INFLUENCES ON CONSUMERS' INTENTIONS TO PURCHASE SUSTAINABLE APPAREL PRODUCTS

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Abstract

India must transition to more sustainable consumption practices because the country's fast economic expansion and overconsumption among the world's largest population have caused the environment to deteriorate. Although consumer views are good and the public's interest in sustainability has increased, consumers' behavioral intentions do not align with their attitudes. The purpose of this study is to investigate the views of Indian consumers toward sustainable apparels in order to identify psychological barriers and motivations (consumption ideals, social norms, and attitudes toward SAP). Clothes and textile items add to the massive amount of waste that is found worldwide and fill landfills. The general public's ignorance about sustainable solutions for textile product care, disposal, and recycling accounts for a large portion of the waste generated by the textile industry. This study examined environmental consciousness, consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls to determine their desire to buy eco-friendly clothing intention and to take part in sustainable activities.

Keywords: - Sustainability consciousness, attitude, social norms and social media

1. Introduction

The availability of fast fashion has contributed to the growth in demand for reasonable priced clothing, which has led to excessive purchase by consumers. The second most polluting sector in the world economy is believed to be the fashion industry and environmental damage is increasing because of its expansion (*Jia, F.; Yin, S. 2020 & Muthukumarana, T.T, 2018*). As stated by (Niinimaki et al., 2020). In addition to producing about 92 million tons of waste yearly, the garment sector is responsible for about 20% of industrial wastewater pollution from textile dyeing and finishing and 8% to 10% of carbon dioxide emissions. Fast fashion has, however, lead to a sharp rise in the quantity of clothing produced and thrown away *(Buzzo. A., 2019).* These challenges are being brough to the attention of the textile and fashion supply chain by the growing concerns and expectations of customers for sustainable products that adhere to ecological and social value. Therefore, a growing number of companies have pledged to reduce their adverse impacts on ecosystems and humans *(Islam, M.M, 2020 & Peters G., Li, 2021).*These problems

have recently come to light across the textile and fashion supply chain due to customers' increasing concerns and expectations for sustainable items manufactured in line with ecological and social principles. Consequently, more and more companies have pledged to reduce their adverse impact on ecosystems and societies *(Kutenkoya Z, 2017 & Dabija D, 2019).*

However, the opinions of consumer regarding eco-friendly apparel include sometimes unclear; with their selection of eco-friendly and non-green apparel are frequently influenced by price, functionality, and aesthetics. As a result, consumers' consumption of sustainable clothing is not as extensive as it could be (*Chang, H.J, 2018 & Rahman, O, 2020*). Consequently, it is imperative to ascertain the key variables influencing the intention to acquire sustainable apparels. Renting and purchasing used or recycled apparel are regarded as sustainable options in the field of sustainable apparel consumption, and a growing body of research has identified the connections between consumers' environmental awareness, perceived values, perceived risks, and purchase intentions (*Kim, I.; Jung, H.J, 2021 & Lee, S.E.; Jung, H.J, 2021*). Furthermore, contemporary data indicates that consumers across generations exhibit distinct sustainable purchasing habits because of their varied upbringings and living conditions (*Dabija, D.C, 2019, Ivanova, O, 2019, Gazzola, P, 2020 & Kamenidou, I.E, 2020*). However, there is a lot of uncertainty regarding the relationship between environmental consciousness and buying intention in the market for sustainable apparel, as well as how different generations influence these intents. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural controls, as well as an individual's environmental consciousness, influence their desire to purchase sustainable apparel.

2. Theoretical Framework
2.1 Environmental Consciousness

Environmental Consciousness, together with cognitive, behavioral, and attitude components, are the core components of the complex concept of environmental consciousness (*Kollmuss, A, 2002*). In view of the above, environmental consciousness is a component of belief systems that support psychological effects associated with a propensity to engage in environmentally beneficial conduct (*Zelezny, L.C, 2000*). In the context of sustainable consumption, a few recent research have shown that environmental consciousness has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer choice. (*Lin, S.T.,2018, Golob, U, 2019& Kautish, P, 2019*).

