older subjective age condition ($M = 0.06$, $SD = 0.34$; $F(1, 154) = 12.53$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$). Also, a one-way ANOVA on the 100-point scale confirmed that participants in the younger subjective age condition felt younger ($M = 40.68$, $SD = 17.26$) than those in the older subjective age condition ($M = 54.42$, $SD = 16.67$; $F(1, 154) = 25.58$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$).

Next, we administered dependent and mediator measures. As in Study 1, we asked participants to choose between more and less sustainable options from five different product categories. We randomized the presentation order of the five pairs as well as the order of the two options within each pair. Then, we asked participants to respond to a one-item measure of perceived fit ("Sustainable products are a good fit for me;" 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*; adapted from Ostinelli & Luna, 2022).

Finally, we collected demographic information, debriefed the participants, and dismissed them from the study.

7.2 | Results

We excluded one participant who took an unusually long time during the writing task using a cut-off of five standard deviations from the mean. After exclusions, we had a final sample of 160 participants ($M_{age} = 39.58$, $SD = 12.37$; 60.6% female).

As in Study 1, we created an index of sustainable choice by adding the number of selected sustainable options ranging from 0 to 5. A one-way ANOVA on sustainable choice revealed a significant main effect of subjective age ($F(1, 158) = 8.43$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2 = 0.051$). As expected, participants chose more sustainable options when they felt younger than older ($M_{younger} = 3.93$, $SD = 1.39$ vs. $M_{older} = 3.28$, $SD = 1.42$), replicating the results of Study 1. Further analyses employing the same procedures detailed in Study 1 revealed that these results persisted when controlling for participants' age and gender. Also, this null effect of chronological age remained in a separate regression where chronological age was entered as the sole predictor of sustainable choice (Web Appendix B).

Figure 3 illustrates the share of sustainable product choices within each product category. Please see Web Appendix A for comprehensive statistical analyses for each product category.

Next, a one-way ANOVA on perceived fit revealed a marginally significant effect of subjective age ($F(1, 158) = 3.05$, $p = 0.083$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$). As predicted, participants perceived a greater fit in the younger subjective age condition than in the older subjective age condition ($M_{younger} = 5.57$, $SD = 1.26$ vs. $M_{older} = 5.22$, $SD = 1.32$). These results persisted when controlling for participants' age and gender (Web Appendix B).

We then used Hayes (2018) macro #4 with 5,000 bootstrapping to conduct a mediation analysis. The results revealed a marginally significant indirect effect of perceived fit ($a \times b = -0.27$, 90% CI = $[-0.52, -0.02]$). The direct effect remained significant ($c' = -0.38$, 90% CI = $[-0.65, -0.11]$), suggesting a partial mediation effect.

