Sustainable Fashion Choices: The Social Media Influence

Anandita Mulukutla
Mohini Sonar
Sonia Singh
Mahindra University
(anandita.mulukutla@mahindrauniversity.edu.in)
(mohini.sonar@mahindrauniversity.edu.in)
(sonia.singh@mahindrauniversity.edu.in)

The fashion industry's environmental impact has raised consumer concern about the industry's contribution to sustainability. While prior studies explore how social media shapes attitudes toward sustainability, there is limited research on its effect on actual purchasing behavior. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study investigates how social media fosters awareness and influences sustainable fashion choices among young Indian consumers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted which identify key barriers to sustainable purchasing mainly economic, emotional and environmental. Findings show that while awareness is high, it often fails to convert into action. The study contributes to the sustainable consumption behavior literature.

1. Introduction

The clothing and textile industry is currently responsible for around 2-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The industry also consumes around 215 trillion litres of water per year and an annual material loss of USD100 billion due to underutilization of resources. Textiles account for approximately 9% of annual microplastic losses to the oceans (UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, n.d.). These microplastic losses occur due to abrasions where plastics such as polyester, acrylic and nylon shed microplastics which are known as microfibers on being washed or used (United Nations Environment Programme, 2022).

Considering this, sustainability is gaining importance in the fashion industry (Saricam et al., 2017). Environmental sustainability has become a pressing issue particularly in the fashion industry where companies are concerned with many problems regarding sustainable procedures (J. Strähle and F. Philipsen 2017). Another concern for the fashion industry is that as of October 2022, Bain and Company has found in its research that around 15% of global fashion consumers are deeply concerned about sustainability and consistently make purchasing decisions to lower their impact on environment. In the coming years, that percentage could increase to more than 50% as more shoppers become conscious about and favor sustainable practices (D'Arpizio et al., 2022).

The mid-2000s saw the emergence of social media (SM) (Braghieri et al., 2022). The range of platforms given by SM and its regular consumers has risen dramatically over the course of time, leading to it becoming one of the most prominent apps on the broad internet (Aichner et al., 2021). At the beginning of 2024, there are 5.04 billion social media users which has grown by 5.6% over the past year. There were 266 million new users in 2023 which is 8.4 new users every single second during the year (Kemp, 2024). McKinsey defines social media as "the applications and websites that allow people to interact with other users, businesses, communities, and content" (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

For businesses to harness social media, it is necessary to understand the four categories of social media being used.

Social networks: Social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, help people connect with family, friends, companies and new people. Businesses can benefit from social networks through branding and customer service.

Media-sharing networks: This includes platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube to share various forms of media. Social media influencers use these social platforms to influence their audience's lifestyles, consumer behavior and so on. Businesses can partner with them to influence specific users and promote their products or services.

Discussion forums: Discussion forums are used by people for advice, make restaurant recommendations and so on. Platforms such as Reddit have large number of visitors with 1.7 billion visits recorded in May 2022. Discussions on various topics help businesses understand potential markets. Advertisements, addressing consumer questions, customer service and interacting with users for ideas for new products can be done by businesses through discussion forums.

Consumer reviews: Apps such as TripAdvisor and Yelp which provide recommendations and reviews help people make decisions about products. These consumer reviews are critical for businesses.

Businesses can use social media platforms to change consumer behavior through activities such as spreading awareness, deals, and customer inputs.

Earlier, businesses would spend large amounts of money on traditional media such as newspapers and there was no way of monitoring and changing consumer behavior. Now, social media has allowed marketers to reach customers while they make purchasing decisions. Social media provides businesses with the opportunity to lead consumers as they make purchasing decisions and till after the receipt of the product. (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

Companies are now leveraging consumers as their brand ambassadors for sustainable purchasing. For example, consumers who are willing to take sustainable action may be made "Sustainability Champions". Most persona groups use social media and

word of mouth to research purchases, so brands can gain by making sustainability information easy for these "Sustainability Champions" to share with others (D'Arpizio et al., 2022).

