

Determinants of Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention: A Study on Indian Consumers

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(FPMN 2103)**



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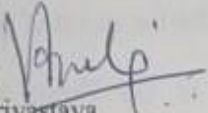
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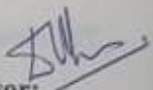
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sustainable apparel has become a main topic in debates across the globe on ethical consumption and environmental responsibility. With the increasing environmental impact of fast fashion, governments, businesses, and consumers are seeking alternatives that mitigate ecological damage. Globally, fashion brands are reforming supply chains, designing circular models, and responding to tough regulations on sustainability reports. However, initiatives are steadily gaining market in the developed economies, whereas the scenario in developing markets like India is complex. Attention towards eco-friendly clothing is increasing, and sustainable apparel is now available across both online and offline retail. Yet, consumer acceptance is still relatively modest. Although several individuals express a likely consumer attitude towards sustainability, they hesitate to choose these in their purchasing behaviour. This hesitation stems from issues such as price concerns, limited product availability, and pursuing lifestyle priorities, which creates a weak link between positive consumer attitude and buying behaviour.

The present study examines the behavioural factors that influence sustainable apparel purchase intention among Indian consumers. To determine the consumer decision-making attributes, the research established behavioural theories by incorporating contemporary perspectives. The concept of the current research is based on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour, Sheth's (1991) Consumption Values framework, and Brodie's (2013) Consumer Engagement perspective, which considers both the rational and experiential parts of consumer choices. The framework uses social online platform engagement and shopping online platform engagement that emphasises the influence of consumers' online engagement on consumer decisions in the context of sustainable apparel.

In addition, two psychological traits, cosmopolitanism and brand dependence, are used as moderators, which provide insights about global ideas and brand loyalty that affect sustainability-related phenomena.

Purpose

The primary focus of the current work is to find out the determinants that shape Indian consumers'

cognitive processes in purchasing sustainable apparel. The current research targets consumers' social and shopping online platform engagement and multiple dimensions of consumption values—functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional, and social—and establishes a framework on how these engagement and value constructs act as the influencers on consumer attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control towards sustainable apparel purchase intention. In addition, the current study puts emphasis on the roles of cosmopolitanism and brand dependence, integrating the influence of personal traits of people on consumer behaviour, on either the positive or negative aspects of formed relationships. It has been observed that individuals living in urban areas are more likely to support the concept of sustainability at the global level; on the other hand, those who are loyal to familiar brands are more likely to stick with their existing choices. This phenomenon clearly shows the different aspects of consumer behaviour towards sustainability.

Consumer perception is generally shaped by the opinions of their peers, digital media influences, and reviews published on online platforms. Therefore, digital content largely shapes the consumer perception towards their purchase. The sustainable fashion trend in India is largely shaped by digital tools these days. The mixture of available theories and the influence of digital platforms provide a multidimensional approach to studying consumer attitude towards sustainability.

Design/Approach/Methodology

The study is based on a quantitative research design, gathering responses from a total of 325 urban consumers through an online survey. Respondents were chosen deliberately to ensure that they had prior exposure to online shopping environments and at least some awareness of sustainable apparel messages circulating in digital and retail spaces. This ensured that the data reflected informed participants who could engage with the constructs under investigation. The questionnaire was developed using recognised scales from prior studies and pre-tested for validity. The final data was analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, permitting robust testing of the extended theory of planned behaviour framework.

The core theory of planned behaviour constructs—consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, formed the base of the model. These were supplemented by five types of consumption values, two engagement constructs (consumer interaction with platforms like Instagram, Myntra, and Amazon), and two moderators, cosmopolitanism and brand dependence.

Findings

The results confirmed that consumer attitude is the most influential predictor of sustainable apparel purchase intention. Among the value constructs, emotional value emerged as a key force, reflecting consumers' desire for self-expression, pride, and ethical alignment in their apparel choices. Subjective norms also influenced intention, especially in collectivist settings like India, where family and peer approval hold weight. Perceived behavioural control, defined as consumers' sense of ease and feasibility in making sustainable apparel choices, had a moderate but significant impact.

The moderation analysis revealed that cosmopolitanism weakened the effect of subjective norms but strengthened the attitude–intention link, suggesting that globally oriented consumers are more likely to act on internal beliefs than social pressure. Brand dependence strengthened the relationship between consumer attitude and sustainable apparel purchase intention but did not significantly moderate the perceived behavioural control–purchase intention link, indicating that brand loyalty has a nuanced influence in this context. Online engagement, reflected through social and shopping online platforms, further contextualized the findings. Consumers who interact frequently with sustainable content or shop online are more likely to be exposed to eco-friendly options, enabling a stronger consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel.

Originality

This study stands out by fusing behavioural theory, value-based constructs, and engagement-driven insights to explain sustainable fashion adoption in a rapidly evolving market. By incorporating cosmopolitanism and brand dependence as moderators, it captures psychological nuances often overlooked in Indian consumer research. Moreover, anchoring consumer

engagement through social online platform engagement and shopping online platform engagement aligns the model with today's digital-first reality.

While existing literature has often focused on functional or environmental concerns, this research highlights the role of emotional connection, brand relationships, and digital experiences in influencing behaviour. These insights provide a roadmap for marketers and policymakers to promote sustainability through personalised communication, digital storytelling, and segmentation strategies based on consumer psychology.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Sustainable apparel (SA) has become a main topic in debates across the globe on environmental responsibility. In the ever-evolving landscape of the global fashion industry, the imperative to embrace sustainability has become increasingly pronounced, driven by mounting environmental challenges, international climate commitments and rising consumer consciousness (Abbate et al., 2024; Lin et al., 2023). The apparel sector, being the second-largest consumer of water and a significant contributor to global carbon emissions, coupled with its substantial generation of plastic and textile waste, has amplified calls for sustainable alternatives (Hoque et al., 2021). Within this context, SA is increasingly gaining traction, defined as apparel made from organically cultivated natural fibres and extending to practices such as recycled material integration, eco-friendly packaging, chemical-free production, second-hand usage and slow-fashion models (Su et al., 2023; Gil et al., 2024).

Despite growing awareness, the SA segment remains underdeveloped in emerging markets. For example, India's SA segment was valued at only \$1.31bn in 2022, representing approximately 1.04% of the total Indian apparel market (Globaldata Report, 2025). The present study examines the behavioural factors that influence sustainable apparel purchase intention (PI) among Indian consumers. The study is grounded on Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Sheth's (1991) Consumption Values framework (CVT), and the Engagement concept (Brodie et al., 2013). TPB is the meta framework and highlights the role of ATT, subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC) in shaping PI. CVT comprises functional values (FV), social values (SV), emotional values (EV), epistemic values (EPV) and conditional values (CV) that consumers associate with products. These values influence ATT which subsequently influence the PI. The Engagement concept foregrounds consumers' interactions with online platforms which includes social online platform engagement (SOPE) and shopping online platform engagement (SHOPE) shapes perceptions and exposure to SA by influencing ATT, SN, and PBC.

The model includes two psychological moderators: cosmopolitanism (COSMO), representing a global outlook and receptiveness to international norms (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007), and brand dependence (BD), reflecting reliance on familiar and trusted brands (Bristow, Schneider and Schuler, 2002). The inclusion of these moderators helps explain why some consumers act on personal beliefs while others follow established brand choices or social cues.

The primary focus of the present work is to validate the key determinants that shape Indian consumers' purchase intention for SA. Specifically, the study examines how consumption values (functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional, social) and integrated online platform engagement (social and shopping platform engagement) influence ATT, SN and PBC; and how ATT, SN and PBC in turn influence PI. Finally, the study analyses how COSMO and BD moderate the relationships between ATT—PI, SN—PI, and PBC—PI. The research is focused on urban consumers in the Delhi NCR region and uses a quantitative design with data analysed through PLS-SEM to test the extended theoretical framework.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The global fashion and apparel sector has become a powerful driver of the world economy while at the same time being recognised as a major source of environmental pressure (Papamichael et al., 2022). SA refers to clothing designed and developed for the well-being of mankind and ecological balance, offering transparency in supply chains and practices such as recycled material integration, eco-friendly production, and slow-fashion models (Niinimäki, 2010; Betzler et al., 2022). SA addresses environmental concerns and aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goals such as SDG 12, SDG 14 and SDG 15.

Research on SA has drawn from a range of theoretical perspectives. Early studies relied on general models of consumer behaviour, but scholars increasingly combine frameworks to capture the layered nature of SA consumption (Niinimäki, 2010; Geiger and Keller, 2018). Among these, Ajzen's (1991) TPB is widely used: ATT, SN and PBC are central predictors of intention, and favourable ATT toward SA is consistently linked with stronger PI (Paul et al., 2016;

Han et al., 2017). Yet TPB alone has limitations to explain the ATT–behaviour gap, where positive intentions do not always translate into purchases (Dhir et al., 2021; Jung et al., 2020).

Geographically, most existing studies in SA have been conducted in developed economies such as the USA, the UK, South Korea, and Finland, while developing nations, including India, remain comparatively underexplored despite their dual role as major producers and growing consumer markets (Khare & Kautish, 2021). From a methodological perspective, research on SA is largely dominated by quantitative survey approaches, and particularly PLS-SEM to examine the relationships among ATT, consumption values, and purchase intentions (Han et al., 2017). Despite this progress, notable methodological gaps remain, and the literature still heavily relies on cross-sectional data, student or urban convenience samples, and limited experimental or longitudinal designs. Overall, we see that which bodies of literature review put forth three large scale issues that require more study. First out of the box is the issue of we must do more to include emerging economies like India which is corrective to the present geographical bias in SA research. Also of great note is the development of a more inclusive theory which puts forward a combination of rational, moral and identity based perspectives to account for which we have a better theory which does justice to the gap between what we know to work in terms of treatment and what we see in terms of consumer behavior. Also we see that there is a push for use of a variety of research methods which include experimental, longitudinal, and netnographic as well as more varied sampling which in turn will allow us to better present the stories of consumers and their online actions. In response to these gaps the present study we put forth an integrated framework which brings together TPB, CVT, and the Engagement concept which also we include COSMO and BD as moderators to put forth a comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of PI among urban Indian consumers.

Research Methodology

A quantitative approach was employed in this investigation. Empirically, the study seeks to test the hypothesized relationships outlined in the conceptual framework, as well as the relationships between the variables. Data was collected via an online survey shared through emails, WhatsApp,

and various social media platforms, from which a total of 350 responses were gathered. For this study, 325 of the responses were found to be complete and of sufficient quality to be used in the analysis. The final sample size was confirmed to be sufficient for multivariate analysis and SEM, as the statistical power and robustness for testing the proposed structural model was guaranteed using G*Power 3.1.

Throughout the entire study, validated scales from existing literature were utilized and measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The consumption values (functional, social, emotional, epistemic, conditional) were adapted from Sheth et al. (1991), Koay et al. (2022) and Hasbullah et al. (2020). The TPB constructs (ATT, SN, PBC, PI) were rooted in Ajzen (1991) and other applicable studies on TPB. The SOPE and SHOPE scales were taken and adapted from the engagement literature proposed by Brodie et al. (2013). COSMO was measured with items adapted from Cleveland and Laroche (2007), and the items used to measure BD came from Brodie et al. (2013).

In our pilot study we had 30 respondents which we used to determine question clarity, readability and reliability. We made minor word changes based on the feedback we received which improved flow. Also, we coded and cleaned the responses out of which we removed incomplete and invalid ones. Also, we noted that we had minimal missing values which we dealt with via listwise deletion and also we went on to screen out outliers.

Results and Analysis

The measurement and structural models were verified using PLS-SEM. All indicator loadings were greater than 0.70 which indicates satisfactory reliability. Items dropped from FV. For all constructs, the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values were greater than the 0.70 benchmark which indicates internal consistency. The AVE values were greater than 0.50 which indicates convergent validity. The Fornell–Larcker and HTMT methods confirmed discriminant validity. All HTMT ratios were below 0.85. This indicates the constructs were empirically distinct. The model fit was adequate. The SRMR values were 0.061 (saturated model) and 0.067

(estimated model), both of which are below 0.08. Overall, the results confirm the constructs' reliability and validity.

The structural model assessment revealed that multicollinearity was not a concern, as all VIF values were below 5. The model's explanatory power was moderate, with R^2 values of 0.383 for ATT, 0.490 for SN, 0.472 for PBC, and 0.248 for PI. The findings demonstrated that all five consumption values—FV, SV, CV, EV, and EPV had significant and positive effects on ATT. Both SOPE and Shopping SHOPE showed strong positive relationships with ATT, SN, and PBC.

In alignment with the TPB, ATT ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.014$), SN ($\beta = 0.174$, $p = 0.018$), and PBC ($\beta = 0.212$, $p = 0.027$) were found to have significant positive effects on PI. Moreover, COSMO (COSMO; $\beta = 0.102$, $p = 0.041$) and BD (BD; $\beta = 0.145$, $p = 0.032$) directly influence PI, highlighting that globally oriented and brand-loyal consumers demonstrate stronger intentions to buy SA. Moderation analysis further revealed that both COSMO and BD moderated key relationships. COSMO significantly moderated the effects of ATT, SN, and PBC on PI. BD also moderated the links between ATT and SN with PI. However, BD did not significantly moderate the relationship between PBC and PI.

In the study we found that out of 22 hypotheses 21 were supported. We saw that all direct hypotheses played out which in turn confirmed ATT, SN, PBC, BD, and COSMO's large role in PI. Also, we found that out of six moderation hypotheses five held true which we took as an indication that COSMO and BD are in fact very good moderators within the model. Also, we looked at the results of the Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) which reported that ATT (importance 0.31; performance 67.4) and PBC (importance 0.28; performance 70.2) to be the key predictors of PI. Also, we saw that while SOPE and SHOPE had medium importance (0.21 and 0.19) they did very well in terms of performance (74.1 and 72.3).

Discussion

The findings show that the framework successfully delineates the factors that determine PI. From the perspective of the TPB, ATT, SN, and PBC positively and significantly influenced PI. In the Indian context, ATT was the strongest, which implies that when consumers consider SA to be of

good quality, fashionable, and morally/ethically responsible, they are likely to buy it. SN was also significant, as expected in collectivist cultures where families and social networks shape and influence the individuals' substantive and social decisions to the buy SA. More importantly, the influence of PBC signified that perceived feasibility in terms of availability, affordability, and convenience of SA transforms positive beliefs to a readiness to action.

Understanding consumer behavior, particularly positive attitudes toward self-service, can be enhanced with the incorporation of CVT. Each of the five value types—functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional, and social—positively strengthened ATT. This suggests that evaluations of SA, or self-service, stem from several self-service functional, affective, and contextual. The provision of confidence rational, functional utility and durability. Emotional conditional gratification and and social contextual parameters, such as discounts, trends, or peer approval, provide evidence that consumers respond to both satisfiers and symbolic benefits.

Online engagement which in turn increased TPB's predictive value. We see that both SOPE and SHOPE played a large role in ATT, SN, and PBC which in term we note that digital ecosystems play a key in putting forth sustainability issues, in establishing their importance and in presenting them as doable. Social media interaction with influencers, peer groups, and sustainability reports increases social acceptance, also at the same time e commerce platforms improve what is put out there in terms of info, transparency and convenience.

In terms of what we found with COSMO and BD which is that they play a mediating role in terms of consumer diversity. COSMO which is the global orientation factor amplified the roles of ATT and PBC on PI but at the same time diminished the SN-PI relationship which means that global consumers tend to go by inner conviction and personal control rather than local social norms. On the other hand, we saw that BD which is brand dependency played into the fields of ATT and SN which means that the brand loyal consumers do in fact translate positive brand images and social signals into greater intent when it is a trusted brand that is putting out the sustainability message. Also, we noted that the non-significant result of the BD x PBC interaction

tells us that brand loyalty does not in fact overcome issues of cost or product access which in turn points out the limits of the behavioral model we are working with.

All the observations prove that how individuals in India decide to purchase services from South Africa is formed through intersections of various lenses which include thinking, feelings, social digital interactions, and online activity, tempered through individual traits. This amalgamation of findings further develops the Theory of Planned Behavior by incorporating dimensions of value and engagement, which richly account for the rational, emotional, and situational dimensions of intent and how they come together to form intent to sustain.

Global oriented consumers may react to international eco campaigns which on the other hand have little to do with the brand attached consumers who are out for legacy and trust. Also global thinking consumers may jump on international eco initiatives while that is not the case for consumers which prioritize brand history and trust. Global oriented customers may support international eco efforts but that doesn't play a large role with the brand loyal customers which in fact are more about brand's past performance and trust. Also, we see that the former does not apply to the later which rather goes after brands they can count on and that which has a proven track record. Global consumers may be into international eco programs but that isn't what we see from consumers that are tied to a brand which instead are after that which has a story and which they can trust. Also, we see that there is a divide between these two groups which is that the former is very much into global issues and the later which is more at home with known and trusted brands.

For policy makers, these findings stress the importance of eco-labeling standards, awareness campaigns, and the development of sustainability-focused infrastructure that is available outside big cities. For instance, educators may choose to incorporate sustainability into the fashion and management courses as a way to foster long-term ecological consciousness among consumers of the future. Finally, the broader conversation reiterates that the adoption of the SA in India hinges on the ATT formation, as well as the necessary systemic backing and identity congruence. The adapted TPB–CVT–Engagement framework brings a contextually grounded and

theoretically solid approach to propelling sustainability in research and practice in developing nations, and also fills a pertinent gap in the literature.

Conclusion and Future Directions

With TPB, CVT, and the Engagement variable we looked at a study of 325 Delhi-NCR consumers which we analyzed via PLS-SEM. We found that which ATTs, social influence, perceived control, consumption values and online engagement as a whole play a role in determining PI.

The findings reconfirm that ATT primarily drives PI. This demonstrates that consumers perceiving SA as high-quality, ethically responsible, and emotionally fulfilling are more likely to intend to purchase. Here, SN significantly influences intention, as it underscores the significance of the collectivist social structure and peer validation in the Indian setting. Also, PBC prompted the translation of positive ATT into intention as the affordability of the product, accessibility, and ease of purchase facilitated transitioned intent. Functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional, and social value ascribed to SA all pointed to ATT, which denotes rational and affective appraisal. SA also appeals to positive environmental consciousness as well as to personal gratification, curiosity, and situational convenience. ATT, SN, and PBC are shaped by the engagement of consumers on online platforms. Visibility of these platforms, narrative of influencers, and seamless e-commerce experience, all turned sustainability from an abstract ideal into an actionable behaviour. The moderating influences of COSMO and BD depicted consumer diversity. COSMO amplified self-driven motivations and, to an extent, moderated social pressure. BD, on the other hand, amplified the influence of peer endorsements and trusted brand equity. BD did not have a meaningful impact on the PBC–PI association, indicating that even brand loyalty cannot surmount the insurmountable structural limits posed by price or the absence of a product. The findings hold strong theoretical and practical significance. It demonstrates that behaviour is not determined by cognition alone but also by affective, contextual, and identity-related forces.

While we see that the research has put forth strong results it also brings to light some issues which we must address in this case the fact that the study looked at a very specific group

in Delhi-NCR and did not look at a larger geographically representative sample or use probability-based sampling which is a issue for future research. To that point we see that the adoption of Sustainable Apparel in India is a complex process which plays out through a series of beliefs, values, levels of engagement and personal disposition which in turn play out in a social digital environment. Also, we present in this study an extended TPB-CVT-Engagement model which we have empirically validated and which we put forth as an improvement to what is currently out there in terms of theory and practice related to sustainable consumption. By looking at the role of sustainability in choice which comes out of the interaction of cognitive, emotional and social elements we in this study also put forth a framework which we think will help build a more responsible and environment conscious fashion community in India.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	FULL FORM
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
ATT	Consumer Attitude
BD	Brand Dependence
COSMO	Cosmopolitanism
CV	Conditional Value
EPV	Epistemic value
EV	Emotional Value
FPM	Fellow Program in Management
FV	Functional Value
HTMT	Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
PI	Purchase Intention
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
R ²	Coefficient of Determination
SA	Sustainable Apparel
PI	Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SHOPE	Shopping Online Platform Engagement
SI	Similarity Index (Turnitin report)
SN	Subjective Norms
SOPE	Social Online Platform Engagement
SV	Social Value
TCCM	Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology framework
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
VBN	Value–Belief–Norm theory
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the ever-evolving landscape of the global fashion industry, the imperative to embrace sustainability has become increasingly pronounced, driven by mounting environmental challenges, international climate commitments and rising consumer consciousness (Abbate *et al.*, 2024; Lin *et al.*, 2023). Sustainability has emerged as a critical priority across industries, engaging managers, policymakers, academicians and consumers who are progressively attentive to environmental concerns (Rajput *et al.*, 2024). The apparel sector, being the second-largest consumer of water and a significant contributor to global carbon emissions, coupled with its substantial generation of plastic and textile waste, has amplified calls for sustainable alternatives (Hoque *et al.*, 2021; Kounina *et al.*, 2024). Within this context, sustainable apparel (SA) is increasingly gaining traction, defined as apparel made from organically cultivated natural fibres and extending to practices such as recycled material integration, eco-friendly packaging, chemical-free production, second-hand usage and slow-fashion models (Su *et al.*, 2023; Gil *et al.*, 2024).

The revenue of the global apparel market in 2023 was reported at \$1.73tn trillion (Statista, 2025). In comparison, India's apparel and textile sector was valued at \$165bn in 2022, with \$125bn attributed to domestic consumption and \$40bn to exports (Invest India, 2025). Despite India's position as the third-largest revenue generator in the global apparel industry (Statista, 2025), the SA segment remains underdeveloped, accounting for merely \$1.31bn in 2022, which is only 1.04% of the total Indian apparel market (Global data, 2025). Understanding the determinants of consumer adoption of SA is, therefore, imperative to overcome barriers and facilitate growth. Against this backdrop, investigating the role of consumption values in shaping consumer attitude (ATT) toward sustainable apparel purchase intention (SA PI) provides crucial insights for advancing the acceptance of SA in emerging markets such as India. Figure 1.1 shows

the share of sustainable fashion in the fashion category worldwide and the percentage country wise.

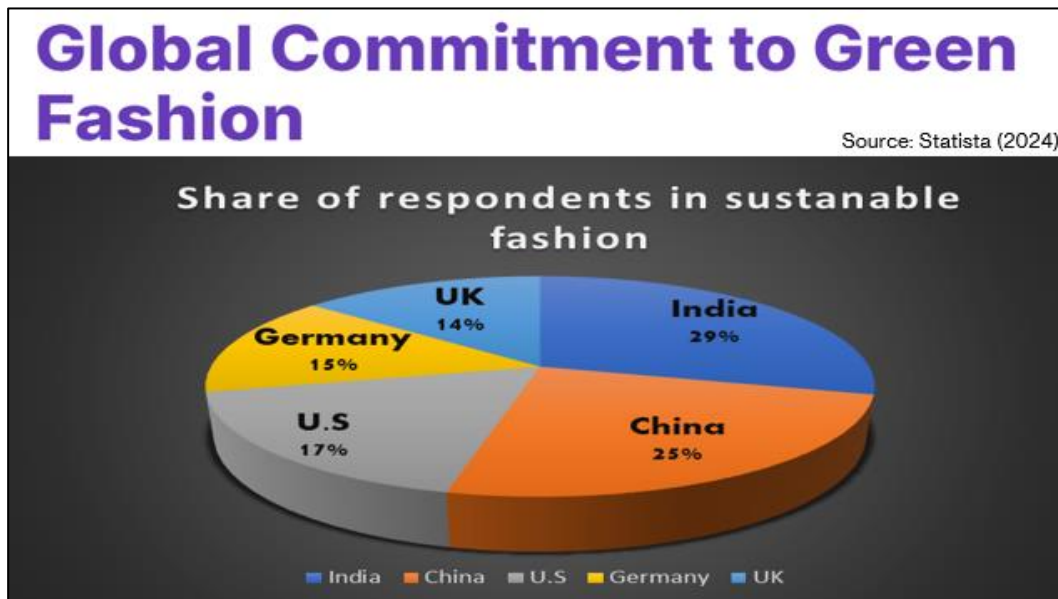


Figure 1.1: Share of Consumers Purchasing Sustainable Fashion by Country
Source: Statista (2024)

With increased awareness about issues such as excessive water usage, textile waste, unethical labor, and carbon emissions, both brands and consumers are being encouraged to make more environmentally and socially responsible choices (Bala Saraswathi and Rathinamoorthy, 2022; Hudd, 2022).

Currently, SA has become a separate category of fashion and apparel industry, wherein customers are looking for environment friendly solutions and it clearly reflects in their purchasing behaviour also (Su *et al.*, 2019; Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020). Generally, SA is perceived as ecofriendly designed, produced, sold and consumed category of clothing (Su *et al.*, 2019). SA provides solution against many environmental concerns such as carbon accumulation, water pollutions, and piling up of textile waste, fashion industry has emerged as most polluting industry on the planet (Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020; Bala Saraswathi and Rathinamoorthy, 2022). Due to fashion industry challenges sustainable clothing has emerged as sole solution at the central stage towards a sustainable solution.

