

Longevity as a Predictor of Sustainability Intentions

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This study examines the impact of increased life expectancy on sustainability intentions employing a mixed-method approach with 300 respondents. Findings reveal that 75% of the respondents perceive and value environmental sustainability. Longer lifespans adopt a broader time horizon, fostering a sense of responsibility toward environmental preservation for themselves and subsequent generations. Empathy for future generations mediates this relationship, enhancing the likelihood of engaging in sustainable practices. The research aims to contribute to behavioral science by demonstrating how psychological and societal factors derived from longevity. This framework has significant implications for policymakers, educators, and advocates seeking to align long-term personal well-being with global environmental goals. Part of the survey underscores strong participation from South Korea, China and Philippines with limited engagement from Western countries, suggesting potential cultural or regional variations in interest. Platforms like Kakaotalk and Facebook proved most effective in reaching respondents, particularly in Korea and the Philippines.

Keywords: longer lifespans, intention, Kakaotalk, Facebook, sustainability

Introduction

Over the past century, advancements in healthcare, technology, and living conditions have significantly increased global life expectancy (Guillen, 2023). As individuals anticipate living longer, their perceptions of the future and their roles within it undergo profound changes. This shift has implications not only for personal decision-making but also for collective challenges, such as environmental sustainability (Miller, 2025). Longer life expectancy extends the time horizon over which people evaluate the consequences of their actions, fostering greater concern for their own long-term well-being and the well-being of future generations (Lotharp, 2025). Environmental sustainability, a pressing global priority, depends on individuals' willingness to adopt behaviors that safeguard ecological balance. Yet, these behaviors often involve trade-offs between short-term convenience and long-term benefits. Tesoro and Barrios (2023) suggest that individuals with a longer perceived time horizon are more likely to invest in future-oriented actions, including those that benefit the environment. This relationship is rooted in psychological mechanisms such as future time perspective; the degree to which individuals focus on long-term outcomes and empathy for future generations, which motivates concern for the environmental legacy they leave behind. This study aims to discover whether there is a reciprocal relationship between life expectancy and environmental quality. It explores the policy and welfare implications of intergenerational externalities, emphasizing the role of education, economic stability, and cultural values in reinforcing sustainability efforts.

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This paper is structured into multiple sections and subsections, including a literature review, methodology, conceptual framework, results, discussion, limitations and future directions, conclusion, funding details, conflict of interest statement, acknowledgements, and appendices.

Literary Review

This research investigates how perceived life expectancy affects individuals' involvement in pro-environmental behaviors, with future time perspective and empathy for future generations acting as mediators, and education, economic values, supportive environmental policy serving as moderators. Subsequent literatures conducted by Garniss (2024), Mariani et al. (2009), Amoud et al. (2024), Ebhota et al. (2023), and Loeffler (2002) all together argued that when individuals can age in environments that meet their needs, they are more likely to engage in environmental preservation efforts. According to Fabio et al. (2009), higher life expectancy can shift how individuals value the future, making them more likely to prioritize long-term sustainability. Psychological and societal mechanisms play a critical role in driving sustainability-related actions, particularly as lifespans increase (Amoud et al., 2024). Improved health and well-being resulting from increased life expectancy further encourage pro-environmental behaviors, thereby enhancing sustainability intentions. The connection between longer life expectancy and sustainability, particularly through environmental stewardship, strengthens the link between the two (Loeffler, 2002). The positive effect of increased life expectancy on sustainability intentions is more pronounced among individuals with higher education levels. When education is tied to life expectancy, and survival probabilities are influenced by both environmental quality and human capital, the positive relationship between longevity and environmental quality extends to income levels in the long term (Mariani et al., 2009). Higher life expectancy is associated with stronger sustainability intentions, as it heightens awareness of long-term environmental impacts and fosters a sense of responsibility toward future generations. Cultural values in economically developed societies and supportive policy environments further amplify this relationship (Loeffler, 2002).