In accordance with studies, price and quality perceptions functioned as a mediator between environmental consciousness and green buying practices (*Wang, J, 2020*). The favorable correlation between consumer views, environmental interested and a desire to purchase clothing made of organic cotton was confirmed by a comparable study (*Hasan, M.M, 2022*). suggested that risk considerations, perceived values, and environmental consciousness are the main indicators of environmental purchasing behavior (*Souza, J.D.L, 2020*). According to study, environmental attitudes influence perceived risk negatively and perceived value positively (*Szabo, S, 2021*).

2.2. Consideration of Sustainability

Research on sustainable concerns is crucial since it has been suggested that these factors are essential before making behavioral changes. These include environmental concerns and sustainability. According to several experts, one of the principal elements affecting sustainable buying behavior is environmental concern, which is defined as a strong attitude toward the protection of the environment (*Murgado-Armenteros, E.M, 2020*). Sustainable consumers care about issues related to the environment, sustainability, and the preservation of both the natural world and humankind. Customers who care about sustainability and the environment consistently support laws and goods designed to protect or enhance it (*Milfont, T.L, 2006*). In other words, customers who are more environmentally conscious will exhibit distinct sustainable purchasing behaviors and are therefore considered to be more environmentally conscious than consumers who are less environmentally concerned (*Stern, P.C, 2000, McDonald, S, 2006 & Young, W, 2010*). However, until consumers feel that their actions may positively impact society and the environment, they will not adopt sustainable consumption practices (*Pieters, R, 1998*). Studies have demonstrated that people's concerns and perceptions about the environment do not necessarily translate into sustainable or pro-environmental behavior (*Tam, K.-P, 2018*). Growing environmental degradation and it's repercussions, global warming, have increased awareness of sustainability's significance. Due to the increased consumer awareness towards sustainable consumption and the consequences of daily purchasing decisions, numerous studies have been conducted (*Murgado-Armenteros, 2020, Fischer, D, 2017, Geels, F.W, 2015 & Pekkanen, T.-L, 2018*)

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
2.1. Consumers' attitude

Consumer attitude and behavior are strongly associated with consumption values. Research indicates that a consumer's decision regarding a brand or product is greatly impacted by useful, communal, sensitive, epistemic, and provisional values (*Sheth, J.N, 1991*). The study of product utilities categorized consumption standards into four categories: economic, societal, hedonic, and altruistic. The subdimensions of ingesting standards utilized in earlier research had somewhat different research frameworks (*Holbrook, M.B, 2005*). According to a study, consumer intents to buy bamboo attire were completely impacted by financial and epistemic standards, but utility and social standards had no discernible influence (*Yoo, J.J, 2013*). Researchers and consultants have thrashed with the disconnect among market share and industry development, and they have turned to attitude-behavior research to find a resolution (*Yamoah, F.A, 2019*). One of the earliest studies on the purchasing of socially responsible clothes discovered an association between attitudes toward sustainable consumption and real attire buying behavior (*Stephens, S.H, 1985*). Since consumers' actual consumptions of sustainable goods do not continuously align with their attitudes toward sustainability, it is critical to comprehend how buy intentions are formed as well as the gap between behavioral and attitude intents (*Carrington, M, 2014*). In everyday life, elements like product design and brand can impact purchase decisions. Consumers that prioritize sustainability

may change their thoughts while making actual purchases. Several research have examined the disconnect between customer beliefs and actions (*Shen, D, 2013*).

2.2. Attitude–behavior gap model

Developed a value scheme and understanding of sustainable customer performance to create the attitude-behavior break model (*Kollmuss, A, 2002*). Created and tested the attitude-behavior intent gap model for green food, which considers social norms, personal beliefs, and involvement. The model's goal is to explain sustainable customer behavior for sustainable food items. Prior research has highlighted the significance of individual values and societal norms in influencing the discrepancy between the behavioral intention and attitude of sustainable consumers (*Vermeir, I, 2006*). A recent study discovered that opinions regarding environmentally friendly clothing had an impact on people's real purchasing behavior for sustainable clothing. The sustainable attitude-behavioral intent gap model used in this study suggests that social norms and individual consumption values play a significant moderating impact on differences in attitudes and behavioral intentions (*Chang, H.J, 2018*).

