UNRAVELING THE MIND: PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the psychological factors that encourage the consumers intentions and behaviours while making purchases related to sustainable fashion. As the fashion industry faces extreme pressure to adopt eco-friendly practices, understanding the reason behind customers' purchasing habits when it comes to choosing or avoiding sustainable options is extremely crucial for promoting lasting change. This study examines key psychological determinants such as motivation, social influencer alongside perceived barriers that shape sustainable fashion consumption. Environmental awareness, ethical concerns and the desire for self-expression are some of the motivations that play a significant role in driving consumers toward eco-conscious purchases. Social influence, including peer pressure and societal trends can also impact these decisions as individuals tend to align their fashion choices with their values and expectations of others. Perceived barriers such as high costs, availability and lack of knowledge about sustainability can also deter the consumers from adopting sustainable fashion. The major goal of this research is to identify how these psychological drivers interact and influence the behaviours of the vast majority of consumers. Through analysing existing studies and surveys, the paper helps us provide a comprehensive overview of these factors that either encourage or hinder the adoption of sustainable fashion in the industry. Findings have suggested that addressing consumer misconceptions, improving affordability and fostering of positive social norms are some of the few ways to ensure the enhancing the adoption of eco friendly practises. Throughout this paper, insights into how the fashion industry can be better connected with consumers' psychological motivations to promote sustainability and make responsible fashion choices more accessible and appealing can be seen.

Keywords: *Sustainability, Fashion,COVID-19 Pandemic, Consumers, Sustainable Consumption, Consumer Psychology.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the largest contributors to environmental degradation is the fashion industry, with its excessive waste, pollution and unsustainable production practices. As the awareness surrounding environmental and ethical issues grows, there has been increasing demand for more sustainable fashion options [1-4]. Despite this there is still only a small fraction of the overall market showcased by sustainable fashion. Many consumers still continue to gravitate towards fast fashion, which offers cheap, trendy clothing at the expensive of the environment and workers' rights [5]. Understanding the psychological drivers behind sustainable fashion consumption has become a crucial area of research, as it offers insights into why consumers make the choices they do and how to encourage more eco-conscious purchasing habits. The idea behind this paper is to dive deeper into the psychological determinants that predict consumers intentions and behaviours regarding sustainable fashion [6]. The paper explores motivations, social influence and perceived barriers and their impact on shaping decisions and considers how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced these factors [6]. By examining how consumer psychology has evolved during and after the pandemic, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how fashion brands, policy creators can better understand and connect

with the users to encourage consumer values and sustainable practices in the fashion industry.

Clothing that is produced in a way to minimize environmental impact and promote ethical practices- refers to sustainable fashion [2]. This includes eco-friendly materials, reducing waste and pollution and ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions for garment workers. This concept in fashion is a sign of circularity as well, meaning products are designed to last for a longer time period, can end up being reused, can end up being recycled and also that they contribute to a closely-loop system rather than ending up somewhere in the landfills [2]. As the fashion industry continues to face criticism for its environmental footprint, the requirement for more and more sustainable options has become very high [4]. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the fashion industry is one of the industries that is responsible for approx [2]. 10% of the global carbon emissions and it also produces up to 92 million tons of water waste every year [8]. This is extremely alarming for customers, leading to higher amount of awareness and a very broad and vast interest shown by consumers for sustainable fashion. However, despite this awareness, the gap between consumers intentions and actions remains to be very large . Many consumers show a desire to make more and more sustainable choices, but their purchasing behaviours often shows otherwise [12].

The study of how individuals make decisions on what they want to purchase, why they make that purchase and how other factors influence their purchases is called consumer psychology. Some of these factors includes motivations, such as environmental concerns and ethical values as well as external influences, like social norms and marketing messages and pop ups [8]. Perceived barriers also play a huge role, such as the cost of clothing or the availability of clothing, can prevent consumers from following through on their intentions to purchase more eco friendly fashion. One of the most important ideas to understand for creating a sustainable fashion consumer base is to understand the impact of psychological determinants for creating strategies. For example, many consumers are seen to be motivated by the desire to express their values and identities through their clothing choices. For some people buying sustainable fashion is a good way to demonstrate the commitment to environmental and social causes [10]. On the other hand, some people may also be discouraged by the higher price of 'sustainable' clothing or by the perception that eco-friendly options are less fashionable or lesser accessible. By identifying these key drivers behind sustainable fashion consumption, policy creators, businesses and brands can develop more and more efficient ways to promote eco-conscious fashion choices [10]. This might involve the addressing of the perceived barriers to sustainable fashion or creating marketing campaigns that appeal to the consumers' values and sense of identity [1] [10]. Primary motivators driving sustainable fashion has it's number one primary

factor reserved as environmental concern [10]. As consumers grow more and more aware of the environmental impact of their choices, many are seeking ways to reduce their carbon footprint and shift towards making more responsible decisions [12]. For consumers like this, buying sustainable fashion represents a more tangible way to contribute to environmental protection.

