Prosocial Behaviour in Ethical Consumption: Evidence from Thai Consumers of Hill Tribe Handcrafts

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Abstract

This study investigates prosocial consumer behaviour in the context of ethical consumption, focusing on handcrafted souvenirs produced by marginalised hill tribe communities in Thailand. Grounded in social cognitive theory, the research examines the psychological antecedents of empathy, moral obligation, and self-efficacy. Using survey data from 303 participants and cluster analysis, three distinct consumer segments were identified: compassionate changemakers, concerned supporters, and disengaged bystanders. These clusters differed significantly (p < .001) in prosocial motivations, behavioural intentions, and altruistic dispositions. Compassionate changemakers exhibited the highest levels across all constructs, while disengaged bystanders scored the lowest. Concerned supporters held internalised ethical values but showed emotional ambivalence and lower confidence to act. The study contributes to the prosocial behaviour literature by proposing a novel segmentation framework that captures psychological diversity among ethical consumers in a collectivist, non-Western context. The findings provide theoretical insights and practical guidance for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote socially responsible consumption through targeted, psychologically informed strategies.

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Introduction

Global consumers are increasingly aware of the social, economic, and environmental consequences of their purchasing behaviour—an awareness shaped by media narratives, corporate responsibility discourses, shifting cultural values, and ethical belief systems (Gillani, et al., 2021, pp. 557–559; Wong, Wang and Su, 2025, pp. 1158–1161). This shift is not merely attitudinal; it is increasingly reflected in actual market behaviour. For instance, PwC's Voice of the Consumer Survey 2024 found that consumers are willing to pay, on average, 9.7% more for sustainably sourced products, despite inflationary pressures (PwC Central and Eastern Europe, 2024). In the UK, the ethical market reached £141 billion in 2022—a 7.2% increase from the previous year—highlighting alignment between consumer values and purchasing decisions (Ethical Consumer Research Association, 2023, p. 4). In Thailand, 95% of respondents acknowledged the daily impact of climate change, with 58% actively seeking sustainable options and willing to pay up to 11.7% more (PwC Thailand, 2024).

This heightened ethical consciousness has fuelled academic interest in prosocial consumer behaviour—a multidimensional concept spanning marketing, tourism, psychology, entrepreneurship, and sustainability. It encompasses a range of ethical practices including fair-trade and ethical consumption (Chatzidakis, Kastanakis and Stathopoulou, 2016, pp. 95–109; Gillani, et al., 2021, pp. 557–577), green purchasing (CG and G, 2025, pp. 1–15; Prados-Peña, et al., 2024, pp. 775–797), support for cultural crafts (Choudhary and Mishra, 2022, pp. 1–13; Dalal, Bhattacharya and Chattopadhyay, 2025, pp. 1–23), and CSR-linked branding (Han, et al., 2020a, pp. 1–17; Yang and Yen, 2018, pp. 260–279). Within tourism, it includes ethical travel and community engagement (Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete, 2024, pp. 2462–2481; Chi, Cai and Han, 2021, pp. 3256–3270; Coghlan, 2015, pp. 46–60).

However, most research remains Western-centric (Basil, Ridgway and Basil, 2008, pp. 1–23; McGinley, Pierotti and Carlo, 2022, pp. 245–261; Rapert, Thyroff and Grace, 2021, pp. 838–847), offering limited insight into non-Western or collectivist cultures (Chi, Han and Kim, 2022, pp. 1915–1936; Leng, et al., 2020, pp. 1–13). This imbalance raises concerns about the cross-cultural relevance of dominant theoretical models. Methodologically, structural equation modelling has been widely used to assess psychological mediators such as moral obligation (Han, et al., 2020a, pp. 9–17), guilt (Basil, Ridgway and Basil, 2008, pp. 1–23), and moral disengagement (Chowdhury and Fernando, 2014, pp. 667–694). Moderating factors such as empathy (Gillani, et al., 2021, p. 566), consumer involvement (Prados-Peña, et al., 2024, pp. 783–790), and COVID-19 risk (Chi, Han and Kim, 2022, pp. 1924–1927) further nuance these dynamics. While emerging segmentation studies (Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete, 2024, pp. 2462–2481; McGinley, Pierotti and Carlo, 2022, pp. 245–261) challenge assumptions of consumer homogeneity, segmentation within ethical consumption remains underexplored. Addressing this gap is essential for refining theory and developing culturally responsive marketing strategies.