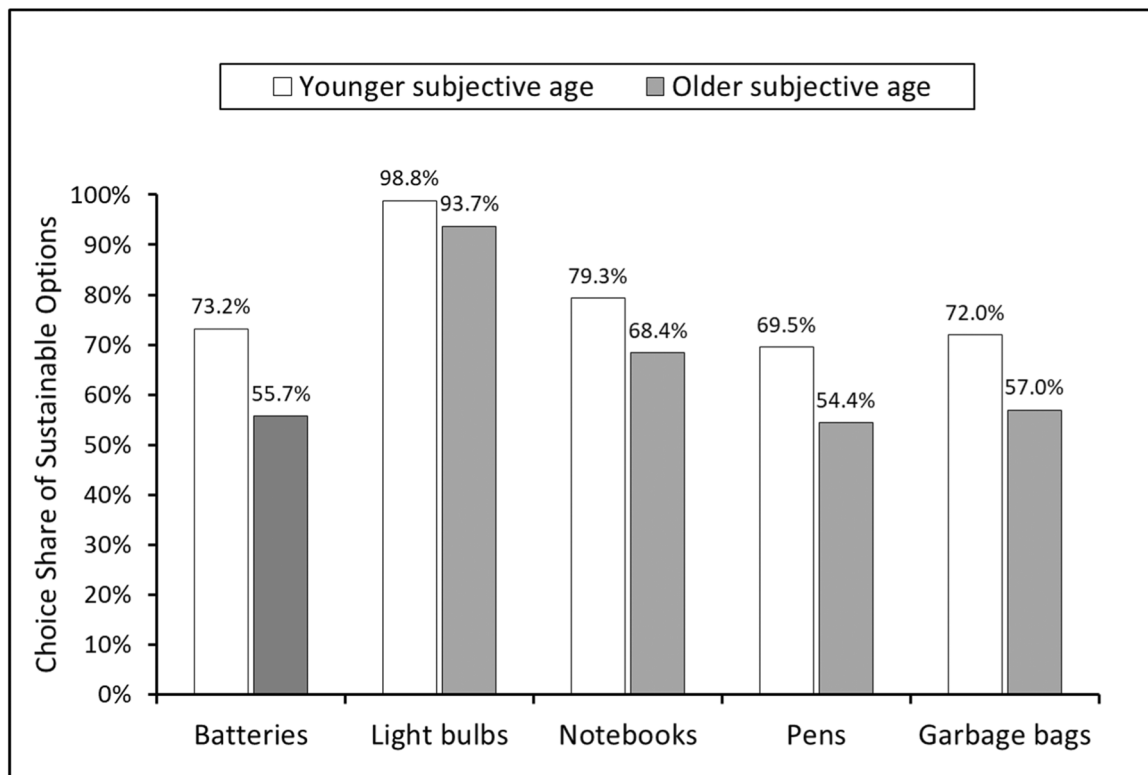


FIGURE 3 Study 2 results.

Therefore, Study 2 replicated the results of the first study and confirmed our hypothesis that the perceived fit between consumers and sustainable options drives this effect.

8 | STUDY 3: SHOWING PROCESS BY A MODERATION

Study 3 aims further to substantiate the underlying mechanism through a moderation approach. In Studies 1 and 2, we demonstrated that feeling youthful enhances the preference for sustainable products, as consumers perceive a greater fit with such products. This effect is predicated on the assumption that consumers link sustainability with the younger generation. Thus, when this association is weak, feeling younger will not lead consumers to perceive a better fit with sustainable products, which could limit its influence on sustainable consumption. Study 3 tests this hypothesis by manipulating the strength of the association between sustainability and younger age. We predict that the impact of feeling younger will be replicated when the association is strong but not weak.

8.1 | Method

We recruited 400 U.S. participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.64$, $SD = 12.62$; 219 female, 166 male, three nonbinary/third gender, two prefer not to say) from MTurk and randomly assigned them to condition in a 2 (subjective age: younger vs. older) \times 2 (sustainability-youth association strength: stronger vs. weaker) between-subjects design.

After manipulating participants' subjective age through the writing task, as described in Study 2, we administered the "preference survey." This survey presented a photo of sustainable batteries (Energizer Eco Advanced) made with recycled materials. To manipulate the strength of the association between sustainability and the younger generation, we included a graphic chart alongside the photo, displaying the sales distribution of the batteries by age group. In the stronger association condition, the chart showed that the youngest age group (ages 18–34) accounted for 51% of the sales distribution, while the other two age groups (ages 35–54 and 55+) accounted for the rest. In the weaker association condition, the chart was reversed, with the oldest age group (ages 55 and above) accounting for 51% of the sales distribution, while the other age groups accounted for the rest (See Appendix B for study material). Then, we measured participants' purchase intention for the sustainable batteries in comparison to the regular batteries of the same brand ("How likely would you be to choose Energizer Eco Advanced instead of regular Energizer batteries?"; 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*).

Lastly, we administered a manipulation check for association strength ("Which generation do you most strongly associate Energizer Eco Advanced with?") on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*definitely the older generation*) to 7 (*definitely the younger generation*). As a manipulation check for subjective age, we also asked participants to indicate how old they felt on a 100-point scale

(1 = *extremely young*, 100 = *extremely old*). Finally, we collected demographic information, debriefed the participants, and dismissed them from the study.

8.2 | Results

We excluded seven participants who wrote nonsense responses to the writing manipulation of subjective age and three who took an unusually long time during the writing task using a cut-off of five standard deviations from the mean. After exclusions, we had a final sample of 390 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.69$, $SD = 12.70$; 56.2% female).