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection to investigate the relationship between longer life expectancy and pro-environmental behavior (Mariani et al., 2009). It seeks to test the said model and explore the mediating and moderating variables (Bestepe & Yildirim, 2022). Independent variable is measured by using a self-reported scale where participants estimate their expected lifespan based on personal health and social trends. Mediating variables are assessed using the Future Time Perspective Scale (FTP), which measures individuals' orientation toward long-term outcomes. Empathy for future generations is measured using a modified empathy scale (Maas et al., 2024). Dependent variable is measured through self-reported actions e.g., recycling, energy conservation and intentions e.g., willingness to donate to environmental causes. For moderating variables, they are evaluated using a scale assessing participants' perception of the urgency and personal relevance of environmental issues (Mariani et al., 2009). Cultural norms are assessed through a brief survey of participants' perceptions of societal expectations related to environmental behaviors. The study uses a cross-sectional survey combined with an experimental manipulation of perceived life expectancy. This model allows both observational analysis and causal inference regarding the impact of life expectancy on environmental action. Research questions were tailored to explore the relationship between increased life expectancy and sustainability intentions, designed to gather in-depth insights into participants'

perspectives, motivations, and behavior. A diverse sample of 300 participants aged 18-70 were recruited, ensuring representation across cultural, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds (Loefler, 2002). Data analysis included path analysis has tested direct and indirect effects, moderation analysis to explore contextual influences, and thematic analysis of qualitative responses. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and participant anonymity, were prioritized. The study expected that priming longer life expectancy will increase future time perspective and empathy for future generations, leading to greater pro-environmental actions, with stronger effects under higher perceived environmental threat and supportive cultural norms (Mavrodaris et al., 2021). This is aimed to provide actionable insights into the psychological drivers of environmental behavior in the context of increasing life expectancy. Relative to the 300 respondents, majority of respondents were from Korea, followed by the Philippines and China. The smallest groups were from Indonesia and Germany. The US, Canada, and Australia each account for 5% of the respondents. Statistical analysis was conducted where respondents found the survey. Kakaotalk was the most common platform, Facebook was the second most common platform and Rednote accounts. Instagram, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and Tiktok had smaller shares.

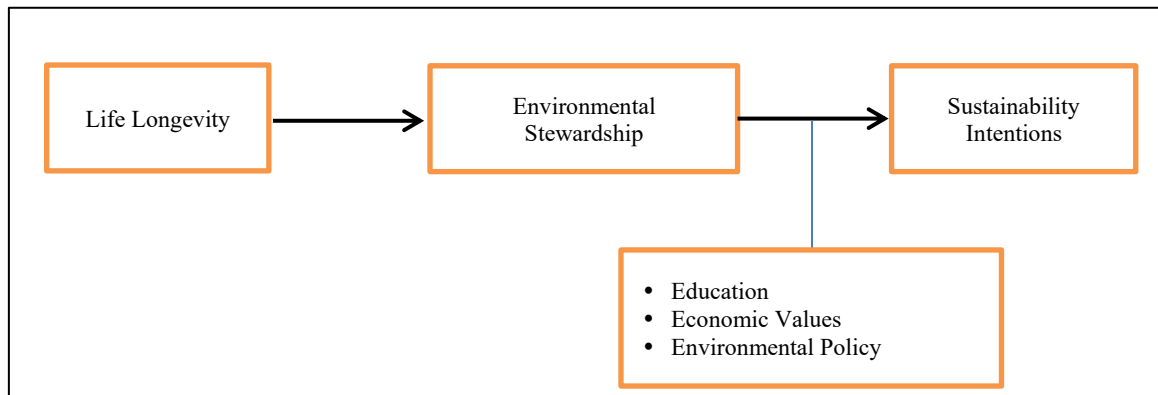


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The research model diagram illustrates how increased life expectancy directly and indirectly influences sustainability intentions, with environmental stewardship acting as a mediator. The relationship is further strengthened by moderating factors such as education level, cultural values, and supportive policies. The model highlights the importance of demographic and contextual factors in shaping sustainability intentions and behaviors, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the link between longevity and environmental responsibility. This design allows both observational analysis and causal inference regarding the impact of life expectancy on environmental action. This expands on existing behavioral and environmental psychology theories by integrating perceived life expectancy as a novel predictor of pro-environmental behavior. It highlights the interplay between temporal and emotional factors, offering a holistic understanding of how individuals balance personal and collective interests over time.

Results

The highest concern is composed of 61 to 70 years old group which has the highest percentage (28%) of respondents who care more about climate change. This reflects a sense of legacy or responsibility toward future generations, as well as greater awareness of long-term environmental impacts. The second highest concern

includes the 18 to 30 years old group follows closely with 26%. This aligns with the global trend of younger generations (e.g., Gen Z and Millennials) being more vocal about climate issues, likely due to their heightened exposure to climate-related information and their future being directly impacted. The lower concern is those of 31 to 45 years old and 46 to 60 years old groups which show the lowest percentages (23% each). This could indicate that middle-aged individuals are more focused on immediate life challenges (e.g., career, family) rather than long-term environmental issues. The Sdata indicates that both older individuals (61 to 70 years old) and younger individuals (18 to 30 years old) show greater concern about climate change than middle-aged groups.