Research Gaps and Objectives

While ethical and fair-trade consumption has been extensively studied (Chatzidakis, Kastanakis and Stathopoulou, 2016, pp. 95-109; Cherrier, 2007, pp. 331-335; Gillani, et al., 2021, pp. 557-577), handcrafted goods—particularly those produced by marginalised communities—remain underexplored (Choudhary and Mishra, 2022, pp. 1-13; Dalal, Bhattacharya and Chattopadhyay 2025, pp. 1-23). This study examines the antecedents of prosocial behaviour in hill tribe handicraft consumption. It applies cluster analysis to: (a) identify latent consumer segments, and (b) profile them by prosocial intentions, motivations, future purchase intention, altruism, and demographics. The findings aim to advance theory and support culturally sensitive marketing strategies.

Literature Review
Prosocial Behaviour

Prosocial behaviour refers to voluntary actions intended to benefit others, driven by altruism, ethical values, and social responsibility (Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2007, p. 646; Goor, et al., 2024, p. 111; Li, et al., 2024, pp. 2712–2713; White, Habib and Dahl, 2020, p. 2). These behaviours include charitable giving, volunteering, ethical purchasing, and consumer activism (CG and G, 2025, pp. 1–15; White, Habib and Dahl, 2020, pp. 2–18). In consumer markets, prosociality extends to ethical consumption—consumers favouring fair-trade, sustainable, and socially responsible products—which increasingly influences brand engagement and corporate reputation (Choudhary and Mishra, 2022, p. 9; Rapert, Thyroff and

Grace, 2021, pp. 841–844; Yang and Yen, 2018, pp. 261–265). Ethical consumption has thus emerged as a key market driver (Li, et al., 2024, pp. 2713–2717; Wong, Wang and Su, 2025, pp. 1158–1160).

In collectivist cultures such as Thailand, prosocial behaviour is shaped by communal values, religious norms, and cultural traditions (Triandis, et al., 1995, p. 463). Thai consumers display heightened interpersonal warmth and affiliation in online prosocial acts (Marshall, et al., 2023, pp. 487–488). Buddhist ethics—especially the Five Precepts—reinforce prosocial tendencies, particularly among youth (Mahaarcha and Kittisuksathit, 2013, pp. 83–85). Social norms also play a vital role; moral actions are often reinforced by the expectations of significant others (Boonyasiriwat, et al., 2015, pp. 21–23). Post-pandemic Thai consumers show strong biospheric and altruistic concerns, which drive emotional and behavioural responses to sustainability issues (Wong, Wang and Su, 2025, pp. 1167–1169). Across ASEAN contexts, prosocial motivations display cultural variation. In Indonesia, cognitive empathy promotes ethical behaviour, whereas affective empathy may obscure moral judgment, complicating ethical decision-making (Arli and Anandya, 2018, pp. 8–13). In the Philippines, crisis-driven empathy often triggers altruistic responses, suggesting that situational factors, rather than stable dispositions, may more strongly activate prosocial behaviour (Kuroishi and Sawada, 2019, pp. 2–10).

Despite regional advances, little research has examined prosocial consumer behaviour in support of marginalised producers

such as Thailand's hill tribes. While prosociality has been linked to volunteering and general ethical purchasing, its psychological drivers—empathy, self-efficacy, moral obligation—remain underexplored in this context. This study is the first to apply psychologically driven segmentation to examine how intrinsic motivators shape ethical consumption for marginalised producers, offering new insights into prosocial behaviour within Thailand's hill tribe context—a collectivist, non-Western cultural setting.

Empathy

Empathy—the ability to understand and share others' emotions—is a well-established antecedent of prosocial behaviour across diverse contexts (Chowdhury and Fernando, 2014, p. 679; Gillani, et al., 2021, pp. 561–562; Leng, et al., 2020, p. 2; Yang and Yen, 2018, pp. 262–264). It functions as a core psychological driver of altruistic action (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987, p. 111; Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006, p. 608) and significantly predicts prosocial intentions, particularly when individuals are emotionally affected by others' suffering (Chi, Han and Kim, 2022, pp. 1919–1929; Eisenberg and Miller, 1987, pp. 114–115; Wakasugi and Ito, 2023, p. 79).

