

A Systematic Literature Review of Consumer Attitude towards Sustainable Fashion

Shujie Wang, Siti Hasnah Hassan

School of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang 11800, Malaysia

Email: wangshujie@student.usm.my

Corresponding Author Email: siti.hassan@usm.my

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Abstract

With the environmental pollution caused by the development of the fashion industry, consumers' attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption have also attracted attention. Consumer attitudes are not only related to individual sustainable consumption choices but also directly affect the development of the sustainable fashion market. Therefore, understanding and promoting consumers' attitudes has become an important topic for sustainable marketing. This study aims to systematically review and analyze consumer purchasing attitudes in sustainable fashion, including its concepts, antecedent variables, and outcome influence. By studying the existing research results, we can better understand how consumer attitudes are formed and affect their consumption outcomes, thus providing theoretical guidance and practical suggestions for sustainable fashion marketing. This study used a literature review approach to increase the understanding of consumer attitudes in the field of sustainable fashion. The main findings include the multidimensional influencing factors of consumer attitudes and the effect of attitudes on purchase intention. Future research can explore consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion from other perspectives, including cultural differences, interdisciplinary approaches, and emerging technologies.

Keywords: Sustainable Fashion, Purchase Attitude, Purchase Intention, Environmental Concern, Perceived Value

Introduction

Under the background of increasingly severe global environmental problems, sustainable development has become a common goal pursued by various fields. As an important part of the global economy, the fashion industry has a significant impact on environmental development and plays an important role in the sustainable development goals (UN Alliance, 2022). Sustainable fashion emerged to achieve economic, environmental and social sustainability by reducing the negative impact of the fashion industry on the environment and society (Farzin et al., 2023). As the core driving force of the fashion industry, consumers'

purchasing attitude towards sustainable fashion plays a crucial role in guiding the development direction of the industry. In-depth research on consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion and their impact on consumer sustainable fashion consumption will not only help reveal the key factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions, but also provide a scientific basis for fashion companies to develop more effective marketing strategies.

In recent years, with the continuous deepening of the concept of sustainable development, many scholars have paid great attention to the attitude of consumers in the context of sustainable fashion. Existing research has explored the influencing factors and results of consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion from a number of different perspectives (Nicolau et al., 2024; Su et al., 2023; Tandon et al., 2023; Yadav et al., 2022). However, the current research on consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion still has some shortcomings, among which the more prominent problem is the lack of systematic research results. Specifically, the conclusions drawn by different studies are scattered and fail to form a coherent and unified conclusion to comprehensively explain the formation mechanism of consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion and its comprehensive impact on consumer sustainable fashion consumption. This lack of systematization makes us face confusion in understanding consumer behavior in the field of sustainable fashion.

The importance of this study includes both theoretical and practical contributions. At the theoretical level, this study systematically sorts the relevant literature on consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion, and comprehensively summarizes the influencing factors of consumer attitudes and its resulting effects. This analysis deepens the understanding of consumer attitudes in sustainable contexts, fills a gap in the existing literature on consumer attitudes and their impact outcomes, and provides directions for future research. At the practical level, the results provide a scientific basis for fashion companies to develop more targeted sustainability strategies, especially in shaping consumer attitudes. At the same time, this study provides empirical support for policy makers, which can help optimize green consumption policies and promote the fashion industry to transform to sustainable development.

Therefore, this paper aims to systematically review the relevant literature on consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion, sort out the influencing factors and results of consumer attitudes, provide scientific marketing strategy suggestions for sustainable fashion enterprises, and promote the long-term development of the sustainable fashion industry.

Methodology

This study adopts the literature review method, which is the process by which the researcher identifies, analyzes, evaluates and synthetically the existing research and intertwines the different literatures (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). In the process of research, literature related to consumer attitudes in the field of sustainable fashion in the past 10 years (2015-2024) was retrieved through databases such as Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar, and VOSviewer software was used to create visualization graphs. The literature closely related to the content of this study is shown in the figure.