2.3. Subjective Norm

The perceived social burden from family and friends to engage in a particular conduct is known as a subjective norm. People have an inbuilt need for acceptance, and the views and deeds of important people shape their behavior (*Chung, K, 2016*). Everyone agrees that social environment have a great influence on people's intentions and actions (*Kim, S.H, 2019*). Study notes that a number of studies in the context of sustainable attire usage have demonstrated a favorable association between subjective standards and purchase intent (*Mostafa, M.M, 2009*). To put it another way, consumer education as a social movement has the potential to alter how people behave in terms of their intents and attitudes about purchases. In a study examining the connection between data acquaintance and the purchase of environmentally conscious clothing (*Sonnenberg, N, 2014*).

The TPB's component measuring people's feelings regarding the social compressions they face when participating in specific performances. According to the results of this study, people were more likely to adopt sustainable practices if their counterparts did (*Paul, J, 2015*). Because consumers aspire to appear morally upright to their peers, a behavioral outcome can be strongly predicted by the subjective norm. Therefore, it is anticipated that consumers' intentions to recycle and purchase green products will rely on the subjective norm (*Rex, J, 2015*). One of the main factors manipulating sustainable buying is the societal compression that consumers experience to buy more sustainable products. A stronger influence can be observed when customers seek to project a favorable social image. Subjective norms have therefore had a favorable impact on behavioral intentions for the purchase of sustainable goods (*Liobikiene, G, 2016*). As a result, it has been acknowledged that the idea of social norms plays a substantial part in motivations as well as in the influence and modification of buying behavior of consumers (*Reynolds, K, 2015*).

2.4. Social Media

Social media has emerged as a crucial platform for establishing connections with peers and expanding friendship circles, thereby enhancing communication, especially within peer groups

(*Zhang, J, 2009*). Not only did unconventional social media platforms alter how individuals interacted with their peer clusters, but they also eventually impacted consumer performance (*Shintaro, O, 2009*). However, with social media's rapid growth, clients and their powerful virtual systems are increasingly pouring the discussion, taking charge of the relationship and impacting a business's advertising, sales, and customer service activities (*Baird, C.H, 2011*). By making it simple for individual customers gain product information and develop public forums. Social media has transformed customer decision-making and consumer-retailer communications (*Kozinets, R.V, 2010*). The way consumers make decisions and communicate with retailers has been altered by social media. More significantly, social media peer communication has a big impact on how consumers make decisions (*Shintaro, 2009*).

Reaching customers through content-related social media marketing remains a crucial chance (*Ramanathan, U, 2017*). Nonetheless, there is a chance to explore how consumers interact with sustainable messaging on social media, particularly Instagram, to pinpoint the most effective marketing strategies for fashion brands. Given that customers have uttered a superior attention in social and ecological sustainability subjects, this is an appropriate opportunity (*Chery, D, 2020*). Even though it's not the major social media system, Instagram is extensively observed as the most significant channel for fashion brand messaging (*O'Connor, T. 2018*). On social media, it accounts for half of all fashion posts. The popularity of Instagram shows how crucial it is to conduct fashion marketing research on this site.

2.5. Perceived Behavioral Controls

The term perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to how easy or difficult an action appears to be to perform. Resources, talents, and capacities to accomplish the desired end are only a few of the many elements that need to be controlled to achieve the behavior. Someone's behavioral intention for an activity lower if they believe they have less control over the outcome (*Chung, K, 2016*). The study found that clients were more expected to take pricing and functionality features into account than environmental concerns when acquiring ESA (*Sonnenberg, N, 2014*). Convenience and price have been identified as the two main factors that impact PBC when making product purchases. Sustainable products need to be reasonably priced and easily accessible for consumers to choose them. The increased cost of eco-friendly items may discourage buyers. On the other hand, it has been shown that buyers are willing to pay more for goods of a higher caliber than alternatives. Brand awareness contributes to the choice of environmentally friendly products. The perceived environmental benefit is the main factor driving green consumption, even with the higher price tag (*Liobikiene, G, 2016*).

Several factors, including perceived inconvenience, time and resource costs, were found to represent perceived behavior control in previous research (*Wang, P, 2014*). According to Camilla and Patrick, buying intentions for environmentally friendly products are frequently inversely correlated with perceived inconvenience (*Camilla, B, 2016*). Solider perceived performance control is associated with a extra favorable intent to buy green attire, as revealed by Bong and Jin (*Bong, K.S, 2017*).