In ethical consumption, empathy influences value-driven decisions, prompting support for sustainable and socially impactful products (Gillani, et al., 2021, pp. 561-562; Rapert, Thyroff and Grace, 2021, pp. 840-844). Batson (2011, pp. 233–234) observes that empathic concern can predict willingness to aid disadvantaged groups, even at personal cost. However, existing literature rarely interrogates empathy's role in consumer decisions

involving identity-based marginalisation, such as support for ethnic minority producers. This theoretical oversight risks portraying empathy as a uniformly virtuous force, overlooking how it may be selectively applied—stronger toward familiar or socially proximate groups, yet significantly weaker toward marginalised communities such as hill tribe artisans, who are often perceived as culturally distant or outside the mainstream.

This gap is critical in collectivist cultures such as Thailand, where relational norms, social harmony, and moral obligation shape behaviour (Triandis, 1995, pp. 34–73). Understanding empathy within this context, especially in tandem with moral obligation and self-efficacy, offers a more culturally grounded and multidimensional framework for analysing prosocial consumer behaviour.

Moral Obligation

Moral obligation—often discussed alongside concepts such as moral norm, personal norm, ascribed responsibility, and sense of duty—refers to an individual's internalised ethical commitment to act in ways that benefit others (Han, 2015, pp. 164–177; Han, et al., 2020a, p. 5; Han, et al., 2020b, pp. 1–14). Functioning as a cognitive subprocess between moral judgment and intention (Haines, Street and Haines, 2008, p. 397), it operates not through external enforcement but through an internal moral compass. While often conflated with personal norms, moral obligation typically pertains to specific situational duties, whereas personal norms reflect broader internal standards (Schwartz, 1977, pp. 221–279; Haines, Street and Haines, 2008, pp. 395–397).

Individuals guided by moral obligation are more likely to support causes aligned with ethical or environmental ideals (Chowdhury and Fernando, 2014, p. 691; Hockerts, 2015, pp. 264–268). Hockerts (2015, p. 264) highlights it as a key motivator for social entrepreneurs aiding marginalised groups, while Han, et al. (2020b, pp. 10-11) found it significantly predicts volunteer tourists' prosocial intentions.

In consumer behaviour, moral obligation encourages support for eco-friendly, fair-trade, and CSR-linked products, particularly when reinforced by self-identity or perceived social norms (Han, et al., 2020a, pp. 3–14; Chatzidakis, Kastanakis and Stathopoulou, 2016, p. 103; Schuhmann, et al., 2019, pp. 323–324). However, its influence is not universal. Wakasugi and Ito (2023, pp. 77–81) found personal norms insufficient in predicting donations without emotional or contextual triggers, suggesting moral obligation may require activation through empathy or relevance. Treating moral obligation as a standalone predictor risks overlooking its interdependence with emotional and contextual factors. This oversimplifies the complex, situationally contingent nature of ethical action, particularly in collectivist cultures where duty is relational rather than individualistic.

In collectivist societies like Thailand, moral obligation is shaped by shared duty and social harmony (Triandis, 1995, pp. 462–463), potentially functioning differently than in individualist settings. Conceptual ambiguity among related constructs (Thøgersen, 2006, pp. 256–259) further complicates its role, particularly in underexplored areas such as consumer support for marginalised communi-ties. Integrating moral obligation with empathy and self-efficacy offers a more comprehensive model for understanding ethical consumption in such contexts.

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, a core concept in social cognitive theory, refers to individuals' belief in their ability to perform behaviours that lead to desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977, p. 193; Bandura, 2006, p. 307). It not only influences the initiation of prosocial behaviour but also sustains it under uncertainty. Higher self-efficacy is linked to stronger altruistic intentions, such as donating (Basil, Ridgway and Basil, 2008, pp. 14–17), and it also mediates personality effects in online prosocial actions (Leng, et al., 2020, pp. 10–12). In social entrepreneurship, it enables individuals to pursue social change despite structural barriers (Hockerts, 2015, p. 265). Ethical consumption is similarly shaped by perceived impact; consumers with stronger behavioural control are more likely to act sustainably (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014, pp. 117–134). Recent studies confirm its relevance: regulatory emotional self-efficacy fosters prosociality via life meaning (Li, et al., 2023, p. 5); food waste reduction is driven by self-efficacy and ethical judgment (Ding and Jiang, 2023, pp. 337–359); and self-efficacy moderates the effects of social exclusion on sustainability (Jiang, Lee, and Jin, 2025, pp. 13–17).