A two-way ANOVA on the subjective age measure revealed a main effect of subjective age manipulation ($F(3, 386) = 16.19$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$). As expected, participants in the younger subjective age condition reported feeling younger than those in the older subjective conditions ($M_{\text{younger}} = 39.95$, $SD = 17.01$ vs. $M_{\text{older}} = 48.56$, $SD = 18.69$), indicating a successful manipulation. There was an unexpected significant interaction effect ($F(3, 386) = 3.90$, $p = 0.049$), indicating a larger difference when the association strength was weaker ($F(1, 191) = 20.63$, $p < 0.001$) than stronger ($F(1, 195) = 4.54$, $p = 0.034$).

Next, a two-way ANOVA on the association strength measure revealed only a main effect of association strength ($F(3, 386) = 236.94$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.38$), indicating a successful manipulation. As expected, participants in the stronger association condition more strongly associated sustainability with the younger generation ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 1.18$) than those in the weaker association condition ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.93$).

For the main analysis, a two-way ANOVA on the intention to choose the sustainable batteries revealed a marginally significant main effect of subjective age ($F(3, 386) = 3.28$, $p = 0.071$, $\eta^2 = 0.008$). Participants in the younger subjective age condition exhibited a higher intention to choose the sustainable batteries than those in the older subjective age condition did ($M_{\text{younger}} = 5.00$, $SD = 1.59$ vs. $M_{\text{older}} = 4.70$, $SD = 1.67$). More importantly, the analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction effect ($F(3, 386) = 3.03$, $p = 0.082$, $\eta^2 = 0.008$). Consistent with our prediction, planned comparisons revealed that, in the stronger association strength condition, participants who felt younger reported a higher intention to choose sustainable batteries than those who felt older ($M_{\text{younger}} = 5.09$, $SD = 1.56$ vs. $M_{\text{older}} = 4.50$, $SD = 1.68$, $F(1, 386) = 6.38$, $p = 0.012$, $\eta^2 = 0.016$). However, in the weaker association strength condition, the intention to choose the sustainable batteries did not differ between the two subjective age conditions ($p = 0.962$; see Figure 4). The interaction effect persisted when controlling for participants' age and gender. Also, age did not predict the intention to choose the sustainable batteries (Web Appendix B).

Study 3 confirmed the hypothesis that the influence of feeling younger on sustainable consumption would diminish when the association between sustainability and younger age is weakened. Therefore, it further supports our proposition that feeling younger enhances the likelihood of sustainable consumption through the perception of a greater fit.

