

A Critical Evaluation of Articles Related to Sustainable Apparel Buying

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Abstract:

One of the main aspects of the future is sustainability, and consumers are looking for sustainable products as a result of their concern for the environment. The expansion of eco-friendly clothing serves as a foundation for the formation of a brand-new consumer market. Unexpectedly, this movement has spread not only to established nations but also to emerging nations. The objective of this literature review is to assess the available research on the many aspects of sustainable apparel consumption and to present potential future research areas. The variables like value, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and knowledge were reviewed to determine the customer's perception of sustainable apparel. These findings show that most consumers in many nations have already shown an increasing interest in sustainable fashion due to considerable growth in knowledge, intense concern, values, and social standards. This literature review assists academics, manufacturers, and retailers in positioning and marketing their sustainable apparel brands based on consumer behaviour.

Keywords: *Sustainable Apparel Consumption; Value; Subjective Norm; Perceived Behavioural Control; Environment Knowledge; Green Brands*

I. Introduction

Consumer awareness of environmentally friendly products is improving, and it is evolving rapidly for apparel in particular. Some people are even looking into the suppliers of the materials, demanding that there be ethics and transparency throughout the fashion supply chain. Carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds are frequently accused of being released into the environment by apparel makers. In fact, these chemicals are being released at an increasing rate due to the growing demand for synthetic fibres used in the creation of clothes. In addition, the chemical fertilisers and pesticides used in cotton cultivation degrade the ecology, which harms humans. Since the 1980s, "ethical fashion" has emerged in response to rising public awareness of this issue and condemnation of the sweatshop labour employed by firms such as Nike, Gap, and Levi Strauss.

The textile sector has become a major source of pollution due to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the landfilling of used garments, and the growing carbon footprint per garment. In addition to adding harmful gases to the atmosphere, typical textile production techniques generate hazardous substances during fabric production. It generates masses of textile waste that contaminates the water supply, as there are no stringent safeguards in place to ensure its correct disposal.⁽¹⁾ Organic clothing has been extensively discussed in recent years.^(Error! Reference source not found.) Due to the increasing number of "green customers" in the market, researchers have shown a significant deal of interest in this subject. Green consumers are interested in products that are organic, energy efficient, or packaged in biodegradable materials, and they maintain environmentally responsible consumption habits.⁽³⁾ In recent years, there has been an upsurge in environmentally conscious initiatives by both apparel manufacturers and consumers.⁽⁴⁾ The majority of consumers have stated a growing desire to purchase environmentally friendly items and want

firms to reveal their environmental initiatives. Style and cost concerns have prevented consumers from adopting sustainable clothes.⁽⁵⁾ By communicating openly about sustainability, sustainable apparel businesses have attempted to overcome this challenge.⁽⁶⁾

However, customers continue to lack understanding regarding sustainable fashion brands.⁽⁷⁾ Therefore, the study is required to determine how to improve communication about sustainable clothing.

This review contains the following three sections.:

1. A general study conducted on the buying behaviour of sustainable apparel.
2. An extensive study performed to assess critically the factors influencing the buying behaviour of sustainable apparel.
3. Study comparing the factors that affect the buying behaviour of sustainable apparel in developed, emerging and under-developing countries

II. GENERAL STUDY ON BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SUSTAINABLE APPAREL.

Nishant Kumar and DivyaMohan⁽⁸⁾ conducted a study to analyze the application of the extended TPB model by additional constructs such as collectivist cultural orientation, environmental concern, and price sensitivity in predicting the intention of educated millennials in India to purchase green apparel. From the total population assumed, 383 samples were taken from Delhi, India. This study analysed the variables Environment Concern, Consumer Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behaviour Control, Price Sensitivity, and Purchase Intention using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) Model. The majority of researchers analysed consumer behaviour towards sustainable apparel using the TPB model. The TPB model has become the standard for analysing consumer behaviour regarding the purchase of sustainable apparel. To expand the study's scope, a new model must be used to analyse apparel buying behaviour.

