

From Awareness to Action: Understanding Consumers Sustainable Fashion Products Purchase Behaviour- A Systematic Literature Review of Determinants

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Received: 28/02/2025;

Revision: 20/03/2025;

Accepted: 08/04/2025;

Published: 25/04/2025

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Abstract: The current study conducted a systematic literature review of 41 studies on sustainable fashion product purchase intention and behaviour covering the period from 2007 to 2024. The study has employed the Theory- Context-Characteristics-Methods (T-C-C-M) framework as the basis for the review. The study explored factors affecting consumers' purchase intention towards sustainable fashion products. This study will help the Government, policymakers and marketers in designing and implementing strategies to encourage sustainable fashion product purchasing and sustainable consumerism.

Keywords: sustainable products, cultural factors, eco products, green consumption

INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has become a major contributor to environmental pollution and the consumption patterns of consumers have emerged as a main driver in affecting the environment. Jang et al. (2012), D'souza et al. (2015) and James et al. (2017) studies highlight the immediate need for sustainable practices and approaches in the fashion industry. Jacobs et al. (2018) and Blazquez et al. (2020) study showed the gap between consumer behaviour towards sustainable fashion products and the present market share of sustainable fashion products. Kim et al. (2013) study also identified eight negative beliefs related to fast fashion, like "overly trendy styles, big stores discomfort, poor performance, lack of personal help, deindividuation, inauthenticity, irresponsibility, and foreignness as negative beliefs regarding fast fashion". Rahman et al. (2020) focused on internal and external factors influencing consumers' preferences and also explored gender-related differences in sustainability. Hasbullah et al. (2022) research also stressed the role of motivating cues influencing consumers' preferences and intention to purchase sustainable products. Various previous studies underscore the complex changing aspects of sustainable consumption, stressing the need for increased awareness, education and active involvement to foster more sustainable practices. Hur & Cassidy (2019) also emphasised the need for creating awareness and active engagement of consumers. Lai & Cheng (2016) study in Hong Kong explained the significant role of perceived responsibility and sustainable marketing practices in shaping consumers' purchasing behaviour. Zhao et al. (2014) showed the significance of attitude towards sustainable consumption and the influencing role of willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products despite limited knowledge.

Various previous studies have been conducted on studying the factors influencing sustainable product purchase behaviour (SPPB) still, there exists a gap in the literature. Recognising the changing nature of sustainable purchase intention and behaviour (Sharma et al., 2022; Nascimento & Loureiro, 2022; Ray & Nayak, 2023), there is an urgent need for a detailed review to gain a deep understanding of consumer behaviour towards sustainable fashion.

With the growth of sustainable fashion brands in India, such as Ethicus, Nicobar, Doodlage, there is an immediate need to study this attitude-behaviour gap. Thus, this study conducts a systematic review considering 41 research papers, employing the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methods (TCCM) (Paul & Rosado-Serrano, 2019; Nascimento & Loureiro, 2022). This review facilitates the identification of underexplored areas that can explain SPPB from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Sustainability has become an important social issue. Now, consumers are more aware about the impact of their consumption habits on environment. According to Khare (2020), youth are more aware about their eco-friendly consumption options and this changing pattern pushes businesses to adopt sustainable business practices. Businesses also have a responsibility towards environment protection, as it adversely impacts the rights of people (Mahecha & Punia, 2023). Businesses play a dual role in climate change, as they are both the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and essential components in developing solutions to address climate change. Pandey & Yadav (2023) study showed that positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion were influenced by perceived

environmental, political and social benefits, with younger generations, particularly Gen Y and Z, significantly influencing intentions to buy. McKinsey & Company (2020) survey highlighted increased consumer engagement with sustainability in the fashion industry post COVID-19 pandemic, with younger generation showing the interest towards durable and sustainable consumptions, giving an opportunity for brands to manufacture sustainable products. Kerr and Landry (2017) study emphasised the need to act, as the population is growing and impacting the environment negatively. This suggests the need for adopting more sustainable practices in the fashion industry to reduce its environmental footprint. According to Pandey & Yadav (2023) study fashion industry is the second-largest consumer of water, approximate 20% of water wastage.

What is Sustainable Fashion?