61 to 70 years old	21 out of 75	28%
18 to 30 years old	20 out of 75	26%
31 to 45 years old	17 out of 75	23%
46 to 60 years old	17 out of 75	23%

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who care more about climate change by age group.

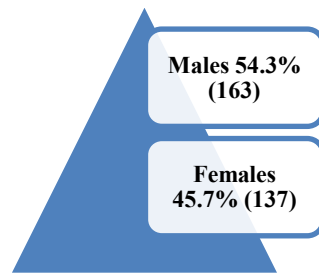


Figure 3. Gender distribution:

The survey sample is slightly skewed toward males, making up 54.3% of respondents and females making up 45.7%. This distribution could reflect the demographic composition of the population being surveyed or the accessibility of the survey to different genders.

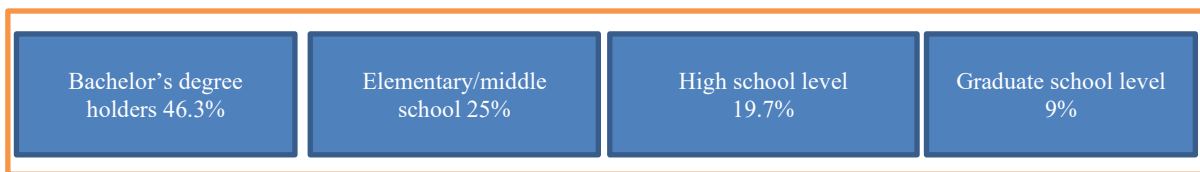


Figure 4. Education categories.

Most respondents (46.3%) hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent, indicating that the survey sample is skewed toward individuals with higher education. A quarter of the respondents (25%) have elementary or middle school level education, representing a significant portion of the sample. Nearly 20% of respondents have high school level, suggesting a smaller but still substantial group with advanced education. A small percentage (9%) fall into graduate school categories. There is a statistical significant difference between the observed distribution of education levels and an expected equal distribution. The survey sample is heavily skewed toward bachelor's degree holders or equivalent (46.3%), followed by elementary or middle school (25%). This implies how education levels might influence responses to survey questions on climate change concern and to ensure representation of diverse education backgrounds in future surveys.

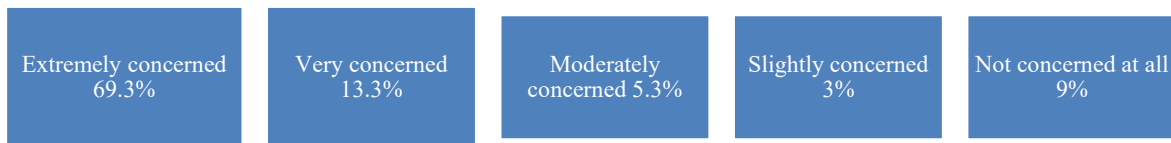


Figure 5. Concern level.

Most respondents (69.3%) are extremely concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change, indicating a high level of awareness and urgency among the surveyed population. A smaller but significant portion (13.3%) are very concerned, while only a small percentage fall into the lower concern categories: The mean concern level is 4.31, indicating that the average respondent is between “very concerned” and “extremely concerned”. The median is the middle value when the data is ordered. Since there are 300 respondents, both the 150th and 151st respondents fall into the 5 (extremely concerned) category. Thus, the median concern level is 5. The mode is the most frequently occurring value. The highest number of respondents (208) voted for 5 (extremely concerned). Thus, the mode concern level is 5. The mean (4.31), median (5), and mode (5) all indicate that most respondents are highly concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change. Only a small percentage of respondents (9%) are not concerned at all, suggesting that climate change is a pressing issue for most of the surveyed population. The survey results reveal a strong sense of concern about climate change among respondents, with the majority being extremely concerned. This data can be used to advocate stronger climate action, as it reflects a high level of public awareness and urgency.