Although customers have awareness and they acknowledge the importance of eco-friendly apparels but still they hesitate to change consist habits of their purchasing behaviour.

This practice is quite visible in developing markets like India wherein customers still hesitate to make sustainable choices in their purchasing habits (Athwal *et al.*, 2019; Khare and Kautish, 2021). Despite many sustainability claims consumers pose doubts regarding the limited product availability, brand preferences consequently slight behavioural change towards SA (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Athwal *et al.*, 2019).

Indian market poses both challenges and opportunities for eco-friendly clothing choices due to its complex demography and layered choices for SA consumption (Sharma and Jha, 2017; Khare and Kautish, 2021). Consumers who live in Tier-1 and Tier-2 urban spaces are aware about sustainability ideas of clothing through platforms like print and social media and educational platforms (Biswas and Roy, 2015; Paul *et al.*, 2016). Although, conversion of ideas into actions are limited due to limited availability and adherence to already used brands of clothing (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Athwal *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, there is a dire need to conduct a study to identify factors that influence the consumer purchase intention towards SA (Verma *et al.*, 2019; Aggarwal and Balasubramanian, 2023).

The current study resides on three following models

- Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB),
- Sheth's Theory of Consumption Values (CVT)
- Engagement concept.

Collectively, above discussed models provide a multidimensional framework to determine the purchase intention towards SA keeping ATT, beliefs and value in account to influence customer or consumer decision making (Ajzen, 1991; Sheth *et al.*, 1991; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2019).

The following theoretical models describe the influence of various factors on shaping consumer intentions towards SA. TPB highlights the character of ATT, subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to shape the consumer intention for SA. CVT comprises functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values with which consumers associate themselves. The Engagement concept (Brodie, 2013) explores the role of digital platforms by which consumers interact and participate in online reviews and quizzes about SA.

Further, psychological factors such as Cosmopolitanism (COSMO) and Brand Dependence (BD) are introduced. Cosmopolitanism (COSMO) shares a global perspective so that consumers can understand global norms (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). On the other hand, brand dependence shows old and trusted brands (Matzler *et al.*, 2008). Addition of these constructs increases the possibility to understand customer responses towards SA.

In this chapter both theory and practical aspects have been highlighted. It also helps in defining the problem statement and in examining the broader aspects of the problem. The research problem has been designed to cover different aspects of SA in sustainability domain.

1.2 Need for the Study

Sustainability has emerged as well discussed theme globally, but Indian markets still show a notable difference in the actual purchase and exposure of the consumer about SA. However, many voices express concerns about the ecological balance but still their actual purchase behaviour shows the influence of brands, price and style trends (Khare and Sadachar, 2017; Goworek *et al.*, 2020). This practice clearly marks a difference between consumer ATT and their consumption patterns towards SA in India. Few empirical studies conducted in this text also reflect the same patterns.

A large chunk of urban consumers discusses the benefits of SA and its benefits to maintain ecological balance but very few are consistent buyers of SA. Large portions of urban consumers are symbolically promoting the idea of SA rather than making it into practice (Paul *et al.*, 2016; Kautish and Sharma, 2019). A rigorous academic investigation is required to understand the complexity of Indian markets that how both social and cultural aspects influence the purchase behaviour in Indian markets (Nash, 2019; Mukherjee *et al.*, 2023).

In addition, many barriers widen this gap wherein price is a critical factor because SA is generally conceived as costly than other available options. Therefore, its acceptance gets limited in Indian consumers (Khare and Sadachar, 2017). Mainstream retail outlets also do not include SA in their shopping lines and it reduces its visibility to the customer. Few voices also raise

concerns over the authenticity of SA which is again a big hurdle to maintain the positive ATT toward the purchasing of SA (Diddi *et al.*, 2019).

Moreover, SA consumption has many inherent challenges such as identity, appearance and social acceptance and these factors often compete with ecological aspects of SA (Moon *et al.*, 2015; Henninger *et al.*, 2015; Niinimäki, 2010).

Although, people are more and more discussing about ecological balance and SA but symbolism of their purchase behaviour still outplays the SA in the fashion industry.

People addition with trends of fashion and over dependence on the used brands are the main hurdles in accepting the SA in the purchasing patterns of the consumers in the Indian market.

As a result, sustainability considerations are often treated as secondary, reinforcing the persistence of the intention–behaviour gap within the Indian apparel market. Additionally, most existing studies on green consumerism focus on broader categories such as food, energy, or general lifestyle habits (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Haws *et al.*, 2014). Far fewer investigations focus specifically on SA, and even fewer examine the Indian urban market, where growing exposure to global trends collides with deep-rooted cultural and behavioural factors (Niinimäki, 2010; Biswas and Roy, 2015; Khare and Kautish, 2021). These knowledge gaps limit the development of effective strategies for promoting sustainable fashion in India (Verma *et al.*, 2019; Paul *et al.*, 2016). Studies that examine how consumers in different markets behave while buying SA have been carried out in the USA (Chi *et al.*, 2019), China (Zhu, 2021) and South Africa (Janda *et al.*, 2021). Cross-cultural comparisons have also been demonstrated in some studies (MinKongandKo, 2017). However, a small number of studies investigate consumer behaviour in India toward SA (Gil *et al.*, 2024; Khan *et al.*, 2024). The growth of the SA market and the scant scholarly attention of scholars in this area served as the driving force behind this study (Diddi *et al.*, 2019; Han *et al.*, 2017). By focusing on SA as an increasingly relevant product category in India, an important yet under-researched market in the context of sustainability, this study offers valuable insights into the unique drivers shaping consumer behaviour in the sustainable fashion space (Paul *et al.*, 2021; Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015; Suki, 2016).

Therefore, this study is essential for three key reasons:

1. It focuses exclusively on the SA segment, which is underrepresented in behavioural studies.
2. It targets the Indian consumer market (Delhi-NCR), especially urban populations, where behavioural inconsistency is pronounced.
3. It integrates well-established theories i.e. TPB and CVT, and the Engagement concept with individual-level psychological moderators COSMO and BD to produce a more comprehensive explanation of behaviour.

By addressing these underexplored areas, the study contributes toward both theoretical development and practical insights that can guide sustainable business practices and targeted policy interventions.

1.3 Research Problem

Despite growing environmental awareness and the global rise of sustainable fashion, Indian consumers continue to show a significant gap between sustainability-related ATT and actual purchasing behaviours (Niinimäki, 2010; Khare and Sadachar, 2017). Most existing studies focus on general green consumption or developed markets, offering limited insight into the unique psychological, cultural, and behavioural drivers influencing SA decisions in India (Kim and Chung, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, few studies have integrated behavioural and value-based models while accounting for individual-level moderating factors such as COSMO and BD (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). This lack of holistic, theory-driven, and context-specific research presents a critical gap in understanding what shapes PI among Indian consumers (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Biswas and Roy, 2015).

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the key determinants influencing Indian consumers' intention to purchase sustainable apparel?

- How do functional value, emotional value, epistemic value, conditional value, and social value influence consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention?
- How do consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence sustainable apparel purchase intention?
- How does the engagement concept integrate with the theory of planned behaviour in shaping the determinants of the sustainable apparel purchase intention?
- How do cosmopolitanism and brand dependence moderate the relationships between consumer attitude and sustainable apparel purchase intention, subjective norms and sustainable apparel purchase intention, and perceived behavioural control and sustainable apparel purchase intention?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is focused on understanding the behavioural drivers of PI among Indian consumers, with particular attention to urban segments that are increasingly exposed to sustainability messaging and green product choices (Biswas and Roy, 2015; Suki, 2016). The scope is restricted to apparel products only, excluding other fashion accessories or lifestyle categories such as footwear, cosmetics, or home textiles (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015; Han *et al.*, 2017).

Geographically, the study is focused on the Delhi NCR region, a major urban hub in India where awareness of sustainability is relatively higher, and purchasing power supports consideration of eco-friendly apparel (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Khare and Kautish, 2021). As a representative urban market, Delhi NCR aligns with broader trends observed in other metropolitan areas of India (Verma *et al.*, 2019; Paul *et al.*, 2016). The sample comprises individuals from different age groups, occupations, and education levels, offering diverse perspectives while maintaining a focus on educated, consumption-active consumers (Kim and Chung, 2011; Haws *et al.*, 2014). Figure 1.2 shows the different ways of the apparel industry creating environmental impact.



Figure 1.2: Environmental Impact of the Apparel Industry.

Source: Author's compilation based on World Resources Institute (2017), Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017), and UNEP (2019).

Conceptually, the study integrates the TPB (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991; Paul *et al.*, 2016) and Sheth's Consumption Values framework (Sheth *et al.*, 1991; Suki, 2016) to explain how beliefs, and values shape behavioural intentions. It also introduces two moderating variables—COSMO and BD—to capture psychological diversity in consumer response patterns (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). The scope does not include actual purchase behaviour (i.e., post-purchase outcomes), pricing analysis, brand-level case studies, or sustainability practices on the supply side, which aligns with prior research emphasizing intention rather than actual behaviour (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Biswas and Roy, 2015). The study is limited to PI and self-reported behaviour, as assessed through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using PLS-SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2017). By narrowing its focus to behavioural intention within the Indian SA market, the study provides targeted insights that can guide marketing strategies, consumer education efforts, and future academic work in the domain of sustainable consumption.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study hold significance at both academic and practical levels, especially as the demand for sustainable consumption becomes increasingly urgent (Niinimäki, 2010; Su *et al.*, 2019).

In the present study two well discussed factors —the TPB (TPB) and Sheth's Consumption Values (Ajzen, 1991; Sheth *et al.*, 1991) has been used to define the problem statement. These two factors provide a holistic understanding of the belief system and value of the consumption in the context of SA (Paul *et al.*, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2019).

Further, Cosmopolitanism (COSMO) and Brand Dependence (BD) act as moderating factors to study the heterogenous nature of the problem. Individuals interpret these factors distinctly in the context of SA (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Yoo and Donthu, 2001). People who have international exposure are more receptive to adopting ecological practices due to their affinity with international culture. However, a segment of people who still show their loyalty to the famous brands and their trust in SA consumption is based on the messages propagated by these brands.

Therefore, it can be deduced that customer purchase behaviour is highly influenced by the psychological and cultural orientations at large. These factors provide a basis to understand the consumer behaviour variations in SA. Inclusion of above discussed factors provides more strength to the theoretical framework of the current problem to explain the situation in the real-world market. This extension strengthens the theoretical framework by moving beyond a one-size-fits-all perspective and enhancing its ability to explain behaviour in real-world markets.

In a country like India which is culturally diverse in terms of social norms, lifestyle patterns and following the global trends vary among the people which has a moderating effect (Khare and Sadachar, 2017; Biswas and Roy, 2015). Inclusion of factors like COSMO and BD has a significant role in deciding purchase intention of consumers towards SA purchase. These factors also define the complexity in decision making by the consumers in their real-life scenario than in merely theoretical.

The current study provides valuable insights about the brands, markets and fashion policy to the corporate managers who wish to promote SA in Indian markets. By identifying the key psychological and value-driven factors that drive PI, the findings can help businesses design more targeted messaging, build trust in sustainability claims, and segment consumers more effectively (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015; Suki, 2016). It also supports

policymakers in developing consumer education campaigns that align with local cultural and psychological profiles (Kim and Chung, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2016).

Finally, this study supports broader environmental and social objectives by identifying the barriers and enablers of sustainable fashion adoption. In doing so, it helps bridge the gap between consumer intention and action—a critical step toward making sustainability a mainstream consideration in consumer decision-making. Please find numbers in fashion industry in Figure 1.3

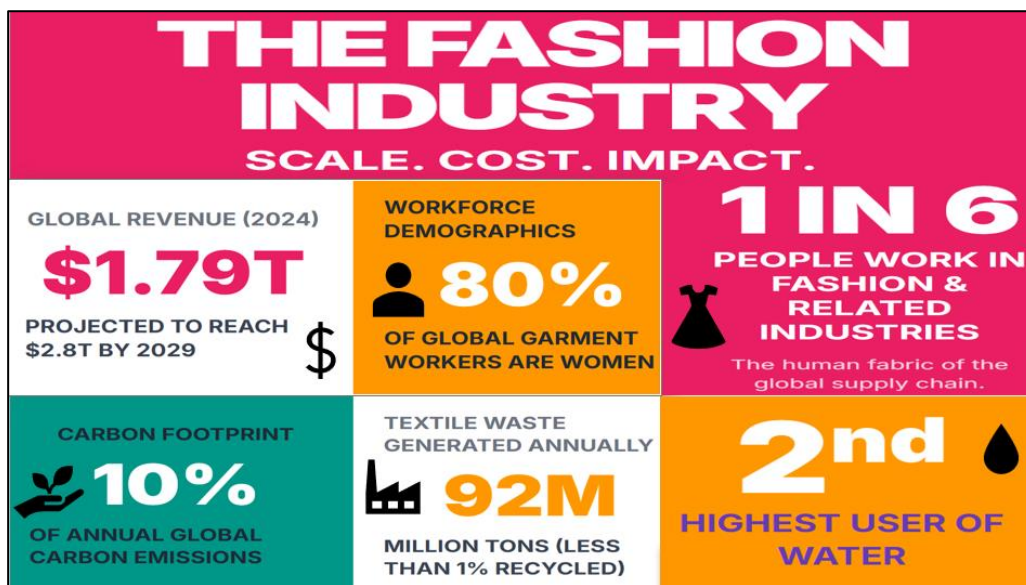


Figure 1.3: The Fashion Industry by the Numbers

Source: Author's compilation using data from Statista (2024); Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2017); UNEP (2019); Global Fashion Agenda & McKinsey (2020).

1.7 Chapter Outline

This thesis is organized into eight chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive investigation of SA purchase behaviour in the Indian context.

- Chapter 1: Introduction – Provides the background, need, research problem, objectives, questions, scope, and significance of the study.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review – Presents a structured review of existing literature using the Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology framework and identifies key research gaps.

- Chapter 3: Research Methodology – Describes the research design, sampling approach, instrument development, and data analysis techniques used in the study.
- Chapter 4: Data Preparation and Measurement Model – Discusses the data screening process, demographic summary, common method bias, and initial model assessment.
- Chapter 5: Data Analysis, Results and discussion – Reports the results of measurement and structural model analysis, including hypothesis testing.
- Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Contribution – Summarizes the key findings, offers practical recommendations, and presents concluding remarks.
- Chapter 7: Implications, and Recommendations – Highlights the research, managerial, and social implications. Includes limitations and future research directions.

This chapter sets the stage for the study by establishing its relevance, direction, and theoretical underpinnings. The next chapter presents an in-depth review of the literature to build the conceptual foundation for the research framework.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The global fashion and apparel sector has become a powerful driver of the world economy while at the same time being recognised as a major source of environmental pressure (Papamichael *et al.*, 2022). It not only contributes over US\$2 trillion annually and provides employment to millions, but also shapes culture, lifestyle, and social identity. Yet the industry has been repeatedly criticized for its heavy dependence on water, energy, and raw materials, which makes it one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and industrial waste (Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020).

In the present context, SA as an idea has become the focus of both policy and research forum discussions. As per the general definition of clothing, SA refers to a type of clothing which is designed and developed for the well-being of mankind and ecological balance (Su *et al.*, 2019). One more aspect which makes the SA unique among other clothing types is that it offers transparency in the supply chains in the global markets (Niinimäki, 2010; Betzler *et al.*, 2022). Many consumers choose SA over other clothing types because it provides a sense of social distinction and ethics (McNeill and Venter, 2019; Weissmuller *et al.*, 2020).

It is very alarming to see the pollution caused by the textile industry in terms of water and landfills. The textile industry uses 1-2 trillion litres of fresh water per year, which is the second largest usage following the agricultural sector (Hudd, 2022; Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). The preparation and finishing process of clothing adds a large chunk of microplastics, approximately 190,000 tons in the ocean every year (Bala Saraswathi and Rathinamoorthy, 2022). Disposition of waste clothing products and textile industrial waste also covering up a large chunk of landmass, resulting adverse effects on soil health (Athwal *et al.*, 2019).

SA addresses these concerns by promoting the use of eco-friendly raw materials, cleaner manufacturing technologies, recycling, and reuse of products (Su *et al.*, 2019; Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). Equally important is the ethical aspect, which focuses on safe working environments, fair wages, and transparency in business practices. These priorities align SA closely with several

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 15 (life on land).

During the current scenario, evidence shows that consumer perspectives are gradually shifting. A McKinsey survey found that 88% of respondents reported the urgency of addressing environmental concerns, and 57% reported making changes in their daily routines to lower their ecological footprint (Granskog, 2020). Other studies indicate a growing inclination toward second-hand purchases, slow fashion, clothing rentals, and resale platforms (Agrawal, Rathi and Garg, 2022). Yet, the movement faces obstacles: skepticism about eco-labels, higher price points, and limited availability remain major barriers (Moon *et al.*, 2015; Diddi *et al.*, 2019). This intention–behaviour gap is now one of the most prominent themes in SA research (Dhir *et al.*, 2021).

Earlier literature reviews on SA have made valuable contributions, but several issues remain unresolved, like Busalim, Fox, and Lynn (2022) discussed a variety of sustainability trends but missed the focus on cultural and forces that influence minds during purchase. On the other hand, many reviews neglected the process weakness and subsequently their findings provided very generic results (Paul *et al.*, 2021; Aggarwal and Balasubramanian, 2023).

The present study fills this gap by using the Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology framework (TCCM) as discussed by Paul *et al.* (2021). TCCM treats every aspect of literature with utmost importance and does not leave behind earlier findings in isolation. The present study provides a link between the theoretical aspect and methodology of the study.

This approach highlights the differences in choices as per regions, populations and parameters of research, which generally remain unexplored. This approach is suitable to study the areas wherein overlapping across multiple disciplines, such as marketing, sustainability, and consumer purchase behaviour often exists. The present study framework is based on a coherent idea that brings different ideas together for analysis. The present review also highlights the use of methods which are quite popular in the health industry, such as the SPAR-4-SLR protocol introduced by Paul *et al.* (2021). SPAR-4-SLR protocol is different from PRISMA, which is

mainly used in the health sciences (Moher *et al.*, 2009). Current trends and studies find SPAR-4-SLR better suited for emerging fields such as SA.

The protocol balances rigor with relevance, enabling a structured review that highlights both conceptual clarity and research gaps. Scholars have therefore found it particularly appropriate for studying sustainability-related consumer behaviour (Paul and Criado, 2020; Aggarwal and Aksha, 2024).

The chapter is structured around two main objectives: i.e. one, what is already established by examining the theories applied, the contexts in which research has been carried out, the constructs tested, and the methods employed, and two, what is still underexplored, pointing out the gaps in earlier studies and showing how these inform the objectives of the present work. Together, these sections allow the review to consolidate existing knowledge while also setting the stage for clearer research directions on SA consumption. Table 2.1 describes the review protocol followed in the study, and Table 2.2 lists the journal-wise number of publications in the sustainable fashion and apparel context.

Table 2.1: Review Protocol for Literature on Sustainable Apparel Consumer Behaviour.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Assembling	Domain: Literature on Consumer Behaviour in SA questions: • What are the theoretical underpinnings of Research in SA consumer behaviour? • What are the fundamental factors shaping the consumer behaviour of SA purchases? • What are the contextual systems and methodologies used in SA's Consumer Behaviour research? • What are consumers' preferences for circular fashion and the disposal of apparel?
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	• Source type and quality: Review Articles, research papers, and theses of SA, and Sustainable fashion • Source quality: Articles indexed in Scopus, WoS and Google Scholar
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Table 2.2: Journal Publication of Articles, Source: Author's own elaboration

Name of the Journal	No. of articles	% of articles
International Journal of Consumer Studies	31	16.67
Sustainability	39	20.97
Journal of Cleaner Production	14	7.53
Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	19	10.22
Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	10	5.38
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	11	5.91
Sustainable Production and Consumption	8	4.3
Fashion Practice – The Journal of Design Creative Process and the Fashion Industry	7	3.76
Journal of Business Research	5	2.69
Fashion and Textiles	7	3.76
Waste Management	4	2.15
Business Strategy and the Environment	3	1.61
Autex Research Journal	2	1.08
International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	4	2.15
Sage Open	2	1.08
Sustainable Development	3	1.61
Journal of Product and Brand Management	2	1.08
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	3	1.61
Journal of Environmental Management	2	1.08

Journal of the Textile Institute	2	1.08
Journal of Macromarketing	1	0.54
Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research	1	0.54
Marketing Intelligence and Planning	1	0.54
Social Behaviour and Personality	1	0.54
Current Psychology	1	0.54
European Journal of Marketing	2	1.08
Environment and Behaviour	1	0.54
Journal of Marketing Management	1	0.54
Fashion Theory – The Journal of Dress Body and Culture	2	1.08
International Journal of Management Review	1	0.54
Fibres and Textiles in Eastern Europe	1	0.54
Environmental Science and Pollution Research	1	0.54
International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology	1	0.54
Journal of Consumer Behaviour	2	1.08
Journal of Business Ethics	1	0.54
Journal of Competitiveness	1	0.54
Industria Textila	2	1.08
Textile Research Journal	2	1.08
Sustainability Accounting Management and Policy Journal	1	0.54
Resources Conservation and Recycling	1	0.54
Continuum – Journal of Media and Cultural Studies	1	0.54
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	1	0.54

2.2 Theory

Research on SA has drawn from a range of theoretical perspectives. Early studies often learned general models of consumer behaviour, but over time, scholars began using frameworks that deal more directly with sustainability choices. This shift underlines an important point: no single model can fully explain the mix of psychological, cultural, and social influences that shape decisions. Because of this, many researchers adapt or combine theories to capture the layered nature of SA consumption (Niinimäki, 2010; Geiger and Keller, 2018; Paul *et al.*, 2021).

Among these, the TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991) has been one of the most widely used. Nearly one-quarter of published SA studies apply TPB as their main framework. The model emphasises the function of ATT, SN, and PBC in predicting intentions. In the context of sustainable fashion, favourable ATT toward SA is consistently linked with stronger PI. Social norms also matter, whether they are seen as moral expectations (injunctive) or as patterns observed in others (descriptive) (Paul *et al.*, 2016; Han *et al.*, 2017). Evidence from India shows that perceived behavioural control often makes a difference: when people feel they have the money, access, and knowledge to shop sustainably, their willingness to do so rises (Khare and Kautish, 2021). Still, TPB has been criticised for falling short in explaining the gap between ATT and behaviour, since positive intentions do not always translate into actual purchases (Dhir *et al.*, 2021; Jung *et al.*, 2020).

To manage the shortcomings, people have used TPB with approaches. The most common approach is to integrate the CVT developed by Sheth *et al.* (1991) with TPB. Generally, CVT has five functional values: mainly social, emotional, epistemic, functional, and conditional. These values are important in purchasing SA and these values influence consumer choices because consumers don't generally purchase SA for common use. Purchase of SA often carries symbolic meaning which relates to people's lifestyle, identity, or ethical principles. Geiger and Keller (2018) and Aggarwal and Balasubramanian (2023) noticed that SA purchase links with emotional, ethical and prestige values of the people and in return they help in maintaining ecological balance and increases its functional value. Rausch and CS (2021) found out that consumers generally pay

more for the product if it adds value to their social identity. Therefore, combination of TPB and CVT provides a holistic solution for the rational and emotional values of the product.

Another important perspective is offered by value-based theories such as the Value–Belief–Norm (VBN) theory (Stern, 2000) and the Norm Activation Theory (NAT) (Schwartz, 1977). These frameworks highlight how environmental and altruistic values lead individuals to feel morally obligated to act sustainably. Research applying these theories has shown that values such as fairness, compassion, and responsibility toward future generations can override short-term convenience or fashion appeal, motivating consumers to prefer sustainable choices (Betzler *et al.*, 2022; Ahn, Kim and Kim, 2020; Niinimäki, 2010). However, such value-based frameworks appear to have stronger predictive power in Western, individualistic contexts, while in collectivist cultures like India, affordability and social influences often outweigh moral reasoning (Khare and Sadachar, 2017).

Identity-driven perspectives have also been used to explain SA adoption. Theories of social identity and fashion consumption emphasize that clothing is a symbolic product through which individuals express personality, lifestyle, and group belonging (Weissmuller *et al.*, 2020; van der Westhuizen and Kuhn, 2023). In this view, adopting SA is not just an ethical decision but also a means of identity signaling.

McNeill and Venter (2019) deduced that senior consumers generally purchase SA to showcase their responsibility for the ecology whereas Han *et al.* (2017) reported that young consumers purchase the SA to distinguish them from mainstream fashion brand users. In a country like India logic behind creating identities are relevant specially in the middle class as a mark of being a cosmopolitan citizen (Khare and Kautish, 2021).