5	2018	Application of Motivation-Opportunity-Ability Theory in the Consumption of Eco-fashion Products: Were Chinese Consumers Underestimated?	Ruirui Zhang, Chunmin Lang
6	2018	Determinants of Organic Cotton Apparel Purchase: A Comparison of Young Consumers in the U.S.A. and South Korea	Tae-Im Han
7	2019	Social media and Chinese consumers' environmentally sustainable apparel purchase intentions	Li Zhao, Stacy H. Lee, Lauren Reiter Copeland
8	2019	Consumer Purchase Behavior of Eco-Fashion Clothes As a Trend to Reduce Clothing Waste	Marzie Hatef Jalil, Siti Shukhaila Shaharuddin
9	2019	Investigating male consumers' lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS) and perception toward slow fashion	Jihyun Sunga, Hongjoo Woo
10	2019	Sustainable clothing: perspectives from US and Chinese young Millennials	Jin Su and Kittichai (Tu), Jianheng Zhou, Maria Gil
11	2020	Influencing Factors of Chinese Consumers' Purchase Intention to Sustainable Apparel Products: Exploring Consumer "Attitude-Behavioral Intention" Gap	Hye Jung Jung, Yun Jung Choi, Kyung Wha Oh
12	2021	Consumers' Value and Risk Perceptions of Circular Fashion: Comparison between Secondhand, Upcycled, and Recycled Clothing	Inhwa Kim, Hye Jung Jung, Yuri Lee
13	2021	Bridge the gap: Consumers' purchase intention and behavior regarding sustainable clothing	Theresa Maria Rausch, Cristopher Siegfried Kopplin
14	2021	Organic Cotton Clothing Purchase Behavior: A Comparative Study of Consumers in the United States and Bangladesh	Md Nakib Ul Hasan, Chuanlan Liu and Bulbul Ahmed
15	2021	Influences on Consumer Engagement with Sustainability and the Purchase Intention of Apparel Products	Ana La Rosa, Jennifer Johnson Jorgensen
16	2021	Understanding purchase intention towards ecofriendly clothing for generation Y & Z	Muhammad Abrar, Muhammad Muzummil Sibtain, Rizwan Shabbir
17	2021	A study of U.S. consumers' intention to purchase slow fashion apparel: understanding the key determinants	Ting Chi, Jenisha Gerard, Yuhfen Yu, Yuanting Wang
18	2021	MILLENNIAL CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION FOR ECO-FASHION APPAREL: A STUDY FROM SOUTHERN CHINA	Bing Zhu
19	2021	The importance of knowledge and trust for ethical fashion consumption	Yongdan Liu, Matthew Tingchi Liu, Andrea Perez, Wilco Chan, Jesus Collado, Ziyang Mo
20	2022	Predicting consumers' intentions to purchase eco-friendly athletic wear in a moderated model of individual green values and gender	Nisar Ahmed Channa, Beenish Tariq, Altaf Hussain Samo, Niaz Hussain Ghumro, Naveed Akhtar Qureshi

21	2022	Theory of planned behavior, ethics and intention of conscious consumption in Slow Fashion Consumption	Jordana Soares de Lira, Marconi Freitas da Costa
22	2022	Green perceived value and intention to purchase sustainable apparel among Gen Z: The moderated mediation of attitudes	Nupur Arora, Parul Manchanda
23	2022	Pro-environmental purchase intention towards eco-friendly apparel: Augmenting the theory of planned behavior with perceived consumer effectiveness and environmental concern	Nishant Kumar, Pratibha Garg, Shailender Singh
24	2022	Sustainable Fashion and Consumption Patterns in Peru: An Environmental-Attitude-Intention-Behavior Analysis	Luigi Leclercq-Machado, Aldo Alvarez-Risco, Romina Gómez-Prado, Berdy Brigitte Cuya-Velásquez, Sharon Esquerre-Botton, Flavio Morales-Ríos, Camila Almanza-Cruz, Sarahit Castillo-Benancio, Maria de las Mercedes Anderson-Seminario, Shyla Del-Aguila-Arcentales, Jaime A. Yáñez
25	2022	Why do consumers buy recycled shoes? An amalgamation of the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior	Sher Singh Yadav, Sanjay Kumar Kar, Prashant Kumar Rai
26	2023	Drivers of green apparel consumption: Digging a little deeper into green apparel buying intentions	Anushree Tandon, Juthamon Sithipolvanichgul, Fahad Asmi, Muhammad Azfar Anwar, Amandeep Dhir
27	2023	Regenerated Cellulose Fibers (RCFs) for Future Apparel Sustainability: Insights from the U.S. Consumers	Ting Chi, Anastasia Frattali, Hang Liu, Yini Chen
28	2023	Sustainable apparel: a perspective from Bangladesh's young consumers	Jin Su, Md Arif Iqbal, Farhan Haque, Maeen Md Khairul Akter
29	2023	Intention to Purchase Eco-Friendly Handcrafted Fashion Products for Gifting and Personal Use: A Comparison of National and Foreign Consumers	Dindin Saepudin, Alireza Shabani Shojaei, Belem Barbosa, and Isabel Pedrosa
30	2024	The role of Eco-shame in shaping Behavioural Purchase Intentions toward sustainable fashion consumption	Luiza Gonçalves Ferreira Nicolau, Juliana Maria Magalhaes Christino, Erico Aurelio Abreu Cardozo, Frederico Leocadio Ferreira