This study uses semi-structured interviews to explore how social media creates awareness and gain insights into the perceptions, motivations, and values that could lead to a shift in attitudes and the resulting change in consumer behavior towards sustainable fashion.

The study contributes to sustainable consumption literature by understanding the underlying factors that result in shift in attitudes and the barriers that prevent consumers from purchasing sustainable fashion.

2.   Literature Review

Textile and clothing consumption are estimated to contribute to around 5% of the environmental impact and carbon emissions of households, and in landfills most textiles, particularly polyester do not decompose at all while some natural materials decompose very slowly. The problem is that there is no planning within the fashion industry to ensure that these materials are suitable for composting. Fibres include many toxic chemicals, colours and finishing's, and most garments are made of blended materials which are not meant for composting (Niinimäki, 2013). Composting is a concern from the environmental standpoint as it produces a lot of methane, which also contributes to greater greenhouse gas emissions and global warming. (Niinimäki, 2013).

As usage of the internet expands, social media has become a powerful tool for sharing information and promoting sustainability discussions (Strähle & Gräff, 2017). It also provides detailed data on purchasing behaviour, helping researchers study fashion trends and the sustainable fashion movement (Skinner et al., 2023). Zafar et al., (2021) studied the impact of social media in endorsing sustainable purchasing attitude. The investigation was carried in Pakistan on 693 responded, aiming to highlights the social media usage and browsing positively influence sustainable purchasing attitudes, with the drive for environmental responsibility playing a mediating role. Trust in social media and perceived environmental effectiveness moderate these relationships. In addition, paper suggested that comparative analysis of social media users from developed and developing nations may help scholars better address the sustainable attitude, which will ultimately result in a stronger inference and better generalisation. Overall, the study emphasizes the significance of social media in promoting sustainable attitudes and provides valuable insights for understanding consumer behaviour in the context of sustainability.

Zhao, L., et al., (2019) highlighted the significance of social influences and subjective norms in shaping attitudes and purchase intentions towards sustainable clothing, emphasizing the unique contribution of the prototype willingness model and Theory of Reasoned Action. Their paper aims to explore how social media was used to educate Chinese consumers about environmentally sustainable apparel (ESA) buying behaviour, as well as how peer influence impacted their purchase intentions. The results demonstrate the persuasive power of social media in fostering a sustainable mindset and achieving sustainable development goals. Furthermore, the paper suggests that, to have a deeper understanding of the variations between customers across nations, a cross-cultural study investigating the effects of social media on ESA purchasing decisions in other nations might be investigated. Social media is not only used by different nations to promote diverse values 869 Sustainable apparel buying intents, but it also plays a larger role in socializing younger generations. Understanding how social media affects ESA and general buying decision-making processes could be a crucial first step Zhao, L., et al., (2019).

McNeill et al., (2015) explored New Zealand consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion involving two step approach using surveys and interviews. The study found that although people were aware about sustainability, but there was significantly less emphasis on sustainable practices when it comes to fashion consumption. Attitudes depend on environmental concern, knowledge of sustainable materials, and how fashion relates to one's identity and peer influence. Consumers were grouped as self (not concerned), social (some concern, influenced by norms), and sacrifice (high concern). But the small sample limits generalization, but future research can examine the role of self-perception, barriers to adopting sustainable fashion, and changes over time. The results support Fishbein & Ajzen's (1980) idea that attitudes and social norms drive behavior.