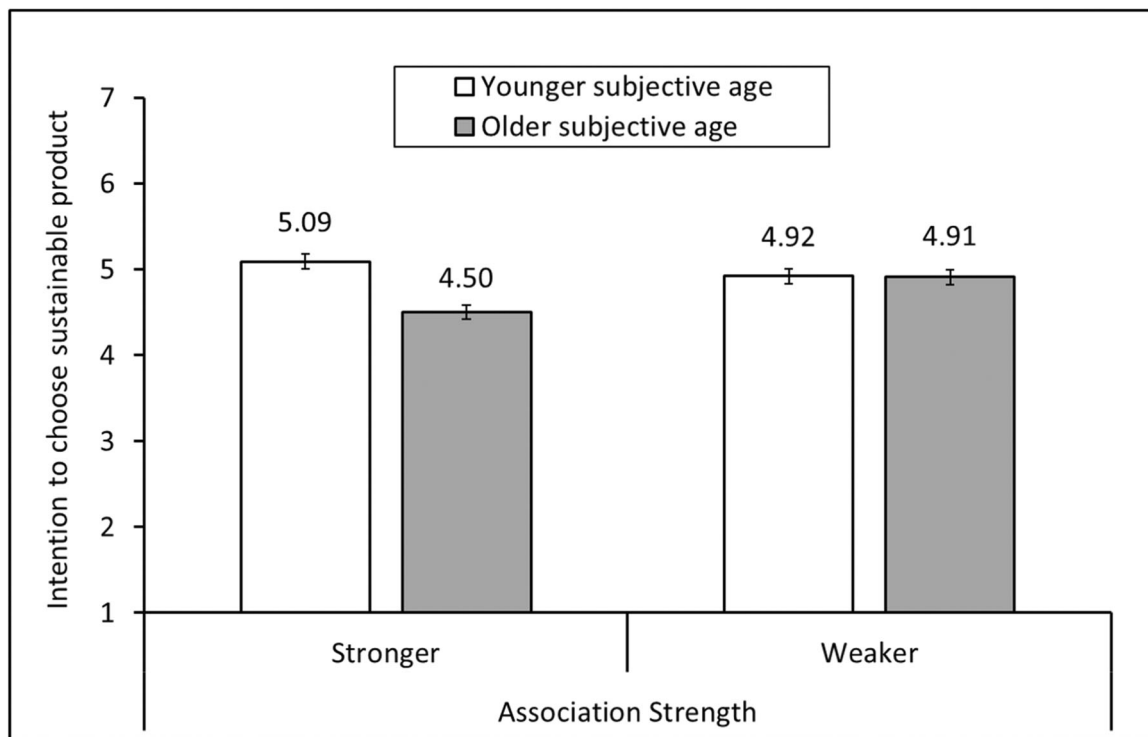


FIGURE 4 Study 3 results. *Error bars represent the standard error.

9 | STUDY 4: CONSEQUENTIAL CHOICE

Study 4 had four objectives. First, we aimed to investigate whether the hypothesized effect remains consistent in a setting with real-world implications. To achieve this, our study employed a consequential choice paradigm where participants could receive the product of their choice. Second, the study was designed to clarify the nature of the observed effect by integrating a control condition. This was in response to unresolved questions from Studies 1–3, which did not clearly distinguish whether the effect was due to feeling younger or older. By comparing responses in the younger subjective age condition against those in the control condition, this study aimed to confirm if feeling younger was the effect's primary driver. Third, Study 4 sought to eliminate an alternative explanation for our results related to individuals' perceptions of their remaining lifetime. The reasoning here is that feeling younger might lead to a perception of having more time left, thereby heightening the personal relevance of sustainability. To address this, we assessed participants' perceptions of their future time availability. Building on the findings of previous research (Park et al., 2021), we predicted that shifting subjective age would not affect perceptions of future time availability. Specifically, although actual age is often linked to perceptions of future time availability, significant health conditions that accompany aging play a pivotal role in this relationship. Therefore, merely shifting subjective age is unlikely to be sufficient to affect future time perspective.

9.1 | Method

We recruited 220 U.S. participants ($M_{age} = 39.08$, $SD = 12.75$; 98 female, 112 male, eight nonbinary/third gender, two prefer not to say) from Connect and assigned them to one of 2 (subjective age: younger vs. control) between-subjects design.

To manipulate subjective age, we designed specific scenarios for the participants to envision. Those in the younger subjective age condition were prompted to imagine themselves feeling youthful. After reading a brief description, they were asked to type "I am feeling very young" into a designated text box to affirm this feeling. Conversely, participants in the control condition were prompted to envision a typical day and type "It's a typical day" into the corresponding box. Further instructions can be found in Appendix C.

Next, participants were presented with a product choice task. They were encouraged to consider this choice genuine, with additional information that some participants would receive a voucher to redeem their selected product. Participants were presented with two options: a regular garbage bag and a sustainable garbage bag (refer to Appendix D).

Following this choice, participants responded to a four-item perceived fit measure adapted from Wang et al. (2012). The items included were: "Sustainable products fit me," "Sustainable products are compatible with my personality," "Sustainable products reflect my personal taste," and "Sustainable products reflect who I am" ($\alpha = 0.97$). Each statement was rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Next, participants completed a 10-item Future Time Perspective Scale (Carstensen & Lang, 1996). They rated their agreement with statements such as “Most of my life lies ahead of me,” “My future seems infinite to me,” and “There is plenty of time left in my life to make new plans” ($\alpha = 0.93$), on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

As a manipulation check, we asked participants to indicate how old they felt on a 100-point scale (1 = *extremely young*, 100 = *extremely old*) and in an open-ended question (in years).