Kerri Byrd and JinSu⁽⁹⁾ carried out a study to examine consumers' perceptions and attitudes concerning clothing labels and environmental, sustainable, and social apparel. The sample size of the study was 399 and responses were collected from US consumers. The outcome of the study was Consumers exhibited favourable attitudes about the sustainability of apparel but lacked information regarding the social and environmental practices of the apparel industry. As explanatory variables, the researchers identified Apparel sustainability knowledge, Consumers' attitudes, Consumers' perceptions of apparel labelling, Consumers' perceptions of the environment, and Consumers' purchase intentions. Even in developed countries, consumers are unaware of sustainable branding and industry practices. Regarding the communication with consumers about sustainable apparel brands, more research is required.

Suha Fouad Salem and AlshaimaBahagatAlanadoly⁽¹⁰⁾ examined 277 consumers from Malaysia to analyse the influence of Word - of - mouth antecedents on sustainable fashion using the Personality Traits hypothesis. Social media, conscientiousness, and openness to experience level of neuroticism are being used as variables to examine how consumers respond to apparel purchases. The result of the study shows extraversion, openness to experience, and agreeability are the three most active personality qualities on social media. Additionally, active social media use has a favourable effect on the optimization of users' eco-friendly behaviour and a rise in users' worries about fashion production. Consumers depend on social media for detailed information about sustainable apparel; therefore, it is necessary to analyse active social media users further.

Gwia Kim and Byoung-ho Ellie Jin⁽¹⁰⁾ carried out a study to examine the consumption of environmentally sustainable apparel (ESA) by older female customers based on their time perspective (TP) (expansive vs. constrained) and various advertising appeals (emotional vs. rational and positive vs. negative emotional appeals). For the analysis, 154 samples were collected from senior female consumers in the United States. Time perspective and Advertisement appeals were taken as variables for this study, an expansive TP tended to consume ESA, with their fashion consciousness. Rational and either positive or negative emotional advertisements with environmental messages were found to encourage the higher purchase intentions of elderly consumers more effectively than advertisements with no environmental messages. This study demonstrates that even elderly female consumers are influenced by advertisements to purchase environmentally sustainable apparel, and it is noticeable that consumers are influenced by advertisements with environmental messages.

Geetika Jain, MohdKamalun Nabi and K.R. Chaturvedi⁽¹²⁾ analysed consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly apparels based on the setting hyper-personalization enabled by digital clienteling. Responses were collected from 270 Indian online consumers, and the Theory of Planned Behavior was employed to analyse the responses. Study variables included Subjective norms, Perceived ease of use, Perceived usefulness, and Intention predicting buying intention. They found that the perceived ease and perceived usefulness of technology encourage consumers to buy sustainable apparel and support maintaining hyper-personalized digital clienteling by marketers. Personalized clienteling is an effective method for promoting eco-friendly apparels on social media, and this study opens the door for future research on digital clienteling aimed at environmentally conscious consumers.

In China **Li Zhao, Stacy H. Lee, and Lauren Reiter Copeland⁽¹³⁾** examined how customers were taught to buy ecologically sustainable apparel (ESA) using social media, as well as how peer pressure influenced their purchase. To investigate the impact of social media on the buying of eco-friendly apparel, the researcher obtained sample responses from 238 members. Factors for the study included subjective norms, consumer attitude, purchase intentions, social media use and perception, and peer influence. The study found that as Chinese consumers learned about social and environmental issues, their positive sentiments toward ecologically friendly purchasing behaviour increased. The analysis's findings also showed that Chinese consumers' social media use and interactions with their peers were significant social influences that were closely linked to growing aspirations to buy sustainable apparel. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) Model as a framework, social media use and perception were included as variables in the study. Adding social media to the theory of planned behaviour is the best option because consumers spend much time on social media; therefore, it must be thoroughly examined to determine how significantly it influences the purchase of sustainable apparel.