Definition Development of Sustainable Fashion and Consumer Attitude

Solomon (2017), believed that fashion is a complex process that operates on multiple levels, and fashion products are aesthetic objects that reflect cultural and artistic traditions and history. Mo and Hue (2021), defined the scope of fashion products as clothing, shoes, handbags and accessories. Because the field of fashion is so widely studied, researchers have mixed the terms sustainable fashion with ethical fashion, eco-fashion, green fashion, and circular fashion. Paige (2021), believed that sustainable fashion has different names in different eras. The 2000s were green fashion and eco-fashion, while the mid-2010s were more known as eco-friendly and sustainable fashion. Assoune (2022), argued that eco-fashion, also known as sustainable fashion, involves all aspects of the production process, supply chain and consumption, materials made from renewable resources, waste management, recycling and fair working conditions. Kim and Suh (2022), argued that sustainable fashion runs through the whole life cycle of fashion products, including the environmental impact of product processing, transportation, use and disposal, as well as the moral impact on labor and society. Tran et al. (2022), defined eco-friendly or green fashion as clothing and accessories produced with minimal use of chemicals, pesticides or toxic pigments, which can significantly reduce the ecological footprint.

Researchers have different understandings of attitudes depending on the different research objectives. Rosenberg (1960a), reported a structural theory of attitude dynamics, imagining attitudes as consisting of cognitive and emotional components. In another study by this author, the author defined attitude as the tendency to respond in a particular way to a particular category of objects (Rosenberg, 1960). Rokeach (1970) believed that attitude is a relatively persistent organization composed of interrelated beliefs, which are used to describe, evaluate and advocate action on an object or situation. Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) believed that attitude represents a person's overall feeling of liking or disliking a certain stimulus object. In research related to consumer behavior, Ahmed et al. (2021) considered attitudes as general and specific terms that consumers like and dislike when making product or service decisions. Kumar et al. (2022), believed that consumer attitude refers to the feelings and beliefs of purchasing decisions on environmentally friendly products due to ecological consequences. Carrión et al. (2023), believed that attitude is an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior. Based on the research context of this study, consumer attitudes can be understood as the positive or negative evaluation of consumer purchasing behavior for sustainable fashion products.

Previous Research on Antecedent Variables of Consumer Attitude

This study focuses on examining the antecedent variables that influence consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion products to gain insight into the psychological mechanisms of consumers in purchasing sustainable fashion products. According to the literature, it is concluded that consumer attitudes are affected by different factors.

Consumer subjective norms in the context of sustainable fashion are closely linked to attitudes towards sustainable fashion products. Subjective norms reflect the consumer's behavioral orientation and decision influencing factors in the social environment, and it represents the perception of significant others about what one should or should not do (Nosi et al., 2020). When carrying out sustainable fashion behaviors, consumers feel greater pressure from related groups, and can better understand the opinions of reference persons

than when purchasing traditional goods (Bong & Jin, 2017). When consumers clearly feel greater pressure from significant others to buy sustainable fashion products, they will be more motivated to buy sustainable fashion products. The results of numerous studies show a positive relationship between subjective norms of consumers and attitudes towards sustainable fashion products (Jung et al., 2020; Li et al., 2019; Lira & Costa, 2022; Yadav et al., 2022).

Consumer knowledge about sustainable fashion is closely related to attitudes towards sustainable fashion products. This impact is first reflected in consumers' understanding of sustainable fashion consumption, and they realize how sustainable fashion supports the sustainability movement, so they are more inclined to green consumption (Chi et al., 2021). The knowledge structure of consumers is also closely related to their understanding of the textile production process and the ecological impact caused by textile waste. As consumers become more aware of these issues, they gradually form a more positive attitude towards environmental protection, making them more likely to buy green clothing (Abrar et al., 2021). In addition, clothing sustainability related knowledge forms the basis of consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion. Having a high level of knowledge can help consumers realize the environmental significance of their purchase behavior, thus strengthening their positive attitude (Su et al., 2019). Studies by several scholars have shown that there is a positive relationship between consumers' knowledge and attitudes towards sustainable fashion products (Abrar et al., 2021; Chi et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2021; Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021).

The perceived value of sustainable fashion products by consumers is closely related to attitudes towards sustainable fashion products. When consumers perceive sustainable products as qualitatively superior to conventional products, they are more inclined to choose these green products. This focus on quality has led consumers to form a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion (Arora & Manchanda, 2022). Consumers pursue individuation and self-expression, and hope to reshape their unique fashion style through sustainable fashion products, while caring about the balance between price and quality (Zhu, 2021). In addition, the three dimensions of perceived value, quality/emotion, price and social value, play a significant role in the purchase decision of consumers. As consumers' perceived value of products in these dimensions increases, their attitude towards sustainable fashion products also increases (Sung & Woo, 2019). Studies by several scholars have shown that there is a positive relationship between the perceived value and the attitude towards sustainable fashion products (Arora & Manchanda, 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Su et al., 2019; Sung & Woo, 2019; Zhu, 2021).