Sustainable fashion refers to efforts to minimise the fashion industry's adverse environmental and social impacts. Sustainable fashion is part of a growing trend towards system maintainability and aims to resolve issues arising from clashes between fast fashion production and consumers (Woodside & Fine, 2019). It involves eco-friendly products that fulfill environmentally conscious consumers' demands. The purpose is to reduce wastage from textiles, improve workers working conditions and slow down production and consumption at the global level. The concept is emerging with the ethical purchasing decisions by consumers and eco-conscious practices. Carey et al. (2014) suggests that within the slow fashion movement, sustainable fashion constitutes a subset. The terms eco-fashion, sustainable clothing, slow fashion, green-fashion, and ethical-fashion are commonly interchanged to describe this term. Joergens (2006) define, "ethical fashion as fashionable clothes that incorporate fair trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton." Reimers et al. (2016) define, "ethical fashion as clothing that seeks to minimise its negative impact on the environment, employees, and animals via processes that include, but are not limited to, slow fashion." Niinimäki (2010) define, "eco-fashion as clothing that is designed for lifetime use; it is produced in an ethical system, perhaps even locally; it causes little or no environmental impact and it makes use of eco-labelled or recycled materials." Carey & Cervellon (2014) define, "eco fashion as any clothing item made in an environmentally friendly process including recycled materials, nontextile materials, and reused clothing." Lundblad & Davies (2015) define, "green fashion as the concept is related to the ecological dimension of sustainable development." Lee et al. (2012) define, "sustainable fashion encompasses the myriad of issues of an ethical or environmental nature in the production and consumption of fashion." Goworek et al. (2012) define, "sustainable clothing as clothing which incorporates one or more aspects of social and environmental sustainability, such as fair-trade manufacturing or fabric containing organically-grown raw material." Wei & Jung (2017) define, "sustainable fashion as fashion products that benefit, or at least do not harm, our

environment and society in their production and consumption processes, and contribute to creating a sustainable future of human beings." Tama et al. (2017) define, "slow fashion as a philosophy, design approach, and method of consumption that prioritises the relationship between the wearer and the clothing, local production and resources, and ethical treatment of workers."

Sustainable Fashion Models

Gurova's (2024) exploration of sustainable fashion consumption practices (SFCP) among young consumers in Finland employed a "Practice Theory Approach", focusing on the stages of acquisition, use and discard. Ronda (2023) investigated market barriers moderating the link between sustainable fashion consumption and consumer behaviour using the "Attitude-Behaviour Gap Model". Daukantiene (2022) proposed methods and approaches for sustainable fashion (SF), emphasising circular design strategies targeting materials and production stages. Williams & Hodges (2022) introduced a "Value-Action Gap Model", exploring the complexities of sustainable and responsible fashion consumption (SRFC) among Gen Z consumers. Ki et al. (2020) explored the moral dynamics influencing consumer perceptions of Circular Fashion (CF) initiatives through the Moral Responsibility Theory of Corporate Sustainability (MRCS). Kozłowski et al., (2015) study identified sustainability factors in the corporate sustainability framework of 14 clothing brands. The study highlighted a shift towards more environmentally focused fashion design practices and increased emphasis strategies for clothing and shoe recycling. Akenji et al. (2015) provided a "Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) cycle", a comprehensive structure for companies to improve sustainability and embrace circular economy principles. The nine principles within the cycle included "resource management, design for sustainability, cleaner production and research efficiency, eco-labeling and certification, sustainable marketing and lifestyle and waste management".

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Screening and Selection

The screening process involved selecting studies that examined various factors influencing consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). To retrieve relevant research papers, multiple sources and databases were searched like Emerald, Wiley Online Library, Science Direct, Sage publication, etc. (shown in Figure 1). Then, studies exploring factors affecting consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB) were analysed. During 2010, many new fashion and sustainability journals emerged. On the basis of this development, the study has conducted an extensive literature review covering the period from 2007 to 2024. Additionally, this period has seen the emergence of new fashion journals and a rise in special issues addressing sustainability in fashion industry, sustainable practices and green consumption. A total of 58 research papers were thoroughly reviewed, 7 papers were excluded due to low impact factor and 10 papers were irrelevant as they were

not related to theme of study like sustainable hotel, sustainable cars, etc. and eliminated, resulting in 41 papers selected for review (Figure 2). For literature review, top

rating 29 journals were selected to confirm use of high-quality research papers as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 1: Database