As a covariate, we used a 10-item subscale from the Environmental Attitudes Inventory (Milfont & Duckitt, 2010). This subscale (i.e., Personal Conservation Behavior) measured the degree to which respondents engage in environmentally protective and resource-conserving activities in their daily lives. Sample items included: “I could not be bothered to save water or other natural resources” and “In my daily life, I'm just not interested in trying to conserve water and/or power” ($\alpha = 0.85$). Participants rated their agreement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Finally, we gathered demographic information, debriefed the participants, and dismissed them. Ten lottery winners were individually contacted and offered a choice between a voucher for their selected product or a cash prize equivalent to the value of the voucher.

9.2 | Results

A one-way ANOVA on the 100-point subjective age measure revealed a significant effect of subjective age ($F(1, 218) = 4.35$, $p = 0.038$, $\eta^2 = 0.020$). As expected, participants in the younger subjective age condition felt younger than those in the control condition ($M_{\text{younger}} = 39.28$, $SD = 18.42$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 44.25$, $SD = 16.92$). A one-way ANOVA on the proportional discrepancy score also revealed a significant effect of subjective age ($F(1, 218) = 4.83$, $p = 0.029$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). As predicted, participants in the younger subjective age condition felt younger than those in the control condition ($M_{\text{younger}} = -0.08$, $SD = 0.24$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = -0.01$, $SD = 0.25$), indicating a successful manipulation.

For the primary analysis, we employed a binary logistic regression with the choice of the garbage bag as the dependent variable and the subjective age conditions as the independent variable. The results revealed a significant effect of subjective age ($b = 0.94$, $SE = 0.28$, $Wald = 11.26$, $p < 0.001$, $\exp(b) = 2.548$). Specifically, the proportion of participants selecting the sustainable option was greater in the younger subjective age condition (66.4% [73/110]) compared to the control condition (43.6% [48/110]). This effect persisted after controlling for participants' chronological age, gender, and environmental attitudes. When entered as the sole predictor, unlike in previous studies, chronological age was positively associated with the choice of the sustainable option ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.01$, $Wald = 5.35$, $p = 0.021$), providing further support for the unique value of subjective age (Web Appendix B).

We analyzed whether our subjective age manipulation influenced the future time perspective to address the alternative

explanation. A one-way ANOVA on the future time perspective revealed that subjective age had a nonsignificant effect on the future time perspective ($p = 0.419$). Also, a logistic regression revealed that future time perspective did not predict the choice of garbage bag ($p = 0.696$), thus ruling out the alternative explanation.

Next, a one-way ANOVA on perceived fit revealed a significant effect of subjective age ($F(1, 218) = 4.24$, $p = 0.041$, $\eta^2 = 0.019$). As predicted, participants perceived a greater fit in the younger subjective age condition than in the control condition ($M_{\text{younger}} = 5.00$, $SD = 1.59$ vs. $M_{\text{control}} = 4.56$, $SD = 1.54$). Again, this effect persisted after controlling for the covariates (Web Appendix B).

We then used Hayes (2018) macro #4 with 5000 bootstrapping to conduct a mediation analysis. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of perceived fit ($a \times b = 0.54$, 95% CI = [0.031, 1.131]). The direct effect remained significant ($c' = 0.90$, 95% CI = [0.181, 1.621]), suggesting a partial mediation effect.

Therefore, Study 4 provided converging evidence for our proposed effect using a consequential choice paradigm, clarified its nature by demonstrating that it is driven by feeling younger rather than older, and successfully ruled out the alternative explanation of the future time perspective.

10 | STUDY 5: TRAIT SUBJECTIVE AGE

Building on recent research showing that subjective age is a flexible construct influenced by context, our previous studies manipulated subjective age to treat it as a state. However, if the proposed relationship between subjective age and sustainable consumption is robust, we should observe the same effect when subjective age is measured and treated as a trait. Demonstrating this would provide stronger evidence for the proposed effect.

