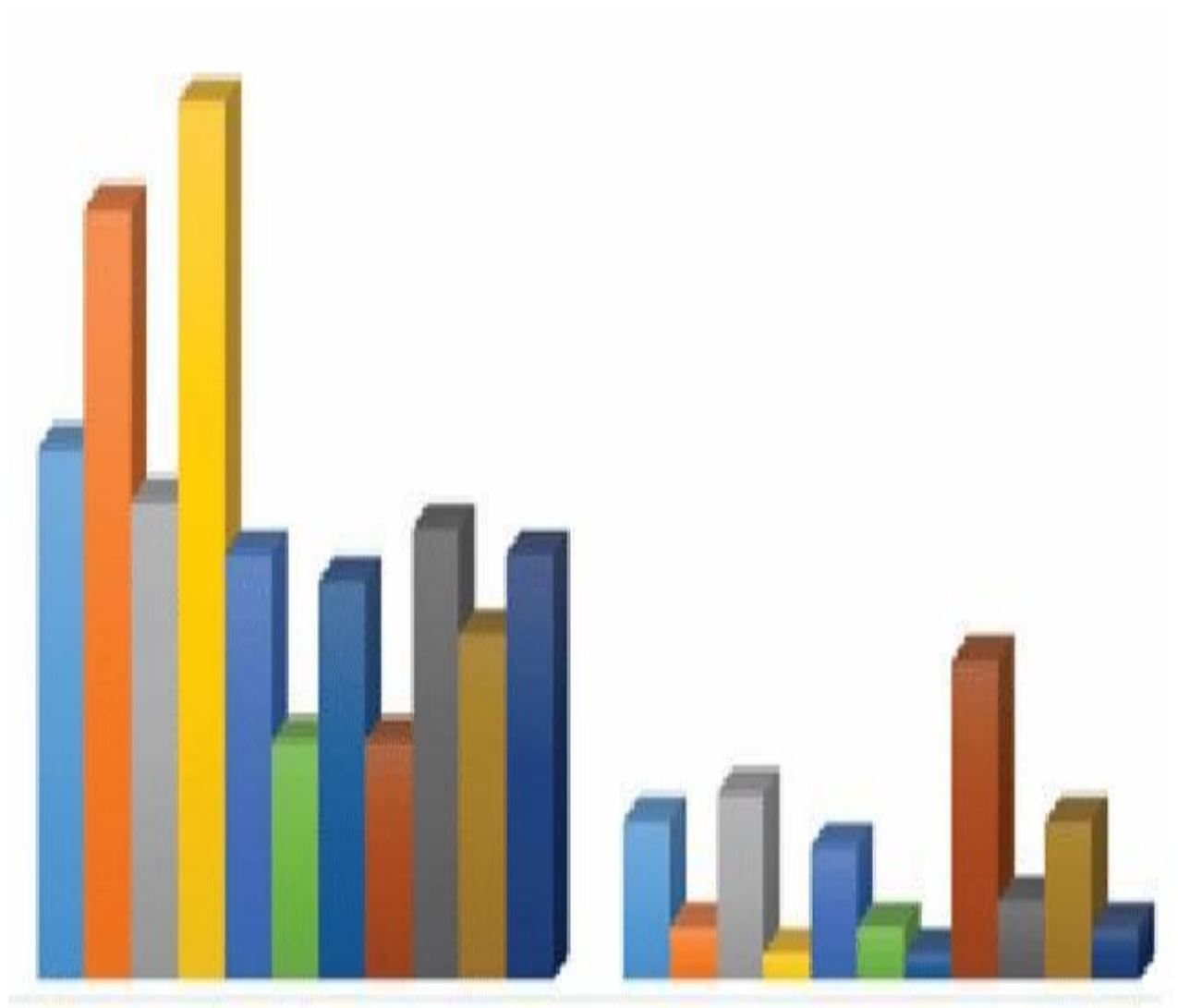


Perception, Motivation and Attitude Studies

Volume: 5 Issue: 3 Year: 2026

ISSN: 2957-4153



Received: 2 May 2026

Revised: 20 June 2026

Accepted: 25 June 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64907/xkmf.v5i3.pmas.13>