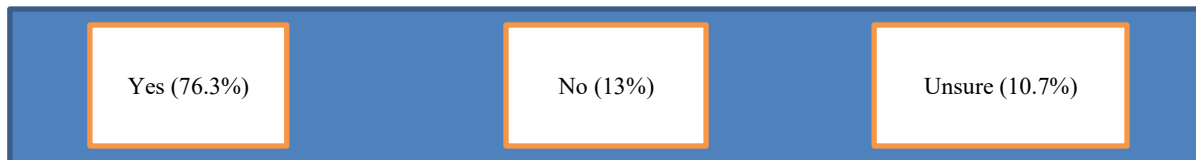


Figure 6. Statistical breakdown.

Statistical breakdown of the survey results regarding whether respondents believe that longer life expectancy increases their responsibility to protect the environment: The overwhelming majority of respondents (76.3%) believe that longer life expectancy increases their responsibility to protect the environment.

This suggests a strong connection between anticipating a longer lifespan and feeling a sense of duty toward environmental preservation. A smaller percentage (13%) do not believe that longer life expectancy increases their responsibility, while 10.7% are unsure.

Result confirms that the observed distribution is significantly different from an equal distribution, highlighting the strong consensus among respondents. This data can be used to support initiatives that emphasize the connection between personal longevity and environmental responsibility.

Response Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree (1)	213	71.00%	71.00%	71.00%
Agree (2)	34	11.30%	11.30%	82.30%
Neutral (3)	18	6.00%	6.00%	88.30%
Disagree (4)	11	3.70%	3.70%	92.00%
Strongly Disagree (5)	24	8.00%	8.00%	100.00%
Total	300	100%	100%	

Figure 7. Mean level.

Living longer increases responsibility to protect the environment for future generations. The mean agreement level is 4.34, indicating that the average respondent is between “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. The median is the middle value when the data is ordered. For 300 respondents, the median is the value of the 150th respondent. Both the 150th and 150th respondents fall into the 5 (Strongly Agree) category. Thus, the median agreement level is 5.

The mode is the most frequently occurring value. The highest number of respondents (213) voted for 5 (Strongly Agree). Thus, the mode agreement level is 5. The mean (4.34), median (5), and mode (5) all indicate that most respondents strongly agree with the statement. The distribution is heavily skewed toward the higher end of the scale, with 71% of respondents strongly agreeing and only 8% strongly disagreeing. The overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) strongly agree that living longer increases their responsibility to protect the environment for future generations. The statistical analysis (mean, median, mode, and chi-square test) confirms that the distribution is heavily skewed toward agreement, with only a small percentage of respondents (8%) strongly disagreeing. This strong consensus highlights the importance of the belief that increased life expectancy is linked to greater environmental responsibility.

Response	Age Group 18-35	Age Group 36-55	Age Group 55+	Total
Yes	100	80	45	225
Unsure	20	15	10	45
No	10	10	10	30
Total	130	105	65	300

Figure 8. Cross-tabulation.

Survey results on whether respondents believe that longer life expectancy has influenced their environmental actions. There’s statistical significant difference between the observed distribution and an expected equal distribution. The overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) believe that longer life expectancy has influenced their environmental actions, highlighting the importance of longevity as a motivator for environmental stewardship. A smaller percentage (15%) are unsure, and 10% do not believe that longer life expectancy has influenced their actions. Relative to the 300 respondents, here’s the breakdown of the participating countries:

The majority of respondents are from Korea (30.67%), followed by the Philippines (27%) and China (22%). The smallest groups are from Indonesia (1.67%) and Germany (2%). The US, Canada, and Australia each account for 5% of the respondents (see Appendix Figure A). Kakaotalk is the most common platform where respondents found the survey, accounting for 30.67% of responses. Facebook is the second most common platform, with 27% of responses. Rednote accounts for 22% of responses, making it the third most common platform. Instagram, Telegram, Facebook Messenger, and Tiktok have smaller shares, with 5%, 2%, 6.67%, and 6.67% respectively. The survey was most widely distributed through Kakaotalk and Facebook, which together account for 57.67% of responses. Platforms like Telegram and Instagram had minimal reach in this survey. Facebook Messenger and Tiktok had similar reach, each contributing 6.67% of responses (refer Appendix Figure B).