Consumers' purchase intention and behaviour regarding sustainable clothing were examined by **Theresa Maria Rausch and Cristopher Siegfried Kopplin⁽¹⁴⁾** in Germany by collecting data from online consumers based on random sampling. The study provides a comprehensive framework that identifies the primary antecedents of sustainable clothing purchasing behaviour and sheds light on the gap between sustainable clothing buying intention and subsequent purchase behaviour. Parameters included for the study are Purchase Intention and Purchase Behavior, Attitude toward Sustainable Clothes, and Subjective Norms for Sustainable Clothes. The funding of the study shows that intention behaviour and perceived economic risk have no substantial impact on the intention to purchase sustainable apparel. Researchers found that the perceived economic risk and intention behaviour do not influence the purchase of sustainable apparel. This opens the door for further

research into the factors that directly influence the intention to buy sustainable apparel. Notably, researchers have used the TPB model to study the intention to purchase sustainable apparel; however, future research must use the alternative model.

Using the TPB model, **Seung Bong Ko and ByoungHoJin⁽¹⁵⁾** compared U.S. and Chinese consumers to determine how cultural differences and a country's standing as a green market influence consumers' choices in green apparel. Samples were collected from 343 consumers from USA and China. Environmental Knowledge and Attitude, Attitude and Purchase Intention, Subjective Norm, Internal perceived behavioural control, and External perceived behavioural control are the variables for this study. This study reveals some variations in the two nations' purchases of eco-friendly apparel. Particularly, the results demonstrated that internal and external PBC were valued differently by countries. The authors selected a developed nation and an emerging nation for the study, and the results indicate that consumers' perceptions of behavioural control vary between the two nations. It provides a way to study consumers from other emerging countries.

Yan Han⁽¹⁶⁾ studied consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable apparel using psychological factors. China's cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Dalian generated a total of 784 responses for the sample. The study variables were Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Intention, and Subjective Norms. The research helps the author to comprehend the scope and significance of interactions between antecedents and intent in the paradigm of sustainable apparel consumption. To analyse consumer behaviour through TPB, additional variables must be used in future research; currently, standard variables are used in the model.

Another study by **Hyo Jung Chang and Kittichai (Tu) Watchravesringkan⁽¹⁷⁾** used the TP model to identify key variables that influence consumer behaviour while purchasing sustainable clothing. 235 samples from US consumers were collected for the study. By using a list of variables such as environmental knowledge, general environmental attitudes, perceived money availability, and perceived store accessibility, the study was conducted. It was discovered that control beliefs and sustainable consumption are significantly influenced by consumers' perceptions of the availability of money and store accessibility among USA consumers.

III. THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SUSTAINABLE APPAREL.

A study by **Abaid Ullah ZafaJie, Shen Muhammad Ashfaq and Mohsin Shahzad⁽¹⁸⁾** shows the effect of social media usage and browsing on sustainable purchasing attitudes, as well as the underlying mechanism and boundary condition. Totally 693 samples were collected from

social media users. The study analysed social media, sustainable purchasing attitudes and environment driving factors. The empirical study reveals that social media usage and browsing significantly influence the sustainable purchasing behaviour and environmental consciousness of users. Currently, social media is the most influential medium for consumers, and sustainable apparel marketers use it to promote their products. Therefore, it is important to study social media in this context, and this study confirms that social media influences consumers to purchase sustainable apparel.

A recent study by **Doroteja Mandarić, Anica Hunjet and Goran Kozina⁽⁰⁾** found that an individual's perception of awareness regarding fashion sustainability and various connected factors, as well as the differences in the awareness of these factors between both the sexes, may influence

consumer behaviour in relation to sustainable fashion products. Sustainable fashion firms are largely responsible for increasing awareness among consumers. In a developing economy such as Croatia, where the transition from fast fashion to slow fashion is challenging, awareness of sustainable fashion is crucial, and sustainable fashion brands need to try and achieve it.