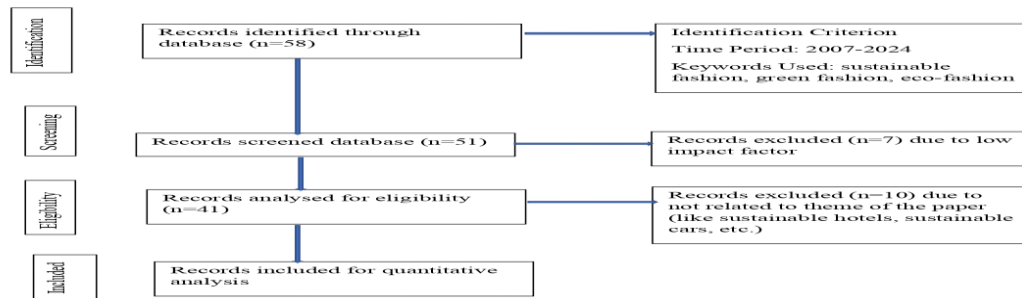


Figure 2: Chart for selection

Figure 3: Top Quality Sampled Publications on SPPB

THEORIES

Table 1 shows the theoretical frameworks used in previous studies investigating factors affecting consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB) towards sustainable apparels, organic food, green personal care products and green products. Out of 41 studies, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) emerged as the most popular framework, appearing in 11 studies. Then, Norm Action Theory (Schwartz, 1977) model also featured in 3 studies, examining the impact of personal and social norms on SPPB. Lastly, Moral Theories, Value Belief Norms, the Theory of Consumption Values, Attitude Behaviour Intention Gap Model, Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Model, Stimulus – Organism – Response Model, Social Cognitive Theory and Reciprocal Determinism and Diffusion of Innovations Theory were each applied in one study, focusing on various psychological, ethical and social factors influencing SPPB. Interestingly, 17 studies in the current review opted not to apply any specific theoretical framework. This detailed exploration of theoretical frameworks shows the multidimensional nature of consumer behaviour towards sustainability and highlights the significance of considering various theoretical perspectives to gain a deep understanding of SPPB.

Table 1: Theories applied

Theories	Number of Studies	Studies
Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991)	11	Arvola et al. (2008); Kim & Chung (2011); Dean et al. (2012); Yadav and Pathak (2017); Chaudhary and Bisai (2018); Choi & Johnson (2019); Emekci (2019); Kumar et al. (2020) Liu et al. (2020); Kumar (2021); Dangelico et al. (2021)
Norm Action Theory Schwartz (1977)	3	Harland et al. (2007); Kim & Seock (2019); Munerah et al. (2021)
Value Belief Norms	1	Hartmann et al. (2018)
Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Model	1	Hasbullah et al. (2022)
Theory of Consumption Values (Sheth et al., 1991)	1	Adhitiya & Astuti (2019)
Attitude Behaviour Intention Gap Model	1	Jung et al. (2020)
Moral Theories (Frederiksen, 2010)	1	Al-Adamat et al. (2020)

How to Cite: Bhawna, and Anupama. "From Awareness to Action: Understanding Consumers' Sustainable Fashion Products Purchase Behaviour—A Systematic Literature Review of Determinants." *Journal of Marketing & Social Research*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2025, pp. 619–627.

Stimulus – Organism – Response (S-O-R) Framework (Mehrabian And Russell,1974)	1	Kumar et al. (2019)
Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Schumpeter, 1939)	1	Zhen & Mansori (2012)
Social Cognitive Theory and Reciprocal Determinism by Bandura (1977)	1	Phipps et al. (2013)
Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977)	1	Prakash & Pathak (2017)
Practice Theory Approach	1	Gurova (2024)
No Theory Applied	17	Lee (2010); Basgoze & Tektas (2012); Ling (2013); Tsarenko et al. (2013); Joshi & Rahman (2015), Harris et al. (2016); Narula & Desore (2016); Khare and Sadachar (2017); Larson & Farac (2019); Panfilo & Blundo (2020); Sharma (2021); Nascimento and Loureiro (2022); Sharma et al. (2022); Chakraborty & Sadachar (2023); Ray & Nayak (2023); Tryphena & Aram (2023); Sinha et al. (2023)

Source: Authors’ Study

CONTEXT

Country wise studies

The distribution of studies across different countries shows a diverse geographic picture in the research on SPPB as shown in Figure 4. Among the 41 selected studies, India emerged as the prominent contributor with 7 studies, followed by the USA with 4 studies. Additionally, 3 studies adopted a cross-country approach. Australia and China each appeared in 2 studies, while UK, Hong Kong, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Turkey and Jordan are each studied in 1 study. Remaining, 13 studies show research conducted in other countries, highlighting the global research and study into SPPB. This distribution shows the international interest and importance of understanding consumer behaviours towards sustainability across diverse geographical areas.

Figure 4: Countries wise studies

General Overview

Previous studies used various theories to investigate consumers’ sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB) within various areas such as sustainable apparels, organic food, green personal care products and green products. Figure 5 shows theories, characteristics and context related to SPPB. This figure shows the adoption and execution of theories at consumer, product and country level and outcomes.