Busalim et al., (2022), conduct a systematic analysis and critical assessment of studies on consumer behavior in sustainable fashion to identify research gaps and inform future research agendas. Their search was based on papers published within a ten-year span 2009-2019. Additionally, they only included research published in English. A total of 167 journal articles were found, and a final sample of 88 articles were synthesized. As per the findings, most of the reviewed studies (71%) employed a quantitative research approach, indicating that there is a lack of variety in research approaches and methods such as qualitative, mixed-methods, and even more novel data science approaches. From the research gap identified, recent research highlights the potential of social media to influence the adoption of sustainable fashion. De Lenne and Vandenbosch (2017) highlighted the significance of social media's effect on young customers' intents to purchase sustainable fashion goods. Salem and Alanadoly (2021) discovered that active use of social media improves consumers' eco-friendly behavior and their concerns about fashion production. Despite this, only three studies in the sample of Busalim et al., (2022), addressed this topic (De Lenne & Vandenbosch, 2017; McKeown & Shearer, 2019; Zhao et al., 2019). Kapoor et al., (2018) stated in their recent review that no considerable effort has been made to address the use of social media to influence institutional knowledge and consumer behavior toward sustainable fashion buying. Fashion brands use social media marketing to influence customer purchasing behavior (Wu, Guaita Martínez, & Martín Martín, 2020), therefore scholars should analyze the impact of social media marketing on consumer decision-making at various stages (Busalim et, al 2022).

McKeown et al., (2019) in their studies sought to investigate the power of social media influencers, including UN Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson, to create a' societal transformation' in terms of Sustainable Fashion Consumption (SFC) awareness and, as a result, boost mainstream, sustainable consumption choices, by adopting a netnographic methodology. The study

discovered that while the social media account encouraged discussions about sustainable fashion, it didn't significantly impact actual purchases. This suggests that while consumer engagement initiatives can shape attitudes toward sustainable fashion, further research is needed to understand their long-term effects.

Current research demonstrates social media's ability to impact the adoption of sustainable fashion. Exploring the influence of social media use in closing the attitude-behaviour gap is an important study topic for future studies (Busalim et al., 2022). To bridge this research gap, this study aims to examine possible factors affecting sustainable purchasing attitude in the context of social media and explore the role of psychological facets (such as drive for environmental responsibility, perceived trust in social media, and perceived environmental effectiveness) in this. Due to this, they are influenced by other social media users' green behaviour which results in urgency in ensuring environmental responsibility and sustainable purchase attitudes. This study explicitly focuses on sustainable purchasing attitudes driven by environmental responsibility in the social media framework (Zafar, 2021).

Considering the literature review conducted, there is a need to further examine the factors that drive the sustainable purchasing attitudes and the resulting behaviour due to the use and influence of social media. Based on this, the study will examine the following research question considering the gap identified: What is the role of social media in influencing the shift of consumer purchasing behavior towards sustainable fashion?

3. Theory

Considering the above, this study examines the research question from the lens of Theory of Planned Behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) focuses on the intention of an individual to perform certain behavior. The intention to engage in a behavior indicates the willingness to exert to perform that behavior. The intention to perform can be expressed as behavior only if the person can make the decision to perform at will.

The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that there are three independent determinants of intention – attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control. Attitude toward the behavior refers to the degree to which a person considers the behavior in a favorable or unfavorable way. Subjective norm is the perception of social pressure whether to perform the behavior. The third predictor of intention is degree of perceived behavioral control which is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior due to past experience and potential obstacles.

Each predictor has a different level of importance across behaviors and situations. In some applications, only attitudes may have a significant impact on intentions. In other cases, attitudes and perceived behavioral control are sufficient to account for intentions, and in others all three independently impact the intention to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

The Theory of Planned Behavior is a constructive model to help foresee the consumer intentions by examining the three antecedents or determinants of intention (Saricam et al., 2019). Kong et al., (2016) stated that the Theory of Planned Behavior can be used to understand how attitude and behavioral intention relate to sustainable fashion. Similarly, Paul et al., (2016) have stated that TBP can be used to understand Green Purchasing behavior.

Considering this, the study examines how awareness created through social media can result in change in intention and consequent behavior (Figure 1).
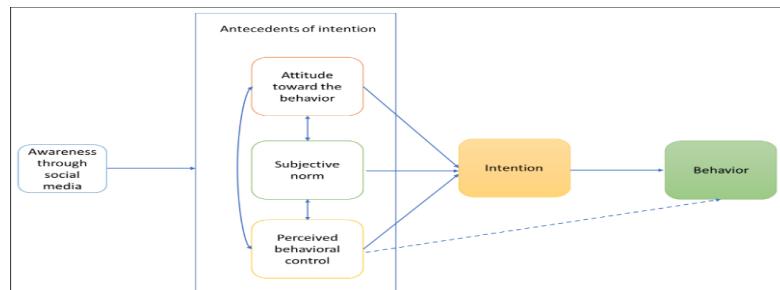

Figure 1 *Conceptual Model Partially Adapted from "The Theory of Planned Behavior" by Ajzen, I. (1991), Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211*

4. Data Collection

A two-stage process was conducted for data collection (McNeill et al., 2015). Individuals between the ages of 18 and 34 who are active users of social media platforms (Wang et al., 2019) were selected to be part of the study.