Sushant Kumar and RambalakYadav⁽²⁰⁾ investigated the effect of shopping incentives on customers' desire to purchase eco-friendly clothing. The utilitarian and hedonic incentive theories of shopping behaviour were used as the study's theoretical foundation. Additionally, all the associations under study were tested for the moderating effects of gender and family income. There was a total of 329 responses received from social media users in India. The results show that information availability and personalised offerings have a large impact on utilitarian motivation, and that adventure, authority, and prestige have a big impact on hedonic motivation.

Hye Jung Jung,Kyung Wha Oh and HaeJung Maria Kim⁽²¹⁾ conducted an exploratory study in UK, USA and China to study characteristics (shopping values, the consciousness of sustainability, perceived consumer effectiveness, and environmental knowledge) and marketing perspective, 711 samples were collected from consumers. Important factors properly considered for the study include utilitarian, hedonistic, differential, social responsibility, pro-environmentalism, perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental knowledge, aesthetic, functional, and sustainable brand. Differentiated marketing tactics are required in the sustainable garment business when addressing global consumers in order to increase consumption of sustainable clothes and successfully contribute to resolving the crisis facing our planet and future generations.

The influence of consumers' knowledge about the environmental impact of apparel and climate change scepticism on their evaluation of brands' pro-environmental initiatives (shared value and perceived benefit) and, ultimately, their relationship with the brand (perceived trust, commitment), leading to purchase intention for both familiar and unfamiliar brands, was studied in the United States by **Lauren Copeland and GardiBhaduri⁽²²⁾** using 204 samples. Knowledge and scepticism influenced the intention of consumers to purchase from an eco-friendly brand. Specifically, the obtained shared value perceptions and perceived benefits of customers drove their relationship with the brand through trust and commitment, ultimately influencing their intention to purchase from the brand.

Shipra Gupta, WenckeGwozdz and James Gentry⁽²³⁾ investigated whether fostering a style orientation (rather than a fashion orientation) among customers will result in more sustainable apparel consumption. Promoting style may be a potential solution to achieve slow fashion and, thus, improve sustainable apparel consumption, and highlights the need for the collective effort of various actors, particularly the role of the government, in developing a more sustainable fashion system. Data was collected from 6,386 Swedish, Dutch, German, British, and American customers. Fashion orientation, Style orientation, and Antecedents Materialism were used as variables in this study.

A lot of studies have been carried out among US consumers regarding consumer preference **Lori Rothenberg and Delisia Matthews⁽²⁴⁾** studied customer preference for organic apparel and consumer preferences for particular organic fashion features. Samples were gathered from 181 university students in the United States. The factors used by the researchers were Sustainable Knowledge, Price, Production, Technology, and Fabric. Young customers prioritise sustainability, price, production, technology, and fabric when buying garments shows that they are well-informed.

The sample consists of 981 Polish respondents in order to examine consumer behaviour in the market for sustainable apparel and develop a theoretical model. **Malgorzata Koszewska**⁽²⁴⁾ found that the consumer's attitude and intention to purchase affect sustainable apparel buying. The theoretical model enables sustainable apparel brand marketers in considering the consumer's attitude and the factors influencing the consumer's purchase intent.

Danielle Sponder Testa, Sonia Bakhshian and Rachel Eike⁽²⁵⁾ conducted a study on the drivers of consumer engagement with sustainable fashion firms on Instagram in order to answer the particular research question: what factors contribute to the popularity of sustainable fashion among digital consumers? For the study, samples were collected from 722 Instagram users in the United States. The study examined the influence of sustainable fashion brands, environmentally conscious brands, and traditional brands. Social media has an impact on the buying of sustainable fashion, and sustainable fashion brands use social media to advertise their products. Millennials use Instagram predominantly, so sustainable aware fashion brands use Instagram to attract consumers. Instagram has evolved into a distinctive social media platform where sustainable fashion manufacturers showcase their production, influencing younger consumers to purchase sustainable fashion brands.