They might be drawn to firms that support environmentally beneficial methods like carbon neutrality or zero-waste production, or they might be drawn to apparel made of organic or recycled materials. Customers are also greatly influenced by ethical principles while making sustainable fashion decisions [11]. Because poor salaries, hazardous working conditions, and exploitation of garment workers are typical in fast fashion supply chains, many customers are worried about how these people are treated [1]. Ethically conscious customers who wish to support firms that share their values are more likely to be drawn to sustainable fashion brands that place a high priority on fair labor practices and supply chain transparency. A significant driving force is the need for self-expression [13] [2]. Fashion is an effective means of expressing one's individuality, and a lot of customers view sustainable fashion as a means of demonstrating their support for social justice and environmental issues. They can show others that they care about social justice and the environment by dressing sustainably [2]. This type of self-signaling is especially significant in a culture where purchasing decisions are becoming more and more of a means of expressing values and personal ideas. Despite the fact that many customers show interest in sustainable design, a number of obstacles keep them from making environmentally friendly choices.

The cost is one of the biggest obstacles. Because eco-friendly materials are more expensive, ethical labor standards demand higher prices, and smaller manufacturing runs result in more expensive sustainable fashion than fast fashion. The price disparity is a big turnoff for a lot of customers, especially those who are used to the cheap costs of fast fashion labels. Another obstacle is limited supply [15]. Although there are more and more sustainable fashion firms, eco-friendly solutions are still more expensive than fast fashion. Customers could have trouble locating eco-friendly apparel in their neighbourhood shops or might have to shop online, which might be less practical. Even if customers are driven to choose sustainable choices, this lack of availability may deter them.Another issue is the general lack of knowledge and comprehension regarding sustainability in the fashion industry [16]. A lot of customers do not know what sustainable fashion is or how to determine if a company is genuinely environmentally conscious. This can cause misunderstandings and mistrust, especially in a sector where false claims about a product's environmental benefits known as greenwashing are frequently made [15]. It may be difficult for customers to make knowledgeable selections concerning

sustainable fashion in the absence of clear, reliable information. Fashion is not an exception to the rule that social influence has a significant impact on consumer behavior [15]. Customers are frequently swayed by the decisions and viewpoints of their friends, relatives, and online communities. Social norms and fashion trends have the power to either promote or inhibit environmentally conscious consumption in the context of sustainable fashion.

In the event that eco-friendly fashion gains popularity among a specific social group, people could experience pressure to follow this trend and choose more environmentally friendly clothing [4]. However, even if a customer is individually driven to emphasize sustainability, they could be less inclined to do so if fast fashion is the prevalent trend in their social circle. The idea that eco-friendly clothing is less stylish or less. Customers may be discouraged from adopting eco-conscious behaviors if they believe that mainstream fashion is more attractive or fashionable than sustainable fashion. Social influence is also shaped by media and marketing. Companies that successfully market themselves as ethical and sustainable can foster a sense of belonging and common ideals among their clientele [1] [4]. Influencers and campaigners have turned to social media platforms in particular to promote sustainable fashion by increasing awareness and encouraging eco-friendly choices. The COVID-19 epidemic has significantly altered consumer behavior in a number of industries, including the fashion industry [1]. Many started to doubt the viability of the fast fashion model as the pandemic shook up global supply networks and made customers rethink their shopping habits. Lockdowns and other social distancing tactics reduced the amount of clothing people bought since they gave them less opportunities to try on new clothes and made them more conscious of their overindulgence.

The pandemic also made people more conscious of how human activity affects the environment. There was a brief decrease in pollution and carbon emissions as a result of companies closing and travel restrictions being put in place, which highlighted the link between environmental degradation and consumption [1]. Due to this change in viewpoint, some customers are now giving sustainability top priority when making fashion selections and are looking for companies that provide ethical and environmentally responsible options. In addition, the pandemic's effects on economic uncertainties have had an impact on consumer psychology [1]. During this time, a lot of people had financial troubles, which might have caused them to put affordability before sustainability. Because fast fashion is more affordable and easily accessible, some customers may have returned to it, while others may have become more conscious of their purchase patterns. Moreover, the pandemic has expedited the transition to internet-based buying, posing obstacles as well as prospects for sustainable fashion [1]. On the one hand, customers may find it simpler to access sustainable brands thanks to the ease of online buying. However, the

environmental effects of more people purchasing online, such as shipping emissions and waste from packing, raise questions about how long e-commerce in the fashion sector can last. In order to influence customer behavior and promote sustainable fashion practices, education is essential [1] [13].