In the first stage of the study, a survey was conducted, and 54 responses were received from participants across India. Since the study focuses on those in the age group of 18-34 years, 5 of these responses were invalid since the respondents were above 34 years old. There was a total of 49 valid responses.

The questions were designed to understand if the respondents were aware about sustainability and its perceived importance for them. It also examined the respondents' use of social media in general and specifically for purchasing sustainable fashion clothing. The survey also helped understand whether social media played a role in their sustainable fashion buying decisions and the confidence that one had while purchasing such sustainable fashion clothing.

In the second stage of the study, purposive sampling method, specifically criterion sampling was chosen since cases that meet certain criterion were selected (Patton, 2015). This was used to select participants based on the responses received in the first stage for semi-structure interviews.

To select the interview participants, the survey respondents were filtered out based on certain criteria to narrow the list further. The respondents were filtered out based on responses to various questions. Initially, 16 respondents were filtered out as they were not willing to be part of the interview process. Participants were also excluded on the basis of other responses in the survey. Participants who had responded "Maybe" on whether they were aware about the concept of sustainability were also eliminated. On the question of how important sustainability was to them, respondents who selected "1" and "2" on a scale of 1-5, 1 being "Least important" were filtered out. Respondents who do not use social media platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, or forums like Pinterest and YouTube were also eliminated. Finally, for the question on how often they use social media for fashion inspiration, respondents who said "Rarely" and "Never" were eliminated. Using this process, there were 29 survey responses which fit the set criteria. It must be noted that there were some participants who were eliminated on multiple criterion. Finally, random sampling method was used to select 10 participants for the interview process.

These semi-structured interviews (Myers & Newman, 2007) were conducted to understand the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors that revolve around sustainable fashion consumption due to the impact of social media. A total of 10 interviews were conducted in which 4 of the participants were male and 6 of the participants were female and questions were asked to understand their perception of sustainable fashion and if and how social media played a role in changing their perceptions and buying behavior towards sustainable fashion.

5. Data Analysis

The first stage survey results (Figure 2) represent the valid responses for each of the questions asked. The survey responses indicate that while majority of the respondents are aware about the concept of sustainability and consider it important, only a smaller number thinks about it while buying fashion clothing. Very few of them actually purchase sustainable fashion clothing due to social media.

It is clear from these results that when it comes to sustainable fashion, the awareness about sustainability may not extend to the concept of sustainable fashion, the intention to buy sustainable clothing and consequently, the actual buying behavior particularly while considering the role of social media.
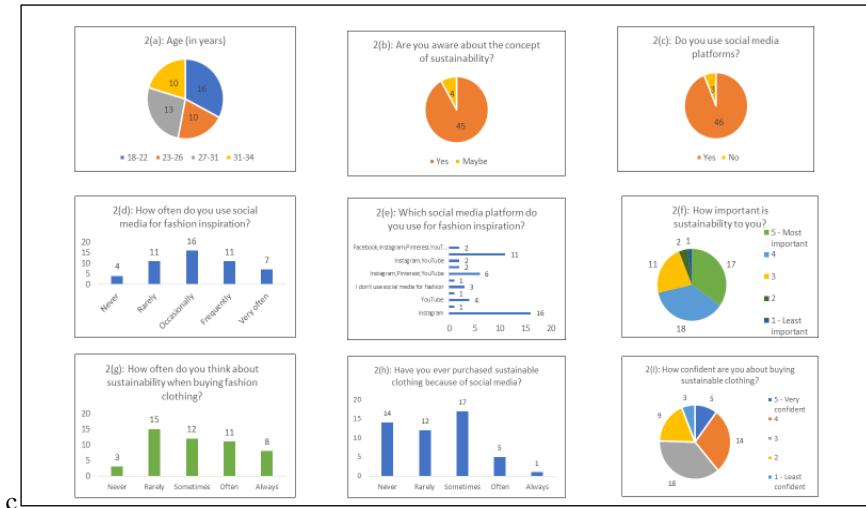
Figure 2 *First Stage-Survey Results*