10.1 | Method

We recruited 221 U.S. participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.73$, $SD = 12.41$; 99 female, 118 male, three others) from MTurk. First, we measured subjective age using a protocol adapted from previous research (Kornadt et al., 2022; Park et al., 2021). Participants were instructed that “many people feel older or younger than they actually are,” and asked, “how old do you feel most of the time?” They then indicated their subjective age on a 100-point scale (1 = *extremely young*, 100 = *extremely old*).

Next, participants chose their preferred options from three pairs of products: pens, batteries, and garbage bags. Each pair included one more sustainable option and one less sustainable option, with the positions of the options randomized within each pair. Next, we measured participants' mood on a scale from 1 (*very bad*) to 7 (*very good*). Then, we collected demographic information including age, gender, annual household income, and personal educational attainment. Finally, we debriefed the participants and dismissed them.

10.2 | Results

We regressed the number of chosen sustainable options (0–3) on subjective age, chronological age, gender, income, education, and mood. As in our earlier studies, we aggregated the responses of three participants who identified their gender as “others” under the male category. As predicted, subjective age was negatively related to sustainable choices ($\beta = -0.014$, $t = -2.69$, $p = 0.010$). None of the other variables were significantly associated with the sustainable choice: chronological age ($\beta = 0.010$, $t = 1.46$, $p = 0.146$), gender ($\beta = 0.154$, $t = 0.96$, $p = 0.340$), income ($\beta = -0.014$, $t = -0.66$, $p = 0.512$), education ($\beta = -0.005$, $t = -0.04$, $p = 0.965$), and mood ($\beta = -0.040$, $t = -0.72$, $p = 0.475$).

11 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

11.1 | Summary of findings

The present research investigated how momentary shifts of subjective age influence sustainable consumption. We proposed that consumers are more likely to gravitate towards sustainable products when they feel younger compared to when they feel older. Additionally, we suggested that the perceived fit between consumers and sustainable products would mediate this effect. Three studies provided converging empirical evidence in support of these hypotheses. Study 1 demonstrated that activating a younger subjective age increased the preference for sustainable products over regular products. Study 2 proved that the perception of fit between consumers and sustainable products mediated this effect. Furthermore, supporting our theoretical account that feeling younger increases the preference for sustainable products due to the association between youth and sustainability, Study 3 showed that the primary effect diminished when the association strength between sustainability and the younger generations was weakened. Study 4 replicated the focal effect in a consequential choice setting. Finally, Study 5 reinforced the findings by showing that trait subjective age can reliably predict sustainable consumption.

11.2 | Theoretical and practical contribution

Our research makes significant contributions both theoretically and practically. First, previous research has indicated that a younger subjective age can lead to the adoption of thoughts or behaviors commonly related to younger consumers, such as an increased interest in fashion or new products (Amatulli et al., 2018; Gwinner & Stephens, 2001; Lin & Xia, 2012). We extend this line of research by introducing sustainable products as another category associated with younger consumers and thus benefit from feeling younger.

Second, we contribute to the existing literature by elucidating the role of perceived fit as the underlying process that connects shifts in subjective age and sustainable consumption. Prior research

has offered limited insights into the mechanism through which subjective age influences consumer behavior (Park et al., 2021; Septianto & Kemper, 2021). While previous research has shown that feeling younger leads to behaviors often associated with younger individuals (Amatulli et al., 2018; Lin & Xia, 2012; Stephens, 1991), no empirical tests have explored the underlying mechanism. Thus, our research makes a meaningful contribution to the current literature by providing the first empirical evidence of the underlying mechanism connecting feeling younger to its downstream effects.

Third, prior research on the malleability of subjective age and its downstream effects has mainly focused on older consumers, examining how making them feel younger changes their behavior (Amatulli et al., 2018). This focus is understandable because older consumers have more room to feel younger compared to younger consumers. However, by demonstrating the relationship between feeling younger and sustainable consumption for consumers from all age groups, we show that the influence of feeling younger extends beyond specific age demographics.