Yet, self-efficacy remains underexplored in contexts involving support for marginalised producers. In cases like Thailand's hill tribes, low perceived efficacy—rather than moral apathy—may suppress ethical choices. Neglecting the role of self-efficacy in ethical consumption risks misinterpreting consumer in-

action as moral disengagement. It may instead stem from a more profound, context-specific sense of helplessness, particularly toward distant or marginalised producer groups. A culturally grounded model integrating empathy, efficacy, and obligation is thus essential.

Research Methods

Data Collection

This study aimed to identify unobserved consumer segments based on prosocial behaviour antecedents among Thai purchasers of hill tribe handicrafts. Data were collected via an online SurveyMonkey questionnaire, distributed through Facebook, Line, and Messenger. Screening questions ensured prior awareness and purchase experience. Purposive and snowball sampling enabled targeted recruitment but may introduce selection bias and limit generalisability (Hair, et al., 2019, p. 60). Duplicate and incomplete responses were excluded. The final sample (n = 303) was 68.6% female, mostly aged 41–60, with high educational attainment (46.2% bachelor's, 32% master's, 17.2% doctorate), and employed across various sectors, including government (26.7%) and freelance (17.8%).

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire included validated scales across seven sections, measuring prosocial motivation (Grant, 2008, p. 51), intentions (Baumsteiger and Siegel, 2019, p. 307), antecedents (Hockerts, 2015, pp. 271–272), future purchasing intentions (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1996, p. 38), and altruism traits (Rushton, Chrisjohn and Fekken,1981, p. 297), using 5- or 7-point Likert scales. Content validity was ensured through expert review, bilingual translation, and a 30-person Thai pre-

test. Minor revisions enhanced cultural clarity. Cronbach's alpha values (0.70–0.91) confirmed internal consistency above the 0.70 threshold (Hair, et al., 2019, p. 161), supporting the reliability of all measures.

Data analysis

This study employs a two-step clustering procedure to categorise prosocial antecedent segments. Ward's hierarchical method first identifies the optimal number of clusters, and K-means then refines membership, enhancing stability and interpretability (Ward Jr, 1963, pp. 236–244; Punj and Stewart, 1983, pp. 138–143; Hair, et al., 2019, p. 220). This approach was chosen over latent class analysis because the variables are continuous and normally distributed, and the study's exploratory aim calls for actionable rather than probabilistic segmentation (Schreiber and Pekarik, 2014, p. 47).

Findings

Segmentation Identification

Following best-practice recommendations (Prayag and Hosany, 2014, pp. 39–40; Punj and Stewart, 1983, pp. 134-148), a two-step cluster analysis was conducted using raw mean scores of prosocial behaviour antecedents. Ward Jr's (1963, pp. 236–244) hierarchical clustering method with squared Euclidean distance was applied to a random subsample to identify preliminary structures. The agglomeration schedule indicated a two-to-five-cluster solution. K-means clustering was then used to refine group membership. A three-cluster solution was selected based on dendrogram structure, interpretability, and balanced group sizes.

Cluster validity was assessed using silhouette coefficients, with an average value of

0.242—acceptable for exploratory segmentation involving psychological constructs (Rousseeuw, 1987, pp. 59–62; Dolnicar, 2003, pp. 9–10). Internal consistency scores confirmed structural robustness: Cluster 2 (M = 0.301), Cluster 3 (M = 0.212), and Cluster 1 (M = 0.159).

Cluster II: Compassionate Changemakers (n = 157, 51.8%; see Table 1)

This dominant segment reported the highest scores across all constructs, particularly in empathy, moral obligation, and self-efficacy, and the lowest agreement with reverse-coded items. Their strong identification with statements like "I try to put myself in their shoes" (M = 6.50, SD = 0.72) and "Solving societal problems is something each of us can contribute to" (M = 6.71, SD = 0.63) suggests high emotional and cognitive alignment with prosocial behaviour, consistent with the empathy–altruism hypothesis.