Discussion

Longer life expectancy encourages individuals to prioritize health, financial stability, personal goals, independence, and family success, fostering self-reliance and resilience. It also enhances environmental awareness, motivating practical actions like recycling and community initiatives, and a stronger sense of responsibility for

future generations. Sustainability is driven by emotional motivators e.g., fear of disasters, family and community involvement, creativity, and daily habits, reflecting a proactive and multifaceted approach. Environmental stewardship is seen as a universal duty, rooted in interconnectedness and moral responsibility. While education boosts awareness, sustainable behavior is also shaped by personal values and practical understanding. Economic stability supports sustainability, but development alone can lead to overconsumption. Effective policies and addressing barriers like inequality are crucial for fostering collective action. Ultimately, respondents view sustainability as a personal and intergenerational duty to secure a healthier, stable future for loved ones (refer to Figure C, Appendix section).

This research underscores the importance of a holistic and inclusive approach to sustainability, driven by personal values, community involvement, and effective policies. By addressing barriers and leveraging opportunities, individuals and institutions can work together to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. The study finds strong bidirectional relationship between longevity and sustainability intentions.

Limitations and Future Directions

While the study includes a diverse sample, cultural, and geographic variations in the perception of life expectancy and environmental responsibility, it lacks generalizability. Future research should expand to include a broader range of populations, particularly in regions facing acute environmental challenges.

The experimental design provides initial evidence of causality, but longitudinal studies are needed to confirm how changes in perceived life expectancy influence behavior over time. Future research could explore additional mediators, such as financial planning or health consciousness, which may also link longer life expectancy with sustainability practices. Additionally, the role of climate anxiety as a potential moderator warrants further investigation.

Conclusion

Data show that many respondents express concern for future generations, viewing sustainability as a personal duty to ensure long-term environmental and social stability. Empirically, respondents with longer life expectancies exhibit resilience, self-empowerment, and optimism, focusing on personal growth, well-being, and meaningful relationships.

It shows 75% of respondents' link longer life expectancy to increased environmental actions, such as recycling, community involvement, and proactive sustainability efforts. Increased life expectancy is seen as an opportunity for individuals to take charge of their health, finances, and personal aspirations, while maintaining independence and fostering fulfillment through family success.

A longer life span is associated with greater environmental awareness, prompting individuals to adopt sustainable practices and view sustainability as a shared responsibility. This supports data from subsequent literatures concluding that decisions to invest in environmental care are shaped by anticipated lifespan, while environmental conditions, in turn, influence longevity (Wang et al., 2022).

Over time, advancements in healthcare, technology, and living standards have led to a significant rise in global life expectancy (Guillen, 2023; Mariani et al., 2009). As people expect to live longer, their perspectives on the future and their responsibilities evolve.

This shift is supported by Thang et al. (2019), who argue that the concept of generative living underscores the importance of environmental responsibility in shaping both personal choices and broader societal issues like

sustainability. A longer lifespan motivates individuals to consider the long-term consequences of their actions, fostering a deeper commitment to their own well-being and that of future generations (Fabio et al., 2009).

Sustainable efforts are driven by emotional motivators, such as concern for future generations and a sense of personal duty. Family participation and community involvement play a significant role in fostering sustainable habits. While education contributes to sustainable behavior, personal values, ethics, and practical understanding are equally important. Economic stability supports sustainability efforts, but it requires conscious prioritization to avoid overconsumption and environmental harm (Mariani et al., 2009).

Qualitatively, this paper concluded that sustainability is a multifaceted endeavor, driven by both individual and collective efforts. Personal responsibility is heightened by longer life expectancy, environmental awareness, and motivating proactive actions. Collective action underscores the universal nature of sustainability, emphasizing shared responsibility and collaboration. Emotional and ethical motivators, such as fear of environmental disasters, family well-being, and moral duty, play a pivotal role in shaping sustainable behaviors. Systemic support, including economic stability, education, and effective policies, is essential for enabling and sustaining these efforts.

Finally, a deep sense of intergenerational duty highlights the importance of securing a livable future for descendants, framing sustainability as both a personal and collective legacy. Together, these themes illustrate that achieving sustainability requires a holistic approach, integrating individual actions, communal efforts, and systemic changes to address environmental challenges and ensure a thriving future for all. As far as demographic distribution of respondents is concerned, it reflects a strong representation from South Korea, China and Philippines with limited participation from Western countries and other regions. This may indicate cultural or regional differences in engagement with the survey topic. Kakaotalk and Facebook are the most effective platforms for reaching respondents, particularly in regions like Korea and the Philippines. Platforms like Telegram and Instagram may require targeted strategies to improve engagement. The survey results highlight the importance of considering regional and cultural differences in sustainability efforts and engagement strategies. Kakaotalk and Facebook are highly effective for survey distribution in certain regions, while other platforms may require targeted approaches.