Consumer environmental concerns are closely related to attitudes towards sustainable fashion. Consumers who harbor environmental concerns tend to hold positive attitudes toward green purchases. For these eco-oriented consumers, their environmental concerns are strong enough to override repeated considerations of self-efficacy or personal norms and thus prompt them to adopt more positive green attitudes (Tandon et al., 2023). As the environment continues to degrade, consumers are becoming more aware of environmental issues and increasingly aware of the impact that human actions have on the planet. This awareness makes them more positive towards sustainable products such as clothing and thus more inclined to buy such products (Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022). In addition, consumers

who consider themselves socially and environmentally responsible will generally show a relatively positive attitude towards sustainable fashion products (Zhang & Lang, 2018). Studies by several scholars have shown a positive relationship between consumer environmental concerns and attitudes towards sustainable fashion (Kumar et al., 2022; Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022; Rausch & Kopplin, 2021).

Previous Research on Outcome Variables of Consumer Attitude

The impact of consumer attitudes on purchase intentions has been extensively studied in the field of sustainable fashion. Consumers' purchasing attitude towards sustainable fashion has a significant positive effect on their purchase intention. When consumers have a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion, this attitude will profoundly influence their purchase intention and prompt them to deeply integrate the concept of sustainability into all aspects of their daily consumption decisions. A positive attitude makes consumers pay more attention to the positive significance of products for the environment and society in their purchasing decisions, reinforcing their intention to purchase sustainable fashion products. Because they realize that the purchase behavior is the embodiment of being responsible for the ecological and social development of the earth, every purchase may push the fashion industry to develop in a more sustainable direction, which makes their purchase intention for sustainable fashion products stronger (Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022). This positive attitude also makes consumers regard products as a key factor to improve their quality of life, and they firmly believe that sustainable fashion products can bring unique use experience under environmental attributes, so they are more willing to translate their purchase intention into practical actions (Arora & Manchanda, 2022).

Consumers firmly believe that choosing sustainable fashion products is an important investment in the future, which further enhances their purchase intention and makes them willing to pay a reasonable price for sustainable fashion products because they fully believe that these products are of higher quality and value (Zhu, 2021). Moreover, positive attitudes prompt consumers to actively seek out and deeply understand sustainable fashion brands and products, further consolidating and strengthening purchase intentions. Many studies have shown that positive consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion are positively and significantly related to purchase intention (Arora & Manchanda, 2022; Carfora et al., 2021; Hasan et al., 2022; Jalil & Shaharuddin, 2019; Rosa & Jorgensen, 2021).

Conclusion

This literature review shows that consumer knowledge, environmental concerns, perceived values and subjective norms are important antecedents of consumer attitudes in the context of sustainable fashion. The higher the consumer's knowledge about sustainable fashion, the more concerned about environmental issues, the greater the perceived value and the stronger the subjective normative influence, the more positive the attitude towards sustainable fashion. Positive consumer attitudes, in turn, significantly affect purchase intentions. This provides a direction for the fashion industry to promote sustainable development, and consumer education, product value enhancement, and normative guidance should be strengthened to promote sustainable fashion consumption.

Limitations and Future Work

Based on the collection and analysis of a large amount of literature, this paper provides a systematic review of the definition of consumer attitudes and its outcome result, which provides a theoretical background for research in the field of sustainable fashion. This paper summarizes the main research and results related to consumer attitudes to help researchers understand the state of the current research and important results in this field and provide a reference for further research. Despite the extensive search approach, this review mainly focuses on summarizing the antecedents and outcome variables of consumer attitudes. As consumer attitude is a complex concept, affected by cultural differences, individual environmental differences and other factors, this paper cannot include all factors that may affect consumer attitude in the field of sustainable fashion, and there is still space for further research in the future.

Future research can explore consumer attitudes in sustainable fashion in depth from the following aspects. First of all, the differences in consumer attitudes in different countries and cultural backgrounds are worth further exploration. Secondly, an interdisciplinary approach can be adopted to integrate theories and methods from psychology, sociology and other fields to more fully understand the nature of consumer attitudes and the mechanisms that influence them. In addition, given the characteristics of sustainable fashion products as an emerging category, research can also focus on emerging methods such as big data analysis and artificial intelligence to provide new ideas for improving the positive attitude of consumers and optimizing the marketing strategies of fashion enterprises.

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