2.6.Theory of Planned Behavior in Purchase Intention for Sustainable apparel

The public's concern for environmental protection has grown throughout time because of increasingly serious environmental issues, and it is widely accepted that human activity has a significant influence on the environment. According to this theory, the desire of individuals to engage in specific behaviors, like buying sustainable apparel, are explained by a set of cognitions that are influenced by media messages that provide information about those behaviors (e.g., social media and publication contented on purchasing sustainable attire).

This intention then forecasts the tendency of individuals to carry out that action (such as purchasing eco-friendly clothing (*Orpha de Lenne, 2017*). The collection of cognitions consists of norms, attitudes, and beliefs in an individual's competence. A consumer's attitudes toward purchasing sustainable clothing indicate how much they believe that doing so will lead to positive outcomes (*Ajzen, 1991*). Subjective standards about sustainable clothing can be distinct as the motivation to buy sustainable clothing and the pressure to do so from friends, family, and coworkers, among other members of the social environment.

The literature has emphasized the significance of descriptive standards in influencing one's intents, even if the concept of planned conduct individual takes subjective standards into account. (*Connell and Kozar, 2012*). Finally, the grade to which people trust they can buy sustainable attires when they set out to do so is known as their self-efficacy views regarding sustainable apparel (*Ajzen, 1991*). Affording to the theory of planned behavior, media exposure influences the cognitions that influence behavioral intentions and subsequent conduct. In reference to the first belief, investigate employing the model of planned behavior has substantiated the consequence of attitudes and standards in explaining the intent to buying sustainable clothes.

According to a survey study by Kang, Liu, and Kim (2013), attitudes (thinking that one's purchases could have an impact on the environment) and subjective norms (thinking that one's social environment valued ethical consumption) were factors that positively predicted the intention of male and female college students (18–29 years old) to buy sustainable clothing. In a survey of men and women (18 years and older), Cowan 485 Sustainable apparel buying intention and Kinley (2014) discovered that attitudes (i.e., environmental concerns) and subjective norms to behave green strongly influenced people's intention to buy ethical fashion. According to both research, self-efficacy beliefs were not statistically significant.
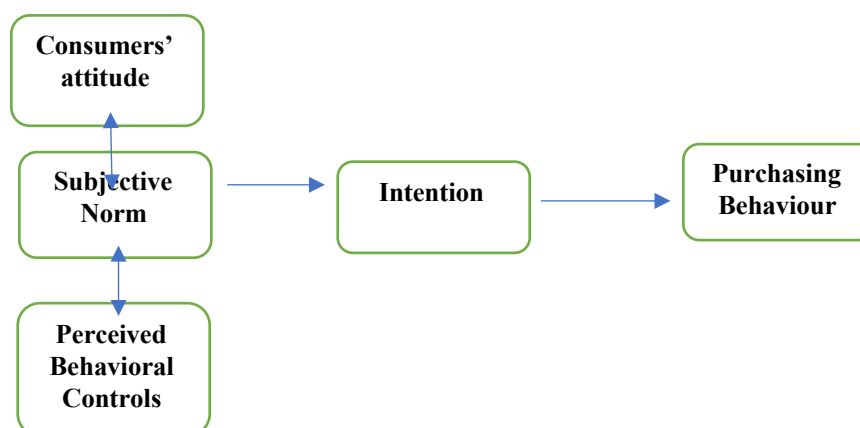
Figer 1: – Proposed model based on Theory of Planned Behaviour (TBP) (Ajzen, 1991)

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is the process that gathers information. systematic, scientific investigation to find appropriate information. In research, data analysis is common. Research, as to the Improvement Learner's Wordbook of Present English, is "A diligent investigation or inquiry, especially through search for fresh fact in any sort of knowledge." Including descriptive and quantitative research. To properly represent a situation, data is collected.

A comprehensive survey was conducted with respondents from a wide range of industries. There were 150 responders from a range of industries. Using these methods, questionnaires developed based on scientific method for the purpose of gathering primary data. To enhance the research deliberately sampling method used to produce a questionnaire survey that was completed by 150 employees from various organizations. Both primary and secondary data were gathered for the study. A standardized survey was used for this research. To obtain general information on the chosen, secondary data from readily available sources across numerous industries was utilized.