Funding

This research was carried out without financial support from any public, commercial, or nonprofit organizations.

Conflict of Interest

There are no financial interests or personal relationships that could have affected the work presented in this research.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank Global Brand Consulting (GBC) in Kumoh National Institute of Technology, South Korea for providing us with a research laboratory.

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Appendix

Country	Respondents	Proportion (%)
Korea	92	30.67%
Philippines	81	27.00%
China	66	22.00%
US	15	5.00%
Canada	20	6.67%
Indonesia	5	1.67%
Germany	6	2.00%
Australia	15	5.00%

Figure A. Participating countries.

Platform	Respondents	Proportion (%)
Facebook	81	27.00%
Kakaotalk	92	30.67%
Rednote	66	22.00%
Instagram	15	5.00%
Telegram	6	2.00%
Facebook Messenger	20	6.67%
Tiktok	20	6.67%

Figure B. Platform analysis of where respondents found the survey.

Perceptions of Increased Life Expectancy:

Do you believe that living longer has influenced your outlook on the future? If so, how?

- *Yes, I do. Now that I exercise regularly, take care of my health, eat good food and I keep track of my expenses.
- *It is worth believing because I am now 65 years old, and my children are all successful and married.
- *I have been a widow over the years.
- *I still have dreams of my own now.
- *There's no stopping to love myself more.
- *I don't want to be a burden to my children. I must thrive and live well.

Connection Between Longevity and Environmental Responsibility:

Do you feel that increased life expectancy has made you more aware of environmental issues? Why or why not?

- *I am more aware of environmental issues now than before. In fact, I joined a planting drive in the neighborhood.
- *I don't watch TV a lot, but I recycle biodegradable to non-degradable.
- *I checked my neighbors on the calamity situations, and we shared ideas about it.

Sustainability Intention and Behavior:

What actions, if any, have you taken to contribute to environmental sustainability?

- *When I heard wildfire, typhoons, storm, I got scared. I make sure that I recycle and stop using plastic bottles.
- *Me and my family join tree planting activities regularly.
- *I recycled old clothing into rugs, blankets, bedcovers etc.

Role of Environmental Stewardship:

Do you believe that caring for the environment is a way to ensure a better future for yourself and future generations? Why or why not?

- *Of course, taking care of the environment is a collaborative effort.
- *Young, old, men, women, students, gays, transgender have all the duty to help preserve it.
- *We breathe the same air; we have the same sun.

Influence of Education and Awareness:

Do you think individuals with higher education are more likely to engage in sustainable behavior? Why or why not?

*Initially yes. The more educated a person is. The more he protects his assets, his life, his education, his family.

*Education gives you awareness and knowledge.

*No, it doesn't matter. If you only have conscience, you know what is right for your environment.

*It is a wrong perception. You don't need to be educated to engage in sustainable behavior.

Cultural and Societal Influences:

Do you think people in economically developed societies are more likely to prioritize sustainability? Why or why not?

*I think so because you have your assets and resources to take care of.

*People are more relaxed if their society is economically well off. So, they have to embrace their surroundings seriously.

Impact of Policy and Institutional Support:

How do government policies or institutional initiatives influence your willingness to engage in sustainable practices?

*In our community, our local leaders penalized those people who failed to recycle.

*Local government including us seniors to take part in cleaning activities.

*Our city mayor does not care for us seniors. Dogs are noisy late at night.

*Young people smoke their lungs out without minding us.

Barriers to Sustainability Intentions:

How do you think these barriers could be addressed to encourage more sustainable behaviors?

*Homelessness is a huge problem here. Our officials never take steps to solve this problem.

*Using plastic bottles in the stores is still not prohibited.

*People are having barbecues in the mountain forest which caused wildfire. It must be stopped.

*Houses are attached to each other without space, so when fire accidents take place. The entire community is burned to the ground.

Personal Motivations and Future Outlook:

What motivates you to engage in sustainable behaviors, if at all?

*I can still see myself surviving in many years, I must be doing my share in taking good care of this life.

*The younger generation must live in a safe climate, that's my motivation.

*My grandchildren are my motivation.

*My loved ones should be comfortable to stay safely.

*I still have life to live. I must live to the fullest.

Figure C. Qualitative data.