Fourth, our findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge connecting consumers' identity with their engagement in sustainable consumption. Previous research has primarily focused on the impact of a pro-environmental identity on sustainable consumption (Bartels & Hoogendam, 2011; Juhl et al., 2017; Van der Werff et al., 2014). However, our research found that age identity can significantly impact the preference for sustainable products. This aligns with a small body of research indicating that self-concepts seemingly unrelated to sustainability, such as gender, can still influence sustainable consumption (Brough et al., 2016).

Fifth, our research findings provide valuable insights for marketers and policymakers, highlighting a strategic opportunity to capitalize on the relationship between younger subjective age and the preference for sustainable products. Marketers can utilize these insights to tailor their marketing strategies effectively. By creating campaigns that evoke feelings of youthfulness, companies have the potential to enhance the appeal and consumption of green products. Retail environments, whether physical or online, could be designed to evoke a youthful ambiance. Companies can subtly guide consumers towards choosing green products over non-green alternatives by providing a shopping experience that resonates with a younger perceived age. Our findings also offer policymakers a fresh perspective on promoting environmentally friendly behaviors. Public campaigns could be reframed to evoke a sense of youthfulness to encourage sustainable behaviors. However, it is worth noting that not every marketing strategy will resonate with people of all ages. For example, certain strategies that instill a sense of youthfulness among younger consumers may alienate older consumers. To successfully evoke a sense of youthfulness, it is essential to tailor marketing campaigns to fit the target consumers.

11.3 | Limitations and future research

Our research also has limitations. First, the present research found that feeling younger increases the preference for sustainable

products. Initially, our findings may appear contradictory to Park et al. (2021), who found that feeling older increases engagement in prosocial actions. They attributed this effect to the heightened sense of responsibility for the well-being of distant others arising from societal norms that emphasize the responsibility of older adults to contribute to the greater good.

There are at least two reasons for the divergent findings. To begin with, as our pilot test showed, consumers maintain distinct cognitive associations for sustainable and prosocial behaviors. Specifically, they associate sustainability more closely with younger generations and prosociality with older generations. Furthermore, the two behaviors represent distinct constructs. Prosocial behaviors are carried out to benefit other individuals (Gentile et al., 2009) whereas sustainable behaviors aim to benefit the environment (Stern, 2000). Also, different factors influence an individual's inclination towards each of these behaviors (Dahl & Brownell, 2019; Flook et al., 2015; Schultz, 2001), and different motivations drive consumers to engage in them (Mostafa, 2007; Septianto & Soegiarto, 2017). The distinct nature of these two concepts allows for unique associations to develop.

Relatedly, this difference may have been more pronounced by contextual differences between the studies. The studies conducted by Park et al. (2021) focused on scenarios involving charitable donations, where participants were initially provided with information about a charity and then asked about their willingness to contribute their resources. This context is likely to have heightened the accessibility of moral concerns, which form the foundation of prosocial behavior (Septianto & Soegiarto, 2017). Consequently, feeling older would have a greater chance of activating lay beliefs associated with social responsibility. On the other hand, our studies examined a typical consumer purchasing situation, where participants were asked to choose a product for personal use. This context is less likely to have evoked a sense of societal responsibility, allowing the influence of self-concept as younger or older individuals to be more prominent. Therefore, sustainable options would have been perceived as more aligned with the younger age identity of the participants rather than the responsibility to fulfill societal obligations. It would be valuable for future research to systematically investigate these contextual differences and their impact on the relationship between subjective age, prosocial behavior, and sustainable behavior.

Second, future research could explore more ecologically valid approaches to manipulate subjective age. In our studies, we employed techniques such as asking participants to think about being very old (vs. very young) and comparing it to their current self (Study 1), writing about things that make them feel younger (vs. older; Studies 2 and 3), and imagining feeling younger (vs. older; Study 4). While these methods effectively shifted participants' subjective age and proved helpful in identifying the impact of feeling younger, they may not be readily applicable in real-world marketing settings. To achieve more tangible applications, future studies could explore alternative methods that could evoke feelings of youthfulness more subtly.