Westaby (2005), proposed Behavioural Reasoning Theory (BRT), which generally focusses upon both the reasons why people purchase the SA and why people avoid it. For the SA the positive traits are quality, ecological benefits and negative traits are high prices, no new designs and less availability. Generally, negative reasons about SA appears to be more practical

(Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020). Therefore, BRT provides a balanced idea about the consumer behaviour in country like India wherein affordability and access to the market is a big thing.

Digitalization has also brought in new perspectives. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model is now widely used in fashion studies. Here, external cues—eco-labels, transparent communication by brands, or endorsements from influencers—act as stimuli. These affect perceptions and emotions (the “organism”), which then shape the eventual response, often a purchase decision. Shrivastava *et al.* (2021) and Wang *et al.* (2022) show that digital platforms can create awareness of sustainable choices, but at the same time they may trigger fast-fashion desires depending on how messages are presented. This double effect is particularly visible in India, where e-commerce and social media strongly guide the fashion preferences of younger consumers.

Beyond BRT and SOR, several other theories have been used more narrowly. Generational cohort theory (Mannheim, 1952) explains why Gen Z and millennials are more responsive to sustainability appeals than older generations, even if financial limits still constrain them (Hassan, Yeap and Al-Kumaim, 2022). Social practice theory (Shove *et al.*, 2012) turns the focus to everyday routine repairing, reusing, or donating clothes—and shows how such actions can become normalized over time. Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) explains how consumers deal with tension between sustainability values and fast-fashion habits, such as buying eco-friendly items while continuing to shop for trendy, low-cost apparel (Jung *et al.*, 2020).

The idea of SA research has been changed; previous research relied on rational models of the problem whereas recent studies rely on moral values and digital content management. Therefore, new approach defines the complexity of the problem due to a mix of ATT and values with people culture, affordability and digital eco systems precisely. Previous literature relied heavily on TPB, CVT, and the Value–Belief–Norm (VBN) model. Current research trend demands an integrated approach to provide a holistic explanation of the problem.

2.3 Context

As per the different demographics, cultures and regions the use and studies performed on SA varies. However, across the globe ecological disbalance is a reality but consumers largely believe on local perceptions (Paul *et al.*, 2016; Han *et al.*, 2017).

Previous studies have reported that representations of SA with ecological concerns is generally unevenly represented and overlooked.

2.3.1 Geographic Contexts

Developed economies such as South Korea, and Finland, United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, are the major contributors for SA research (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020; Han *et al.*, 2017). In these countries, consumers usually show greater awareness of sustainability issues, governments provide stronger policy backing, and retailers offer wider access to sustainable fashion. European consumers, for example, are frequently cited as being more willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly clothing and as active participants in practices such as second-hand shopping, garment rental, and recycling (Geiger and Keller, 2018).

In contrast, studies from emerging economies—including India, China, Brazil, and Malaysia—remain relatively limited, even though these countries serve as major manufacturing centers and rapidly expanding consumer markets (Khare and Sadachar, 2017; Khare and Kautish, 2021). In India, for instance, environmental awareness among urban consumers is on the rise, but high price sensitivity and limited product availability continue to pose barriers. Comparative research also reveals striking cultural differences. While second-hand clothing in the United States is often associated with individuality and eco-consciousness, in China it is more commonly regarded as socially undesirable (Liang and Xu, 2018; Hur, 2020) (Please refer figure 2.1).

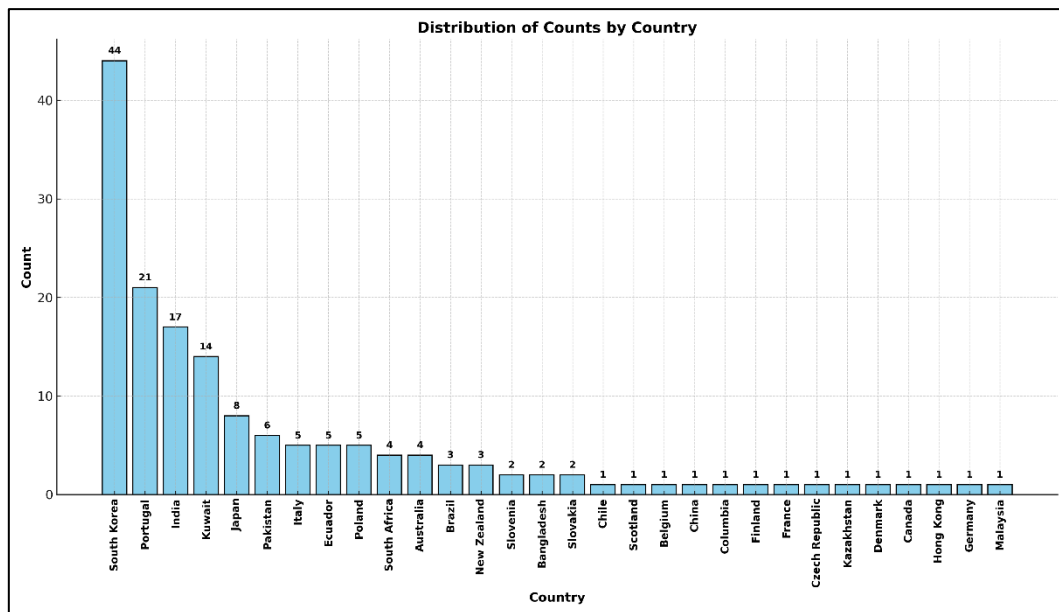


Figure 2.1: The number of studies conducted in different countries.

Source: Author's own elaboration

2.3.2 Cultural and Social Contexts

Cultural orientation strongly shapes how people engage with SA. In collectivist contexts, clothing choices often reflect the search for social approval and the pressure to match group expectations. By contrast, in individualist cultures, people give more weight to self-expression and the desire to stand apart (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Kim and Chung, 2011). Religious traditions and long-standing customs also play a role. In India, for instance, ideas of sustainability often align with cultural and spiritual values that stress modesty, durability, and ethical responsibility (Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020).

Globalization adds another layer by creating “hybrid” consumers who mix global sustainability ideals with local routines. This is most visible among young, urban Indians. Many buy organic cotton T-shirts to project an eco-conscious identity, yet at the same time they turn to fast fashion for its lower cost and wider choice (Aggarwal and Aksha, 2024). These patterns illustrate the constant negotiation between global aspirations and local realities that defines much of SA adoption.

2.3.3 Demographic Contexts

Demographic variables—age, gender, income, and education—play a clear role in shaping SA choices. Younger groups, particularly Gen Z and millennials, are more open to sustainability appeals, largely because they encounter them often on social media and other digital platforms (Hassan, Yeap and Al-Kumaim, 2022). Even so, enthusiasm among these groups is often limited by affordability, so positive ATT do not always turn into actual purchases. Older consumers show the opposite trend: they are less influenced by online campaigns but place more weight on durability and practicality when making clothing decisions (Khare and Sadachar, 2017).

Gender also shapes patterns of adoption. Women usually show higher interest in eco-friendly apparel, a trend linked to stronger ecological awareness and altruistic values (Han *et al.*, 2017). Men have historically been less engaged, but their participation is increasing when sustainable products are presented in terms of utility, durability, or performance (Betzler *et al.*, 2022).

Income and education further influence adoption. Higher-income consumers are better able to absorb the price premiums typically associated with sustainable fashion, while education tends to raise awareness of environmental and social issues. Still, awareness does not always lead to consistent practice, highlighting a continuing gap between knowledge and behaviour (Moon *et al.*, 2015; Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020).

2.3.4 Urban vs. Rural Contexts

A noticeable imbalance exists in SA research between urban and rural populations. Much of the existing literature has concentrated on metropolitan consumers, leaving rural and semi-urban contexts relatively underexplored (Domingos *et al.*, 2022). However, rural communities often engage in sustainability practices out of necessity rather than conscious choice, repairing, reusing, and repurposing garments to extend their lifecycle (Machado *et al.*, 2019). In South Asia, clothing is frequently passed down within families or adapted for household purposes, practices that inherently support sustainability principles though they are seldom categorized as part of formal sustainable fashion discourse (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016).

Overlooking these consumer groups risks narrowing the scope of sustainability to urban, higher-income segments, while undervaluing traditional practices that already embody low-waste and resource-conscious behaviour. Recognizing and integrating such practices into mainstream SA frameworks would broaden the relevance of sustainability, positioning it not just as an urban lifestyle choice but also as a continuation of cultural traditions that prioritize durability and minimal waste (Athwal *et al.*, 2019).

2.3.5 Market and Retail Contexts

Demographic factors—such as age, gender, income, and education—shape how consumers engage with SA. Younger cohorts, especially Gen Z and millennials, tend to be more receptive to sustainability appeals, in part because these messages are prominent on social media and other digital platforms (Hassan, Yeap and Al-Kumaim, 2022). Yet their positive ATT are often constrained by price sensitivity, which means interest does not always translate into actual purchases. Older consumers show a different pattern: they are less swayed by online campaigns but give greater importance to attributes such as durability and practicality when making apparel choices (Khare and Sadachar, 2017).

The growth of digital platforms and social media has complicated the picture further. On one hand, these channels expose consumers to more sustainability messages and make information easy to access. On the other, the same platforms also fuel fast-fashion demand through influencer campaigns and aspirational promotions (Shrivastava *et al.*, 2021). This creates a retail space full of contradictions, where sustainable products are highlighted but fast-fashion trends are promoted at the same time, leaving consumers to navigate mixed signals.

2.3.6 Summary of Contextual Insights

The contextual review highlights three broad themes. To begin with, much of the scholarship on SA remains geographically skewed, with Western economies drawing the majority of attention while emerging markets are still understudied. A second theme relates to demographic variation: differences across age, gender, income, and education make it clear that research needs a more inclusive lens to capture the diversity of consumer behaviour. Finally, the relative neglect of rural

practices and the continued influence of affordability constraints risk narrowing SA to an urban, elite phenomenon, even though low-waste practices have long been part of everyday life in many communities.

Taken together, these observations suggest that SA cannot be fully understood—or effectively promoted—without grounding it in the cultural, demographic, and market realities that shape consumption across different contexts.

2.4 Characteristics

A survey of prior studies indicates that consumer engagement with SA is influenced by a wide range of factors. Key among these are perceptions of sustainability, underlying values, and motivations such as willingness to pay. External forces—particularly social norms and the availability of products in the market—also play an important role. At the same time, researchers continue to point out the well-documented ATT–behaviour gap, where stated intentions to buy sustainable products often fail to materialize in practice. Barriers such as affordability concerns, limited accessibility, or doubts about quality further constrain adoption. Considering these factors together helps explain how consumers interpret sustainability, what encourages them to adopt SA, and why positive ATT are not always reflected in consistent purchasing behaviour.

2.4.1 Perceptions

Perceptions often act as the first screen through which people judge SA. They influence how consumers interpret product attributes, brand claims, and the way sustainability is framed in the marketplace. Research shows that knowledge and clear communication are central in shaping favorable perceptions. When companies explain their practices—ethical sourcing, eco-friendly production, or fair labor—in a transparent way, consumers are more likely to view these claims as credible and authentic (Kang, Liu and Kim, 2013; Henninger, McDonald and Rosen, 2015).

In India, digital platforms strongly shape these perceptions. Khare and Kautish (2021) point out that peer reviews, social media groups, and online discussions often act as cues of credibility. These exchanges allow people to cross-check brand claims, reducing skepticism. They

also create a participatory environment where shared experiences build trust and strengthen confidence in SA.

Even when perceptions are positive, they do not always translate into purchases. Han *et al.* (2022) observed that awareness of the benefits of eco-friendly apparel does not consistently lead to buying decisions. This gap suggests that other conditions—such as affordability, product availability, and a sense of trust—need to be in place before favorable perceptions can turn into actual adoption.

2.4.2 Values

Values remain one of the most influential psychological drivers of SA adoption. Commitments linked to ethics and the environment—such as fairness, ecological protection, and responsibility toward future generations—often carry more weight than short-term fashion appeal or aesthetics (Niinimäki, 2010; Geiger and Keller, 2018).

Altruistic orientations make this influence stronger. Betzler *et al.* (2022) note that values grounded in fairness and compassion can lead consumers to choose sustainable options even when these are more costly or offer limited variety. Ahn, Kim, and Kim (2020) similarly report that individuals with strong ecological convictions frequently tie SA to their sense of identity, treating it as a moral duty rather than simply a lifestyle choice.

Hedonic values, however, also matter. Enjoyment, pride, and self-expression can motivate consumers just as much as ethical duty (Aggarwal and Balasubramanian, 2023). This mix is visible in India, where buyers of brands like Fab India or Khadi often describe their purchases as both a reflection of ecological responsibility and a source of cultural pride. In this way, SA consumption embodies both moral duty and emotional Satisfaction, with values acting as drivers that are at once practical and symbolic.

2.4.3 Motivations and Willingness to Pay (WTP)

Motivation for buying SA is shaped not only by values but also by product benefits and symbolic rewards. Song and Ko (2017) note that qualities such as durability, uniqueness, and symbolic meaning often raise consumers' willingness to pay. Rausch and CS (2021) add that comfort, style,

and functionality remain essential. Without these features, sustainability alone may not be enough to keep products appealing.

Social and identity factors also influence motivation. McNeill and Venter (2019) found that many younger consumers adopt SA as a way of expressing individuality and reinforcing an ethical identity, not only for ecological reasons. In India, Hassan, Yeap, and Al-Kumaim (2022) observed that celebrity endorsements increase the aspirational value of SA, particularly when sustainability is paired with trend and style appeal. By blending ecological responsibility with fashion-forward imagery, such endorsements help present SA as both desirable and socially visible, encouraging wider acceptance.

Even so, willingness to pay is uneven. Wealthier consumers are generally able to absorb price premiums, while cost-sensitive groups still view SA as elitist or niche (Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020). For brands, this highlights a central challenge: unless sustainability is paired with affordability, SA is unlikely to reach beyond privileged groups into the broader market.

2.4.4 External Drivers

External factors such as aesthetics, affordability, and prevailing social norms also shape the adoption of SA. Rahman and Koszewska (2020) and Wang *et al.* (2022) note that consumers are often drawn to sustainable options when these products fit their fashion preferences, even when environmental concerns are not the main priority.

The role of social norms appears to differ across contexts. In many Western settings, both injunctive and descriptive norms tend to support sustainable choices. In India, however, Khare and Sadachar (2017) observed that such norms had little influence on younger consumers, who placed greater weight on novelty and affordability. Similar contradictions have been found with eco-labels: Lee *et al.* (2012) showed that while they can enhance perceptions of a brand, skepticism about greenwashing often prevents this from translating into consistent purchase behaviour.

Positive consumer experiences further reinforce adoption. Nam, Dong, and Lee (2017) found that individuals Satisfied with earlier eco-friendly purchases were more inclined to buy

sustainably again. Psychological factors also matter; for example, Sadiq *et al.* (2021) reported that optimistic consumers displayed greater confidence in adopting SA than their more pessimistic counterparts.

2.4.5 ATT–Behaviour Gap

One of the most persistent themes in SA research is the gap between what consumers say and what they do. Many people voice strong support for sustainability, but this often fails to show up in their actual purchasing habits (Dhir *et al.*, 2021).

Believe in brands and association with green movement claims shape the intentions of consumers towards SA, although these practices are not enough. Lifestyle preferences, higher costs and limited availability of designs pose real barriers for the consumers (Aggarwal, Varakantham and Balasubramanian, 2023). Sharma and Jha (2017) reported that affordability and price generally outplay the ethical and moral concerns associated with the product. Few studies reported that blend of sustainability with good designs, comfort and social acceptance increases the sale of the product significantly

Park and Lin (2020) and Jung *et al.* (2020) also reported the same phenomenon that SA with necessary attributes of the clothing can turn up the consumer intention towards purchasing SA. In urban India, consumers generally look at the usage and practicality of the clothing which suits their daily lifestyle patterns rather giving much importance to ethical part of it.

2.4.6 Barriers and Challenges

However, acceptability towards SA is increasing but few barriers are still holding it back, wherein high cost is one of them. High pricing of SA often discourages the consumers. Secondary, limited retail outlets and limited data about the quality of the product also pose a barrier for SA consumption (Moon *et al.*, 2015; Diddi *et al.*, 2019).

In addition, people still consider SA less fashionable and less practical compared to popular fashion brands consequently lower down its acceptance (Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020). Cultural factors along with age factors also complicate the situation further. For example, young

consumers prefer fast fashion whereas old consumers show less interest towards SA (McNeill and Venter, 2019; Niinimäki, 2010).

A tendency for reuse and resale clothes is still less popular among people (Hur, 2020). The sustainability of SA is also generally questioned by the people (Testa *et al.*, 2015).

In a country like India intersection of above discussed issues impose a bargaining limit on the SA (Khare and Sadachar, 2017).

SA has become merely an option for urban population only its popularity in rural and suburban areas is still weak therefore, good and affordable design, strong retail network, affordable cost and cultural integration may increase the SA consumption (Rausch and CS, 2021).

2.4.7 Summary of Characteristics

All in all, the construct on SA is based on the cultural, cultural, psychological factors rather than it is based on a single straight forward decision. Sometimes change in perceptions about sustainable products generate interest in SA, but bottlenecks such as higher cost and limited production of the product slow down the pace of the growth of the product. Therefore, people's orientation towards supporting the product merely make it a niche choice in the market but it does not help the product to share the large chunk of the mainstream market.

2.5 Methodology

To analyze SA consumption behaviour people have tried variety of methodologies. Some of them have used quantitative methods and surveys whereas other have used qualitative methods and mixed methods to analyze the factors that influence the SA consumption behaviour. However, each method has its own strength and weakness but mixed methods are quite popular these days.

Quantitative methods are mostly used by many researchers but over reliance on the generalizations of participants intentions pose a challenge in this method (Paul *et al.*, 2021).

On the other hand, qualitative studies with experimental findings provide better insights into the SA research aspects such as culture, role of consumer emotions into the study to make clear and better decisions about SA.

This section reviews the main methodological streams found in the literature. To give structure, the discussion is divided into quantitative approaches, qualitative approaches, mixed-method and synthesis studies, and issues related to sampling and data collection. Each subsection highlights not only what has been done but also what gaps remain, and why these gaps are relevant to advancing future inquiry into SA consumption.

2.5.1 Quantitative approaches

A clear majority of the reviewed studies adopt quantitative survey methods. Questionnaires are typically distributed to students, urban consumers, or working professionals, with data analyzed using regression models, structural equation Modelling (SEM), or partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM). These techniques allow researchers to test relationships between constructs such as ATT, norms, perceived behavioural control, values, and purchase intentions. For example, Joshi and Rahman (2015) used SEM to model determinants of green apparel consumption, while Han *et al.* (2017) applied similar methods to examine cross-cultural differences in sustainable fashion ATT.

Although these methods are powerful in identifying significant predictors, their heavy reliance on self-reported intentions raises concerns about the well-documented ATT–behaviour gap. Surveys tend to measure what people say they would do, rather than what they actually do, which may lead to overestimation of SA adoption. Conjoint analysis, used in a smaller group of studies, provides more nuanced insights by asking respondents to make trade-offs between attributes such as price, design, and eco-labels. However, true experimental studies remain rare in this domain. The lack of controlled experiments limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about how interventions—such as eco-labeling, celebrity endorsements, or price subsidies—might affect real purchase behaviour (Paul *et al.*, 2021). Future work that includes more experimental manipulation could help close this gap.

2.5.2 Qualitative approaches

While quantitative surveys dominate, qualitative research has offered equally valuable contributions by uncovering how consumers construct meaning around sustainable fashion. In-depth interviews and focus groups are the most widely used methods, enabling scholars to explore consumer narratives about identity, morality, and cultural practices. For example, Henninger *et al.* (2015) highlighted how consumers evaluate sustainability claims by analyzing interviews around eco-label credibility, while Jung *et al.* (2020) studied dissonance between fast-fashion purchases and sustainability commitments. Such studies shed light on motivations, emotions, and symbolic dimensions that structured surveys often overlook.

Case studies and content analyses have also enriched the field by examining sustainability initiatives at the brand or community level. Case work has focused on pioneering companies, such as Patagonia or FabIndia, to show how corporate practices and consumer perceptions interact. Netnographic studies, though still limited, have begun to analyze online forums, Instagram campaigns, and resale platforms where sustainable fashion is discussed. These approaches are particularly valuable in contexts like India, where digital platforms have become central to fashion engagement and peer influence. Yet, compared to marketing and communication research more broadly, the use of digital ethnography in sustainable fashion remains underdeveloped, leaving an important avenue for future research.

2.5.3 Mixed methods and evidence syntheses

Several studies report using mixed method designs that combine surveys with participant interviews. This combination gives researchers access to different perspectives and helps them validate their findings more effectively. Only a limited number of researchers have used interviews and surveys with larger participant groups. These studies aim to capture consumer ATT more precisely, along with their cultural and emotional dimensions. This approach supports clearer decision-making. It also generates relevant data that can be used to track trends within specific contexts.

The primary efforts and reviews conducted provide important framework for scattered findings. Paul *et al.* (2021) and Busalim *et al.* (2022) reported that TCCM and SPAR-4SLR have significant potential to organize scattered findings. These theories provide foundation for unexplored areas also such as developing economies, digital footprints etc. Such contributions are critical in a young and fragmented research stream like SA consumption, as they provide a foundation for more cumulative and theory-driven work.

2.5.4 Sampling and data collection

Sampling strategies represent another area of concern in SA literature. A significant proportion of studies rely on student samples or urban, educated participants. This trend is partly due to convenience, but it limits the external validity of findings and overlooks key consumer groups. For example, Khare and Sadachar (2017) observed that rural and lower-income populations in India often rely on practices such as repair, reuse, or tailoring, which are inherently sustainable but rarely captured in survey research. Similarly, older consumers are underrepresented, despite evidence that they may place higher value on durability and practicality than younger cohorts.

Cross-national research is expanding but remains concentrated in a handful of countries, particularly the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and South Korea (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). Regions with strong fashion industries, such as Italy and France, and emerging consumer markets like India and Brazil, remain less studied. This geographic imbalance reduces the generalizability of findings and risks portraying SA as a primarily Western phenomenon, despite its clear relevance in diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, most surveys use non-probability sampling, often through online panels or university classrooms, which raises questions about representativeness. Broader frames and probability-based designs would enhance confidence in the conclusions drawn.

2.5.5 Methodological gaps and positioning

Despite steady progress, several methodological gaps remain in SA research. First, the lack of experimental and longitudinal design limits the ability to observe actual behaviour over time.

Most existing work captures cross-sectional snapshots of ATT and intentions, but few studies follow consumers across multiple decision points or interventions. Second, the dominance of student and urban samples neglects the perspectives of rural populations, older consumers, and lower-income groups who may face affordability constraints or rely on alternative practices such as reuse and repair. Third, the underutilization of digital ethnography means that consumer engagement on Instagram, resale apps, or online fashion communities—spaces where sustainable fashion discourse thrives—remains insufficiently analyzed (Henninger *et al.*, 2015; Paul *et al.*, 2021).

Addressing these gaps is important not only for academic knowledge but also for practice. More diverse samples, multi-site studies, and innovative methods such as experiments, netnography, or longitudinal panel designs would provide richer insights into how sustainability is adopted in real life. For researchers focusing on contexts like India, where affordability and cultural norms strongly shape behaviour, methodological pluralism is especially valuable. In sum, while quantitative modelling continues to be the backbone of SA research, literature would benefit from a more balanced mix of methods that reflect the social, cultural, and digital complexities of contemporary apparel consumption. Table 2.3 explains and lists all the components of the TCCM framework in SA.

Table 2.3: Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology framework for sustainable apparel literature review, Source: Author’s own elaboration

Dimension	Key Elements Identified in Literature
Theory	• Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) • Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) • Behavioural Reasoning Theory • Value–Belief–Norm Theory • Norm Activation Theory • Social Identification Theory • Social Practice Theory • Hofstede’s Cultural Factors • Consumption Value Theory • Motivation Theory • Customer Value Theory • Cognitive Dissonance Theory • Elaboration Likelihood Model

	• Stimulus–Organism–Response Theory • Generational Cohort Theory • Socialization Theory • Utility Theory • Critical Marketing Theory
Context	Countries: • United Kingdom • United States of America • India • China • South Korea • Germany • Italy • Malaysia • Brazil • Finland • Japan • Poland • Canada, South • Africa • Spain • Sweden • Netherlands • Colombia • New Zealand • Portugal • Scotland • Bangladesh • Belgium • Chile • Czech Republic • Denmark • France • Kuwait • Ecuador • Australia Participants: • Students • Working Professionals • General Consumers Gender: • Male • Female • Both

Characteristics	Constructs: • Attitude (ATT) • Subjective Norms (SN) • Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) • Purchase Intention • Environmental Concern • Environmental Knowledge • Sustainability Awareness • Perceived Consumer Effectiveness • Perceived Value • Functional Value • Emotional Value • Social Value • Epistemic Value • Conditional Value • Willingness to Pay • Perceived Quality • Perceived Risk • Price Sensitivity • Brand Trust • Brand Dependence • Cosmopolitanism • Social Influence • Consumer Engagement • Behaviour Gap Domains: • Sustainable Apparel • Second-hand Apparel • Circular Fashion • Renting and Swapping • Disposal of Apparel
Methodology	Quantitative Methods: • Surveys • Conjoint Analysis • Experiments Qualitative Methods: • Interviews • Case Studies • Netnography • Exploratory Studies • Content Analysis

	Mixed Methods: • Mixed-method studies • Literature reviews
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2.6 Evidence from Previous Studies on Consumer Response for Why Consumers Prefer or Avoid SA

Consumer decisions about SA are rarely driven by environmental awareness alone. Other factors such as affordability, lifestyle needs, cultural expectations, and perceptions of social value also play an important role.