Cluster I: Disengaged Bystanders (n = 92, 30.4%; see Table 1)

This group recorded the lowest scores on all prosocial antecedents, reflecting weak moral engagement. However, moderate disagreement with reverse-coded statements—e.g., "I don't care how people feel who live on the margins of society" (M = 2.91, SD = 1.48)—suggests emotional detachment is not absolute. Their agreement with "I do not believe it would be possible for me to bring about significant social change" (M = 3.99, SD = 1.52) points to low perceived efficacy, rather than complete indifference, as a possible barrier to action.

Cluster III: Concerned Supporters (n = 54, 17.8%; see Table 1)

These participants scored moderately high on all antecedents but paradoxically showed strong agreement with reverse-coded items, e.g., "I find it difficult to feel compassionate for people less fortunate than myself" (M = 5.43, SD = 1.27). Despite cognitive endorsement of prosocial values, they exhibited emotional detachment and low perceived impact (e.g., "I do not believe it would be possible for me to bring about significant social change"; M = 4.98, SD = 1.24), indicating psychological dissonance. This tension may inhibit the translation of moral intention into ethical consumption behaviour.

To validate the segmentation, multiple discriminant analysis was performed. Two discriminant functions explained most variance, with Wilks's lambda and univariate F-tests confirming statistical significance. Canonical correlations were high (p < .001), and the classification matrix yielded a 95.7% hit ratio (Hair, et al., 2019, pp. 495–545), indicating excellent predictive accuracy (Table 2). Segment robustness was further assessed through predicted membership probabilities and boxplots (Hair, et al., 2019, pp. 228–229). Cluster 2 showed the highest classification confidence, with medians near 1.0 and narrow interquartile ranges. Cluster 1 displayed slightly lower consistency due to a few outliers, while Cluster 3 showed greater variability and dispersed probabilities, reflecting reduced classification certainty. Nonetheless, all three segments demonstrated sufficient distinction, supporting the reliability of the final cluster solution.

Cluster Profiling by Prosocial Motivations, Intentions, Altruism, and Demographics

To assess external validity, one-way ANOVAs were conducted across clusters us-

ing prosocial motivation, general prosocial intentions, future purchasing intentions, and altruistic personality as dependent variables. As shown in Table 3, "Compassionate Changemakers" (Cluster II) and "Concerned Supporters" (Cluster III) reported similarly high motivation to purchase hill tribe crafts, while "Disengaged Bystanders" (Cluster I) scored significantly lower. This suggests Clusters II and III exhibit stronger attitudinal alignment with ethical consumption, reinforcing an affective–motivational distinction across segments.

Cluster II and III showed comparably high general prosocial intentions (Table 4), differing significantly only on "Comfort someone I know after they experience a hardship" "($M_{clusterII}$ = 6.47, SD = 0.94; $M_{clusterIII}$ = 5.67, SD = 1.21) and "Help care for a sick friend or relative" ($M_{clusterII}$ = 6.29, SD = 0.93; $M_{clusterII}$ = 5.72, SD = 1.19), where Cluster II scored higher. These slight differences support the view that Cluster III, despite shared values, may lack the efficacy to act consistently. Cluster I scored significantly lower than the other groups across most items, except for "Comfort someone I know after they experience hardship," where only the difference between Clusters I and II was significant ($M_{clusterI}$ = 5.45, SD = 1.21; $M_{clusterII}$ = 6.47, SD = 0.94; p < .001).

Both Clusters II and III expressed high intentions to purchase and recommend hill tribe products (Table 5), with no significant difference between them. This suggests that despite psychological ambivalence, Cluster III maintains future-oriented prosocial intent—possibly activated under favourable conditions. Cluster I again scored lowest, reflecting weak behavioural commitment.

All clusters exhibited moderate levels of altruism on a 5-point scale (Table 6). Cluster II reported significantly higher frequencies of altruistic acts, reflecting stronger behavioural consistency with internalised values. The only item where Cluster III scored higher was "I have donated blood" ($M_{clusterII}$ = 2.50, SD = 1.53; $M_{clusterIII}$ = 3.22, SD = 1.25), suggesting context-specific engagement. Cluster I scored significantly lower than Cluster II on key items such as "I have given money to charity" ($M_{clusterI}$ = 3.60, SD = 0.89; $M_{clusterII}$ = 3.98, SD = 0.99), "I have given money to a stranger who needed it" ($M_{clusterI}$ = 2.55, SD = 1.01; $M_{clusterII}$ = 3.17, SD = 1.06), and "I have donated goods or clothes to charity" ($M_{clusterI}$ = 3.68, SD = 1.00; $M_{clusterII}$ = 4.02, SD = 0.97), reinforcing its lower orientation toward prosociality and more self-focused behavioural profile.