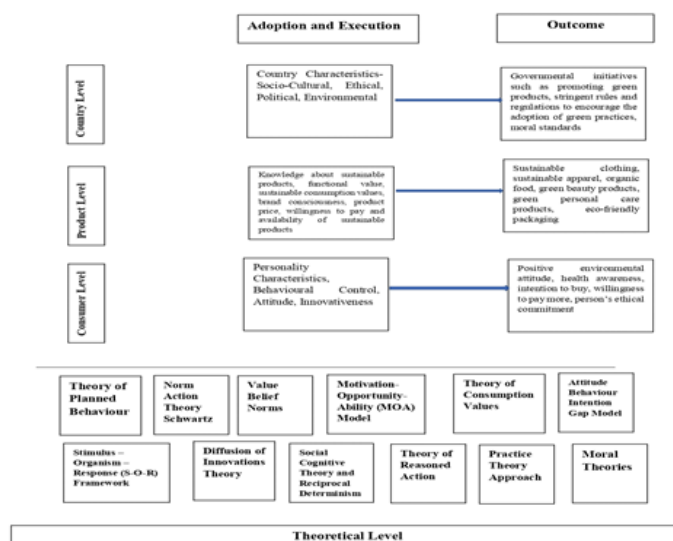


Figure 5: General Overview of SPPB studies

CHARACTERISTICS

Socio-Cultural Factors

Lee (2010) and Kumar et al. (2019) findings showed the role of peer influence on consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Similarly, Tsarenko et al. (2013) and Yadav & Pathak (2017) results showed the positive influence of social and reference groups on consumers' decision-making processes regarding sustainable products purchase. However, Khare & Sadachar (2017) study on Indian youth did not find any role of peer influence. Chakraborty & Sadachar (2023) study found the impact of traditional values and Adhitiya & Astuti (2019) findings showed the role of social value on consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Kumar (2021) and Dean et al. (2012) study found the indirect impact of subjective norms on sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). In other studies, Munerah et al. (2021) and Chaudhary and Bisai, (2018) found the strong role of social norms on sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB).

Ethical Factors

Leonidou et al. (2015) define ethics as, "individual's moral beliefs, rules, and obligations about right and wrong, guiding an individual's life and direct decision-making". Munerah et al. (2021) findings showed positive association between ethical commitment and consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Hartmann et al. (2018); Kim & Seock (2019) and Munerah et al. (2021) findings suggested positive influence of personal norms on consumers' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Liu et al. (2020) showed significant impact of moral standards on sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Similarly, Jung et al., (2020) and Al-Adamat et al. (2020) showed positive impact of ethical values and norms on consumers' attitudes towards sustainable consumption. Al-Adamat et al. (2020) study also indicate that all dimensions of moral intelligence positively influence purchase intentions.

Political Factors

Braithwaite (1999) define, political actions as, "person's desire to engage in various socio-political issues such as lobbying political agents, participating in pressure groups, and boycotting irresponsible companies". Larson & Farac (2019) showed individual political beliefs significantly influence individuals' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Johnstone and Hooper (2016) study showed role of government sustainable initiatives like promoting green products in influencing sustainable product purchase intention (SPPI). Kumar et al. (2019) study also found the importance of enforcing strict rules and regulations to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices among manufactures and consumers.

Product Related Factors

Gurova (2024) study showed positive association between individual's acceptability and knowledge of sustainable products towards sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Jung et al. (2020) found that product related factors

i.e. eco-labels, sustainable consumption values and green brand image affect individuals' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Adhitiya & Astuti (2019) study found that green risk, functional values and experience also impact sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). However, Dangelico et al. (2021) study showed negative association between product price and individuals' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Conversely, Kumar et al. (2020); Chaudhary & Bisai (2018) and Narula & Desore (2016) study showed positive link between willingness to pay and sustainable product purchase intention. Adhitiya & Astuti (2019) study in Indonesia found no relationship between price and quality on affect individuals' sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB).

Environmental Factors

Dunlap & Jones (2002) study state that "the degree to which people are aware of problems regarding the environment and support efforts to solve them and or indicate the willingness to contribute personally to their solution". Chaudhary & Bisai (2018); Dangelico et al. (2021) showed a positive relation between environmental concern and SPPB. However, Choi & Johnson (2019) study did not find a link between environmental concern and SPPB. Other researchers like Kim & Chung (2011); Kumar et al. (2020) reported a positive association between environmental consciousness and pro-environmental intentions. Similarly, Tryphena & Aram (2023) and Choi & Johnson (2019) found consumers with environmental knowledge are more inclined towards the purchase of sustainable products. More environmental awareness leads to more purchase of sustainable products.