Buyers face issues while buying SA due to few stigmas such as quality issues, identity issues and high cost. Therefore, it discourages the sales of SA in the market. Despite Being quite popular at various marketing spaces the SA is not reaching its full potential (Khare and Kautish, 2021; Dhir *et al.*, 2021).

At the same event, consumers go for new products rather than limiting themselves to a single product. However, sustainability practices like wearing secondhand clothing, disposal of used clothing responsibly does a good ecological service (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016; Machado *et al.*, 2019). These practices are aligned with the concept of circular economy which also increases the product shelf life and reduces the pollution caused by textile waste. Although, these practices are not popular with a section of society due to labeling of a certain stigma in society.

2.6.1 Second-Hand Apparel Purchase

Usage of second-hand clothing and its impact on sustainable practices has been widely studied. These practices are getting popular due to affordability of theses clothing and a sense of contribution towards sustainable practices (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016; Xu *et al.*, 2014). This practice appears to be a treasure of old and vintage items in the store which adds its popularity to the young generation (Betzler *et al.*, 2022).

In Western markets, resale platforms such as ThredUp and Poshmark have helped reposition second-hand shopping as aspirational rather than stigmatized. Machado *et al.* (2019) show that younger U.S. consumers increasingly associate resale with individuality and eco-

consciousness. In collectivist societies such as China and India, however, cultural stigma continues to be a significant barrier. Liang and Xu (2018) and Hur (2020) report that many consumers avoid pre-owned clothing because of associations with poverty or hygiene concerns. In the Indian context, Khare and Kautish (2021) note that while awareness of resale platforms is growing, many urban consumers still prefer new clothing in order to maintain social status. Overall, second-hand apparel reflects both opportunity and resistance: it offers affordability and uniqueness, but cultural stigma and perceived risks continue to limit its mainstream acceptance.

2.6.2 Renting and Swapping

Renting and swapping are increasingly discussed as alternatives to ownership, mainly because they help reduce the need to buy new clothes and keep garments in use for longer. Renting gives consumers short-term access to premium or designer pieces, especially for occasions like weddings or parties, and the cost is far lower than buying the item outright (Lang and Armstrong, 2018). Digital platforms have made practice easier by offering simple interfaces, clear rules, and fast return systems (Lang and Zhang, 2019).

Social media also shapes how these practices are viewed. Influencers and online communities often present clothing rental as both trendy and responsible, which helps make it look like a smart lifestyle choice rather than just a budget option (Shrivastava *et al.*, 2021). Because of this, renting and swapping are now understood not only as ways to save money but also as visible acts of sustainable consumption.

Swapping, on the other hand, often has a community orientation. Events and swap parties are popular in some Western countries, marketed as fun social gatherings that also promote reuse (Camacho-Otero, Pettersen and Boks, 2020). While participants often value affordability and novelty more than sustainability, swapping nonetheless reduces waste and extends garment lifespans.

In India and other emerging economies, organized swapping remains limited. However, informal exchange practices within families or communities are common, especially in middle-

and lower-income households (Moon *et al.*, 2015). These practices are rarely framed as sustainability-oriented but achieve similar outcomes.

Barriers to these models include hygiene concerns and doubts about garment quality. Consumers also worry about whether rented or swapped clothing will be fashionable enough for social visibility (Hur, 2020). This suggests that branding and positioning are critical for normalizing these alternatives.

2.6.3 Disposal Practices

The end-of-life stage is crucial in determining whether clothing contributes to waste or is reintegrated into circular systems. Common practices include donation, resale, repurposing, and discarding (Joung and Park-Poaps, 2013). Donation is widespread, often motivated by pro-social values and moral Satisfaction (Cruz-Cárdenas *et al.*, 2017).

In a country like India donating used clothes is the part of customs of the culture and it also helps society and environment at large (Khare and Kautish, 2021). In the younger generation who frequently buy and change their clothing sale their used clothing and earn money to monetize new purchases (Machado *et al.*, 2019).

The use of old clothes as cleaning clothes or for household purposes is generally considered of low value compared to donating clothes, recycling the clothes (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). It is also a harsh reality besides these sustainable practices majority of used clothes are used for landfills or remain unused in the almirah of the people. It is due to unawareness of the people towards sustainable practices and proper collection system for used clothes (McNeill *et al.*, 2020).

Therefore, human habits sometimes create a blockage for the concept of circular economy. In addition, absence of proper disposal systems, awareness of textile pollution, and the need of recycling of used clothes reduces the life of clothing and disturbs the ecological balance. Subsequently, the pace towards having robust model of circular economy is absent.

2.6.4 Summary of Preferences and Avoidance

Overall, alternatives to fast fashion—such as second-hand shopping, clothing rental, swapping, and responsible disposal—are available and are becoming more familiar to consumers. Even so,

issues like cultural stigma, affordability pressures, lack of trust, and weak infrastructure continue to slow down wider acceptance.

This gap explains why many consumers express positive intentions yet do not follow through in practice. Unless both cultural and structural barriers are tackled more directly, SA is likely to remain concentrated in niche markets rather than becoming a mainstream mode of consumption.

2.7 Research Gaps and Chapter Summary

Although research on SA has gained significant momentum in recent years, several gaps remain in literature that restrict a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour in this domain. A recurring limitation is the heavy concentration of studies in Western and developed economies. Countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and South Korea dominate the evidence base, while emerging economies like India, Brazil, and Malaysia remain underexplored (Khare and Sadachar, 2017; Khare and Kautish, 2021). Given that these markets represent not only major apparel producers but also rapidly expanding consumer bases, their limited representation creates a geographical imbalance. Cultural variations play a decisive role in shaping sustainable behaviour, and without a stronger focus on emerging markets, theoretical generalisations remain incomplete. In the Indian context, SA consumption is shaped by a distinctive mix of price sensitivity, cosmopolitan aspirations, and deeply rooted cultural traditions. These dynamics set it apart from Western patterns of adoption and underscore the need for more context-specific investigation (Mukherjee and Goyal, 2020; Aggarwal and Balasubramanian, 2023).

A second gap arises in the theoretical underpinnings used to explain SA adoption. While frameworks such as the TPB and Value–Belief–Norm (VBN) theory have been widely applied, they primarily emphasise rational or moral reasoning (Ajzen, 1991; Stern, 2000). However, consumer decisions in apparel are rarely guided by rationality alone. Identity-driven motives, hedonic values, and cultural practices often intersect with sustainability concerns, making the adoption process more complex than what single theories can capture (Geiger and Keller, 2018; McNeill and Venter, 2019). Although some studies have attempted to integrate TPB with

consumption values or identity perspectives, there is still a lack of comprehensive, theory-driven models that reflect both utilitarian and expressive aspects of fashion consumption. This theoretical limitation contributes to the persistent gap between ATT and actual purchase behaviour, where positive intentions often fail to convert into action (Dhir *et al.*, 2021).

A third limitation relates to the constructs examined in existing studies. Much of the research continues to focus narrowly on ATT, and purchase intentions (Paul *et al.*, 2016). While these constructs are important, they do not capture the full spectrum of drivers and barriers influencing consumer engagement with SA. Factors such as affordability concerns, stigma around second-hand clothing, scepticism toward eco-labels, and cultural traditions of reuse remain relatively underexplored (Lee *et al.*, 2012; Hur, 2020). Similarly, hedonic and identity-related constructs that shape self-expression through fashion have received limited empirical attention, especially in the context of non-Western societies (Han *et al.*, 2017). This narrow construct base results in an incomplete picture of why consumers either embrace or resist SA.

The methodological orientation of SA research shows several limitations. Much of the existing work relies on cross-sectional surveys and quantitative techniques, with structural equation modelling—particularly PLS-SEM—being the most frequently applied (Hair *et al.*, 2017; Joshi and Rahman, 2015). Although these methods provide statistical rigour, they are often used in ways that limit contextual richness. Approaches such as qualitative inquiry and mixed-method designs, which could capture deeper cultural meanings and symbolic aspects of SA, remain relatively underutilised (Henninger *et al.*, 2015; Jung *et al.*, 2020).

Another concern relates to sampling practices. A large number of studies depend heavily on student populations, raising questions about representativeness. Findings based primarily on younger cohorts may not adequately capture the perspectives of consumers across different age groups, income brackets, or geographic regions (Han *et al.*, 2017; Khare and Sadachar, 2017). Broadening methodological designs and incorporating more diverse samples would enhance both the external validity and the cultural inclusivity of future SA research. Finally, the literature demonstrates a tendency to emphasise consumer intentions rather than actual behaviours. Many studies have focused on what consumers say they will do, rather than on what they actually

purchase, reuse, or dispose of (Moon *et al.*, 2015; Cruz-Cárdenas *et al.*, 2017). This gap is particularly critical in fashion, where the ATT-behaviour discrepancy is pronounced. Without stronger attention to real-life practices such as second-hand shopping, rental adoption, or disposal patterns, scholarly insights risk remaining abstract and disconnected from market realities. Similarly, the perspectives of rural and semi-urban consumers—who often practice sustainability through necessity rather than ideology—are rarely included, further narrowing the scope of insights (Sihvonen and Turunen, 2016).

In summary, the body of research on SA consumption has made substantial progress, but several shortcomings remain. Geographically, there is a need for greater inclusion of emerging economies such as India. Theoretically, integrative models that combine rational, moral, and identity-driven factors are still lacking. Construct-wise, the dominance of attitudinal and intentional variables restricts understanding of broader motivational and cultural dimensions. Methodologically, studies remain overly reliant on cross-sectional surveys and narrow samples, leaving qualitative richness underexplored. Finally, there is a need to bridge the gap between consumer intentions and actual practices to capture the lived realities of sustainable fashion adoption. In line with the research gaps identified, this study seeks to validate the key determinants of consumers' purchase intentions (PIs) for SA.

The aim of this study is to analyse the effect of consumption values on SA purchase, along with the effect of online digital spaces on its outcomes. Further, current efforts analyse the influence of the cosmopolitan nature of society, dependence on some clothing brands on the consumer purchase intentions. At last, the current study is conducted to provide valuable contributions which can help marketing people and policy makers to highlight the use of SA in society effectively.

Therefore, the study has the following research objectives:

- To validate the key determinants of sustainable apparel purchase intention.
- To investigate the influence of consumption values on consumer attitude towards sustainable apparel purchase intentions.
- To investigate the influence of online platform engagement on determinants of sustainable apparel purchase intentions.
- To examine the moderating effects of cosmopolitanism and brand dependence on relationship of determinants and sustainable apparel purchase intentions.
- To provide actionable insights for marketers to promote sustainable apparel adoption

CHAPTER 3

3.0 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

This chapter presents the conceptual framework and hypotheses of the study. The research model is developed based on the literature reviewed in the previous chapter and integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Consumption Value Theory (CVT), and the engagement concept to explain consumers' purchase intention toward sustainable apparel. The developed model analyses the factors responsible for consumer purchase intention towards SA. The conceptual development of the proposed model uses TPB, CVT and engagement concept to comprehensively study the process of consumer intention towards making purchase intention for SA. The basic structure of the model is created by the TPB by positioning ATT, SN, and PBC as the predictor constructs to influence the PI (Paul *et al.*, 2016). Further, the model of study is supported by CVT given by Sheth *et al.* (1991) that explains the role of functional, emotional, epistemic, conditional, and social values in shaping the ATT for SA (Suki, 2016; Haws *et al.*, 2014; Biswas and Roy, 2015). Then Engagement concept is largely based on the usage of digital spaces engagement on online platforms and its impact on consumer decision-making abilities, which in turn showcases the engaging roles of social online platform engagement (SOPE) and shopping online platform engagement (SHOPE) towards developing consumer perceptions and intentions (Kim and Chung, 2011; Khare and Kautish, 2021).

Upon integration of all these, a comprehensive understanding of consumers' cognitive abilities, socially driven motivations and influences of digital spaces engagements on the consumer choices for SA (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015).

The current research model largely depends on values of the product, such as functional, social, conditional, emotional, and epistemic, which also act as key antecedents of ATT in connection with the model proposed by Sheth *et al.* (1991) and further supported in sustainable consumption studies (Suki, 2016; Haws *et al.*, 2014; Biswas and Roy, 2015).

Online platform engagement, conceptualised through SOPE and SHOPE, is also included to capture the growing influence of digital interactions on consumer perceptions and behaviours (Khare and Kautish, 2021; Kim and Chung, 2011). Within this structure, ATT, SN, and PBC act as the primary predictors of PI, aligning with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Paul *et al.*, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2019). To capture individual differences, the model incorporates two moderators—COSMO and BD—recognised in earlier work as significant psychological traits influencing sustainability-oriented decision-making (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Yoo and Donthu, 2001; Sharma and Jha, 2017). These additions allow the framework to account for how global orientation and emotional reliance on brands can either strengthen or weaken the links between TPB constructs and PI.

By integrating these elements, the model contributes to theory and practice in three ways:

1. It extends TPB by incorporating value-based determinants of ATT.
2. It contextualizes SA intention within the digital engagement environment, reflecting the growing role of online platforms.
3. It tests boundary conditions through moderators, providing deeper insights into consumer heterogeneity.

3.1 Research Model

The proposed research model is based on the integration of TPB, CVT and engagement concept and reflects the significance of psychological determinants of consumer decision-making. The meta theory for understanding the determinants is TPB which includes three constructs i.e. ATT, SN, and PBC (Ajzen, 1991).

According to TPB, three predictors influence behavioural intention:

- **ATT** – the degree to which an individual evaluates SA positively or negatively.
- **SN** – the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in SA purchasing.
- **PBC** – the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour, shaped by past experiences and anticipated obstacles.

An individual's motivation to act depends on these three predictors. Stronger positive ATT, supportive social norms, and higher perceived control typically lead to stronger intentions. While the relative weight of each predictor varies across contexts, empirical evidence consistently supports their collective influence on PIs in innovation and sustainability research (Fatoki, 2021; Pradeep *et al.*, 2021; Shalender and Sharma, 2021). Consequently, TPB has become one of the most widely applied frameworks in explaining consumer acceptance of new products, including SA.

Building on TPB, this study incorporates the CVT to explain the underlying value-based antecedents of ATT toward SA. The CVT framework (Sheth *et al.*, 1991) identifies five distinct consumption values that shape consumer choices:

- **Functional value (FV)** – practical utility such as quality, durability, and price-worthiness.
- **Social value (SV)** – enhancement of social status and group belonging.
- **Emotional value (EV)** – affective responses such as joy, pride, or comfort.
- **Epistemic value (EPV)** – novelty, curiosity, and learning derived from the product.
- **Conditional value (CV)** – context-specific factors that make a product desirable in particular circumstances.

These five dimensions collectively predispose consumers' evaluations, thereby influencing their ATT toward SA. Previous studies have successfully applied CVT to diverse sustainable domains such as organic cosmetics (Halan *et al.*, 2024), sustainable packaging (Janda *et al.*, 2021), e-commerce (Rana *et al.*, 2024), electric vehicles (Sharma *et al.*, 2024), and organic food (Qasim *et al.*, 2019). In SA, however, limited research has examined how consumption values affect ATT (Hasbullah *et al.*, 2020; Koay *et al.*, 2022). This study seeks to fill that gap.

The Engagement Concept provides another extension to TPB by recognizing the growing influence of online platform engagement (OPE) on consumer behaviour. OPE is divided into:

- **SOPE** – engagement with social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, where consumers actively search for sustainable fashion content, follow influencers, and interact with brand communities.
- **SHOPE**– engagement with e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Myntra, where consumers browse, compare, and purchase SA products.

Both SOPE and SHOPE influence consumers' cognitive evaluations and social interactions, thereby shaping their ATT, SN, and PBC toward SA (Hollebeek *et al.*, 2019; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). Prior research has often treated social media engagement and e-commerce participation as distinct domains—for example, studies have analyzed how social media fosters community interaction and peer influence (Dessart *et al.*, 2016; Habibi *et al.*, 2014), while others have focused on how online shopping platforms facilitate convenience, trust, and behavioural control (Kim and Kim, 2020; Kim and Chung, 2011). However, few studies have attempted to conceptually merge these dimensions into a single framework. By integrating SOPE and SHOPE together, this study addresses this gap and provides a more holistic understanding of how digital engagement ecosystems collectively shape PI (Grewal *et al.*, 2020; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). The proposed research model (Figure 3.1) therefore integrates consumption values, online engagement, and TPB predictors, moderated by COSMO and BD, to explain PI.

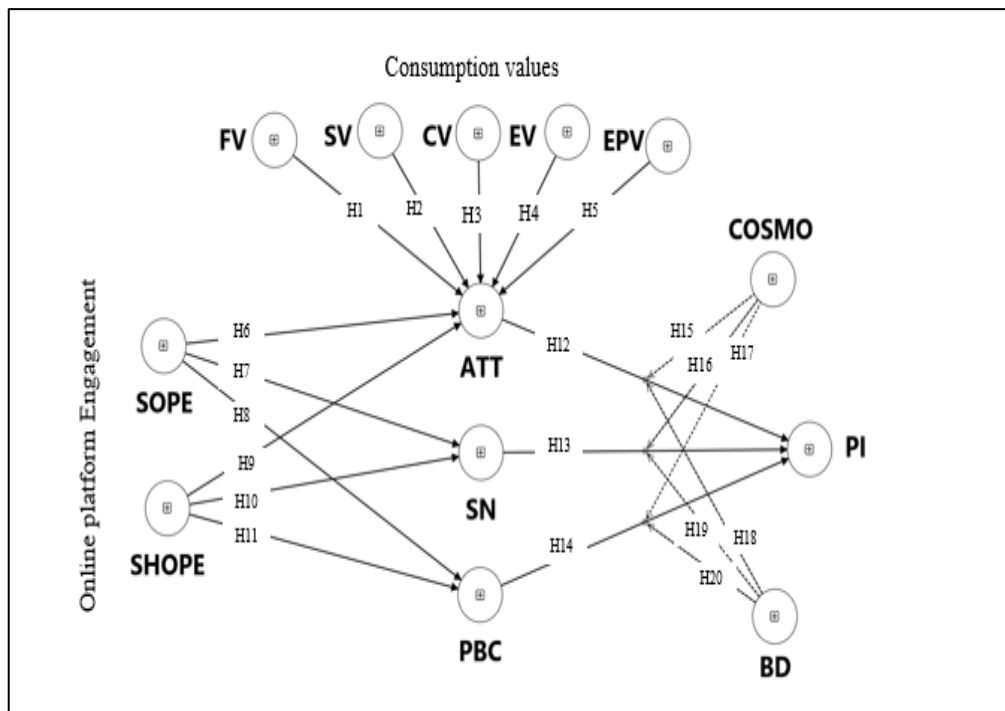


Figure 3.1: Proposed model. Source: Author's creation, Source: Author's own elaboration

Note: FV- Functional Value, SV- Social Value, CV- Conditional Value, EV- Emotional Value, EPV- Epistemic Value, SOPE- Social Online Platform Engagement, SHOPE- Shopping Online Platform Engagement, ATT- Consumer Attitude, SN- Subjective Norms, PBC- Perceived Behavioural Control, PI- Purchase Intention, COSMO- Cosmopolitanism, BD- Brand Dependence

3.1.1 Antecedents

a) FV

Functional value (FV) refers to the practical benefits offered by a product based on its functional attributes such as quality, durability, and value for money (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, functional value reflects consumers' perception that the product offers environmental benefits while maintaining acceptable quality and affordability. These attributes shape consumers' evaluation of sustainable apparel.

b) SV

Social value (SV) refers to the perceived social benefits that consumers derive from purchasing or using a product that enhances their social image or group belonging (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, social value reflects the perception that

adopting environmentally responsible fashion can improve social approval and status. These perceptions influence consumers' evaluation of sustainable apparel.

c) CV

Conditional value (CV) refers to the perceived benefits derived from specific situations or circumstances that influence a consumer's purchase decision (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, conditional value reflects situational factors such as product availability, promotional campaigns, or discounts that make sustainable products more attractive to consumers. These situational conditions influence consumers' evaluation of sustainable apparel.

d) EV

Emotional value (EV) refers to the benefits derived from a product's ability to evoke feelings or affective responses in consumers (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, emotional value reflects positive feelings such as satisfaction, pride, or personal fulfilment associated with making environmentally responsible fashion choices. These emotional responses influence how consumers perceive sustainable apparel.

e) EPV

Epistemic value (EPV) refers to the perceived benefit derived from a product's ability to provide novelty, curiosity, and new knowledge to consumers (Sheth et al., 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, epistemic value reflects consumers' interest in exploring innovative and environmentally friendly fashion alternatives. These perceptions shape consumers' evaluation of sustainable apparel.

f) SOPE

Social online platform engagement (SOPE) refers to the extent to which consumers interact with social media platforms to search, share, and evaluate information related to

sustainable apparel (Dessart et al., 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2019). Through platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest, consumers follow sustainability-related content, interact with influencers, and engage with brand communities. These online interactions shape consumers' perceptions and evaluations of sustainable apparel.

g) SHOPE

Shopping online platform engagement (SHOPE) refers to consumers' interaction with e-commerce platforms to search, evaluate, and purchase sustainable apparel (Bilgihan, 2016; Rose et al., 2012). It includes activities such as browsing product information, reading reviews, and comparing sustainable apparel options on online retail platforms. These interactions influence consumers' perceptions and evaluations of sustainable apparel.

3.1.2. Predictors

a) ATT

Consumer attitude (ATT) refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, attitude reflects consumers' favourable or unfavourable evaluation of purchasing environmentally responsible clothing. Such evaluations influence how consumers perceive sustainable apparel.

b) SN

Subjective norms (SN) refer to the perceived social pressure that influences an individual's decision to perform or avoid a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, subjective norms reflect the influence of family members, friends, peers, and social groups on consumers' decisions to purchase environmentally responsible clothing. These social influences shape consumers' perceptions and evaluations of sustainable apparel.

c) PBC

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour based on available resources, opportunities, and personal capabilities (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of sustainable apparel, PBC reflects consumers' perception of their ability to purchase environmentally responsible clothing despite potential constraints such as price or availability. These perceptions influence how consumers evaluate the feasibility of purchasing sustainable apparel.

3.1.3 Moderators

a) COSMO

Cosmopolitanism (COSMO) refers to an individual's openness toward global cultures, ideas, and lifestyles (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). Cosmopolitan consumers tend to be more receptive to international trends, cultural diversity, and global issues such as environmental sustainability. In the context of sustainable apparel, cosmopolitan orientation reflects consumers' openness toward adopting environmentally responsible fashion practices.

b) BD

Brand dependence (BD) refers to the extent to which consumers rely on a particular brand to fulfil their needs within a product category due to trust, perceived quality, and emotional attachment (Mulyanegara et al., 2009; Matzler et al., 2008). In the context of sustainable apparel, brand dependence reflects consumers' reliance on trusted brands when making environmentally responsible purchase decisions. Such dependence influences consumers' evaluation of sustainable apparel offerings.

3.1.4 Consequent

a) PI

PI reflects consumers' willingness and likelihood to buy clothing that is designed, produced, and consumed in environmentally and socially responsible ways (Gil *et al.*, 2024). It is not only about expressing a preference but also about the readiness to allocate effort, money, and choice in favour of SA over conventional alternatives. In behavioural research, PI has been regarded as a crucial predictor of actual sustainable fashion consumption, bridging the gap between positive environmental ATT and tangible consumer actions (Ajzen, 1991; Paul *et al.*, 2016).

PI is influenced by multiple psychological drivers. Core values such as environmental concern, ethical responsibility, and altruism strongly predict intention, with consumers who internalize sustainability into their identity more likely to demonstrate higher PI (Niinimäki, 2010; Geiger and Keller, 2018; Betzler *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, hedonic values—pleasure, enjoyment, and pride—also reinforce intention, illustrating that sustainable fashion is not just a moral choice but also a source of emotional satisfaction (Song and Ko, 2017; Ahn *et al.*, 2020; Hassan *et al.*, 2022). For example, many urban consumers choose eco-friendly apparel for both ethical alignment and the personal gratification of contributing to a cause, creating a dual motivation behind PI.