Chi-square tests revealed significant differences across clusters by gender (χ^2 = 12.834, p = .002), age (χ^2 = 15.994, p = .042), and education (χ^2 = 19.485, p = .012), but not by occupation (χ^2 = 23.422, p = .054) or income (χ^2 = 12.977, p = .528). Clusters I and II skewed female, while Cluster III had a younger demographic. Older adults were more prevalent in Clusters I and II. Although all clusters had high levels of education, its predictive value for prosocial orientation was inconsistent. Income levels did not significantly differentiate the segments, suggesting that ethical consumption in this context may be driven more by psychological and cultural factors than socioeconomic status.

Table 1 Clustering by Antecedents of Prosocial Behaviour

Antecedents of Prosocial Behaviour	Cluster I Disengaged Bystanders n=92 (30.36%)		Cluster II Compassionate Changemakers n=157 (51.81%)		Cluster III Concerned Supporters n=54 (17.82%)		F-value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
Empathy											
When thinking about socially disadvantaged people like the Hilltribes people, I try to put myself in their shoes.	4.40	1.14	6.50	0.72	5.78	1.13	144.081	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
I don't care how people feel who live on the margins of society. (R)	2.91	1.48	1.47	1.16	4.50	1.95	97.324	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Seeing socially disadvantaged people like the Hilltribes people triggers an emotional response in me.	3.77	1.29	5.77	1.49	5.76	0.97	69.891	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.998
I feel compassion for socially marginalized people like Hilltribes people.	4.28	1.40	6.18	1.33	6.02	0.96	66.098	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.587
I do not experience much emotion when thinking about socially excluded people. (R)	2.89	1.43	1.40	0.84	4.28	1.92	113.043	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
I find it difficult to feel compassionate for people less fortunate than myself. (R)	2.83	1.57	1.48	1.30	5.43	1.27	165.708	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Moral Obligation											
It is an ethical responsibility to help people less fortunate than ourselves.	4.37	1.29	6.38	0.86	6.02	0.92	115.676	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.038
I am morally obliged to help socially disadvantaged people.	4.25	1.10	6.43	0.75	5.91	1.01	165.621	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003
Social justice requires that we help those who are less fortunate than ourselves.	4.50	1.21	6.48	0.84	5.94	0.88	120.323	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001

Antecedents of Prosocial Behaviour	Cluster I Disengaged Bystanders n=92 (30.36%)		Cluster II Compassionate Changemakers n=157 (51.81%)		Cluster III Concerned Supporters n=54 (17.82%)		F-value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
It is one of the principles of our society that we should help socially disadvantaged people.	4.85	1.22	6.54	0.79	6.06	0.94	89.031	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003
Self-Efficacy											
Solving societal problems is something each of us can contribute to.	5.33	1.34	6.71	0.63	6.02	0.94	61.392	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000
I am convinced that I personally can contribute to address societal challenges if I put my mind to it.	4.32	1.24	5.99	1.05	5.61	1.27	62.898	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.119
I could figure out a way to help solve the problems that society faces.	3.87	1.04	5.22	1.35	5.43	1.09	42.833	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.491
I do not believe it would be possible for me to bring about significant social change.(R)	3.99	1.52	3.29	1.94	4.98	1.24	20.461	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000

Table 2 Predicted Group Membership

Predicted Group Membership		Cluster I	Cluster II	Cluster III	Total
Original	Cluster I	89 (96.74%)			92
	Cluster II		154 (98.09 %)		157
	Cluster III			47 (87.04 %)	54
Cross-validated	Cluster I	83 (90.22 %)	7	2	92
	Cluster II	1	152 (96.82 %)	4	157
	Cluster III	7	3	44 (81.48 %)	54

Note: 95.7% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

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Table 3 Profiling by Prosocial Behaviour Motivations