Research Article

Consumer Motivation in Sustainable Fashion Purchases: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of Secondary Studies

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ABSTRACT

The growing environmental and ethical challenges associated with the global fashion industry have intensified scholarly and practical interest in sustainable consumption. This study examines consumer motivation in sustainable fashion purchases through a qualitative meta-synthesis of secondary studies published between 2015 and 2024. Drawing upon the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Value-Belief-Norm theory, and hedonic-utilitarian motivation theory, the research integrates diverse findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of the drivers and barriers influencing consumer behaviour. The analysis identifies key motivational dimensions, including environmental concern, ethical values, identity expression, social influence, emotional satisfaction, and functional product evaluation. At the same time, structural barriers such as high prices, limited accessibility, and scepticism toward sustainability claims constrain behavioural outcomes. The findings highlight the persistence of the attitude-behaviour gap, demonstrating that strong pro-sustainability attitudes do not consistently translate into purchasing actions. This study contributes to the literature by synthesising fragmented insights into a unified conceptual framework and offers practical implications for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable fashion consumption.

Keywords: sustainable fashion, consumer motivation, ethical consumption, qualitative meta-synthesis, green apparel, behavioural intention, sustainability

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1. Introduction

The global fashion industry has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades, evolving from a system of seasonal production cycles to one dominated by fast fashion, characterised by rapid design turnover, low-cost production, and high consumption rates. While this model has democratized access to fashion, it has also intensified environmental degradation and raised serious ethical concerns related to labour practices and resource exploitation. The industry is now recognised as one of the largest contributors to global pollution, accounting for substantial carbon emissions, water consumption, and textile waste (Niinimäki et al., 2020). In response to these challenges, sustainable fashion has emerged as a critical paradigm shift, emphasising environmentally responsible production, ethical labour standards, and conscious consumption patterns.

Sustainable fashion encompasses a wide range of practices, including the use of eco-friendly materials, recycling and upcycling processes, fair trade production, and circular economy principles. However, despite increased awareness of these issues among consumers, the adoption of sustainable fashion products remains inconsistent and relatively limited compared to conventional apparel consumption (McNeill & Moore, 2015). This discrepancy highlights the importance of understanding the motivations that drive or inhibit consumer behaviour in this domain.

Consumer motivation plays a central role in shaping purchasing decisions, particularly in contexts that involve ethical and environmental considerations. In the case of sustainable fashion, motivations are often complex and multifaceted, influenced by a combination of personal values, social norms, emotional responses, and practical considerations. While some consumers are driven by a strong sense of environmental responsibility or ethical concern, others may be motivated by factors such as product quality, brand image, or social identity (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). These diverse motivations interact in dynamic ways, making it challenging to predict consumer behaviour based solely on attitudes or intentions.

A key issue in the study of sustainable consumption is the so-called “attitude-behaviour gap,” which refers to the discrepancy between consumers’ expressed concern for sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour. Numerous studies have shown that although many consumers report positive attitudes toward environmentally friendly products, these attitudes do not always translate into consistent buying practices (Carrington et al., 2010). This gap suggests that additional factors, such as perceived barriers, situational constraints, and competing motivations, play a significant role in shaping consumer decisions.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern et al., 1999), and hedonic-utilitarian motivation theory have been widely used to explain sustainable

consumption behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour posits that behaviour is determined by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, while the Value-Belief-Norm framework emphasises the role of moral values and environmental beliefs in shaping pro-environmental actions. Meanwhile, the distinction between hedonic and utilitarian motivations highlights the dual nature of consumer decision-making, where emotional satisfaction and functional benefits both influence purchasing behaviour (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

Despite the growing body of research on sustainable fashion, existing studies often focus on specific aspects of consumer behaviour or are limited to particular geographic contexts. As a result, the literature remains fragmented, with varying findings regarding the relative importance of different motivational factors. This fragmentation underscores the need for a comprehensive synthesis of existing research to identify common themes and develop a more integrated understanding of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a qualitative meta-synthesis of secondary studies, integrating insights from a diverse range of qualitative and mixed-method research. By systematically analysing and synthesising existing findings, the study aims to provide a holistic perspective on the motivations that drive sustainable fashion consumption, as well as the barriers that hinder it. The research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the primary motivational drivers influencing consumer

decisions in sustainable fashion purchases?