De Lenne and O.Vandenbosch^(Error! Reference source not found.) analysed attitudes, social norms, and self-efficacy beliefs that influence sustainable apparel purchasing using social media as a significant factor. The survey was conducted among 681 young adults aged 18-26 in Leuven, Belgium. Study variables included consumer attitudes, subjective norms, descriptive norms, self-efficacy beliefs, social media, and magazines. As we all know, social media rule the world, and social media have a direct impact on consumer buying of sustainable apparel.

IV. BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SUSTAINABLE APPAREL IN DEVELOPED, EMERGING AND UNDER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

A recent study was done in Italy by **Valentina Carfora, Giulia Buscicchio and Patrizia Catellani**⁽²⁸⁾ to analyse psychosocial predictors of women consumers who have the intention to purchase sustainable apparel by integrating the Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model and Value Belief Norms (VBN) theory. For the study, 286 samples were collected by using interviewing method. As Italy is considered to be a developed country, customers must be aware of environmental issues and have pro-environmental behaviour, pro-environmental attitudes, and personal values. The pro-environmental behaviour of female consumers influences their purchase of sustainable apparel. Furthermore, consumers' moral motive influences their intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

Luo Wang Yingjiao Xu, Hanna Lee and AilinLi⁽²⁹⁾ examined how different product attributes (i.e., type of fabric, type of down, eco-label certification, and price) influence consumers' purchasing choices for sustainable apparel in more realistic settings, this study was carried out in the United States 440 consumer responses were collected. As anticipated, price continues to be the most influential element on consumer behaviour, followed by the type of fabric (recycled), the availability of eco-brands, and the type of down (traceable). The study revealed that consumers' trade-offs differed based on their gender, level of education, income, and prior purchase experience. Even in the U. S., price plays a significant role in influencing the buying of sustainable apparel. India, an emerging economy, faces the same challenge, trying to make price an important factor in research at all levels of countries.

As consumers adapt to technology more rapidly, **Retno Andri Pamudyarini**⁽³⁰⁾ carried out research to examine the influence of consumer behaviour and innovation on the purchase of sustainable clothing in Indonesia among the student population. As Indonesia is a technologically-advanced country, innovation in the fashion industry influences customer behaviour toward sustainable apparel. Developed nations are particularly interested in processing fabrics and fashion items, and they assure that it is sustainable. Utilizing natural materials and natural dyes, implementing water resource management in relation to the fashion industry, and swiftly implementing textile recycling technology. Therefore, consumers are well-informed about sustainable clothing and recycling fashion. Emerging nations should innovate similar technologies to attract consumers for sustainable clothing.

Osmud Rahman and Malgorzata Koszewska^(Error! Reference source not found.) conducted an empirical study in Poland to assess the significance of numerous sustainable and non-sustainable garment cues, as well as the practical, aesthetic, and ethical considerations in buying sustainable apparel. The study revealed that many Polish consumers would not purchase a sustainable or "green" product if it lacked sufficient aesthetic, functional, and economical benefits to meet their requirements and desires. For the study, 288 consumers were interviewed. As Poland is an emerging economy, consumers are influenced by the aesthetic and economic benefits of purchasing sustainable clothing. Since the price of green apparel in emerging nations is high, apparel manufacturers must work on their pricing strategies to attract more consumers.

A study was conducted in Fortaleza, Brazil to study the impact of emancipation and materialism on slow fashion consumption by collected 306 samples. **Erica Maria Caliope Sobreira and Clayton Robson Moreira Da Silva**^(Error! Reference source not found.) found that the empowerment of individuals had a favourable effect on slow fashion consumption. In contrast, only one fashion brand was influenced positively by materialism. People can be empowered via education, employability, and a higher standard of living in developing nations, which is a crucial part of human development. According to the current study, consumer empowerment has a serious effect on the buying of slow fashion in Brazil; therefore, consumers must be empowered with pro-environmental knowledge so that they will buy slow fashion.