Individual Factors

Various studies have explored individual factors such as consumers' attitudes (Arvola et al., 2008; Choi & Johnson, 2019), egoistic values (Kim & Seock, 2019), ability (Hasbullah et al. 2022) and health awareness (Kumar, 2021) showing different associations with sustainable product purchase intention (SPPI) and sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB). Factors positively correlated with SPPI/SPBI include perceived behavioural control (Kim & Chung, 2011); Kumar, 2021; Kumar et al. 2020; Yadav & Pathak 2017), consumers' intention (Yadav & Pathak 2017); self-efficacy (Ling, 2013) and perceived consumer effectiveness (Emekci, 2019). However, Choi & Johnson (2019) study did not find an association between perceived behavioural control and SPPB and Zhen & Mansori (2012) study also found no influence of consumer innovativeness on buying sustainable food.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approaches and methods

The research into SPPB considered a diverse array of research approaches, as shown in the Table 2. Structural Equation Modeling emerged as the most popular research method, used in 16 studies (Arvola et al. (2008), Tsarenko et al. (2013) and Kumar (2021) and others). Multiple Regression Analysis was also employed, with 5 studies.

Probit Regression Analysis, Hierarchical Regression Analysis and Independent Sample t-test were also employed as seen in the work of Tryphena & Aram (2023), Harland et al. (2007) and Liu et al. (2020) respectively. Additionally, Phipps et al. (2013) utilised a Theoretical Based approach. Lee (2010) employed factor analysis.

Various studies adopted Traditional Regression Analysis as shown in Table 2. The Systematic Literature Review method was also popular, with 7 studies. Furthermore, qualitative method i.e. interview was employed in studies by Basgoze & Tektas (2012) and Harris et al. (2016).

Table 2: Research approach and methods

Research Approach	Number of Studies	Studies
Structural Equation Modelling	16	Arvola et al. (2008); Tsarenko et al. (2013); Khare and Sadachar (2017); Prakash & Pathak (2017); Yadav and Pathak (2017); Chaudhary and Bisai (2018); Adhitiya & Astuti (2019); Emekci (2019); Kumar et al. (2019); Kim & Seock (2019); Al-Adamat et al. (2020); Kumar et al. (2020); Kumar (2021); Munerah et al. (2021); Hasbullah et al. (2022); Chakraborty & Sadachar (2023).
Multiple Regression Analysis	5	Kim & Chung (2011); Dean et al. (2012); Zhen & Mansori (2012); Ling (2013); Jung et al. (2020)
Probit Regression Analysis	1	Tryphena & Aram (2023)
Hierarical Regression analysis	2	Harland et al. (2007); Choi & Johnson (2019);
Independent sample t test	1	Liu et al. (2020)
Factor Analysis	1	Lee (2010)
Regression Analysis	3	Hartmann et al. (2018); Larson & Farac (2019); Dangelico et al. (2021)
Systematic Literature Review	8	Joshi & Rahman (2015); Narula & Desore (2016); Panfilo & Blundo (2020); Sharma (2021); Sharma et al. (2022); Nascimento and Loureiro (2022); Ray and Nayak (2023); Sinha et al. (2023)
Interview	3	Basgoze & Tektas (2012); Harris et al. (2016); Gurova (2024)
Theoretical Based	1	Phipps et al. (2013)

Source: Authors' Study

CONCLUSION

Post COVID-19 pandemic there is a significant change in consumer behaviour (Purohit et al., 2022) and major structural changes across various aspects of life and businesses (Rayburn et al., 2021). As a result, there is an immediate need for the development of new theories and models to support research efforts towards sustainable consumption in the post-pandemic era. There is a call to action for developing frameworks and models to guide future studies within this developing area.

The current literature review showed that consumer behaviour is influenced by various factors like socio-cultural, political, ethical, environmental, individual and product related factors. Most of the studies are based on quantitative methods like regression analysis and structural equation modelling. The findings also showed that most of the studies used Theory of Planned Behaviour for understanding consumer behaviour towards sustainable product purchase intention (SPPI) and sustainable products purchase behaviour (SPPB).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SCOPE

The current study focuses only on sustainable products within the fashion industry i.e. green apparel, organic food, green personal care products and green beauty products. To extend the scope of current study, future research should

explore sustainable practices in other industries such as green automobiles, green hotels, green manufacturing, green electricity, green packaging, etc. This extension will provide a detailed understanding of sustainability efforts and practices across various industries, thereby enhancing the body of knowledge in this field.

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