The authors adopted a thematic analysis approach and went through the data collected from the ten interviews in detail and started the coding process. Each case or interview was analyzed carefully, and statements made by the participants which were linked to the research question in some way, were coded.

Coding was done using QDA Miner and the codes created were: "Cost", "False claims", "Lack of awareness", "Quality of sustainable material", "Trend misalignment", "Local brands", "Product attributes", "Authenticity", "Broad implications of sustainability", "Brand credibility", "Information availability", "Social media influence", "Promotion through social media", "Awareness and knowledge", "Connection to personal and work life", "Knowledge from experience", "Buying decision", "Consumption", "Intention" and "Post-consumption".

6. Findings

This study had started with the objective of understanding the role of social media in influencing the shift of consumer purchasing behavior by understanding how it creates awareness and the perceptions and driving factors contributing to purchasing sustainable fashion.

In most of the interviews, cost was found to be a major barrier to purchasing sustainable fashion. As one participant said "my pocket should allow me to purchase any sustainable product." Another participant observed that they wanted to buy sustainable clothes but the cost factor played a major role as people may prefer to purchase many clothes in that amount of money instead of a single clothing item. In the case of another participant who is a student, though they are highly interested in purchasing sustainable fashion clothing, they are concerned that such clothing is "out of budget" for them.

Some participants also expressed skepticism towards the claims of sustainability of large brands. As one participant mentioned, when brands claim that they are doing something, it just felt like a marketing strategy for people. Another questioned the sustainability claims of brands like H&M. One participant even opined that companies are doing things which are mostly not sustainable.

Participants felt that there is lack of awareness about sustainability. One of the participants spoke about how people are unaware of what ecolabels are. According to them, "government claims that there are ecolabels." However, what they miss telling is that people don't know what ecolabel is - they don't know what ecolabel represents".

Some participants were concerned about the quality of sustainable material. One participant stated that, "when it's been recycled and passed the recycling process, it loses that strength, so the ability for it to last long after recycling is also very questionable." At the same time, another participant expressed that even if they are aware about the processes involved in ensuring quality, consumers may not be aware and this may prevent them from buying sustainable clothes.

Participants mentioned that most of the sustainable fashion clothing available in the market do not follow the fashion trends and the choice is limited. As one participant in the age group of 18-22 years opined, "I would want something that is a little bit more my style as well. And I haven't seen a lot of products that were sustainable as well as something that I particularly wanted to buy for myself."

A few of the participants expressed their interest and support of local brands or handicrafts. One participant even recalled a store in Hyderabad where "this lady called Netra, she does dyes and everything from vegetable waste - I take the fabrics from there, I get them stitched according to my choice." Another participant spoke about product attributes such as being "biodegradable and recyclable". All participants spoke about the need for "comfort" and "durability" as a factor for purchasing sustainable clothing.

Most participants purchased sustainable fashion clothing after considerable research about the manufacturing processes and the materials used. One of the participants stated that, "if it's a B-corporation site, then I, for sure, go for it and I believe that it is not an animal-based product at all and it is plant-based."

Some of the participants reflected on the broader implications of sustainability including its impact on future generations, how brands contribute to social impact and the role of the government in influencing people to be more sustainable. One participant explained - "but I think businesses should focus more on how they actually impact the environment, how they impact different people, how they impact different people's lives in a long-term future basis as well."

Participants felt that there is brand credibility when organizations are transparent about their environmental footprint during manufacturing processes. As one participant mentioned, there are companies that declare how much electricity has been consumed and the environmental impact of making that particular product.