In South East Asia Bangladesh has become the hub of textile manufacturing, **Sobuj, Adnan Maroof Khan and Ahashan Habib**^(Error! Reference source not found.) analysed the factors that influence the eco-friendly apparel buying habits of young Bangladeshi consumers. Environmental concern and environmental knowledge are utilised as additional variables in the application of the theory of planned behaviour. 198 sample was collected from a college student for study. Subjective norms and perceived behavioural control play a crucial role in the student population's purchase of sustainable apparel. This will increase the purchase of eco-friendly clothing if they are educated on environmental issues and provided with environmental knowledge.

Arpita Khare^(Error! Reference source not found.) conducted a study to examine the impact of prior environmental behaviour, green peer influence, and green apparel knowledge on the appraisal of perceived benefits of green apparel by Indian customers. The sample size for the study was 450, and Mall Intercept Methods were utilized in Ludhiana, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Pune, Bangalore, Kolkata, Delhi, Faridabad, Guwahati, and Hyderabad. The Indian consumer is influenced by past environmental behaviour, green peer influence, knowledge of green apparel, and perceived benefits of green apparel. India is an emerging economy where consumers must be thoroughly educated on environmental behaviour in order for them to purchase sustainable fashion. The perceived benefits

of green apparel played a significant role in motivating consumers to choose sustainable clothing. Marketers of eco-friendly apparel in emerging nations must improve marketing strategies.

In Vietnam, **Mai Thi Tuyet Nguyen and Linh Hoang Nguyen**⁽³⁴⁾ examined the influence of materialistic values on the purchase intentions of young adults towards green apparel. The attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and materialistic values of consumers are analysed, 45 young adults under the age of 25 were sampled in Hanoi. Subjective norms are the most influential factor in the purchase of green apparel; consumers place materialistic value on the purchase of green apparel, and the price of green apparel is extremely expensive.

Heesook Hong and Ji Hye Kang⁽³⁶⁾ investigated the cause-and-effect correlations between moral philosophy, moral intensity, and the purchase of environmentally sustainable textile and apparel products. They found the two dimensions of moral philosophy and idealism had a significant influence on overall moral intensity, and moral intensity had a significant influence on consumer purchase behaviour toward sustainable textile and apparel products, confirming the sequential relationship among the variables. The study was conducted in Korea by collecting online samples from 321 female consumers. The Moral Philosophy of the consumer will vary from country to country and will be affected by the consumer's education level, societal beliefs, and values.

Nazan Okur and Canan Saricam⁽³⁷⁾ carried out an empirical study by collecting samples from 796 consumers in Turkey to examine customer behaviour toward sustainable apparel. The consumption of green apparel is influenced by motivation for environmental responsibility, attitude green brand awareness and purchasing intent. There was a significant correlation between environmental responsibility motivation and consumer perception of the green brand. In addition, it was discovered that customer knowledge of environmental issues has a significant impact on the purchase of green brands.

Conclusion

In order to analyse previously published research studies that identify elements influencing the consumption of sustainable clothes, a literature review was undertaken for this article. Only 30 articles were chosen since they fitted the study's criteria; these articles were divided into three categories. The review's findings are also reported depending on the variables utilised to examine variables affecting the purchase of sustainable apparel. A large majority of researchers employed the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). In addition, a few other factors are taken into account, such as knowledge of environmental issues, commitments to sustainable fashion, theory of planned behaviour, social media, branding and sustainable labelling, social influence, and price orientation. However, several restrictions suggest exciting possible directions for further research. Research from developed countries looked into societal aspects that influence consumers' attitudes towards purchasing sustainable apparel, which is an extremely significant factor to do research in developing nations. For further research into the variables influencing the purchase of sustainable apparel, new models must be developed for understanding consumer behaviour towards sustainable apparel.

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