- How do theoretical frameworks explain these motivations?
- What barriers contribute to the persistence of the attitude-behaviour gap?

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform both academic research and practical applications. By offering a comprehensive synthesis of consumer motivations, the study contributes to the theoretical development of sustainable consumption research. At the same time, it provides valuable insights for policymakers, marketers, and fashion industry stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable practices and influence consumer behaviour.

In an era where environmental sustainability has become a global priority, understanding the psychological and social drivers of consumer behaviour is essential. Sustainable fashion represents not only a shift in production practices but also a transformation in consumption patterns, requiring consumers to reconsider their values, habits, and identities. This study aims to contribute to this transformation by providing a deeper understanding of the motivations that underpin sustainable fashion consumption.

2. Literature Review

Sustainable fashion refers to a holistic approach to clothing production and consumption that seeks to minimise environmental impact, ensure ethical labour practices, and promote long-term economic

viability. It encompasses various dimensions, including ecological sustainability, social responsibility, and economic fairness (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The concept is closely aligned with the principles of the circular economy, which emphasises resource efficiency, waste reduction, and product lifecycle extension.

The rise of sustainable fashion has been driven by growing awareness of the environmental and social consequences of the conventional fashion industry. Issues such as water pollution, excessive carbon emissions, and exploitative labour conditions have prompted calls for more responsible production and consumption practices. Consumers are increasingly expected to play an active role in this transition by making informed purchasing decisions and adopting more sustainable consumption habits (Joy et al., 2012).

2.1 Consumer Behaviour in Sustainable Fashion

Consumer behaviour in sustainable fashion is influenced by a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors. Research indicates that consumers' awareness of environmental issues and their attitudes toward sustainability significantly influence their purchasing intentions (Chan & Wong, 2012). However, these factors alone are insufficient to explain actual behaviour, as external constraints and competing motivations often intervene.

Studies have identified several key determinants of sustainable fashion consumption, including environmental concern, ethical values, perceived consumer

effectiveness, and trust in sustainability claims (Kim & Damhorst, 1998). Perceived consumer effectiveness refers to the belief that individual actions can contribute to environmental improvement, which has been shown to positively influence pro-environmental behaviour.

2.3 Motivational Drivers of Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Environmental Motivation: Environmental concern is one of the most widely recognised drivers of sustainable consumption. Consumers who are aware of the environmental impact of their choices are more likely to seek out eco-friendly products. This motivation is often linked to broader environmental values, such as conservation and sustainability (Stern et al., 1999).

Ethical and Moral Motivation: Ethical considerations, including concerns about labour conditions and social justice, also play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour. Consumers who prioritise ethical values are more likely to support brands that demonstrate transparency and social responsibility (Shen et al., 2012).

Identity and Self-Expression: Sustainable fashion consumption is increasingly associated with identity formation and self-expression. Consumers use clothing as a means of communicating their values and beliefs, including their commitment to sustainability. This form of symbolic consumption reflects the growing importance of identity-based motivations in consumer behaviour (Belk, 1988).

Social Influence and Norms: Social norms and peer influence are critical factors in

shaping consumer behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour highlights the role of subjective norms, which refer to the perceived expectations of others. Consumers are more likely to adopt sustainable practices when they perceive that such behaviours are socially desirable (Ajzen, 1991).

Hedonic and Utilitarian Motivations: Consumer motivation in fashion is often driven by both hedonic and utilitarian considerations. Hedonic motivations involve emotional and experiential aspects, such as enjoyment and satisfaction, while utilitarian motivations focus on functional benefits, such as quality and durability (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). In the context of sustainable fashion, both types of motivation are relevant, as consumers seek products that are not only environmentally friendly but also aesthetically appealing and functional.

2.4 Theoretical Perspectives

Theory of Planned Behaviour: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) has been widely applied to the study of sustainable consumption. According to this framework, behaviour is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Research has shown that these factors significantly predict consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable clothing.

Value-Belief-Norm Theory: The Value-Belief-Norm theory (Stern et al., 1999) provides a moral perspective on pro-environmental behaviour. It suggests that individuals' values influence their beliefs about environmental issues, which in turn shape their personal norms and behavioural intentions. This framework is particularly

useful for understanding the ethical motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption.