Social influences add another layer. SN—perceptions of what peers, family, or society expect—often strengthen PI in collectivist contexts, where social validation is central (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020; Khare and Sadachar, 2017). However, this effect may vary across cultures; while peer approval boosts PI in some markets, in others, individuality and cosmopolitan orientations reduce reliance on social pressure (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009; Liang and Xu, 2018). Digital communities and online platforms also play a vital role in reinforcing PI by providing sustainability narratives, peer reviews, and influencer-driven content that normalize eco-conscious apparel consumption (Khare and Kautish, 2021; Shrivastava *et al.*, 2021).

Practical and situational factors further determine PI. PBC—the ease or difficulty of accessing SA—directly influences whether favorable ATT translate into intention (Ajzen, 1991; Han *et al.*, 2017; Verma *et al.*, 2019). High price perception, limited availability, and skepticism

about brand claims remain major barriers, dampening PI despite positive ATT (Lee *et al.*, 2012; Dhir *et al.*, 2021; Diddi *et al.*, 2019). This suggests that for PI to strengthen, consumers must feel confident not only in their personal values but also in the affordability, accessibility, and authenticity of SA options.

Importantly, PI is not homogeneous across demographics. Younger consumers, often influenced by social media campaigns and digital engagement, report higher PI compared to older or more cost-conscious consumers, who may emphasize durability or affordability over sustainability (McNeill and Venter, 2019; Xu *et al.*, 2014). Geographic context also matters—while PI levels are relatively high in Western markets, emerging economies like India show persistent gaps between intention and action due to affordability concerns, fast-fashion aspirations, and lack of trust in eco-labels (Athwal *et al.*, 2019; Domingos *et al.*, 2022).

Overall, PI represents a multidimensional construct that incorporates cognitive, emotional, social, and contextual influences. Its importance lies in predicting actual adoption of SA and guiding strategies for marketers, policymakers, and educators to foster greater alignment between sustainability values and everyday consumer choices (Park and Lin, 2020; Jung *et al.*, 2020). By addressing both motivational drivers and structural barriers, research on PI provides valuable pathways to closing the long-standing gap between pro-sustainability ATT and real consumer behaviour.

3.2 Hypothesis Development

3.2.1 Consumption values and consumer attitude

In consumer behaviour, ATT is a positive or negative perception of an individual toward a product based on his/her perception of the product; however, consumers may have dissimilar ATT toward the same product in different situations and places (Rozenkowska, 2023). A consumer's positive ATT toward a certain product results in positive PI (Zaremohzzabieh *et al.*, 2021). In the studies on SA, it is found that ATT is the most influential aspect in forming PI (Sobuj *et al.*, 2021). The following describes how each consumption value and ATT toward PI are related.

a) Functional Value and consumer attitude

FV refers to the benefits offered by a product based on its functional aspects (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). In the context of SA, environmental value and price attributes act as the functional benefits. Consumers assess FV of the product based on contextual utility and value for money in the apparel purchase choices (Shi *et al.*, 2021). Consumers' perception is based on the belief that SA is good for the environment being made from natural material and manufactured under eco-friendly production processes (Degirmenci and Breitner, 2017). Then, because apparel consumers regard price attributes and the value for money offered by the product (Das *et al.*, 2022), if SA is reasonably priced, it minimises the economic burden on the consumer, fostering positive evaluations of the product. The combination of environmental value and affordability fulfils both economic and environmental motivations, reinforcing a consumer's positive perception of SA. This alignment satisfies consumers' desire to contribute to sustainability, which strengthens their positive ATT. Consequently, based on the above statements, we hypothesise that:

H1. Functional value positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

b) Social value and consumer attitude

The perceived benefits of having a product that relates to a specific socio-economic, demographic or cultural-ethnic group are referred to as SV (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Studies have shown that a consumer's decision to purchase an alternative is significantly influenced by the SV of that product (Noe and Hyun, 2024). Research on sustainable consumer behaviour indicates that the social self-image of consumers influences their inclination to purchase the environmentally friendly options (De Lenne and Vandenbosch, 2017). When consumers feel that using SA would result in social approbation or a favourable social image (Huang *et al.*, 2021), they are more likely to have a positive ATT about it. Consequently, based on the above statements, we hypothesise that:

H2. Social value positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

c) Conditional value and consumer attitude

CV is the perceived benefit that a product offers because of the situations or circumstances that the decision-maker is faced with (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). In the context of SA, CV is based on the availability of SA products in the market, attractive discount offerings and the informational promotion campaigns running in the market (Hasbullah *et al.*, 2020), as increased availability reduces effort and inconvenience; price incentives enhance perceived affordability; and informational promotion campaigns increase awareness of its benefits. These factors reduce perceived barriers and enhance the attractiveness of SA, leading to consumers' inclination toward it (Bielawska and Grębosz Krawczyk, 2021). When these conditions are favourable, the ATT towards PI becomes positive. Consequently, based on the above statements, we hypothesise that:

H3. Conditional value positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

d) Emotional value and consumer attitude

EV, as defined by Sheth *et al.* (1991), is the benefits of a product derived from its ability to elicit feelings or affective states. When a particular product is SA, EV is generated through the feelings of stress relief and pleasure, as it offers a sense of relaxation and peace of mind by assuring consumers that they are making responsible choices through wearing what supports environmental sustainability (Bielawska and Grębosz-Krawczyk, 2021). When consumers find these feelings in SA, they develop a positive ATT toward it (Okur *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, based on the above statements, we hypothesise:

H4. Emotional value positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

e) Epistemic value and consumer attitude

The perceived benefit from an alternative's capacity to spark curiosity, provide novelty and satisfy a need for information is known as EPV (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). EPV influences decision-making when consumers are inquisitive about something new, unsatisfied with a product and

energetic to try something different (Park *et al.*, 2024). When they find SA different from conventional apparel, they feel it is unique, and their curiosity needs to be fulfilled, leading to the development of a positive ATT toward PI (Koay *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, based on the above statements, we hypothesise that:

H5. Epistemic value positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.2 Online platform engagement and Consumer attitude

a) Social online platform engagement and consumer attitude

Numerous scholarly investigations have highlighted the significance of SOPE in influencing ATT (Agarwal and Mitra, 2025; Mir and Salo, 2023). ATT is shaped by behavioural beliefs, which are influenced by information, past experiences, and social interactions (Ajzen, 1991). SOPE is an important source of apparel shopping information (Copeland and Zhao, 2020). Its interactions enable consumers to find information about SA through their social connections and advertisements posted by the brands on these platforms (Vladimirova *et al.*, 2023; Valos *et al.*, 2017). Pookulangara and Koesler (2011) assert that through online communication and product evaluations, consumers may shape their needs and desires from the very beginning of the supply chain. Through a variety of channels, including shopping, education, brand promotion, and social influence, SOPE reaches a wide range of consumer perceptions and beliefs regarding SA (Copeland and Zhao, 2020) fostering a positive ATT (Ramany *et al.*, 2022). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H6. Social online platform engagement positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

b) Shopping online platform engagement and consumer attitude

According to Ajzen's (1991) TPB, ATT toward a behaviour is shaped by behavioural beliefs about its expected outcomes. Shopping platforms influence these beliefs by providing credible information through online reviews that shape ATT, helping consumers evaluate the benefits of

the product (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). Particularly when it comes to sustainable products, ATT is positively influenced by SHOPE which builds certainty through reputable and informative evaluations of the product based on online reviews (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). SHOPE provides product information for SA through product reviews such as the quality and fit of the apparel (Huang, Chen, and Wang, 2024). Positive reviews build trust in the sustainability claims of the apparel brands such as the use of natural fabric (Maarif, Syafrudin, and Fitriyani, 2024). Because SHOPE platforms offer personalized experiences and improved information access, they influence ATT toward PI (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H9. Shopping online platform engagement positively influences consumer attitude toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.3 Online platform engagement and subjective norms

a) Social online platform engagement and subjective norms

SN represents the social influence that affects consumers' PI based on perceived approval or disapproval from his/her social circles (Ajzen, 1991). Online social circles on SOPE amplify SN by shaping consumer perception of social approval, influencing their motivation to comply with group norms, and ultimately driving PI. Several studies (Copeland and Zhao, 2020) have shown that in fulfilling the need for approval from peers, friends, and family members, SOPE plays an important role by (a) facilitating communication among peer groups (Osterrieder, 2013; Tran *et al.*, 2023) and (b) posting encouraging remarks on SOPE platforms (de Vries *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, based on the communication in these online social circles, consumers form positive normative beliefs about SA purchases (Wolny and Mueller, 2013). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H7. Social online platform engagement positively influences subjective norms toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

b) Shopping online platform engagement and subjective norms

Within Ajzen's (1991) TPB, SN refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a specific behaviour, shaped by normative beliefs about the expectations of significant others.

Shopping platforms contribute to these normative beliefs by enabling social interactions, peer recommendations, and visible endorsements that signal socially approved consumption choices.

In the context of SA, SHOPE fosters these perceptions by showcasing community-driven reviews, influencer endorsements, and ratings that reflect broader societal support for eco-friendly purchasing (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). The visibility of other consumers' sustainable choices on such platforms can strengthen an individual's belief that purchasing SA is a socially desirable act, supported by peers, family, or influential social groups (Huang, Chen, and Wang, 2024).

Through these mechanisms, SHOPE reinforces the social expectations surrounding SA consumption, thereby influencing the perceived SN toward PI. Hence, we hypothesise that:

H10. Shopping online platform positively influences subjective norms toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.4 Online platform engagement and perceived behavioural control

a) Social online platform engagement and perceived behavioural control

In SA purchase research, consumers' PBC is enhanced when they have greater familiarity and comfort with the platforms through which they engage with sustainable fashion content. SOPE allows consumers to actively interact with SA brands, communities, and opinion leaders, providing them with practical knowledge about product availability, purchase processes, and brand credibility (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). By enabling discussions, QandA sessions, and direct brand-consumer communication, SOPE reduces uncertainty and increases consumers' confidence in their ability to identify, evaluate, and purchase SA (Huang, Chen, and Wang, 2024). This is particularly important for SA, where consumers often require additional assurance regarding product authenticity and environmental impact (Ikhsan *et al.*, 2024).

Hence, we hypothesize that:

H8. Social online platform engagement positively influences perceived behavioural control toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

b) Shopping online platform engagement and perceived behavioural control

Past studies in PI have shown that consumers' perception of control is favorably influenced by the availability and accessibility to second-hand knowledge about SA products based on other consumers' experiences (Mohammad *et al.*, 2020). SHOPE facilitates online reviews that offer thorough opinions and second-hand information from other consumers, assisting prospective purchasers in making better-informed decisions about which products to choose (Huang, Chen, and Wang, 2024). By offering these user experiences and assessments, SHOPE aids in lowering perceived risk and uncertainty (Huang, Chen, and Wang, 2024). This is especially true for sustainable products, as consumers worry about the products' authenticity and potential environmental effects (Ikhsan *et al.*, 2024). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H11. Shopping online platform engagement positively influences perceived behavioural control toward sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.5 Consumer attitude and sustainable apparel purchase intention

Various studies established that ATT influences PI for environmentally sustainable products (Liu *et al.*, 2020; Tewari *et al.*, 2022, Sharma *et al.*, 2023). Because of environmental ramifications, ATT is highly specialized in terms of perception and belief regarding the choice to buy sustainable products (Jaiswal and Kant, 2018). Particularly, in the context of SA, research has demonstrated that ATT is one of the most important determinants for influencing PI (Rausch and Kopplin, 2021; Tewari *et al.*, 2022). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H12. Consumer attitude positively influences sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.6 Subjective norms and sustainable apparel purchase intention

Ajzen (1991) says that SN influence the intention to perform a particular behaviour. In this way, several studies have reported that SN influence the intention to purchase sustainable products (Hamzah and Tanwir, 2021; Rausch and Kopplin, 2021). Particularly in SA, research has shown that SN favourably influences PI (Abrar, Sibtain, and Shabbir, 2021; Tewari *et al.*, 2022). When

consumers believe that their family, friends, and peers approve of SA purchases, they experience a normative push to conform (Copeland and Zhao). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H13. Subjective norms positively influence sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.7 Perceived behavioural control and sustainable apparel purchase intention

The influence of PBC on the PI of sustainable products has been the subject of several prior research and it was found that PBC exerts a significant positive influence (Johe and Bhullar, 2016; Molinillo, Vidal-Branco, and Japutra, 2020). PBC in SA is built on the availability of product information (Jalil and Shaharuddin, 2019) and second-hand information of experience through consumer reviews shaping the control belief for buying SA. Studies in SA purchase have shown that PBC has a significant influence on PI (Abrar, Sibtain, and Shabbir, 2021; Brandão and Costa, 2021). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H14. Perceived behavioural control positively influences sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.8 Moderating effect of cosmopolitanism

COSMO is an orientation based on a specific set of qualities held by individuals (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007). The most crucial qualities of a cosmopolitan individual are willingness to engage, adaptability, flexibility, cultural openness, learning about other ways of life, being with people from different countries and cultures to learn about their unique views and approaches, and being aware and concerned about global trends (Cannon, Yaprak, and Sasser, 2002). Due to their personal and moral convictions, cosmopolitan people are more inclined to practice conscientious consumerism, which considers the environment, society, and health (Leung, Koh, and Tam, 2015). Sustainable consumerism is more likely to be favoured by cosmopolitan individuals because they are more receptive to various viewpoints worldwide (Cleveland and Laroche, 2007) which positively strengthens their ATT towards PI.

Cosmopolitans are likely more objective and independent, so they are more demanding when analyzing products and services (Cannon, Yaprak, and Sasser, 2002). Cosmopolitan consumers don't seem to purposefully attempt to gain others' approval to improve their perception of themselves, obtain rewards, or avoid punishments (Lee, Lee, and Lee, 2014). Cosmopolitans

are influential individuals whose influence does not rest on who they know (i.e., normative) but rather on what they know (i.e., informational) (Poferl, 2016). Therefore, cosmopolitan consumers may place greater importance on socially shared sustainability values, which can strengthen the influence of subjective norms on their sustainable apparel purchase intention. COSMO positively influences PBC due to enhanced awareness, information access, and alignment with global values, strengthening their PI (Riefler and Diamantopoulos, 2009). Hence, we hypothesize that:

H15. Cosmopolitanism significantly strengthens the influence of consumer attitude in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

H16. Cosmopolitanism significantly strengthens the influence of subjective norms in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

H17. Cosmopolitanism significantly strengthens the influence of perceived behavioural control in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.2.9 Moderating effect of brand dependence

BD refers to the extent to which consumers consistently rely on a particular brand to meet their needs within a product category, owing to trust, perceived quality, emotional attachment, and reduced decision-making effort (Delafronz *et al.*, 2014). Consumers with high BD are more likely to repeatedly purchase from the same brand because it provides assurance of performance, authenticity, and Satisfaction (Mishra, Dash, and Cyr, 2014). In the context of SA, strong BD may amplify the effect of a favourable ATT toward PI, as consumers who already trust a brand's offerings are more willing to extend that trust to its sustainable product lines.

For SN, BD can strengthen the influence of social approval if the brand itself enjoys positive social recognition. When significant others endorse or prefer a brand, highly brand-dependent consumers may be more motivated to align with that preference, reinforcing the SN's effect on PI (Keller, 2013).

Similarly, BD can enhance PBC by reducing uncertainty and simplifying decision-making. Consumers dependent on a brand often feel confident about product availability, quality,

and after-sales service, which increases their perceived ease in purchasing SA from that brand (Delafronz *et al.*, 2014).

Hence, we hypothesise that:

H18. Brand dependence significantly strengthens the influence of consumer attitude in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

H19. Brand dependence significantly strengthens the influence of subjective norms in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

H20. Brand dependence significantly strengthens the influence of perceived behavioural control in forming sustainable apparel purchase intention.

3.3 Summary

This chapter presented the proposed research model and hypotheses for examining the determinants of PI. The model adopts the TPB as a meta-framework, integrated with the Consumption Values Theory (CVT) and engagement theory, to explain how consumption values and online platform engagement influence ATT, SN, and PBC. COSMO and BD are incorporated as moderating constructs, highlighting their potential to strengthen or weaken the effects of TPB predictors on PI. The chapter provided theoretical justifications for each construct, identified antecedents, predictors, moderators, and the consequent, and formulated hypotheses based on past literature. The next chapter outlines the research methodology, including research design, sampling procedures, measurement and operationalization of constructs, data collection methods, and statistical techniques used to test the proposed model.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology adopted for the study. Methodology provides the framework that guides the process of addressing the research objectives and testing the proposed hypotheses. A well-structured methodology ensures that the study is rigorous, replicable, and aligned with its theoretical framework.

This chapter outlines the overall research design, sampling approach, and data collection procedure used to investigate the determinants of PI. It further explains the operationalization of constructs, the development of the research instrument, and the techniques employed for data analysis. In addition, considerations related to data preparation and ethical standards are described.

The methodology adopted in this study combines a quantitative, hypothesis-testing approach with statistical techniques such as Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate both the measurement and structural models. This systematic approach ensures that the findings are reliable and valid, thereby providing a strong basis for the discussion of results in subsequent chapters.

4.2 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design, which is considered appropriate for testing theory-driven models and examining causal relationships between latent constructs (Creswell, 2014; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). A survey method was employed, as it enables the collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents in a cost- and time-efficient manner (Malhotra and Dash, 2016; Zikmund *et al.*, 2013). The research is empirical in nature, aiming to validate hypotheses derived from the conceptual model and to explore the causal associations between constructs, consistent with the recommendations for explanatory research designs in behavioural studies (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Paul and Criado, 2020).

4.3 Sampling Design and Sample Details

The target population for this study consisted of urban consumers in India who have potential exposure to SA products, aligning with the practice of defining populations based on research objectives and accessibility (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Malhotra and Dash, 2016). A non-probability sampling method was employed, specifically snowball sampling, as a comprehensive sampling frame for SA consumers does not exist. Snowball sampling is widely recognized as an effective approach in exploratory consumer behaviour studies, especially where the population is hard to access or not clearly defined (Goodman, 1961; Baltar and Brunet, 2012). This method also facilitated the inclusion of a diverse mix of respondents across age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupations, thereby enhancing representativeness within the urban consumer segment (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

A total of 350 responses were collected through an online survey, of which 325 valid responses were retained after preliminary data screening. Determining the adequacy of sample size is a critical step in quantitative research, particularly for multivariate techniques like SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Kline, 2016). To validate sufficiency, G*Power 3.1 software was used for statistical power analysis, which confirmed that the retained sample exceeded the minimum threshold required for SEM (Faul *et al.*, 2009). Ensuring an adequate sample is essential for achieving reliable parameter estimates and reducing the risk of Type II errors (Cohen, 1992). The final sample size of 325 was therefore deemed appropriate to ensure adequate statistical power and robustness for testing the proposed structural model.

4.4 Data Collection Method and Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered online, a method widely recommended for behavioural and consumer research due to its efficiency and ability to capture large datasets within a short timeframe (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The questionnaire was distributed through digital platforms including email, WhatsApp, and social media channels to maximize reach and accessibility, which is consistent with prior studies that highlight the effectiveness of online surveys for reaching tech-savvy and digitally active

respondents (Evans and Mathur, 2005). Respondents were informed about the voluntary nature of participation and assured of anonymity and confidentiality, in line with ethical guidelines for social science research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Data collection was carried out over a period of two months, allowing sufficient time for responses while avoiding participant fatigue.

The use of online questionnaires offered several advantages: it facilitated access to respondents with prior exposure to online shopping and sustainability-related content, while also reducing geographical and logistical constraints in reaching a large and diverse sample. This mode of data collection is particularly useful in emerging market contexts, where digital penetration is rapidly growing (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Wright, 2005).

4.5 Constructs and Measurement

The study employed validated scales from prior literature to measure each construct in the research model. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The constructs and their measurement sources are summarized below:

- Consumption Values (Functional, Social, Emotional, Epistemic, Conditional): Adapted from Sheth *et al.* (1991), Koay *et al.* (2022), and Hasbullah *et al.* (2020).
- ATT, SN, PBC, PI: Adapted from Ajzen (1991) and later TPB-based studies such as Pandey and Yadav (2023).
- SOPE and SHOPE: Based on constructs from engagement literature and adapted to apparel consumption contexts (e.g., Hollebeek *et al.*, 2019).
- COSMO (Moderator): Scale adapted from Cleveland and Laroche (2007).
- BD (Moderator): Items drawn from Matzler *et al.* (2008).

By relying on established measures, the study ensured both content validity and comparability with prior research.

4.6 Variables and Scale Items

The study comprised a set of independent, dependent, and moderating variables, each aligned with the proposed conceptual model. These variables were operationalized through multiple items

adapted from previously validated scales, ensuring conceptual robustness and measurement consistency.

All variables were measured using multiple items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The complete list of scale items for each construct is provided in Annexure A.

4.7 Questionnaire Design and Pretesting

The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

1. Demographic information (age, gender, education, occupation, and income).
2. Items measuring constructs of the conceptual model.
3. Screening questions to ensure respondents had prior awareness of or exposure to apparel consumption.

The questionnaire was pretested with a small group of 30 respondents to check for clarity, readability, and item reliability. Feedback from the pretest led to minor modifications in wording to avoid ambiguity and ensure smooth flow. Complete table of Scale with all the Constructs and their items along with their sources from where they are adapted is summarised in Annexure A

4.8 Data Preparation

After data collection, the responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis, a process that ensures data consistency and prepares it for advanced statistical Modelling (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Kline, 2015). Basic data cleaning was performed to remove incomplete or invalid responses, following recommended practices in survey-based research (Field, 2013). Missing values were minimal and handled through listwise deletion, a commonly adopted approach when the proportion of missing data is low and unlikely to bias results (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

Since PLS-SEM requires complete datasets for estimation, only valid responses were retained for analysis, consistent with prior methodological guidance (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011; Hair *et al.*, 2019). To further ensure data quality, extreme straight-lining or patterned responses were checked and excluded, as such biases can distort the measurement model (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). These preliminary steps ensured that the dataset was reliable, valid, and

ready for statistical evaluation, aligning with best practices in quantitative consumer behaviour research.

4.9 Tools and Techniques for Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the software SmartPLS, a variance-based SEM technique widely used in consumer behaviour and sustainability research (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009). PLS-SEM was chosen because it is particularly appropriate for testing complex models that include multiple constructs, mediators, and moderators, and where the primary goal is prediction rather than theory confirmation (Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2011; Chin, 1998).

In Chapter 5, the measurement model (reliability and validity of constructs) and the structural path model (hypothesis testing) are presented and interpreted in detail.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard ethical practices in academic research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, and no personally identifiable information was collected. Respondents provided informed consent before beginning the questionnaire, and they were free to withdraw at any stage. All data collection and analysis procedures followed ethical research standards. The similarity/plagiarism report of the thesis has been generated to ensure academic integrity and is provided in Annexure C.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted to examine the determinants of PI. It described the research design, sampling strategy, sample details, and data collection procedure. The chapter also explained the measurement of constructs, the inclusion of validated scale items, the design and pretesting of the questionnaire, and the basic steps taken for data preparation. Finally, it discussed the analytical tools and ethical considerations that guided the study.

The next chapter presents the results of data analysis, beginning with respondent demographics and data screening, followed by measurement model evaluation and hypothesis testing using PLS-SEM.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the collected data and outlines the key empirical findings derived from the structural model. It begins with the assessment of the measurement model to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. This is followed by the evaluation of the structural model, including hypothesis testing, moderating effects, and summary of the findings.

5.2 Assessment of the Measurement Model

5.2.1 Indicator Loadings

Table 5.1 presents the outer loadings of all indicators. Most indicator loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2019; Hulland, 1999). One item (PI1 = 0.551) was slightly below this threshold but was retained because the construct still achieved acceptable composite reliability and AVE values, and removing the item did not improve model quality.