Prosocial Behaviour Motivations	Cluster I n=92		Cluster II n=157		Cluster III n=54		F-Value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
I am motivated to buy arts and crafts made by the Hill tribes people, because I care about benefiting others through my purchases.	4.01	1.51	5.45	1.32	5.07	1.24	32.472	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.145
I am motivated to buy arts and crafts made by the Hill tribes people, because I want to help others through my purchases.	4.52	1.61	5.71	1.32	5.39	1.32	20.522	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.284
I am motivated to buy arts and crafts made by the Hill tribes people, because I want to have a positive impact on others.	4.17	1.51	5.34	1.43	5.02	1.27	19.472	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.274
I am motivated to buy arts and crafts made by the Hill tribes people, because it is important to me to do good for others through my purchases.	3.88	1.51	5.16	1.53	5.06	1.28	22.948	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.877

Table 4 Profiling by Prosocial Behaviour Intentions

Prosocial Behaviour Intentions	Cluster I n=92 (30.36%)		Cluster II n=157 (51.81%)		Cluster III n=54 (17.82%)		F-Value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
Comfort someone I know after they experience a hardship.	5.45	1.21	6.47	0.94	5.67	1.21	29.784	0.000	0.000	0.538	0.000
Help a stranger find something they lost, like a key or a pet.	4.12	1.41	5.59	1.35	5.35	1.28	35.033	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.489
Help care for a sick friend or relative.	5.08	1.23	6.29	0.93	5.72	1.19	36.754	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.006
Assist a stranger with a small task (e.g. help carry groceries, watch their things while they use the restroom).	3.95	1.79	5.25	1.72	4.94	1.64	16.699	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.481

Table 5 Profiling by Future Purchase Intentions

Future Purchase Intentions	Cluster I n=92		Cluster II n=157		Cluster III n=54		F-Value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
I will continue to buy arts and crafts made by Hilltribes people in the future.	4.57	1.45	5.90	1.18	5.48	1.13	32.524	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.059
I will say positive things about the arts and crafts made by Hilltribes people to friends and families.	4.38	1.53	5.47	1.53	5.26	1.26	15.912	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.593
I will recommend arts and crafts made by Hilltribes people to friends and families.	4.30	1.44	5.49	1.38	5.33	1.18	22.851	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.700
I will encourage friends and families to buy arts and crafts made by Hilltribes people.	4.28	1.32	5.59	1.25	5.20	1.34	29.964	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.162
I will consider Hilltribes people as my first choice when buying arts and crafts.	3.83	1.34	4.89	1.40	5.04	1.29	21.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.746

Table 6 Profiling by Altruistic Personality

Altruistic Personality	Cluster I n=92 (30.36%)		Cluster II n=157 (51.81%)		Cluster III n=54 (17.82%)		F-Value	P-value	Post-hoc tests p-value		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			I-II	I-III	II-III
I have given money to charity.	3.60	0.89	3.98	0.99	3.63	1.20	5.203	0.006	0.005	0.984	0.136
I have given money to a stranger who needed it.	2.55	1.01	3.17	1.06	3.13	1.24	10.017	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.980
I have donated goods or clothes to charity.	3.68	1.00	4.02	0.97	3.74	1.15	3.662	0.027	0.030	0.953	0.255
I have donated blood.	2.65	1.39	2.50	1.53	3.22	1.49	4.852	0.008	0.690	0.061	0.008
I have done volunteer work for a charity.	2.77	1.05	3.08	1.15	3.22	1.25	3.206	0.042	0.086	0.072	0.733
I have given directions to a stranger.	3.84	0.89	4.09	0.92	3.94	0.88	2.321	0.100	0.087	0.758	0.559

Conclusion and Discussion

This study identified three segments whose empathy, moral obligation, and self-efficacy shaped prosocial motivations, intentions, and purchasing toward marginalised artisans. Compassionate changemakers (51.81%) surpass the Asian tourist figure of 17.9% (philanthropists) reported by Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete (2024, pp. 2471–2474) and match the Western undergraduate rate of 54.0% (altruistic helpers) in McGinley, Pierotti and Carlo (2022, pp. 251–256), indicating that prosocial engagement in Thailand is both widespread and culturally normative. Their high prevalence—comparable to the substantial representation in Western samples—suggests that collectivist cultural norms in Thailand, including relational ethics and communal responsibility (Triandis, et al., 1995, p. 463; Wong, Wang and Su, 2025, pp. 1167–1169), also embed altruistic behaviour into social identity (Marshall, et al., 2023, pp. 487–488). Comparable prosocial rates across cultures suggest shared psychological drivers transcend cultural boundaries.