Attitude-Behaviour Gap: The attitude-behaviour gap remains a central issue in sustainable consumption research. While consumers may express strong support for sustainability, their actual purchasing behaviour often fails to reflect these attitudes (Carrington et al., 2010). This gap can be attributed to various factors, including price sensitivity, lack of availability, and scepticism toward sustainability claims.

2.5 Barriers to Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Despite strong motivational drivers, several barriers hinder the adoption of sustainable fashion. High prices are often cited as a major obstacle, as sustainable products tend to be more expensive than conventional alternatives. Limited availability and accessibility also restrict consumer choices.

Additionally, trust plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour. Scepticism toward green marketing and concerns about “greenwashing” can undermine consumer confidence and reduce the likelihood of sustainable purchases (Joy et al., 2012).

2.6 Research Gap

Although the literature provides valuable insights into consumer motivation, it remains fragmented and lacks integration across different theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. Many studies focus on specific regions or consumer segments, limiting the generalizability of their findings.

This study addresses this gap by conducting a qualitative meta-synthesis of secondary studies, integrating diverse findings into a coherent framework. By doing so, it aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion purchases.

3. Theoretical Framework

Understanding consumer motivation sustainably requires a multidimensional theoretical approach that captures cognitive, moral, emotional, and contextual influences on behaviour. This study integrates three major theoretical perspectives—the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, and Hedonic-Utilitarian Motivation theory—to construct a comprehensive framework for analysing consumer decision-making in sustainable fashion consumption.

3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour, developed by Ajzen (1991), is one of the most widely applied frameworks in consumer behaviour research, particularly in the context of sustainability. According to TPB, an individual's behaviour is primarily determined by behavioural intention, which in turn is influenced by three key components: attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

In the context of sustainable fashion, attitudes refer to consumers' evaluations of eco-friendly clothing, including beliefs about its environmental benefits, quality, and ethical

implications. Positive attitudes toward sustainability are often associated with higher intentions to purchase sustainable apparel (Chan & Wong, 2012). However, attitudes alone are insufficient predictors of behaviour, as they are often moderated by external factors.

Subjective norms represent the perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in a particular behaviour. Sustainably, these norms may arise from peers, family members, social media influencers, or broader societal expectations. Research suggests that social influence plays a significant role in encouraging sustainable consumption, particularly among younger consumers who are more responsive to social validation (Lundblad & Davies, 2016).

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to the extent to which individuals believe they have the ability and resources to perform a behaviour. Sustainably, PBC is influenced by factors such as product availability, affordability, and accessibility. Even when consumers have positive attitudes and strong social support, limited perceived control, such as high prices or lack of availability, can hinder actual purchasing behaviour (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

TPB is particularly valuable for explaining the intention-behaviour relationship; however, it has been criticised for its limited focus on moral and emotional factors, which are highly relevant in ethical consumption contexts. This limitation necessitates the integration of additional theoretical perspectives.

3.2 Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory

The Value-Belief-Norm theory, proposed by Stern et al. (1999), provides a moral and normative framework for understanding pro-environmental behaviour. The VBN model posits a causal chain in which values influence beliefs, beliefs shape personal norms, and norms ultimately drive behaviour.

At the foundational level, values such as altruism, biospheric concern, and social responsibility play a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes toward sustainability. Individuals who prioritise environmental protection and social equity are more likely to develop strong pro-environmental beliefs.

These values inform beliefs, particularly awareness of environmental consequences and the perceived responsibility to address them. For example, consumers who recognise the environmental impact of fast fashion are more likely to support sustainable alternatives (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

Beliefs, in turn, activate personal norms, which are internalised moral obligations to act in a certain way. Sustainably, personal norms may manifest as a sense of duty to purchase ethically produced clothing or to reduce consumption. These norms are powerful motivators because they are rooted in individuals' moral identities rather than external pressures.

The VBN framework is particularly effective in explaining why some consumers are willing to incur higher costs or inconvenience to align their behaviour with their values. However, similar to TPB, it does not fully account for hedonic or experiential aspects of

consumption, which are highly relevant in the fashion domain.