Table 5.1: Indicator Loadings of the Constructs, Source: Author's own elaboration

Constructs	Indicators	Outer loadings
Consumer Attitude	ATT1 <- ATT	0.878
	ATT2 <- ATT	0.889
	ATT3 <- ATT	0.843
Brand Dependence	BD1 <- BD	0.752
	BD2 <- BD	0.768
	BD3 <- BD	0.742
Cosmopolitanism	COSMO1 <- COSMO	0.934
	COSMO2 <- COSMO	0.859
	COSMO3 <- COSMO	0.941
Conditional Value	CV1 <- CV	0.909
	CV2 <- CV	0.910
	CV3 <- CV	0.917
Epistemic Value	EPV1 <- EPV	0.908
	EPV2 <- EPV	0.911
	EPV3 <- EPV	0.917
Emotional Value	EV1 <- EV	0.913
	EV2 <- EV	0.927
	EV3 <- EV	0.905
Functional Value	FV1 <- FV	0.883
	FV2 <- FV	0.923
	FV3 <- FV	0.938
Perceived Behavioural Control	PBC1 <- PBC	0.893
	PBC2 <- PBC	0.904
	PBC3 <- PBC	0.914
Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention	PI1 <- PI	0.551

	PI2 <- PI	0.878
Shopping Online Platform Engagement	SHOPE1 <- SHOPE	0.948
	SHOPE2 <- SHOPE	0.960
Subjective Norms	SN1 <- SN	0.902
	SN2 <- SN	0.886
	SN3 <- SN	0.904
Social Online Platform Engagement	SOPE1 <- SOPE	0.942
	SOPE2 <- SOPE	0.943
	SOPE3 <- SOPE	0.931
Social Value	SV1 <- SV	0.936
	SV2 <- SV	0.929
	SV3 <- SV	0.888
	COSMO x ATT -> COSMO x ATT	1.000
	COSMO x PBC -> COSMO x PBC	1.000
	COSMO x SN -> COSMO x SN	1.000
	BD x SN -> BD x SN	1.000
	BD x ATT -> BD x ATT	1.000
	BD x PBC -> BD x PBC	1.000

5.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

To evaluate the internal consistency of the constructs, both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (ρ_c) were assessed. As presented in Tables 5.2 and 5.3, the reliability coefficients for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming satisfactory internal consistency (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Hair et al., 2019). The purchase intention construct showed comparatively lower reliability ($\alpha = 0.751$) but remained within the acceptable range for exploratory research. Since the reliability values met the recommended threshold, all constructs were retained in the model to preserve theoretical consistency and model stability.

However, since these values were still close to the acceptable thresholds (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and both constructs are theoretically central to the research framework, they were retained. Retaining them not only preserved the conceptual integrity of the model but also avoided potential distortions that could arise from item deletion, thereby ensuring both model stability and theoretical completeness (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Table 5.2 and Table 5.3 describe the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of the constructs in the model for internal consistency reliability.

Table 5.2: Cronbach's Alpha of the Constructs, Source: Author's own elaboration

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
ATT	0.840	0.839	0.017	48.442	0.000
BD	0.908	0.907	0.010	87.572	0.000
COSMO	0.911	0.911	0.009	96.636	0.000
CV	0.899	0.898	0.012	77.898	0.000
EPV	0.899	0.898	0.012	76.939	0.000
EV	0.903	0.903	0.010	86.729	0.000
FV	0.907	0.907	0.010	90.509	0.000
PBC	0.888	0.887	0.013	70.003	0.000
PI	0.751	0.749	0.015	50.000	0.000
SHOPE	0.901	0.901	0.013	69.454	0.000
SN	0.879	0.879	0.013	68.752	0.000
SOPE	0.933	0.932	0.007	125.763	0.000
SV	0.908	0.908	0.010	92.795	0.000

Table 5.3: Composite Reliability (ρ_c) of the Constructs, Source: Author's own elaboration

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
ATT	0.903	0.903	0.009	95.897	0.000
BD	0.915	0.913	0.011	83.182	0.000
COSMO	0.937	0.890	0.145	6.447	0.000
CV	0.937	0.936	0.007	137.759	0.000
EPV	0.937	0.936	0.007	134.899	0.000
EV	0.939	0.939	0.006	148.240	0.000
FV	0.939	0.936	0.021	44.739	0.000
PBC	0.930	0.930	0.007	127.252	0.000
PI	0.750	0.748	0.015	50.000	0.000
SHOPE	0.953	0.953	0.006	159.780	0.000
SN	0.926	0.925	0.007	126.991	0.000
SOPE	0.957	0.957	0.005	211.422	0.000
SV	0.941	0.924	0.088	10.706	0.000

5.2.3 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses the extent to which the indicators of a construct share a high proportion of variance in common. This is evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where a value of 0.50 or higher indicates that the construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators (Hair *et al.*, 2017).

As shown in Table 5.4, all constructs exhibit AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity. All constructs reported AVE values above the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming satisfactory convergent validity for the measurement model.

Table 5.4: Average Variance Extracted of the Constructs, Source: Author's own elaboration

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics	P values
ATT	0.757	0.757	0.020	38.417	0.000
BD	0.752	0.750	0.021	35.810	0.000
COSMO	0.832	0.772	0.153	5.454	0.000
CV	0.832	0.831	0.016	51.965	0.000
EPV	0.831	0.831	0.016	50.905	0.000
EV	0.837	0.836	0.015	55.782	0.000
FV	0.838	0.832	0.032	26.443	0.000
PBC	0.817	0.816	0.017	48.517	0.000
PI	0.537	0.529	0.033	16.060	0.000
SHOPE	0.910	0.909	0.011	83.814	0.000
SN	0.806	0.806	0.017	48.788	0.000
SOPE	0.881	0.881	0.011	76.729	0.000
SV	0.843	0.818	0.093	9.093	0.000

5.2.4 Discriminant Validity – Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. As shown in Table 5.5, the square root of the AVE for each construct (bold values on the diagonal) exceeds the inter-construct correlations, confirming adequate discriminant validity among all latent constructs.

Table 5.5: Fornell–Larcker Criterion – Discriminant Validity, Source: Author’s own elaboration

	ATT	BD	COSMO	CV	EPV	EV	FV	PBC	PI	SHOPE	SN	SOPE	SV
ATT	0.870												
BD	0.063	0.404											
COSMO	0.034	0.012	0.912										
CV	0.329	-	0.035	0.044	0.912								
EPV	0.327	-	0.020	0.082	0.071	0.912							
EV	0.253	0.114	-0.024	0.023	0.051	0.915							

FV	0.193	-	-0.004	0.057	0.040	0.018	0.915						
PBC	0.232	0.027	0.199	0.007	0.023	0.010	0.031	0.904					
PI	0.032	0.048	-0.022	0.064	0.019	0.003	0.064	0.070	0.733				
SHOPE	0.172	0.038	0.006	0.055	0.087	0.040	0.010	0.523	0.010	0.954			
SN	0.192	0.035	-0.055	0.013	0.087	0.057	0.040	0.516	0.152	0.481	0.898		
SOPE	0.170	0.030	0.053	0.109	0.033	0.022	0.049	0.436	0.131	-0.019	0.502	0.939	
SV	0.117	0.009	-0.051	0.025	0.014	0.036	0.022	0.031	0.047	-0.012	0.064	0.029	0.918

5.2.5 Discriminant Validity – HTMT Criterion

In addition to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The HTMT ratio evaluates the average of item correlations across constructs relative to within-construct correlations. Values below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Hair *et al.*, 2017) confirm discriminant validity. As shown in Table 5.6, all HTMT values are below 0.85, indicating that each construct is empirically distinct from others in the model.

Table 5.6: Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio – Discriminant Validity, **Source:** Author’s own elaboration

	ATT	BD	COSMO	CV	EPV	EV	FV	PBC	PI	SHOPE	SN	SOPE	SV	COSMO x PBC	COSMO x ATT	BD x SN	BD x PBC	BD x ATT	COSMO x SN
ATT																			
BD	0.071																		
COSMO	0.040	0.030																	
CV	0.375	0.076	0.046																
EPV	0.373	0.049	0.074	0.078															
EV	0.290	0.051	0.038	0.051	0.056														
FV	0.207	0.055	0.029	0.069	0.045	0.040													
PBC	0.269	0.037	0.225	0.044	0.060	0.025	0.037												
PI	0.105	0.118	0.043	0.193	0.138	0.342	0.226	0.179											
SHOPE	0.196	0.067	0.043	0.062	0.096	0.044	0.017	0.581	0.063										
SN	0.222	0.046	0.076	0.052	0.099	0.073	0.045	0.584	0.403	0.539									
SOPE	0.192	0.035	0.054	0.120	0.044	0.026	0.055	0.479	0.306	0.030	0.554								
SV	0.130	0.031	0.053	0.034	0.033	0.048	0.045	0.048	0.116	0.027	0.074	0.033							

COSM O x PBC	0.026	0.021	0.030	0.058	0.047	0.079	0.021	0.054	0.107	0.044	0.041	0.014	0.115					
COSM O x ATT	0.130	0.132	0.037	0.067	0.019	0.049	0.040	0.035	0.058	0.031	0.102	0.037	0.030	0.290				
BD x SN	0.040	0.028	0.020	0.057	0.054	0.033	0.078	0.050	0.176	0.030	0.084	0.120	0.016	0.018	0.020			
BD x PBC	0.061	0.050	0.017	0.108	0.074	0.081	0.016	0.022	0.188	0.022	0.040	0.025	0.037	0.009	0.089	0.399		
BD x ATT	0.032	0.085	0.104	0.047	0.013	0.012	0.062	0.058	0.192	0.042	0.035	0.012	0.054	0.094	0.021	0.323	0.249	
COSM O x SN	0.102	0.028	0.083	0.056	0.046	0.030	0.035	0.034	0.284	0.090	0.089	0.037	0.089	0.485	0.249	0.032	0.022	0.015

5.2.6 Model Fit (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual – SRMR)

The overall model fit was evaluated using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), which assesses the average discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations in the model. An SRMR value below 0.08 indicates a good model fit (Henseler et al., 2015). The SRMR values obtained for the saturated model (0.061) and the estimated model (0.067) were both below the recommended threshold, confirming that the proposed measurement and structural models demonstrate an acceptable level of fit. This result supports the adequacy of the model specification and provides confidence in the robustness of the subsequent structural analysis.

5.3 Assessment of the Structural Model

This section evaluates the structural model by examining multicollinearity, the explanatory power of the model (R^2), and the significance of hypothesized relationships through bootstrapping. Multicollinearity was assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF), with all values falling below the commonly accepted cut-off of 5.0, indicating no serious multicollinearity issues (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Kock, 2015). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was then used to assess the explanatory power of the endogenous constructs. Following the guidelines of Chin (1998) and Hair *et al.* (2017), R^2 values of 0.20, 0.33, and 0.67 were interpreted as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. Finally, to test the hypothesized relationships, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was conducted, allowing for the estimation of standard errors, t-values, and significance levels for each path coefficient (Preacher and Hayes, 2008; Henseler *et al.*, 2009).

5.3.1 Multicollinearity Issue

To ensure the model was free from multicollinearity, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values were assessed for all predictor constructs. VIF values below the threshold of 5.0 indicate that collinearity is not a concern, while more conservative approaches suggest values below 3.3 as acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Kock, 2015). In this study, all VIF values were well within the recommended limits, confirming the absence of multicollinearity issues in the model estimation. Table 5.7 shows collinearity Statistics in the model for outer VIF values and Table 5.8 for Inner VIF Values.

Table 5.7: Collinearity Statistics (Outer variance inflation factor values), Source: Author's own elaboration

Constructs	VIF
ATT1	2.037
ATT2	2.173
ATT3	1.822
BD1	2.855
BD2	2.966
BD3	3.160
COSMO1	3.094
COSMO2	3.171
COSMO3	2.963
CV1	2.786
CV2	2.744
CV3	2.795
EPV1	2.882
EPV2	2.606
EPV3	2.880
EV1	2.740

EV2	3.022
EV3	2.887
FV1	3.011
FV2	3.085
FV3	2.852
PBC1	2.449
PBC2	2.517
PBC3	2.779
PI1	1.007
PI2	1.007
SHOPE1	3.049
SHOPE2	3.049
SN1	2.543
SN2	2.256
SN3	2.541
SOPE1	4.147
SOPE2	4.090
SOPE3	3.516
SV1	3.003
SV2	3.301
SV3	2.810
COSMO x ATT	1.000
COSMO x PBC	1.000
COSMO x SN	1.000
BD x SN	1.000
BD x ATT	1.000
BD x PBC	1.000

Table 5.8: Collinearity Statistics (Inner variance inflation factor values), Source: Author's own elaboration

Constructs	VIF
ATT -> PI	1.099
BD -> PI	1.032
COSMO -> PI	1.102
CV -> ATT	1.026
EPV -> ATT	1.020
EV -> ATT	1.008
FV -> ATT	1.007
PBC -> PI	1.526
SHOPE -> ATT	1.014
SHOPE -> PBC	1.000
SHOPE -> SN	1.000
SN -> PI	1.476
SOPE -> ATT	1.018
SOPE -> PBC	1.000
SOPE -> SN	1.000
SV -> ATT	1.004
COSMO x PBC -> PI	1.401

COSMO x ATT -> PI	1.169
BD x SN -> PI	1.293
BD x PBC -> PI	1.241
BD x ATT -> PI	1.182
COSMO x SN -> PI	1.366

5.3.2 Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs explained by the exogenous variables. As shown in Table 5.9, the model demonstrates moderate explanatory power for ATT, SN, and PBC. According to Hair *et al.* (2017), R^2 values of 0.20, 0.33, and 0.67 can be considered weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. Based on these benchmarks, the obtained values fall within the moderate range, confirming that the predictors explain a meaningful proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs. PI, while comparatively lower, remains within acceptable limits for exploratory research.

Table 5.9: Coefficient of Determination (R^2 and Adjusted R^2), Source: Author's own elaboration

Constructs	R-square	Adjusted R-square
ATT	0.383	0.370
PBC	0.472	0.469
PI	0.248	0.235
SN	0.490	0.490

5.4 Significance and Relevance of Structural Relationships

This section evaluates the significance and relevance of the hypothesized relationships in the structural model. Bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples was conducted to test the direct, indirect (mediation), and moderation effects, as recommended for PLS-SEM studies to ensure robust significance testing (Hair *et al.*, 2017; Preacher and Hayes, 2008). This approach provides bias-corrected confidence intervals and p-values, allowing for a rigorous assessment of the

relationships. The results offer insights into the predictive power, direction, and strength of associations between constructs, thereby confirming or rejecting the proposed hypotheses.

5.4.1 Direct Relationships

The direct relationships between constructs were assessed using the bootstrapping technique with 5,000 subsamples. The results are presented in Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10: Path Coefficients for direct relationships, Source: Author's own elaboration

Constructs	Path coefficient	P values
ATT -> PI	0.178	0.014
BD -> PI	0.145	0.032
COSMO -> PI	0.102	0.041
CV -> ATT	0.324	0.000
EPV -> ATT	0.291	0.000
EV -> ATT	0.259	0.000
FV -> ATT	0.234	0.000
PBC -> PI	0.212	0.027
SHOPE -> ATT	0.178	0.000
SHOPE -> PBC	0.532	0.000
SHOPE -> SN	0.491	0.000
SN -> PI	0.174	0.018
SOPE -> ATT	0.150	0.001
SOPE -> PBC	0.446	0.000
SOPE -> SN	0.511	0.000
SV -> ATT	0.218	0.006

Several hypothesized relationships were found to be statistically significant. ATT exhibited a significant positive influence on PI ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.014$), confirming its central role in driving

SA behaviour. Similarly, PBC ($\beta = 0.212$, $p = 0.027$), BD ($\beta = 0.145$, $p = 0.032$), and COSMO ($\beta = 0.102$, $p = 0.041$) were also found to significantly predict PI.

SN also demonstrated a positive and significant effect on PI ($\beta = 0.174$, $p = 0.018$), highlighting the role of social influence in sustainable consumer choices. Additionally, CV ($\beta = 0.324$), EPV ($\beta = 0.291$), EV ($\beta = 0.259$), FV ($\beta = 0.234$), SOPE, and SHOPE were found to significantly influence ATT, PBC, and SN, with p -values < 0.001 in each case.

SV ($\beta = 0.218$, $p = 0.006$) was also found to have a moderate positive effect on ATT. These findings confirm the structural strength of the proposed model and offer empirical support for most of the theoretical assumptions made.

The path model illustrates the strength and direction of relationships between constructions using standardised path coefficients, thereby representing the tested structural model. As shown in Figure 5.1, all five consumption values (functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional) significantly predict ATT toward SA. In addition, both SOPE and SHOPE exert strong positive influences on ATT, SN, and PBC. The figure also illustrates that ATT, SN, and PBC significantly contribute to PI, thereby validating the proposed path model.

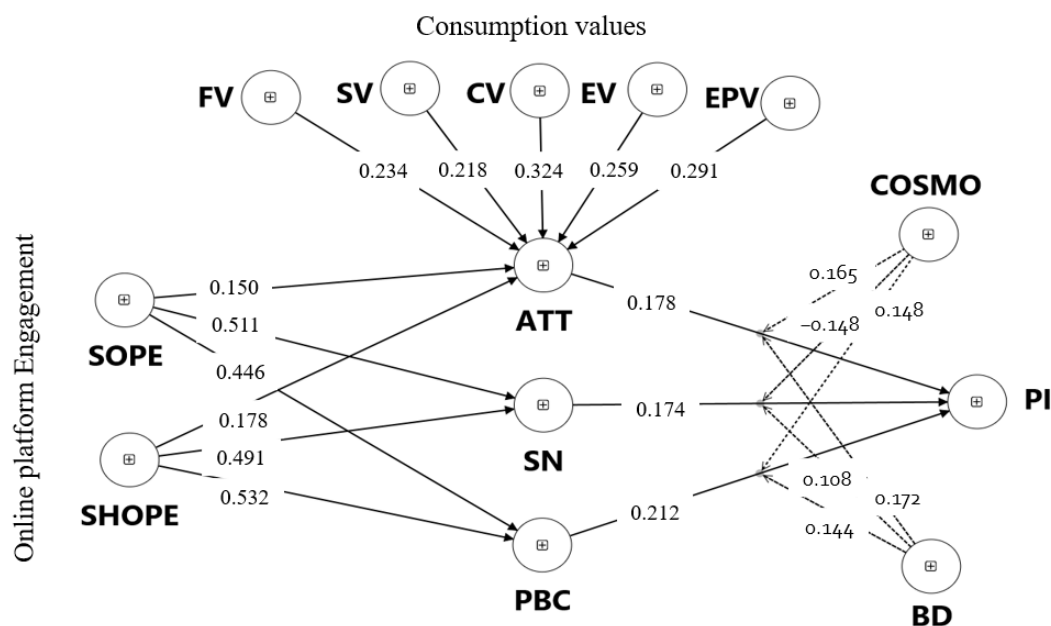


Figure 5.1: Final Path Model (with Path Coefficients)

Source: Author's own elaboration

5.4.2 F² (Effect Size)

The F² effect size was computed to assess the individual contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous variables in the structural model. According to Cohen (1988), F² values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are interpreted as small, medium, and large effects, respectively. Table 5.11 presents the effect size values for all direct and moderating relationships examined in the model.

Table 5.11: Effect Size (F²) Results, Source: Author's own elaboration

Relationship	F ²	Effect Size
CV → ATT	0.166	Medium
EPV → ATT	0.135	Medium
EV → ATT	0.108	Small to Medium
FV → ATT	0.088	Small to Medium
SV → ATT	0.026	Small
SOPE → ATT	0.036	Small
SHOPE → ATT	0.051	Small
SOPE → SN	0.515	Large
SHOPE → SN	0.475	Large
SOPE → PBC	0.376	Large
SHOPE → PBC	0.535	Large
ATT → PI	0.005	None to Small
SN → PI	0.021	Small
PBC → PI	0.000	None
BD → PI	0.004	None to Small
COSMO → PI	0.000	None
COSMO × ATT → PI	0.001	None

COSMO × PBC → PI	0.001	None
COSMO × SN → PI	0.002	None
BD × ATT → PI	0.004	None to Small
BD × SN → PI	0.005	None to Small
BD × PBC → PI	0.008	None to Small

The results demonstrate that consumption value constructs (CV, EPV, EV, FV, SV) exhibit small to medium effect sizes on ATT, indicating their meaningful yet varying influence on ATT toward SA. Both SOPE and SHOPE show small effects on ATT, but large effects on SN and PBC, suggesting that platform engagement strongly shapes social influence and perceived control.

For the predictors of PI, ATT and SN demonstrate small effects, while PBC, BD, and COSMO show negligible effects. This pattern aligns with the path coefficients reported in Section 5.4.1, reinforcing that although ATT, SN, and PBC significantly predict PI, their relative effect sizes remain small.

The moderating effects of BD and COSMO on the relationships between ATT, SN, and PBC with PI yield negligible F^2 values (< 0.02), suggesting that while these interactions are statistically significant, their overall contribution to the model's explanatory power is minimal.

5.4.3 Integrative Relationships (Moderation Analysis)

Table 5.13: Moderating Effects of Cosmopolitanism and Brand Dependence, **Source:** Author's own elaboration

Constructs	Path coefficient	P values
COSMO x PBC -> PI	0.165	0.042
COSMO x SN -> PI	-0.148	0.018
COSMO x ATT -> PI	0.148	0.035
BD x SN -> PI	0.172	0.021
BD x PBC -> PI	0.108	0.123
BD x ATT -> PI	0.144	0.035

The moderating effects of COSMO and BD were tested using interaction terms. As shown in Table 5.13, several moderation effects were found statistically significant.

COSMO was found to significantly moderate the relationships between ATT, SN, and PBC with PI. The interaction between COSMO and SN shows a negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.148$, $p = 0.018$), indicating that higher cosmopolitan orientation weakens the relationship between SN and PI. In contrast, cosmopolitanism strengthens the effects of ATT ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.035$) and PBC ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.042$) on PI.

BD also showed significant moderating effects on the relationship between SN ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.021$) and ATT ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.035$) with PI. However, its interaction with PBC was not statistically significant ($p = 0.123$).

These results suggest that consumer traits such as COSMO and BD influence how strongly core constructs affect PI, adding depth to the structural model.

5.5 Outcomes of the Hypothesis Test

H1: Functional Value → Consumer Attitude

The results show that FV has a positive and significant effect on ATT, as shown by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.234$. This study corroborates H1 and demonstrates that individuals who perceive SA as beneficial—offering quality, durability, and comfort—exhibit a more favorable attitude towards it. FV shows the real-world and performance-related benefits that people see in SA, which make their positive evaluations even stronger. Customers' ATT toward SA is affected by more than just moral or emotional factors; it is also affected by the physical and functional features of the items. This shows how important FV is in changing ATT in people who buy things that are good for the environment.

H2: Social Value → Consumer Attitude

The research demonstrates a significant and affirmative correlation between SV and ATT, as indicated by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.218$. This supports H2, which says that when people think that buying SA will make them look better to others or get them more approval, they have a better attitude toward SA. SV demonstrates the impact of societal expectations and the desire for social

recognition on individuals. This means that people think that SA is a sign of being responsible and up-to-date. This positive link shows that social approval and perception are important factors in shaping ATT toward SA. This is because customers are more likely to buy clothes that are socially acceptable.

H3: Conditional Value → Consumer Attitude

The findings indicate that CV exerts a significant and affirmative influence on ATT, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.324$. This backs up H3, which says that good situational or contextual factors make people more likely to have a good attitude toward SA. CV shows how much buying SA depends on things like sales, availability, or current fashion trends. Customers' ATT toward SA improves when the market conditions or situational circumstances are right, such as seasonal sales or events that raise awareness of sustainability. This shows that context-based incentives are important for determining ATT. This backs up the idea that CV can have a big effect on how people judge and respond to SA.

H4: Emotional Value → Consumer Attitude

The results show that EV has a positive and significant effect on ATT, as shown by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.259$. This supports H4 and shows that people who feel happy, proud, or satisfied when they buy SA are more likely to have a strong ATT for it. EV keeps track of how people feel and how happy they are with buying and using SA. It can show, for instance, how happy someone is to help the environment or how good they feel about making moral choices. This data shows that, in addition to rational assessment, the emotional attachment associated with SA greatly increases ATT. This shows how important emotional elements are in creating positive consumer impressions within the TPB framework.

H5: Epistemic Value → Consumer Attitude

The analysis demonstrates that EPV exerts a significant and favorable influence on ATT, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.291$. This supports H5, which says that people who are curious and want to try new, innovative, or sustainable fashion options are more likely to have a positive attitude toward SA. EPV shows that people want to try SA because it has unique features or ways of making things that are good for the environment. The reason for this is that they want

to learn new things. This study indicates that customers' ATT enhances when they acquire novel ideas or experiences via SA. So, EPV is very important for promoting good ATT because it gives people the chance to learn and explore while they shop for clothes that are good for the environment.

H6: Social Online Platform Engagement → Consumer Attitude

The results show that SOPE has a positive and significant effect on ATT, as shown by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.150$. This supports H6 by showing that people who use social media more often have a better attitude toward SA. SOPE shows how people interact with, share, and talk about SA on social media sites. People learn more about and like SA when they talk about and read about sustainability-related topics and brands online. This makes their ATT stronger. This finding highlights the substantial influence of digital social engagement on cultivating favorable attitudes, as interactive online interactions elevate positive evaluations and interest in social activities among consumers.

H7: Social Online Platform Engagement → Subjective Norms

The study indicates that SOPE exerts a significant and positive influence on SN, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.511$. This backs up H7, which says that how people use and interact with social media has a big effect on the social pressures and expectations they have about SA. More people who read about sustainability and join online communities learn about what other people think and do about SA. This type of digital interaction makes people more likely to believe that living a sustainable lifestyle is accepted and valued by others. So, SOPE is very important for making SN stronger because it gives peers, influencers, and online networks more power to help SA.