Disengaged bystanders (30.36%) fall between the altruistic idealists in McGinley and colleagues' (2022, pp. 251-256) Western undergraduate sample (24.4%) and the self-centred consumers in Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete's (2024, pp. 2471-2474) East Asian tourist cohort (46.2%). Disengagement is less prevalent in Thailand than among East Asian tourists but more than in Western undergraduates, placing Thai respondents mid-range between high-disengagement leisure contexts and low-disengagement youth cohorts. Their mix of emotional sensitivity with low moral obligation, self-efficacy, and behavioural intention reflects a motivational gap, consistent with social cognitive theory's view that perceived agency is essential for converting empathy into action (Bandura, 2006, pp. 314–319). Thai disengagement may stem from collectivist norms that prioritise harmony over individual action, shaping distinct barriers to prosocial behaviour.

Concerned supporters (17.82%) are fewer than the intermediates in Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete's (2024, pp. 2471-2474) East Asian tourist sample (36%) and slightly less than the public helpers (21.6%) in McGinley and colleagues' (2022, pp. 251–256). This lower prevalence suggests Thai prosocial orientations polarise toward high engagement or low involvement, leaving fewer moderates. Their moderate empathy and values, but hesitancy in emotional engagement and perceived efficacy, align with partial moral disengagement or contextual constraints (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014, pp. 117–134), highlighting the conditional nature of value-action translation.

Empathy, moral obligation, and self-efficacy jointly predicted ethical purchasing intentions, reaffirming the role of moral emotions, normative beliefs, and behavioural control (White, Habib and Dahl, 2020, pp. 7–10). Altruism did not reliably predict cluster membership, while gender, age, and education showed prosocial consumerism's multidimensional psychological–demographic basis.

Theoretical Implications

This study advances prosocial consumer behaviour theory by demonstrating that empathy alone does not drive action unless

reinforced by moral obligation and self-efficacy. While prior segmentation studies emphasised personality traits or broader psychological factors (Agyeiwaah and Bangwayo-Skeete, 2024, pp. 2462–2481; McGinley, Pierotti and Carlo, 2022, pp. 245–261), this research positions moral obligation and self-efficacy as critical enablers of prosocial intention. It extends Bandura's (1977, pp. 191–215) social cognitive theory, showing that empathic concern translates into behaviour only when individuals feel both ethically compelled and efficacious.

By segmenting consumers along these psychological dimensions, the study proposes a novel typology for ethical consumption, contributing a more nuanced understanding of prosocial markets. Furthermore, it introduces an integrative framework where prosocial action is co-determined by personal agency and sociocultural reinforcement—consistent with Bandura's principle of reciprocal determinism. This perspective is especially relevant in collectivist cultures, where communal expectations and moral norms strongly shape behaviour (Boonyasiriwat, et al., 2015, pp. 12–22; Mahaarcha and Kittisuksathit, 2013, pp. 83–85).

Practical Implications

To encourage ethical consumption of hill tribe crafts, campaigns should strengthen consumer self-efficacy, pairing emotional storytelling with moral and collective appeals. Segment-tailored tactics matter: empowerment cues for compassionate changemakers, empathy primes for disengaged bystanders, and efficacy boosters for concerned supporters. Community-based tourism can deepen prosocial motivation through sustained, meaningful interactions between visitors and residents. Policymakers and NGOs can embed such culturally grounded nudges, aligning intrinsic motives with social norms to sustain support for marginalised producers and inclusive development.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although the sample size was sufficient for cluster analysis, its limited demographic scope constrains generalisability. Broader, more diverse samples are needed to enhance external validity. Thai hill-tribe specificity further limits transferability, and the fit of psychometric scales for ethical consumption demands reassessment. Future research should employ longitudinal qualitative approaches to trace interactions among empathy, moral obligation, and self-efficacy, and cross-cultural comparisons to reveal how norms and structures shape prosocial behaviour and support marginalised producers.

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