3.3 Hedonic-Utilitarian Motivation Theory

Consumer behaviour in fashion is inherently influenced by both hedonic and utilitarian motivations. Hedonic motivations are associated with emotional and experiential aspects of consumption, such as pleasure, enjoyment, and self-expression, while utilitarian motivations relate to functional and practical considerations, such as quality, durability, and value for money (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

Sustainably, hedonic motivations may include the emotional satisfaction derived from making ethical choices, the enjoyment of wearing eco-friendly clothing, and the symbolic value of expressing one's identity through sustainable consumption. These motivations are particularly important in overcoming the perception that sustainable products are less fashionable or less appealing.

Utilitarian motivations, on the other hand, focus on the tangible benefits of sustainable clothing, such as superior quality, longer lifespan, and cost-effectiveness over time. Research indicates that consumers are more likely to adopt sustainable fashion when they perceive it as both environmentally responsible and functionally superior (Shen et al., 2012).

The integration of hedonic and utilitarian perspectives highlights the dual nature of consumer motivation, emphasising that sustainable fashion must satisfy both

emotional and practical needs to gain widespread acceptance.

3.4 Integrated Theoretical Model

This study proposes an integrated framework that combines TPB, VBN, and hedonic-utitarian theories to provide a holistic understanding of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion. In this model:

- **Values and beliefs (VBN)** shape attitudes and personal norms.
- **Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (TPB)** influence behavioural intentions.
- **Hedonic and utilitarian motivations** moderate the relationship between intention and behaviour.
- **External barriers**, such as price and availability, further influence perceived behavioural control and actual behaviour.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study captures the complexity of consumer decision-making, addressing both rational and emotional dimensions, as well as internal and external influences.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative meta-synthesis approach, which involves systematically reviewing and integrating findings from existing qualitative and mixed-method studies to generate new interpretive insights. Meta-synthesis is particularly suitable for exploring complex phenomena such as consumer motivation, as it allows for

the identification of patterns and themes across diverse contexts and methodologies (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Unlike quantitative meta-analysis, which focuses on statistical aggregation, qualitative meta-synthesis emphasises interpretive integration, enabling the researcher to develop higher-order conceptual frameworks. This approach is well aligned with the objectives of the present study, which seeks to understand the multidimensional nature of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion.

4.1 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The study relies on secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2024. Academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were used to identify relevant studies. Keywords included “sustainable fashion,” “ethical consumption,” “consumer motivation,” “green apparel,” and “pro-environmental behaviour.”

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Studies focusing on consumer behaviour sustainably or ethically.
- Use of qualitative or mixed-method research designs.
- Publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.
- Availability in English.
- Clear discussion of motivational drivers or barriers.

Studies that were purely quantitative without qualitative insights, non-peer-reviewed

sources, and articles lacking relevance to consumer motivation were excluded.

4.2 Data Extraction and Coding

Data extraction involved systematically reviewing each selected study to identify key findings related to consumer motivation. Relevant information was coded using a thematic approach, focusing on recurring concepts such as environmental concern, ethical values, social influence, and perceived barriers.

The coding process followed three stages:

- **Open coding:** Initial identification of concepts and themes from individual studies.
- **Axial coding:** Grouping related codes into broader categories.
- **Selective coding:** Integration of categories into overarching themes.

This iterative process ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the data while allowing for the emergence of new insights.

4.3 Thematic Synthesis

The study employs the thematic synthesis method proposed by Thomas and Harden (2008), which involves three main steps:

- Line-by-line coding of primary study findings
- Development of descriptive themes
- Generation of analytical themes

Descriptive themes summarise the findings of individual studies, while analytical themes go beyond the original data to provide new interpretations and theoretical contributions. This approach enables the study to move

from descriptive analysis to conceptual synthesis.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

Ensuring the rigour of qualitative meta-synthesis requires careful attention to validity and reliability. Several strategies were employed in this study:

- **Triangulation:** Findings from multiple studies were compared to identify consistent patterns.
- **Transparency:** The selection and coding processes were clearly documented.
- **Theoretical grounding:** Established frameworks (TPB, VBN, hedonic-utility theory) were used to guide interpretation.
- **Reflexivity:** The researcher critically examined potential biases in data interpretation.