Third, Study 3 identified the strength of the association between sustainability and youth as a boundary condition supporting our proposed theoretical underpinning. However, future research should investigate additional boundary conditions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effect. Examining this effect across different types of sustainable behaviors would be valuable. For example, recycling is a form of sustainable behavior, and previous studies have found that older adults are more inclined to engage in it. Therefore, if our identity-based explanation holds, we may observe a diminished or even reversed effect regarding recycling when individuals feel younger. On the other hand, climate justice may resonate more strongly with younger individuals, leading to larger effects of feeling younger on such types of sustainable behaviors. Moreover, it would be beneficial to examine how subjective age impacts decisions differently across distinct contexts, such as public versus private settings or hedonic versus utilitarian consumption settings. Exploring these potential differences could provide a more nuanced understanding of how subjective age influences sustainable behavior and shed light on the boundary conditions of our findings.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

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APPENDIX A

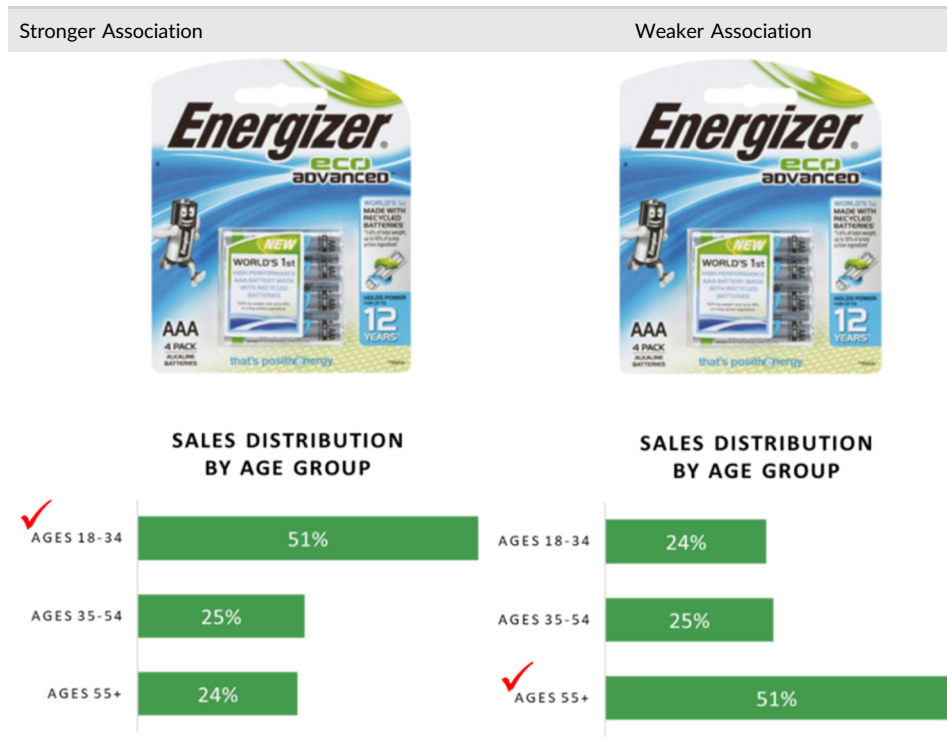
REGULAR AND SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS (STUDY 1 & 2)



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APPENDIX B

MANIPULATION OF SUSTAINABILITY-YOUTH ASSOCIATION STRENGTH (STUDY 3)



APPENDIX C

MANIPULATION OF SUBJECTIVE AGE (STUDY 4)

Younger Subjective Age	Control
<p>In this task, we are inviting you to envision that: “You are feeling very young now!” We are not interested in your age. We are only interested in your feelings. There are times when you feel younger than usual—like when you look young in the mirror or when your body feels energized. We want you to focus on these sensations of youthfulness within. Try to feel the youthfulness coursing through your veins by writing “I am feeling very young” in the box below.</p>	<p>In this task, we are inviting you to envision that: “It’s a typical day!” We are interested in your ordinary day. These are the times that represent your average day—such as when you follow your routine and experience feelings within the range of your daily norm. It’s just another day in your life. We simply want you to effortlessly maintain your usual state. Try to reflect on your typical state by writing “It’s a typical day” in the box below.</p>

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APPENDIX D

REGULAR AND SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS (STUDY 4) REGULAR OPTION