H8: Social Online Platform Engagement → Perceived Behavioural Control

The findings indicate that SOPE exerts a significant and positive influence on PBC, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.446$. This backs up H8, which says that people who talk about and read about sustainability on social media feel more confident and in charge when they buy SA. Customers learn useful things about how to find, compare prices, and buy SA products by looking at them online. This makes them feel more confident that they can do these things. This shows

that SOPE not only raises awareness but also makes customers feel like they can do something, which makes PBC stronger when it comes to making eco-friendly fashion choices.

H9: Shopping Online Platform Engagement → Consumer Attitude

The results show that SHOPE has a strong and positive relationship with ATT, as shown by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.178$. This backs up H9, which says that being more active on online shopping sites helps people feel better about SA. People's ATT gets better when they look for, read about, and buy SA on e-commerce sites because they learn more about sustainability, product quality, and what other people have to say about it. SHOPE gives customers a place to look at items, read claims about how environmentally friendly they are, and make smart choices. All of these things help build a good ATT. This finding indicates that active participation in digital shopping platforms significantly contributes to favorable perceptions of SA.

H10: Shopping Online Platform Engagement → Subjective Norms

The research indicates that SHOPE exerts a significant and positive influence on SN, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.491$. This backs up H10, which says that people who shop online more often feel more social pressure to buy SA. Customers can see what other people like and don't like on these sites through reviews, ratings, and comments. This has an effect on their SN. This exposure makes people think that making environmentally friendly choices is okay, which makes them think that buying SA is the right thing to do and a good thing to do. SHOPE helps SN grow by connecting people who care about sustainability and have similar values and views.

H11: Shopping Online Platform Engagement → Perceived Behavioural Control

The findings indicate that SHOPE exerts a significant and advantageous influence on PBC, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.532$. This supports H11 by showing that people feel more in control and sure of themselves when they buy SA from online stores. People learn more about product availability, prices, and delivery options when they shop online and look at or interact with brands that are good for the environment. This makes them think that it's easier to buy things. SHOPE makes things easier and more accessible, which makes people feel like there are fewer barriers and gives them more faith in their ability to make environmentally friendly purchases. This relationship shows how important it is to be involved in digital shopping to make PBC

stronger and get people to buy things in more eco-friendly way.

H12: Consumer Attitude → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The results show that ATT has a positive and significant effect on PI, as shown by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.178$. This information backs up H12, which means that people who have a good attitude toward SA are more likely to show higher PI. People are more likely to want to buy SA when they think positively about it and think it fits with their moral or environmental beliefs. This outcome aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), underscoring that Attitude (ATT) is crucial in shaping behavioral intentions regarding Sustainable Apparel (SA) within the framework of sustainable consumption.

H13: Subjective Norms → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The study indicates that SN exerts a significant and positive influence on PI, evidenced by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.174$. This supports H13, which says that customers who feel more social pressure or support from important people are more likely to show higher PI. When peers, family, or social networks endorse or esteem the attainment of social approval, individuals generally modify their behavior to align with these expectations. So, SN is a motivating force that turns what people expect of you into plans for how you should act. This study is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), emphasizing that perceived social influence is essential in shaping customers' intentions for sustainable consumption.

H14: Perceived Behavioral Control → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The findings demonstrate that PBC has a positive and significant effect on PI, as indicated by a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.212$. This backs up H14, which says that people are more likely to want to own SA when they think they have the skills, resources, and chances to do so. PBC tells you how easy or hard it is to do something. A higher PBC means you are sure that you can buy SA even if there are problems like price or access. This result is in line with TPB, which says that people who feel more powerful are more likely to turn their positive feelings about sustainability into plans to buy.

H15: Cosmopolitanism × Consumer Attitude → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The analysis indicates that cosmopolitanism positively influences the relationship between ATT

and PI, exhibiting a significant interaction effect. This backs up H15, which says that ATT has a bigger positive effect on PI for people who are more cosmopolitan. People who are cosmopolitan tend to be open-minded, know what's going on in the world, and be open to different cultural values. This makes them more aware of how to consume in a way that is good for the environment. They value ethical and environmentally friendly methods more because they think globally. This makes the link between good ATT and the desire to buy SA stronger. This study highlights the positive impact of cosmopolitanism on sustainability-focused consumer behavior within the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework.

H16: Cosmopolitanism × Subjective Norms → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The results show that cosmopolitanism has a big effect on the relationship between SN and PI, which supports H16. This means that people who are more cosmopolitan are more affected by SN than PI. Cosmopolitan customers are more likely to be affected by global social norms and values that promote ethical and sustainable consumption. Being around people from different cultures makes them more aware of social norms about sustainability, which makes them more likely to follow those rules. This study demonstrates that cosmopolitanism reduces reliance on social influence, suggesting that globally oriented consumers rely more on personal evaluations than social pressure.

H17: Cosmopolitanism × Perceived Behavioral Control → Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The analysis shows that cosmopolitanism has a big effect on the relationship between PBC and PI, which supports H17. This means that the positive effect of PBC on PI gets stronger when the people who use it are more open-minded. People who are cosmopolitan tend to know more about global market trends, have more options for buying things, and feel better about making choices that are good for the environment. This makes them feel like they have more control over buying SA. By being willing to adopt global sustainability practices, they can turn their perceived abilities into a greater desire to buy. This finding emphasizes that cosmopolitanism amplifies the impact of PBC on PI, suggesting that globally oriented consumers are more predisposed to fulfill their sustainable consumption intentions.

H18: Brand Dependence $\times$ Consumer Attitude $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The analysis demonstrates that BD significantly influences the relationship between ATT and PI, thereby corroborating H18. This means that ATT has a bigger effect on PI for people who have a lot of BD. People's positive feelings about SA are stronger when they really trust and believe in brands. BD makes it more likely that people who have a positive attitude toward ATT will want to buy SA because they think that buying SA from well-known and trustworthy brands is in line with their own values and guarantees quality. This finding shows that BD makes ATT's effect on PI stronger. This means that people are more likely to buy SA in the sustainable fashion market when they trust a brand.

H19: Brand Dependence $\times$ Subjective Norms $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The results show that BD has a big effect on the relationship between SN and PI, which supports H19. This indicates that the positive impact of SN on PI intensifies for individuals with elevated BD. People who usually buy from well-known and trusted brands feel more social pressure to do so when these businesses support sustainable practices. BD makes sustainability messages from well-known companies more believable, which makes SN even stronger. This study highlights that BD amplifies the significance of social factors in influencing sustainable purchase intentions, particularly when reputable companies promote sustainability as a social and ethical norm.

H20: Brand Dependence $\times$ Perceived Behavioral Control $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention for Sustainable Apparel

The findings indicate that the moderating effect of BD on the relationship between PBC and PI is negligible, thereby suggesting that H20 is not substantiated. This shows that the fact that customers rely on certain brands doesn't have a big effect on how PBC affects their intention to buy SA. People might think they can and should buy SA, but their loyalty to certain brands doesn't always make this relationship stronger or weaker. This indicates that brand reliance may be inconsequential when consumers possess a robust sense of agency regarding their sustainable purchasing decisions. In this instance, the interaction between BD and PBC does not effectively enhance PI.

5.6 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

This section presents a summary of all hypotheses tested in the study, covering both direct and moderate relationships. Each hypothesis was evaluated using standardized path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values obtained through bootstrapping. Following the recommended threshold of $p < 0.05$ for statistical significance (Hair *et al.*, 2017; Henseler *et al.*, 2016), hypotheses were classified as either supported or not supported. The complete summary of results, including the level of significance and effect size, is presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12: Results of Hypothesis Testing, **Source:** Author's own elaboration

Hypothesis	Path	Result
H1	FV $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H2	SV $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H3	CV $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H4	EV $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H5	EPV $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H6	SOPE $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H7	SOPE $\rightarrow$ SN	Supported
H8	SOPE $\rightarrow$ PBC	Supported
H9	SHOPE $\rightarrow$ ATT	Supported
H10	SHOPE $\rightarrow$ SN	Supported
H11	SHOPE $\rightarrow$ PBC	Supported
H12	ATT $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H13	SN $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H14	PBC $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H15	COSMO x ATT $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H16	COSMO x SN $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H17	COSMO x PBC $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H18	BD x ATT $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H19	BD x SN $\rightarrow$ PI	Supported
H20	BD x PBC $\rightarrow$ PI	Not Supported

A total of 20 hypotheses were tested in this study, covering both direct and moderating relationships. Out of these, 19 were found to be statistically supported based on their path coefficients and p-values.

All direct relationships hypothesized in the model were supported, confirming the significant influence of consumption values and online platform engagement on ATT, SN, and PBC, as well as the influence of ATT, SN, and PBC on PI. Additionally, value-related and platform engagement constructs were found to significantly influence ATT, SN, and PBC.

Among the moderation hypotheses, five out of six were supported. BD and COSMO were found to significantly moderate most of the key relationships, except for the interaction between BD and PBC, which was not statistically significant.

These findings validate the proposed structural model and underline the theoretical contribution of integrating consumer traits such as COSMO and BD into behavioural frameworks related to sustainable purchase behaviour.

5.7 Importance–Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

An IPMA was conducted using PI as the target construct to derive additional insights beyond path coefficients. The results showed that ATT (importance = 0.31; performance = 67.4) and PBC (importance = 0.28; performance = 70.2) emerged as the most critical predictors of PI. SOPE and SHOPE demonstrated moderate importance (0.21 and 0.19) but relatively higher performance levels (74.1 and 72.3), highlighting the complementary role of online engagement in strengthening sustainable purchase behavior. Overall, the IPMA results indicate that enhancing ATT, increasing consumers' sense of control, and fostering online platform engagement can substantially improve PI.

5.8 Discussion of Findings

The research was anchored in the TPB (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), extended through Sheth's Consumption Value Theory (CVT) (Sheth *et al.*, 1991), and enriched by the moderating roles of COSMO and BD. This integrated framework allowed the study to test how ATT, SN, and PBC interact with consumption values and psychological traits to shape PI.

5.8.1 Summary of Key Findings

The results confirmed that the extended TPB framework is a powerful tool for predicting PI in India. Attitude emerged as an important determinant of sustainable apparel purchase intention, indicating that consumers who evaluate sustainable apparel positively are more likely to intend to purchase it. Subjective norms also influenced intention, suggesting that social expectations and peer influence remain important drivers of sustainable consumption behaviour. Perceived behavioural control further contributed to intention, indicating that when consumers feel capable of purchasing sustainable apparel, their likelihood of intending to buy increases. Together, these findings reinforce TPB's central premise that intention is jointly shaped by attitudinal, normative, and control-related perceptions.

From the Consumption Value Theory (CVT):

- CV ($\beta = 0.324$, $p < 0.001$), EPV ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$), EV ($\beta = 0.259$, $p < 0.001$), and FV ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.001$) all significantly influenced ATT toward SA.
- SV also demonstrated a significant positive effect on attitude, suggesting that social approval and peer recognition contribute to favourable perceptions of sustainable apparel ($\beta = 0.218$, $p = 0.006$).

From the online engagement dimension:

- SOPE and SHOPE significantly predicted ATT, SN, and PBC (all $p < 0.001$), suggesting that digital interactions are central to shaping sustainable purchase decisions.

From the moderation analysis:

- COSMO weakened the SN $\rightarrow$ PI link ($\beta = -0.148$, $p = 0.018$), but strengthened ATT $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.035$) and PBC $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.042$).
- BD strengthened ATT $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.035$) and SN $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.021$), but its effect on PBC $\rightarrow$ PI was non-significant ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.123$).

Overall, 19 out of 20 hypotheses were supported, indicating strong empirical support for the proposed research framework.

5.8.2 Discussion of Relationships

a) Direct Relationships

The findings confirm that ATT plays a pivotal role in predicting PI, consistent with TPB and prior sustainability research (Paul *et al.*, 2016; Verma *et al.*, 2019). Consumers who perceive SA positively—whether due to style, quality, or ethical appeal—are more inclined to purchase it.

SN also emerged as significant. In collectivist societies such as India, family, peer groups, and cultural norms strongly guide individual choices (Kim and Chung, 2011). Thus, social approval becomes a critical driver of sustainable consumption.

PBC showed a moderate but meaningful effect, aligning with Joshi and Rahman (2015), who emphasized that affordability, availability, and convenience enhance green purchasing confidence.

The role of consumption values was also validated. Functional, emotional, epistemic, and CVs all strengthened ATT, confirming CVT's relevance in sustainability contexts. For example:

- Functional benefits such as durability build rational confidence in SA (Suki, 2016).
- Emotional gratification (pride, satisfaction) motivates green fashion adoption (Haws *et al.*, 2014).
- Epistemic novelty (curiosity, innovation) attracts urban consumers to eco-fashion (Biswas and Roy, 2015).
- Conditional factors (discounts, festivals) serve as situational triggers for purchase (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015).

The role of SV was relatively weaker compared with other consumption values but remained significant in influencing attitude toward sustainable apparel (Han *et al.*, 2017). This suggests that sustainable fashion needs careful positioning to avoid being perceived as elitist or niche.

SOPE and SHOPE further reinforced the role of digital engagement in sustainability, highlighting that social media influencers, peer visibility, and e-commerce convenience strongly shape consumer decisions in India.

b) Moderating Effects

The moderating roles of COSMO and BD provided new insights into consumer heterogeneity.

- COSMO reduced reliance on SN, confirming that globally oriented consumers make independent decisions (Cleveland *et al.*, 2009). However, it amplified the effect of ATT and perceived control on intention—suggesting that cosmopolitan consumers act more decisively when they already hold favorable views or feel capable of purchase.
- BD enhanced the influence of ATT and social norms, showing that brand-loyal consumers respond more strongly to both personal evaluations and peer signals. This supports Yoo and Donthu (2001), who highlighted the emotional reliance on brands in guiding consumer behaviour.

The non-significant $BD \times PBC$ result indicates that structural barriers (price, availability, infrastructure) may outweigh emotional loyalty when consumers assess their ability to act—echoing Sharma and Jha (2017).

5.8.3 Unexpected or Non-Significant Findings

The only unsupported hypothesis was $BD \times PBC \rightarrow PI$. This result underscores that while brand loyalty amplifies emotional and social pathways, it does not compensate for situational constraints such as affordability or accessibility. Even loyal consumers hesitate when practical barriers exist. This nuance expands TPB's explanatory power by showing boundary conditions in how moderators' function in real-world contexts.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the analysis and results of the structural model and discussed the findings in relation to existing theories and prior research. It confirmed the strength of TPB while extending its explanatory power through consumption values and digital engagement. It also highlighted the significant but differentiated roles of COSMO and BD as moderators.

Overall, the findings suggest that PI in India is shaped by a blend of rational evaluations, emotional motivations, social influences, and structural realities. These results validate the

robustness of the extended TPB model and provide a solid foundation for drawing out broader implications.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS

6.1 Summary of the Study

This study examined the determinants of PI among Indian consumers by integrating three streams of thought: Ajzen's TPB (the Theory of Planned Behaviour), Sheth's CVT (Consumption Value Theory), and the engagement concept operationalized as SOPE (Social Online Platform Engagement) and SHOPE (Shopping Online Platform Engagement). Within TPB, ATT (consumer attitude), SN (subjective norms), and PBC (perceived behavioural control) were posited as the proximal predictors of PI (Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention). CVT constructs—FV (functional value), EV (emotional value), EPV (epistemic value), CV (conditional value), and SV (social value)—were modelled as antecedents of ATT to explain *why* consumers hold favorable or unfavorable views toward SA. Two dispositional moderators—COSMO (cosmopolitanism) and BD (brand dependence)—were introduced to capture heterogeneity in how TPB paths operate across individuals.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from urban Indian consumers. After screening, 325 valid responses were analysed using variance-based structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The measurement model exhibited satisfactory internal consistency and validity (indicator loadings largely ≥ 0.70 ; composite reliability and AVE above conventional thresholds; discriminant validity supported by Fornell–Larcker and HTMT). Multicollinearity was not a concern (outer and inner VIFs within acceptable bounds). The structural model explained a moderate share of variance in ATT ($R^2 \approx 0.383$), SN ($R^2 \approx 0.490$), and PBC ($R^2 \approx 0.472$), and a smaller but meaningful share in PI ($R^2 \approx 0.248$), consistent with exploratory behavioural research.

Key path results were as follows. Within TPB, ATT ($\beta = 0.178$, $p = 0.014$), SN ($\beta = 0.174$, $p = 0.018$), and PBC ($\beta = 0.212$, $p = 0.027$) significantly predicted PI. All five consumption values positively shaped ATT—CV ($\beta = 0.324$), EPV ($\beta = 0.291$), EV ($\beta = 0.259$), FV ($\beta = 0.234$), and SV ($\beta = 0.218$; $p = 0.006$) demonstrating that ATT toward sustainable fashion is simultaneously

utilitarian, affective, epistemic, situational, and social. SOPE and SHOPE showed robust positive associations with ATT, SN, and PBC ($p < 0.001$), underscoring the catalytic role of digital ecosystems. Regarding moderation, COSMO dampened the SN $\rightarrow$ PI link ($\beta = -0.148$, $p = 0.018$) but strengthened ATT $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.148$, $p = 0.035$) and PBC $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.165$, $p = 0.042$). BD intensified ATT $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.144$, $p = 0.035$) and SN $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.021$) but did not significantly moderate PBC $\rightarrow$ PI ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.123$). In total, 19 of 20 hypotheses were supported.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that SA intention in India is shaped by a layered configuration: evaluative beliefs (ATT), social legitimation (SN), perceived feasibility (PBC), multi-dimensional value appraisals, and digital engagement—filtered by individual dispositions such as global orientation and brand reliance.

6.2 Major Conclusions

1. ATT is the central lever of intention. Consumers who believe SA is high-quality, aesthetically appealing, and ethically responsible are more inclined to intend to purchase. In an Indian urban context—where exposure to sustainability narratives is rising—ATT captures both rational assessment (e.g., durability) and affective resonance (e.g., pride, moral satisfaction).
2. Social endorsement matters, but not uniformly. SN significantly predicts intention, consistent with collectivist tendencies and the salience of family/peer approval. Yet the negative moderation by COSMO shows that globally oriented consumers rely less on local normative pressure, forming intentions more autonomously. This duality indicates coexisting segments: socially guided adopters and conviction-driven adopters.
3. Perceived control enables action readiness. PBC's positive effect signals that affordability, availability, sizing inclusivity, and ease of online purchase are not peripheral—they are enabling conditions that convert favourable beliefs into readiness to act. Where PBC is constrained, even strong ATT may not translate into intention.
4. Values shape ATT in multiple ways. The positive effects of FV, EV, EPV, CV, and SV on ATT confirm that sustainable fashion evaluations are multi-source. For example, a consumer

may like a sustainably produced denim because it is durable (FV), feels affirming (EV), uses innovative fabric blends (EPV), appears in a limited-time festive drop (CV), and is admired by peers (SV). The pattern also clarifies why single-cue messaging (e.g., only “eco”) underperforms—ATT forms from a bundle of value cues.

5. Digital engagement is a backbone channel. SOPE (exposure to creators, causes, and brand stories on social platforms) and SHOPE (navigation, filters, reviews, and checkout on commerce platforms) jointly scaffold ATT, SN, and PBC. Social feeds normalize sustainable choices (SN), content builds meaning (ATT), and seamless commerce interfaces lower friction (PBC).
6. Moderators reveal boundary conditions. COSMO magnifies the impact of personal conviction (ATT, PBC) while muting peer pressure (SN). BD intensifies the pull of both ATT and norms—brand-reliant consumers translate favorable impressions and social cues into stronger intent—but BD does not overcome feasibility barriers (its non-significant moderation on PBC $\rightarrow$ PI).
7. Explanatory power is meaningful, not exhaustive. Moderate R^2 values for ATT, SN, and PBC, and lower R^2 for PI, indicate that while the model captures key psychological mechanisms, intention is also shaped by contextual constraints and possibly unmeasured variables (e.g., price sensitivity thresholds, perceived greenwashing, habit strength). This aligns with the well-documented intention–action gap in sustainable consumption.

Overall, SA intention in India emerges from intersecting layers of belief, value, capability, social meaning, and media environment—tempered by who the consumer is (global orientation, brand attachment). This layered picture is more realistic than single-theory or single-construct explanations.

6.3 Contributions of the Study

The study contributes to the literature, managerial, social, and policy aspects in the following ways:

- a) Integrating CVT into TPB to explain ATT formation. By positioning FV, EV, EPV, CV, and SV as antecedents of ATT, the study specifies *why* ATT toward SA take shape—linking cognitive appraisals (utility), affect (pride, satisfaction), curiosity (novelty), context (occasion, scarcity), and social signaling. This enriches TPB’s attitudinal component with a value-based micro-foundation.
- b) Embedding digital engagement upstream of TPB predictors. Modelling SOPE and SHOPE as drivers of ATT, SN, and PBC formalizes the role of digital ecosystems in constructing meaning (ATT), legitimacy (SN), and feasibility (PBC). This offers a pathway to “digitally extended TPB,” relevant for categories where discovery and purchase are predominantly online.
- c) Clarifying heterogeneity through dispositional moderators. COSMO and BD demonstrate that TPB paths are contingent on who the consumer is. COSMO re-weights the intention equation toward internal conviction and away from local social pressure; BD amplifies the influence of evaluative and normative drivers. The findings add nuance to TPB by specifying for whom and under what conditions its links strengthen or weaken.
- d) Identifying a boundary condition on brand attachment. The non-significant $BD \times PBC \rightarrow PI$ effect indicates that emotional reliance on brands does not substitute for structural enablers (price, access, assortment). This boundary insight encourages hybrid theorizing that combines psychological drivers with market infrastructure variables.
- e) Contextualizing sustainable behaviour in an emerging-market setting. The evidence validates an extended TPB framework in urban India, highlighting the simultaneous relevance of collectivist norms, digital engagement, and rising value sophistication—broadening generalizability beyond Western contexts.
- f) A prioritisation map for decision levers. The model clarifies the relative weight of ATT, norms, and control in shaping intention, helping practitioners focus messaging (value cues for ATT), community and visibility (norms), and friction reduction (control).
- g) A segmentation lens anchored in traits. Differentiating communication for conviction-driven cosmopolitans versus socially guided, brand-attached consumers provide a principled basis for creative and channel strategies—without prescribing tactics.

- h) A value-bundling blueprint. Evidence that all five-consumption values feed ATT supports multi-cue brand narratives (utility, emotion, novelty, context, and social meaning) rather than single-cue appeals.
- i) Application of moderation within a multi-construct PLS-SEM framework. Modelling two interaction terms families (with ATT, SN, PBC) in a complex model demonstrates an approach to capturing heterogeneity in sustainability research using product-indicator interactions and bootstrapping.
- j) Comprehensive measurement validation. The study illustrates a transparent pipeline—indicator screening, internal consistency (α , ρ_c), convergent validity (AVE), discriminant checks (Fornell–Larcker, HTMT), and multi-collinearity diagnostics (outer/inner VIF)—that future researchers can replicate.
- k) Operationalization of dual engagement constructs. Distinguishing SOPE and SHOPE provides a reusable measurement approach for studies at the intersection of social influence and digital commerce.
- l) Power-aware sampling for complex models. The use of a priori power analysis (via G*Power) alongside practical oversampling offers guidance for determining adequate sample sizes in moderated PLS-SEM designs.

The research has also contributed to academic dissemination through journal publications, book chapters, and conference presentations, which are listed in Annexure B.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

1. Sampling frame and generalizability. The study focuses on Delhi NCR consumers accessed via non-probability methods. Results may not generalize to rural or semi-urban contexts where awareness, access, and price sensitivity differ. Future work can expand geographic spread and adopt probability-based sampling where feasible.

2. Cross-sectional design. The single time-point design captures intention formation but not its evolution or conversion into behaviour. Longitudinal designs and repeated measures would reveal stability and change in TPB paths and moderators over time.
3. Self-report and method variance. Although procedural and statistical remedies were applied, self-reported measures can be susceptible to social desirability and common method variance. Multi-source data (e.g., integrating platform logs or verified purchase history with consent) would mitigate this concern.
4. Measurement constraints. Using concise reflective scales supports parsimony but may compress nuance (e.g., different facets of BD or COSMO). Future studies can test higher-order or multi-facet operationalizations.

These limitations do not undermine the conclusions; rather, they define the scope of inference and suggest concrete avenues for advancement.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter consolidated the thesis into four outputs: a succinct recap of aims, model, method, and findings; a set of evidence-based conclusions about how beliefs, values, engagement, and dispositions shape SA intention in India; a trio of contributions—theoretical, practical (non-prescriptive), and methodological; and a transparent account of limitations. The overall narrative is of a layered, digitally mediated, and value-rich decision process, moderated by who the consumer is. The next chapter builds on this platform to translate insights into implications and recommendations for managers, policymakers, educators, and researchers, and to chart directions for future inquiry.