These measures enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

4.5 Limitations

Despite its strengths, the study has certain limitations. First, the reliance on secondary data means that the analysis is constrained by the scope and quality of existing studies. Second, the focus on English-language publications may limit the inclusion of relevant research from non-English contexts. Third, variations in research design and cultural context across studies may affect the comparability of findings.

Nevertheless, the meta-synthesis approach provides a robust framework for integrating diverse perspectives and generating

comprehensive insights into consumer motivation.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

As this study is based on secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human participants. However, ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring proper citation of all sources and adherence to academic integrity standards. The study also respects intellectual property rights by accurately representing the findings of original authors (Mannan & Farhana, 2026).

5. Findings and Analysis

The qualitative meta-synthesis of secondary studies reveals that consumer motivation in sustainable fashion purchases is complex, multidimensional, and context-dependent. The findings indicate that motivations are not singular drivers but rather an interconnected set of cognitive, emotional, social, and structural factors. Through thematic synthesis, seven major themes emerge: environmental motivation, ethical and moral motivation, identity and self-expression, social influence, hedonic motivation, utilitarian motivation, and structural barriers. These themes are interrelated and collectively shape consumer decision-making processes.

5.1 Environmental Motivation

Environmental concern emerges as one of the most dominant drivers of sustainable fashion consumption. Many consumers demonstrate awareness of the environmental consequences associated with conventional fashion practices, including excessive water use, carbon emissions, and textile waste. This

awareness often translates into a desire to reduce personal environmental impact by choosing eco-friendly clothing options (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

However, the findings indicate that environmental motivation alone does not guarantee consistent purchasing behaviour. While consumers may express concern for environmental sustainability, this concern is often moderated by situational constraints such as price, accessibility, and product availability. This supports the argument that environmental awareness is a necessary but insufficient condition for sustainable consumption (Carrington et al., 2010).

Moreover, environmental motivation is frequently linked to broader ecological values, such as conservation and responsibility toward future generations. Consumers with strong biospheric values tend to exhibit higher levels of commitment to sustainable fashion, suggesting that deeply held values play a crucial role in shaping behaviour (Stern et al., 1999).

5.2 Ethical and Moral Motivation

Ethical considerations constitute another significant motivational dimension. Consumers are increasingly concerned about labour conditions, fair wages, and the social implications of fashion production. The meta-synthesis reveals that many individuals perceive sustainable fashion as a moral obligation, reflecting a desire to align consumption practices with ethical principles (Shen et al., 2012).

The Value-Belief-Norm framework is particularly relevant in this context, as it explains how moral values translate into

behavioural norms. Consumers who internalise ethical concerns are more likely to develop a sense of personal responsibility, which drives their purchasing decisions. This sense of moral obligation often leads to deliberate and reflective consumption practices.

However, ethical motivation is also subject to limitations. Some consumers experience cognitive dissonance when their ethical beliefs conflict with practical considerations such as affordability or convenience. This dissonance contributes to the persistence of the attitude-behaviour gap, highlighting the complexity of ethical consumption (Joy et al., 2012).

5.3 Identity and Self-Expression

The findings underscore the importance of identity and self-expression in sustainable fashion consumption. Clothing serves as a symbolic medium through which individuals communicate their values, beliefs, and social identities. Sustainable fashion, in particular, allows consumers to signal their commitment to environmental and ethical causes (Belk, 1988).

This identity-driven motivation is especially prominent among younger consumers, who are more likely to view sustainable consumption as an integral part of their personal and social identity. The desire to be perceived as responsible, conscious, and socially aware influences purchasing decisions, reinforcing the role of symbolic consumption.

Furthermore, sustainable fashion can enhance consumers' sense of authenticity and self-consistency. By aligning their

consumption choices with their values, individuals experience a sense of coherence between their beliefs and actions. This alignment contributes to long-term behavioural commitment.

5.4 Social Influence and Normative Pressure

Social influence is a critical factor shaping consumer motivation. The meta-synthesis reveals that subjective norms, peer influence, and social expectations significantly affect sustainable fashion consumption. Consumers are more likely to adopt eco-friendly practices when they perceive that such behaviours are socially valued or expected (Ajzen, 1991).