Many participants found that social media has led to ample availability of information and has helped as a starting point in their research on sustainable fashion clothing. As one participant said, "With the help of social media, we get to research about the products on various websites and the quality of products and they're using to make the products."

Social media had influenced some of the participants to become more conscious about what is going on around them. As one participant expressed, "And it's not like I believe everybody I see on social media, but definitely I think. When they show us through videos how it is affecting Earth or the pollution that the fast fashion is creating. And I feel that is where I get connected and emotional and that is what makes me think."

However, some of the participants were concerned that there is still not enough awareness about sustainable fashion or even about the concept of sustainability on the ground. One participant even mentions that "the awareness is only not there, so I think 1% to 2% maybe, but definitely not a lot." Another participant expressed that "as an individual, if you ask, I would love to purchase sustainability products, but first I need to understand what sustainability is."

Respondents also talked about how social media was used as a tool to promote sustainable fashion and stated that "there are lot of voices on social media that actively promote sustainable fashion". With respect to social media, different perspectives came from various interviewees. Some of the interviewees or participants discussed about how social media created awareness for them by talking about initiatives that they have come across by organizations such as H&M, Levi Jeans, Fab India, Plant based news and Green Soul and influencers such as Mr. Earth.

One contradiction was that while one participant mentioned that how sustainability in fashion is being promoted rapidly through social media, on the contrary, another participant speaks about how she is unable to recollect a single friend who supports sustainability and is disheartened that there is only a small number of influencers who promote sustainable fashion.

Majority of the participants had an understanding about sustainable fashion through social media. However, a few pointed out that there was a gap between awareness and knowledge. One respondent stated that "layman idea about purchasing a sustainable thing is because it has been reused, otherwise you are recycling the model and giving it to us."

The participants also talked about how their personal and work life are closely linked to sustainability. Their experiences show how mindful their buying decisions are which can be seen from one of the responses - "You know, when you consume less, you definitely conserve more."

Participants also talked about their experiences driven by practices such as reusing leftover fabrics, role of PR campaigns, personal habits of reusing and restyling clothes. They also talked about various brand that practice sustainability like H&M, FabIndia etc. One of the respondents talked about sustainability in fashion designing - "But I've seen most of the fashion designers and the NIFTI students coming up over there, they pick up these clothes and they start making some zigzag patterns or contrast dresses if you're aware of that. So, they make this stuff and they sell it at a higher price. So, I would say that there's one of the best sustainable, trends that fashion students have been doing."

The buying decisions of participants were influenced by their awareness of sustainability, and most of the respondents mentioned preferring stores and online platforms that offers eco-friendly materials. One of the respondents said "But then, obviously, when I see certain things, certain websites, yeah, I believe they are doing a really good job. They make me purchase."

Participants focused on sustainable products that are durable and personally meaningful. They also preferred traditional, ethical and preloved items with the intention to contribute to society. As one respondent stated - "It is very amazing because this kurta also that I'm wearing is from Fab India. So, you can just see the prints. They are old traditional prints. It looks very, it might look outdated. But this is what I like to get. This gives me a class. I feel proud wearing this because I know that, you know, I am focusing, I am helping the society. I am doing something that no one else is doing."

Participants also showed their intention to buy sustainable products, guided by social media influence, their own values, and mass public awareness. They believed that social media promotion can enhance sustainable purchase. As one respondent said: "So people have this commitment towards taking a sustainable product and they, because they have a commitment, they have this mantra of using anything sustainable, which is environmentally friendly and everything."

Respondents also expressed positive commitment towards post-consumption practices like recycling, repurposing, and upcycling old garments. Participants said "So the old sarees that my mom has, I try to convert it into hoodies or long frocks."

A couple of participants even gave their opinion about what can be done to encourage and improve sustainable fashion initiatives by organizations based on their understanding and knowledge in the area. One participant spoke about how "once you create a demand, then you know they will make it affordable." They also said "it's just that they have to tweak their processes, they have to tweak their value chains, they have to tweak their suppliers and that's it." Another participant spoke expressed hope that in "the next couple of years we'll see if innovation will come into that space".