Table 1:

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	MEAN (X)	SD
Age for Respondent			1.85	.938
Below 25	75	50.0		
(26-35)	51	34.0		
(36-45)	13	8.7		
Above 45.	11	7.3		
Gender for Respondent			1.99	.281
Male	72	48		
Female	78	52		
Marital Status for Respondent			1.72	.551
Single	11	7.3		
Married	139	92.7		
Educational Qualification for Respondent			2.66	.697
Certificate	9	6.0		
Diploma	61	40.7		
UG	72	48.0		
PG	8	5.3		
Experience for Respondent			2.46	1.150
Below 1yr	49	32.7		
2-5yrs	43	28.7		
5-10yrs	30	20.0		
Above 10yrs	28	18.7		
Income (Salary) / PA for Respondent			1.62	.972
Bel 4L	116	77.3		
4.1L-8L	17	11.3		
8.1L-12L	11	7.3		
12.1L-16L	2	1.3		
Above 16L.	4	2.7		

Table 1: The majority (50%) of respondents are under 25. A large chunk (34%) is 26–35. Only 8.7% are 36–45 years old and 7.3% are above 45. Its mean age is 1.85 and its standard deviation is 0.938, indicating a young group with some variety. The survey's 52% female and 48% male population is fairly balanced. The mean gender value is 1.99, and the standard deviation is 0.281, indicating a near-even split. The majority (92.7%) are married, while another 7.3% are single. This shows that most members are married. The standard deviation is 0.551, while the mean marital status is 1.72. The respondents' educational backgrounds are varied but overwhelmingly higher. Most hold undergraduate degrees (48%) or diplomas (40.7%). Certificates (6%) and postgraduate degrees (5.3%) are rarer. Different yet high education levels are indicated by the mean qualification level of 2.66 and the standard deviation of 0.697. Professional experience

ranges, with 32.7% having less than a year. Others are 2–5 years (28.7%), 5–10 years (20%), or above 10 years (18.7%). Moderate experience variance is indicated by the mean of 2.46 and the standard deviation of 1.150. Majority of respondents (77.3%) earn below 4 lakhs per year, while smaller numbers earn 4.1–8 lakhs (11.3%), 8.1–12 lakhs (7.3%), 12.1–16 lakhs (1.3%), and above 16 lakhs (2.7%). The mean income is 1.62 and the standard deviation is 0.972, indicating a low-income concentration.

TABLE 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.816
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1878.980
	Df	351
	Sig.	.000

Table 2: KMO = 0.816, suggesting high sampling adequacy. Since a number above 0.8 is good, factor analysis may work effectively with this data. The dataset's variables are correlated enough for this analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed a significant result with a chi-square value of 1878.980, df of 351, and Sig. of 0.000. This shows that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, confirming that the variables are related and validating the data for factor analysis.

Table 3: The table indicates that 27 components were extracted, with their corresponding eigenvalues and explained variance. Initially, 7 components had eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for a total cumulative variance of 65.329%. The first component alone explains 31.039% of the variance, while the subsequent components contribute progressively less. This suggests that the data's variability is spread across several dimensions but is primarily driven by the first few components.

TABLE 3

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.380	31.039	31.039	8.380	31.039	31.039	5.531	20.486	20.496
2	3.034	11.237	42.275	3.034	11.237	42.275	4.540	16.813	37.289
3	1.479	5.478	47.753	1.479	5.478	47.753	1.707	6.324	43.663

4	1.322	4.897	52.650	1.322	4.897	52.650	1.674	6.202	49.855
5	1.222	4.526	57.176	1.222	4.526	57.176	1.487	5.508	55.363
6	1.139	4.219	61.395	1.139	4.219	61.395	1.382	5.120	60.474
7	1.062	3.934	65.329	1.062	3.934	65.329	1.316	4.876	65.349
8	.983	3.641	68.970						
9	.799	2.958	71.928						
10	.787	2.914	74.842						
11	.697	2.583	77.425						
12	.653	2.418	79.844						
13	.606	2.243	82.087						
14	.540	2.002	84.088						
15	.517	1.915	86.003						
16	.463	1.714	87.717						
17	.458	1.697	89.414						
18	.429	1.588	91.002						
19	.406	1.504	92.506						
20	.350	1.295	93.801						
21	.335	1.241	95.042						
22	.311	1.153	96.195						
23	.285	1.054	97.249						
24	.265	.982	98.231						
25	.189	.699	98.931						
26	.166	.614	99.545						
27	.123	.455	100.000						