Social media platforms play a particularly important role in amplifying these influences. Influencers, celebrities, and online communities contribute to the normalisation of sustainable fashion, making it more visible and desirable. This visibility can create a bandwagon effect, encouraging individuals to conform to emerging social norms.

However, social influence can also have contradictory effects. In some contexts, sustainable fashion may be perceived as niche or elitist, limiting its appeal to broader audiences. This suggests that the impact of social norms is context-dependent and varies across cultural and demographic groups.

5.5 Hedonic Motivation

Hedonic motivation refers to the emotional and experiential aspects of consumption. The findings indicate that consumers derive significant emotional satisfaction from purchasing sustainable fashion, including

feelings of pride, fulfilment, and moral satisfaction (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982).

This emotional gratification plays a crucial role in reinforcing sustainable behaviour. Consumers who associate positive emotions with eco-friendly purchases are more likely to repeat such behaviours, suggesting that emotional rewards can enhance behavioural consistency.

Additionally, the aesthetic appeal of sustainable fashion contributes to hedonic motivation. Contrary to earlier perceptions that eco-friendly clothing lacks style, many consumers now view sustainable fashion as both fashionable and desirable. This shift highlights the importance of design and branding in influencing consumer perceptions.

5.6 Utilitarian Motivation

Utilitarian considerations, such as product quality, durability, and functionality, are equally important in shaping consumer decisions. The meta-synthesis reveals that many consumers prioritise practical benefits when evaluating sustainable fashion products. High-quality materials, longer lifespan, and cost-effectiveness over time are key factors influencing purchase decisions (Shen et al., 2012).

The integration of utilitarian and hedonic motivations is particularly significant. Consumers are more likely to adopt sustainable fashion when products satisfy both emotional and functional needs. This dual motivation underscores the importance of delivering value beyond environmental benefits.

5.7 Structural Barriers and Constraints

Despite strong motivational drivers, several structural barriers hinder sustainable fashion consumption. Price is consistently identified as the most significant barrier, with many consumers perceiving sustainable products as expensive and inaccessible (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Limited availability and lack of accessibility further restrict consumer choices, particularly in regions where sustainable fashion markets are underdeveloped. Additionally, scepticism toward sustainability claims and concerns about greenwashing undermine consumer trust, reducing the likelihood of purchase (Joy et al., 2012).

These barriers highlight the importance of contextual factors in shaping consumer behaviour. Even highly motivated consumers may be unable to act on their intentions due to external constraints, reinforcing the complexity of the attitude-behaviour gap.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion purchases, revealing the interplay between psychological, social, and structural factors. By integrating insights from multiple theoretical frameworks, the discussion offers a deeper interpretation of the mechanisms underlying consumer behaviour and highlights key implications for theory and practice.

6.1 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Value-Belief-Norm theory, and hedonic-utilitarian motivation theory provides a robust framework for understanding sustainable fashion consumption. Each theory contributes a unique perspective, capturing different dimensions of consumer motivation.

The TPB effectively explains the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping behavioural intentions. However, the findings suggest that these components are influenced by deeper value systems and emotional drivers, as emphasised by the VBN and hedonic-utilitarian frameworks.

The VBN theory highlights the importance of moral values and personal norms, demonstrating that ethical considerations play a central role in sustainable consumption. Meanwhile, the hedonic-utilitarian perspective emphasises the dual nature of consumer motivation, showing that both emotional satisfaction and functional benefits are essential for driving behaviour.

The integration of these frameworks addresses the limitations of individual theories, providing a more holistic understanding of consumer decision-making. This multidimensional approach is particularly important in the context of sustainable fashion, where motivations are complex and interconnected.

6.2 The Persistence of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

One of the most significant findings of this study is the persistence of the attitude-behaviour gap. Despite strong environmental and ethical motivations, many consumers fail to translate their intentions into actual purchasing behaviour. This gap can be attributed to several factors, including structural barriers, competing motivations, and contextual constraints (Carrington et al., 2010).

The findings suggest that perceived behavioural control plays a critical role in bridging this gap. When consumers perceive sustainable fashion as accessible and affordable, they are more likely to act on their intentions. Conversely, when barriers such as high prices and limited availability are present, even highly motivated individuals may revert to conventional consumption patterns.