These findings can be aligned with the Theory of Planned Behavior discussed earlier. It can be seen that product attributes such as comfort and durability, authenticity of the brand, trust in local brands and understanding the implications of sustainability determine the attitude towards sustainable fashion. The availability of information due to social media also plays a role in determining the attitude of consumers towards sustainable fashion.

While the influence of, and promotion through social media can change attitudes, it is also determined by subjective norm since influencers and well-known brands can influence consumers towards sustainable fashion. Brand credibility also can influence consumer attitudes as most consumers prefer to know if the brand is integrating sustainability into its manufacturing processes. At the same time, subjective norm can be seen as consumers are slowly being influenced by their friends and family to research and change their attitude towards sustainable fashion.

Social media has played a role in improving the awareness and knowledge of consumers and improving their attitudes. At the same time, their past experiences and knowledge from such experiences which can be seen in post-consumption actions such as recycling and upcycling leads to perceived behavioral control in purchasing sustainable fashion.

The current fashion trends are in the market are constantly changing and sustainable fashion is unable to keep with the trends due to the type of material used, or the choice offered. Participants have also flagged cost, false sustainability claims of companies and lack of awareness, concerns about quality of sustainable material used as the major factors for the negative attitudes leading to lack of intention to purchase sustainable fashion clothing.

Although social media influencers are influencing people's fashion choices, it is unclear how many of them are genuinely discussing sustainable fashion. Remarkably, based on the responses of the participants, celebrities—of which there are currently relatively few—can contribute significantly to the promotion of sustainability. However, it was also observed that most respondents to the initial survey were not users of sustainable clothing as they may be unaware about the concept or did not come across this concept while browsing social media platforms. It is also possible that there were barriers to buying sustainable clothing such as pricing or the comfort level in wearing such clothes due to which there was hesitancy in buying sustainable clothing.

During the interviews, the authors found that most of the interviewees are highly self-aware about sustainability and how they can contribute to environmental sustainability in fashion. However, it appears that social media has contributed to awareness about what are the type of products available and which organizations are taking initiatives to introduce or encourage sustainable fashion purchasing. During interviews, it has been also observed that while respondents are aware about sustainability and use social media but there is significant gap between awareness on sustainable clothing and use of social media. They revealed that there are not many social media platforms or influencers who promotes sustainable fashion and can create awareness on ground.

Our findings indicate that while there are barriers to shifting consumer purchasing behavior, social media can be leveraged to play a crucial role in changing perceptions of people about sustainable fashion.

7. Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, with 49 valid survey responses and only ten interviews, which restrict the generalizability of the findings. Because the participants were all between 18 and 34 years old, the results may not reflect the perspectives of older consumers, rural populations, or those with limited digital access. The

sampling strategy also relied on voluntary participation, which leads to self-selection bias, as individuals already interested in sustainability may have been more willing to take part. Since all data were self-reported, the responses may be affected by recall error or social desirability bias, especially regarding sustainability attitudes. The study also does not differentiate the influence of specific social media platforms, nor does it verify actual purchasing behavior, making it difficult to fully assess the attitude–behavior gap. Finally, the findings relate to a specific cultural context and may not apply entirely to other contexts.

8. Conclusions

Consumers are slowly gaining interest in understanding environmental and social initiatives and they are demanding sustainable products. Apparel companies are responding to the demands of consumers by slowly changing their traditional practices and offering more environment friendly and socially responsible clothing.

However, the growing interest and awareness of sustainable fashion have not yet resulted in a swift change in consumption behaviors towards sustainable clothing. Based on the initial survey and interviews which focused on consumers of fashion industry, the study found that as consumers become more informed about environmental sustainability particularly in fashion industry, a subjective norm develops that links to a positive attitude and potential purchasing behavior toward sustainable fashion. Furthermore, consumers' engagement with social media and peer influence through these platforms helps create significant awareness about the role of environmental sustainability in fashion industry and ultimately boosting the intention to buy sustainable fashion and actual purchasing behavior.

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