Table 4 presents the FA findings. The factor loadings varied from 0.857 to 0.502. The findings reveal seven critical factors influencing sustainable clothing purchases, ranging from social and societal influence to personal confidence, financial capacity, and environmental priorities. These insights can guide targeted strategies for promoting sustainable clothing, such as improving affordability, raising awareness, and addressing accessibility issues. This study interpreted features using components with significant loadings of 0.50 or above.

TABLE 4

Rotated Component Matrix							
	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Buying sustainable clothes is encouraged by the environmental groups I follow.	.745						
25. The price tag of sustainable apparel is reasonable and appropriate.	.712						
26. Discounts and promotions have a big impact on my choice to purchase sustainable clothing.	.703						
24. Price plays a significant role in my choice of sustainable clothes.	.694						
16. My friends and relatives believe that I should buy eco-friendly clothing.	.684						
23. Compared to conventional clothing, I am willing to spend more on sustainable clothing.	.681						
21. A large number of people I know buy sustainable clothes.	.651						
27. I prefer non-sustainable clothing to sustainable ones because they are less expensive.	.639						
19. I'm inspired to purchase eco-friendly clothing by social media influencers.	.626						
17. Those who are important to me support buying eco-friendly clothing	.626						
20. Buying environmentally friendly clothing is valued in my society.	.614	.508					
4. My purchase decisions are influenced by brands that promote sustainability.		.728					
6. When selecting apparel, I look for sustainable fashion certifications.		.706					
5. Fair wages and ethical labor standards are examples of a brand's social responsibility that favorably		.674					
14. I can't buy eco-friendly clothing because of outside issues like higher prices or limited availability.		.672					

	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I believe that I can influence my ability to support sustainable fashion by making wise purchases.	.626					
12. I am familiar with brands that sell eco-friendly clothing.	.558					
7. I consider environmental factors when making decisions about buying clothes.	.513					
9. I have trust in my ability to recognize and choose sustainable clothing items.		.800				
8. Fashion influencers have an impact on my choice to buy sustainable clothes.	.502	.531				
2. Brands that support sustainability affect my purchasing decisions.			.647			
15. I have no issues finding information regarding sustainable clothing products.			.575			
3. I spend extra on brands of clothing that follow sustainable standards.			.570			
11. I have the funds to purchase sustainable clothing.				.793		
10. The stores where I buy have a lot of sustainable clothing items.						
18. The public expects consumers to buy eco-friendly clothing.					.821	
1. I consider the use of sustainable materials to be vital when buying apparel.						.857

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Apparel firms are reacting to consumer expectations for environmentally and socially responsible products by altering their old business methods, being more transparent, and providing ecologically friendly and socially conscious clothing (*Song, 2017*). Sustainable attire purchasing intent was also inclined by attitudes. Even though earlier works frequently originate a gap between attitudes and the behavioral intents *(Carrington et al., 2010)*. Unfortunately, sustainable apparel consumption habits have not yet materialized despite customers' interest in and awareness of sustainable clothing. Using the idea of planned behavior, the current study filled this knowledge gap by demonstrating how social media exposure might influence consumers' attitudes, social norms and perceived control behaviour about buying sustainable clothing. According to research by Hye Jung Jung (2020), customers who follow more social standards are more likely to have favourable opinions and plans about sustainable clothing. Customers who scored highly in the aesthetic area also showed more favourable opinions on sustainable items, according to our findings. Choosing sustainable practices and solutions is influenced by people like family and

friends. Customers who are unconcerned about sustainability, however, will recycle less and take part in less sustainable activities. More people must find it convenient to adopt more sustainable behaviours if there is to be any significant change. Customers might also be unaware of the long-term advantages, including any possible drawbacks, if sustainable methods are not extensively embraced (Ana La Rosa, 2021).

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