This highlights the need for interventions that address both motivational and structural factors. Simply increasing awareness or promoting ethical values is insufficient; practical barriers must also be reduced to facilitate behavioural change.

6.3 The Role of Identity and Social Influence

Identity and social influence emerge as powerful drivers of sustainable fashion consumption. The findings indicate that consumers use sustainable fashion as a means of expressing their values and aligning with social norms. This reflects the growing importance of symbolic consumption in contemporary society (Belk, 1988).

Social influence operates through multiple channels, including peer networks, social media, and cultural norms. The increasing visibility of sustainable fashion in popular culture has contributed to its normalisation, making it more appealing to a broader audience.

However, the impact of social influence is not uniform. In some contexts, sustainable fashion may still be perceived as niche or exclusive, limiting its adoption. This suggests that efforts to promote sustainable consumption should focus on making it more inclusive and accessible.

6.4 Emotional and Experiential Dimensions

The findings highlight the importance of emotional and experiential factors in driving sustainable fashion consumption. Hedonic motivations, such as enjoyment and satisfaction, play a crucial role in reinforcing behaviour and enhancing consumer engagement.

This challenges the traditional view of sustainable consumption as purely rational or utilitarian. Instead, it suggests that emotional experiences are equally important in shaping consumer behaviour. Marketers and policymakers can leverage this insight by emphasising the positive emotional aspects of sustainable fashion, such as pride and self-expression.

6.5 Practical Implications

The study has several practical implications for stakeholders in the fashion industry. First, brands should focus on delivering both emotional and functional value, ensuring that

sustainable products are not only environmentally friendly but also stylish and high-quality.

Second, efforts should be made to reduce structural barriers, particularly in terms of price and accessibility. This may involve adopting innovative business models, such as rental services or second-hand markets, to make sustainable fashion more affordable.

Third, transparency and trust are critical for building consumer confidence. Brands must provide clear and credible information about their sustainability practices to address concerns about greenwashing.

6.6 Implications for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it also highlights several areas for future research. Cross-cultural studies are needed to examine how consumer motivations vary across different contexts. Additionally, the role of digital technologies and social media in shaping sustainable consumption warrants further investigation.

7. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive qualitative meta-synthesis of consumer motivation in sustainable fashion purchases, integrating findings from diverse secondary studies to develop a multidimensional understanding of consumer behaviour. The results demonstrate that sustainable fashion consumption is driven by a complex interplay of environmental, ethical, social, emotional, and functional motivations. These motivations are not independent; rather, they

interact dynamically to shape consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviours.

Environmental concern and ethical values emerge as foundational drivers, reflecting increasing consumer awareness of the ecological and social impacts of the fashion industry. However, the findings also reveal that these motivations alone are insufficient to ensure consistent behavioural outcomes. The persistence of the attitude-behaviour gap underscores the importance of contextual and structural factors, such as price, accessibility, and perceived credibility of sustainability claims. Even highly motivated consumers may fail to translate their intentions into action when faced with practical constraints.

The integration of theoretical frameworks, specifically the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Value-Belief-Norm theory, and hedonic-utilitarian motivation theory, offers a holistic explanation of consumer decision-making. While cognitive and moral dimensions influence attitudes and norms, emotional and experiential factors play a critical role in reinforcing sustainable consumption. The importance of identity and self-expression further highlights the symbolic nature of fashion, suggesting that sustainable consumption is not only a rational choice but also a reflection of personal and social identity.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that promoting sustainable fashion requires a multifaceted approach. Policymakers and industry stakeholders should focus on reducing structural barriers, enhancing product accessibility, and improving transparency to build consumer trust. At the same time, marketing strategies

should emphasise both the emotional and functional value of sustainable products, aligning them with consumer aspirations and lifestyles.

In conclusion, sustainable fashion consumption represents a significant opportunity for advancing environmental and social sustainability. However, achieving widespread adoption requires a deeper understanding of consumer motivation and the implementation of strategies that bridge the gap between intention and behaviour. Future research should explore cross-cultural variations and the evolving role of digital technologies in shaping sustainable consumption patterns.

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