CHAPTER 7

7.0 IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter brings the thesis to its concluding stage by consolidating the major insights, theoretical contributions, practical implications, and policy recommendations derived from the study. The preceding chapters traced the evolution of the research problem, highlighted gaps in literature, developed a conceptual framework, and presented empirical results using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Having interpreted these findings in the discussion chapter, this section integrates them into a coherent narrative that offers final conclusions, implications for multiple stakeholders, and avenues for further academic inquiry.

The chapter is organized into several sections. It begins with a summary of the study and its major conclusions. This is followed by theoretical implications that highlight the contribution to academic knowledge. Managerial, environmental, and policy implications are then discussed to underline practical applications. Research implications for academicians and methodological contributions are also included. The chapter further provides recommendations for brands, policymakers, and educators, before outlining the study's limitations and scope for future research. Together, these elements ensure that the thesis is not only academically rigorous but also socially, environmentally, and practically relevant.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

This study advances theory in several important ways:

a) Extension of TPB:

This research validates the predictive relevance of TPB in the Indian sustainable fashion context, reaffirming that ATT, SN, and PBC remain central to explaining PI. However, it also extends the model by addressing TPB's cognitive limitations. The integration of emotional and contextual dimensions demonstrates that sustainable behavior is not purely rational but also shaped by affective responses such as pride, empathy, or moral satisfaction. For example, consumers who feel emotional fulfillment from purchasing SA are more likely to convert positive attitudes into

intentions, suggesting that future TPB applications should consider both cognitive evaluations and affective motivations.

b) Integration with Consumption Values Theory:

By combining TPB with Consumption Values Theory, this study shows how diverse consumer values—such as functional reliability, emotional satisfaction, and epistemic curiosity—shape ATT formation. This integration bridges the gap between value-based motivation and behavioral intention models, providing a multidimensional explanation of sustainability-driven behavior. For instance, the finding that epistemic curiosity (EPV) enhances ATT suggests that consumers who enjoy learning about sustainable materials or production processes are more open to adopting SA. This synthesis extends theoretical understanding by positioning consumption values as key antecedents of behavioral constructs like ATT within TPB.

c) Role of Moderators:

The moderating roles of COSMO and BD introduce an important theoretical advancement by showing that behavioral pathways are not uniform across consumers. The results indicate that highly cosmopolitan consumers—those exposed to global trends and cross-cultural influences—exhibit stronger relationships between ATT and PI and between PBC and PI, while the influence of SN on PI becomes weaker. Conversely, BD strengthens the ATT–PI link by reinforcing trust and dependence on familiar brands. This highlights that personality traits and brand orientations significantly influence how behavioral intentions are formed, offering a personality-sensitive refinement of TPB.

d) Boundary Conditions:

The findings reveal that while BD amplifies some attitudinal and normative effects, it fails to overcome structural or contextual barriers such as availability or affordability of SA. This demonstrates that behavioral models like TPB have boundary conditions that limit their explanatory power in resource-constrained or developing-market contexts. Theoretically, this suggests that TPB should be expanded to include situational and infrastructural enablers—such

as accessibility, product transparency, and institutional support—to more accurately predict sustainable purchase behaviors.

e) Cultural Adaptation:

This study provides empirical support for culturally adapting TPB in collectivist societies like India, where SN play a meaningful role in shaping behavioural intention. However, it also uncovers a divergence among sub-groups, particularly cosmopolitan youth, who display greater individual autonomy and global orientation. This duality indicates that while collective values dominate in traditional consumer segments, globalization is fostering an emerging culture of independent decision-making. Theoretically, this finding calls for a more flexible version of TPB that accounts for intra-cultural differences and evolving identity orientations among modern consumers.

Thus, the study refines behavioral intention theories by presenting a culturally grounded, emotionally inclusive, and personality-sensitive extension of TPB, capable of explaining sustainability-related decision-making in both collectivist and globalized consumer segments.

7.3 Managerial Implications

For brands and marketers in sustainable fashion, the findings of this study offer several actionable insights:

a) Build Positive ATT:

Marketers should design campaigns that go beyond information and connect emotionally with consumers. Storytelling that communicates a brand's sustainability journey—such as fair labor practices, responsible sourcing, or waste reduction—can create trust and resonance. For example, brands like *Levi's* and *Patagonia* have used real stories of repair, recycling, and community engagement to transform sustainability into a lifestyle statement. Visual narratives on social media or interactive brand experiences can further strengthen ATT toward SA by evoking feelings of pride and ethical satisfaction.

b) Leverage Social Influence:

SN emerged as a key driver of PI, indicating that social validation plays a powerful role in encouraging sustainable purchases. Brands should collaborate with sustainability influencers and micro-celebrities who align with eco-conscious values, while also encouraging user-generated content that normalizes SA as fashionable and aspirational. Creating online communities—such as sustainability challenge groups or social media hashtags—can amplify social pressure positively and make consumers feel part of a responsible movement. For instance, *H&M's Conscious Community* campaign successfully leveraged peer participation to foster sustainable buying norms.

c) Reduce Barriers:

The importance of PBC suggests that even consumers with positive attitudes may hesitate to act if purchasing feels inconvenient or inaccessible. Brands must address this by ensuring product availability across both digital and physical stores, simplifying online navigation, and offering flexible price ranges. Providing clear sustainability labels, transparency reports, and easy return options can enhance consumers' perceived control. Partnerships with e-commerce platforms like *Myntra* or *Tata Cliq Luxury* can also improve accessibility and convenience, making sustainable choices both visible and viable.

d) Value-Based Messaging:

The findings highlight that different consumption values influence ATT, implying that campaigns should appeal to multiple motivations simultaneously. Messaging can emphasize durability and practicality (functional value), emotional fulfillment from doing good (emotional value), curiosity about innovation (epistemic value), and relevance to fashion trends or seasons (conditional value). For example, highlighting how a recycled-fabric jacket performs better and lasts longer can appeal to both functional and emotional motivations. This approach ensures broader consumer engagement by linking ethical appeal with tangible benefits.

e) Segment Consumers:

The moderating roles of COSMO and BD suggest that different consumer profiles require distinct positioning strategies. Cosmopolitan consumers—exposed to global sustainability trends—should be targeted through campaigns that showcase international collaborations, transparent supply chains, and cross-cultural ethical commitments. Conversely, brand-dependent consumers respond more strongly to emotional and heritage-driven branding. For these segments, marketers can emphasize legacy, authenticity, and brand trust—for instance, by spotlighting long-standing brand values or eco-certifications. This segmentation ensures that sustainability messaging aligns with both global and brand-loyal mindsets.

By implementing these strategies, firms can effectively bridge the intention–action gap, encouraging consumers not only to express support for sustainability but to translate it into consistent purchasing behavior. Over time, such approaches can strengthen brand equity, enhance loyalty among environmentally aware consumers, and position sustainable fashion as both a desirable and attainable choice.

7.4 Environmental Implications

The study highlights that SA adoption can reduce textile waste through longer-lasting garments, minimize water and chemical use via organic materials, and lower carbon emissions through ethical and localized production. Brands that embrace these practices can act as environmental catalysts rather than mere market players.

Integrating sustainability across sourcing, production, and post-use stages fosters a circular fashion ecosystem through repair, reuse, and recycling. Such initiatives not only align with global sustainability goals, particularly SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), but also enhance transparency, authenticity, and consumer trust. By linking responsible production with conscious consumption, sustainable apparel brands can drive meaningful environmental change while reinforcing their competitive and ethical positioning.

7.5 Policy Implications

The findings provide actionable directions for policymakers:

- a) Eco-certifications and labelling to curb greenwashing and improve consumer trust.
- b) Public awareness campaigns emphasising the ecological costs of fast fashion.
- c) Subsidies and incentives for sustainable textile SMEs to boost competitiveness.
- d) Infrastructure development to improve accessibility in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
- e) Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies to hold brands accountable for post-consumer waste.

Such system-level interventions create an enabling ecosystem for sustainable consumption.

7.6 Research Implications for Academicians

For scholars, this research:

- a) Demonstrates the value of cross-theoretical integration (TPB + Consumption Values).
- b) Emphasises the role of moderators in capturing consumer heterogeneity.
- c) Highlights the need for contextual validation in non-Western markets.
- d) Suggests exploring symbolic and identity-driven values in sustainability research.
- e) Opens avenues for comparative and longitudinal studies to test the evolution of sustainable behaviour.

7.7 Recommendations

a) For Brands and Marketers

- Develop educational campaigns that simplify sustainability concepts.
- Use digital storytelling (e.g., QR codes linking to supply chain transparency).
- Encourage experiential marketing like pop-up stores showcasing eco-friendly apparel.

b) For Policymakers

- Mandate sustainability reporting by apparel firms.
- Create financial incentives for sustainable production clusters.
- Support collaborative campaigns with schools, NGOs, and media.

c) For Educators and Institutions

- Embed sustainability modules in management and fashion curricula.
- Conduct campus campaigns and student-driven projects promoting eco-conscious apparel.

7.8 Future Research Directions

- Longitudinal studies to capture evolving behaviour over time.
- Cross-cultural comparisons to test the model in other collectivist and individualist societies.
- Inclusion of new variables like trust in eco-labels, greenwashing perceptions, and personal norms.
- Experimental research manipulating pricing or message framing to identify causal effects.
- Use of behavioural data (actual purchases, digital tracking with consent) to complement self-reports.

7.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter consolidated the research journey by presenting a comprehensive summary, conclusions, and a multi-dimensional set of implications. The study reaffirmed TPB as a strong framework while enriching it with consumption values and psychological moderators to capture the complexity of SA decisions in India. Theoretical contributions highlighted the adaptability of TPB, managerial implications guided brands toward ATT-building and segmentation strategies, while environmental and policy insights underscored the wider societal relevance of sustainability.

Recommendations were made for brands, policymakers, and educators, supported by recognition of the study's limitations and future research opportunities. Collectively, the findings

contribute to both academic knowledge and practical solutions, while also pointing to sustainability as a shared responsibility between consumers, corporations, and institutions.

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ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section-1

Details of the scale items in Section 1 of the Questionnaire

Section 1, Part A: Demographic Variables

Sl. No	Respondent demographics	Sub-classifications
1	Gender	Male
		Female
2	Age	Between 25 and 40 years
		Greater than 40 years and less than 55 years
3	highest level of education	High School
		Bachelor's Degree
		Master's Degree
		Doctoral Degree
		Other
4	occupation	Student
		Salaried Employee
		Business Owner
		Freelancer
		Homemaker
		Other
5	City/Town	Tier 1 (e.g. Delhi, Mumbai)

		Tier 2 (e.g. Lucknow, Jaipur)
		Tier 3 or Rural

Section 1, Part B: Filter Questions

Sl. No.	Filter Question	Sub-classifications
1	Have you purchased SA before?	Yes
		No
		Not sure
2	How frequently do you shop for clothing?	Rarely
		Occasionally
		Monthly
		Frequently
3	What is your average monthly spending on apparel?	Less than ₹2,000
		₹2,000–₹5,000
		₹5,000–₹10,000
		More than ₹10,000
4	What influences your apparel choices the most?	Price
		Brand
		Style
		Sustainability
		Other
5	Have you heard about SA before this survey?	yes
		No
6	Where did you first learn about sustainable fashion?	Social media
		Brand website
		Word-of-mouth
		News
		Not heard

Section-2

Details of the scale items of the Survey Questionnaire along with the studies from where they are adapted.

S.N.	Constructs	Adapted items	Original Items	Source
1	FV	SA helps save resources	"Sustainable products help save resources"	Koay, 2022
2		SA is environmentally friendly	"Sustainable products are environmentally friendly"	Koay, 2022
3		SA has more environmental benefits than non-SA	"SA has more environmental benefits than non-sustainable products"	
4		SA offer value for money	"Sustainable products offer value for money"	Okur,2022
5		SA are worth the price	"Sustainable products are worth the price"	Okur,2022
6	SV	SA makes a good impression on others	"Sustainable products make a good impression on others."	Okur,2022
7		SA improves how I am perceived	"Sustainable products improve how I am perceived."	Okur,2022
8		Purchasing SA shows my caring side	"Buying sustainable products shows my caring side."	Okur,2022
9	EV	SA makes me feel good	"SA makes me feel good."	Okur,2022
10		SA are the ones I feel relaxed using	"SA are the ones I feel relaxed using."	Okur,2022
11		Purchasing SA relieves environmental stress	"Buying SA relieves environmental stress."	Okur,2022
12	EPV	SA offers uniqueness	"SA offers uniqueness "	Koay, 2022
13		I consider SA to allow me to be a part of establishing a new trend	"I consider SA to allow me to be a part of establishing a new trend "	Yan, 2019
14		SA has points of difference from general apparel	"SA has points of difference from general apparel"	Yan, 2019

15	CV	I would like to purchase the SA instead of conventional apparel when there is a promotion	"I would like to buy the product instead of the conventional product when there is a promotion."	Bielwska, 2021
16		I will purchase SA if offered at a discount	"I will purchase the product if it is offered at a discount."	Bielwska, 2021
17		I will purchase SA if it is available	"I will purchase the product if it is available."	Bielwska, 2021
18	SOPE	I frequently come across content related to SA on social media	"I come across content about topics of interest on social media."	Brodie, 2013
19		I follow social media influencers or brands that promote sustainable	"I follow influencers or brands I value on social media."	Brodie, 2013
20		I actively seek out information related to SA on social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Pinterest).	"I actively seek information about products I'm interested in online."	Van Doorn, 2010
21	SHOPE	I frequently browse e-commerce websites for SA options.	"I browse websites for products of interest regularly."	Vivek, 2012
22		I trust the product recommendations given by e-commerce websites when shopping for SA.	"I trust product recommendations from online stores."	Vivek, 2012
23		I pay attention to customer reviews and ratings on e-commerce sites when considering SA.	"I consider online reviews and ratings when shopping online."	Brodie, 2013
24		I am motivated to purchase SA after viewing promotions or advertisements on e-commerce websites.	"I make purchase decisions based on promotions or advertisements on e-commerce websites."	Vivek, 2012
25	ATT	I have a positive ATT toward purchasing SA.	"I have a positive ATT toward performing the behaviour."	Paul, 2016
26		I believe purchasing SA is a good idea.	"I believe performing the behaviour is a good idea."	Paul, 2016
27		I think purchasing SA is beneficial	"I think performing the behaviour is beneficial."	Paul, 2016
28	SN	Most people who are important to me think I should purchase SA.	"Most people who are important to me think I should perform the behaviour."	Paul, 2016
29		Most people who are important to me would approve of my SA purchase	"Most people who are important to me would approve of my performing the behaviour."	Paul, 2016

30		People whose opinions I value would approve of me purchasing SA.	"People whose opinions I value would approve of me performing the behaviour."	Paul, 2016
31	PBC	I am confident in my ability to purchase SA.	"I am confident in my ability to perform the behaviour."	Paul, 2016
32		Whether or not I purchase SA is entirely up to me.	"Whether or not I perform the behaviour is entirely up to me."	Paul, 2016
33		It is easy for me to purchase SA	"It is easy for me to perform the behaviour."	Paul, 2016
34	PI	I will consider purchasing SA because they are less polluting in coming times.	"I will consider buying products because they are less polluting in coming times."	Paul, 2016
35		I am likely to purchase SA in the near future.	"I am likely to perform the behaviour in the near future."	Paul, 2016
36		I plan to purchase SA in the future	"I plan to perform the behaviour in the future."	Paul, 2016
37	COSMO	I like to learn about other ways of life	"I like to learn about other ways of life"	Cleveland, 2007
38		I enjoy being with people from other countries to learn about their unique views and approaches	"I enjoy being with people from other countries to learn about their unique views and approaches"	Cleveland, 2007
39		I am interested in learning more about people who live in other countries.	"I am interested in learning more about people who live in other countries."	Cleveland, 2007
40	BD	I consider brand names as a major factor when choosing SA.	"Brand names are the primary factor I consider when purchasing products."	Bristow, 2002
41		I place more trust in brands I recognize than those I don't.	"I place more trust in brands I recognize than those I don't."	Bristow, 2002
42		The brand name is an assurance of quality for SA.	"The brand name is an assurance of quality for me."	Bristow, 2002

ANNEXURE B: LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Journal publications

- Akanksha Rajput, Deepak Halan. and V. S. (2025) “PI: Influence of Branding on Indian Consumers”, Journal of The Textile Association (JTA), 85(4), pp. 1–7. doi: 10.5281/zenodo.14604631.
- Rajput, A., Halan, D. and Srivastava, V. (2025). Influence of consumption values on ATT towards PI: evidence from the Indian apparel market. Research Journal of Textile and Apparel. doi.org/10.1108/RJTA-06-2024-0090.

Book chapter publication

- Rajput, A. (2022). Youth involvement in families’ final purchase decisions in Industry 4.0. Indian Economy, pp.148–155. JSR Publishing House.

Conference presentation

- Achievements of Indian Economy: with Reference to the Village, Youth, Economy, Women, Environment, Digitalisation, and Industries”; Title – “Youth Involvement in Families’ Final Purchase Decisions in Industry 4.0.” *Gautam Buddha University*.
- “Business Management and Sustainable Development Goals: Responding to the New Normal”; Title – “Sustainable Development Goals in the Tourism Industry.” Jaipuria Institute of Management
- “Influence of Branding Attributes on Consumers’ Brand ATT Towards SA” (Best Paper of the Track of Consumer Behaviour Award). SEEDS International conference at Middlesex University, Dubai

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Influence of consumption values on consumer attitude towards sustainable apparel purchase intention: evidence from the Indian apparel market

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Research Journal
of Textile and
Apparel

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the influence of consumption values on consumer attitudes toward sustainable apparel (SA) purchase intentions (PIs) in emerging markets.

Design/methodology/approach – The data was collected from 294 Indian consumers using the convenience technique and snowball method sampling. An online questionnaire was hosted, and analysis was performed using the PLS-SEM software.

Findings – The findings of this study revealed that conditional values had the greatest influence, followed by emotional, epistemic and functional values in decreasing order of strength, but social value was found to be insignificant.

Research limitations/implications – This study contributes to the literature by examining the influence of consumption values on consumer attitude toward SA. This study addresses a gap where previous research has primarily linked consumption values directly to PIs. Notably, this study finds that social value has a limited impact on attitude toward SA despite its established significance in general apparel consumption.

Practical implications – The practical implications of this study emphasize the need for a customized approach to popularize SA in emerging markets via promotional campaigns, display of availability and leveraging on emotional appeal.

Social implications – The results of this study indicate that consumers' attitude is influenced significantly by product availability and environmental advantages than on price, which supports United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12. This stresses on the necessity for businesses to be responsible and authentic in their marketing campaigns.

Originality/value – This study is a novel examination, as it unearths the intricate relationships between consumption values and consumer attitude toward SA PIs and contributes to the scarce literature.

Keywords Sustainable apparel, Consumer attitude, Consumption values, Emerging markets, Purchase intention

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of the global apparel industry, the imperative to embrace sustainability has become increasingly pronounced (Abbate *et al.*, 2024). The apparel industry is one of the world's most polluting sectors (Lin *et al.*, 2023). It has been around for hundreds of years and has undergone continuous change (Hoque *et al.*, 2021). Adopting sustainable apparel (SA) by consumers may lessen their influence on the environment and encourage the clothing industry to use more environmentally friendly practices (Li and Leonas, 2022). SA is defined as one that is made of natural fiber and is cultivated organically (Su *et al.*, 2023). Other definitions of SA include the incorporation of recycled materials, production without the use of chemicals



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for dyeing, environmentally friendly packaging, second-hand clothing and garments that are more durable than trendy ones that quickly go out of fashion (Gil *et al.*, 2024). Concern for sustainability in the apparel market is expanding, which can be seen with the increase in several businesses like Patagonia, People Tree and Eileen Fisher which create clothing in environmentally friendly ways (Rajput *et al.*, 2024). Global fast fashion retailers like Zara, H&M and Primark have incorporated sustainability into their collections (Jones, 2024). Additionally, several businesses such as Conscious Collection which emphasizes organic cotton have launched environmentally friendly apparel collections. SA aims to offer a strong and environmentally friendly foundation for innovative business plans, processes and product development (Su *et al.*, 2023).

As the industry works toward becoming more environmentally conscientious, consumer involvement in SA consumption is essential. Consumers adopting SA can help reduce environmental impact and promote sustainable practices in the apparel industry (Zhao *et al.*, 2019). However, in India, the fifth largest economy [1] and the most populated country with the most promising market, we find a disproportionately low academic interest in consumer behavior for SA. Hence, this study is focused on analyzing SA purchase behavior by exploring the intricate relationships between consumption values and consumer attitudes leading to sustainable apparel purchase intentions (SA PIs) in emerging markets such as India.

The revenue of the apparel market worldwide in 2023 was \$1.73tn (Statista, 2025), where the size of the Indian apparel and textile sector was estimated to be \$165bn in 2022, with the domestic market amount to be \$125bn and exports contributing \$40bn (Investindia, 2025). Despite India's position as the third-largest revenue generator in the global apparel industry (Statista, 2025), the SA market share remains relatively small, accounting for only \$1.31bn in revenue in 2022, just 1.04% of the total Indian apparel market (Globaldata, 2025).

Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention: Influence of Branding on Indian Consumers

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Abstract:

Background: Sustainable apparel which combines ethical production with environmental responsibility, has become an integral part of the global fashion industry. This evolution reflects increasing consumer demand for products that reduce environmental harm while upholding social accountability. As the textile sector faces heightened scrutiny over its environmental footprint, sustainable apparel provides a pathway for aligning industry practices with global sustainability objectives. This study explores how branding influences consumer purchase intentions for sustainable apparel.

Method: An empirical study was conducted based on data gathered from 210 consumers in Delhi NCR who consistently buy sustainable apparel. SPSS 26 was used to do regression analysis.

Results: These results underscore the critical value of branding in shaping consumer choice and propelling eco-friendly purchasing behaviors. Focusing on branding, the article fills a gap in the current literature, where more research accounts for issues of cost and functionality vis-a-vis other concerns such as sustainability. The findings show that sustainable brands should invest in being perceived as authentic and trustworthy, to win loyalty. Effective communication and powerful sustainability stories are critical to align with changing consumer values.

Conclusion: This body of study offers new insights for businesses, marketers, and policymakers, underlining the integration of branding strategy with sustainability that targets responsible consumption and supports larger societal and environmental goals.

Keywords: *Branding, brand authenticity, brand reputation, purchase intention, sustainable apparel*

Citation: Akanksha Rajput*, Deepak Halan & Vinita Srivastava, "Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intention: Influence of Branding on Indian Consumers ", *Journal of the Textile Association*, **85/4**(Nov-Dec'24), 390-395, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14604631>

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1. Introduction

The apparel industry has greatly contributed to global environmental concerns and fast fashion has been the focus of all sustainability discussions. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of their choices and their impact on the environment. Hence there is an influx of products that are sustainable and more environment-friendly. On the other hand, however, despite this growing awareness, traditional aspects like price, quality, style, and fit are still key influencers of most purchase decisions. It is a challenge for sustainable apparel brands to meet customer expectations on these conventional considerations [2, 11].

Branding has emerged as a key tool for influencing consumer behavior, particularly in sectors where differentiation is vital. A strong brand can foster trust, create emotional connections, and signal reliability and quality. This is especially important in the sustainable apparel market, where unfamiliarity with eco-friendly materials and processes can complicate purchasing decisions. Consumers often rely on brand cues, such as reputation and authenticity, to guide their choices, especially when a brand is perceived as a leader in

sustainability. Despite the growing interest in eco-friendly fashion, the influence of branding on purchase intentions for sustainable apparel remains underexplored. The influence of branding attributes on the purchase intention of sustainable products is underexplored and a smaller number of studies examined the branding variables in the sustainable category [4, 7, 8, 9].

This paper investigates the influence of branding factors such as brand strength, reputation, and authenticity on consumers' purchase intentions of sustainable apparel. It assists in understanding the drivers of sustainable shopping behavior. Knowledge of the role of branding in consumer choice is thus pertinent to the business community, as well as policymakers who wish to encourage more sustainable consumption. This study fills an important gap in existing literature by highlighting how branding can be a strategic tool to encourage sustainable fashion choices. Therefore, the three objectives of this study are:

RO1: To examine the influence of brand strength on consumer purchase intention for sustainable apparel.

RO2: To examine the influence of brand reputation on consumers' purchase intention for sustainable apparel.

RO3: To examine the influence of brand authenticity on consumer purchase intention for sustainable apparel.

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ANNEXURE C: SIMILARITY REPORT



Page 1 of 114 - Cover Page

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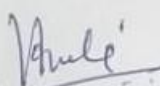
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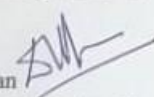
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