Educating consumers on the environmental and social impacts of their clothing choices can have a big impact on their purchase decisions, as many consumers are unaware of sustainable fashion and its implications. It is imperative that brands, academic institutions, and nonprofit groups spread the word about ethical labor practices, sustainable materials, and the value of waste reduction in the fashion business [17].There are many different ways to implement educational initiatives: from online courses and social media campaigns to workshops and seminars. These initiatives can provide customers with the information they need to make wise choices and help them see the advantages of sustainable fashion over rapid fashion [17]. Through developing a more comprehensive awareness of the clothing lifecycle, from manufacturing to disposal, consumers may see the significance of selecting sustainable options and the beneficial effects their decisions can have on the environment and society. Additionally, partnerships between fashion houses and academic institutions might promote encourage creative responses to sustainability-related problems. Future designers and business executives can be prepared with the information and abilities needed to develop environmentally friendly goods and incorporate sustainable practices all the way up to the supply chain by incorporating sustainability into fashion design curriculum. This helps the business as a whole and gives the upcoming generation of fashion professionals a sense of accountability [2]. Consuming sustainable fashion requires social responsibility and community involvement. Brands that encourage a feeling of community and social responsibility can build a devoted following of customers as consumers look more and more to match their beliefs with the products they purchase. Efforts like neighborhood gatherings, regional alliances, and alliances with charitable institutions can assist companies in connecting with customers more deeply by highlighting our shared accountability for sustainability. Brands can foster a connection between consumers and the production process by endorsing local craftsmen and craftspeople, thereby fostering support for sustainable methods [11]. This may eventually cause a move away from the quick fashion mentality by creating a more knowledgeable consumer base that prioritizes quality over quantity.

2. RELATED WORK

In recent years, there has been a lot of interest in the study of psychological factors that affect consumer behavior in a sustainable way. Numerous studies have looked at the factors that influence consumer intentions and behaviors, such as perceived barriers, social effects, and external events. Several research have emphasized the underlying reasons

why customers choose sustainable clothing. For instance, McNeill and Moore's (2015) qualitative study found that buying sustainable clothing was significantly influenced by one's desire to lessen one's carbon footprint and environmental concerns. According to their results, more and more customers see sustainable fashion as a way to match their consuming habits with their moral principles. Furthermore, Khan et al. (2020) looked at the significance of ethical issues, such as social justice and fair labor standards, and discovered that these elements are crucial to the decision-making processes of many consumers [7]. Another important factor is the need for self-expression and identity, since buyers frequently look for sustainable clothing options that match their lifestyles and ideals [7]. This is consistent with the model's focus on the role that self-expression plays in driving sustainable consumption.

2.1 Social Influences: There is a wealth of evidence supporting the importance of social influences on consumer behavior. Bhanot and Jha's (2020) research revealed that opinions about sustainable fashion are greatly influenced by social circles, including family and friends [19]. According to the study, when consumers believe their peers respect and practice eco-friendly consumption, they are more inclined to embrace sustainable activities themselves. In addition, Lim et al. (2016) investigated how influencer marketing and social media may help promote sustainable companies [5]. According to their research, social media influencer endorsements have the power to positively impact consumer views and encourage sustainable buying habits. This validates the model's claim that customer views toward sustainable fashion are significantly shaped by influencer marketing.

2.2 Perceived Barriers: A major focus of most studies examining sustainable consumption has been perceived barriers. According to Garrone et al. (2018), there are a number of barriers that customers must overcome, such as rising costs and a shortage of sustainable goods [21]. Their research showed that these obstacles can seriously impair consumers' ability to make sustainable fashion-related purchases, even in cases where they are driven to do so [21]. Similar to the previous model, the current one highlights the alleged higher costs of sustainable fashion as a key barrier, emphasizing the need for firms to overcome these obstacles in order to promote broader adoption of sustainable practices.

2.3 External Factors: The COVID-19 epidemic has changed consumer behavior, and research conducted recently have attempted to determine how it affects the purchase of sustainable apparel. The pandemic has caused a shift in consumer preferences, which has increased awareness of environmental issues (Kozlowski et al., 2020) [19]. According to their research, as people reevaluate their values and spending patterns, the crisis can inspire them to take up more environmentally friendly shopping practices. This is consistent with the present model's emphasis on external

factors, which acknowledges that important societal developments can have a big impact on the motives and behaviors of consumers [19].

2.4 Holistic Approaches: A number of academics have put forth extensive frameworks to help comprehend how different psychological factors interact in a sustainable way. For example, in the context of sustainable fashion, Tublitz et al. (2021) created a model that incorporates psychological, social, and economic aspects impacting consumer behavior [3]. Their method places a strong emphasis on the necessity of a multifaceted understanding of consumer influences, barriers, and motives; this is in line with the current study's objective of developing a coherent framework that takes these disparate components into account [5]. A solid foundation for comprehending the psychological factors influencing consumer behavior sustainably is provided by the body of extant scholarship. It draws attention to how important incentives, social influences, perceived barriers, and outside variables are in determining the intents of consumers. Nonetheless, there are still gaps in our understanding of how these components dynamically interact, especially in reaction to outside events such as the COVID-19 pandemic [1] [14]. By expanding on this body of work, the current study hopes to provide insightful analysis of the intricate world of sustainable fashion consumption, providing a thorough model that can direct future studies and real-world applications in the field. In the end, this research will help marketers, legislators, and businesses encourage people to engage in sustainable consumption habits [1].

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the fashion industry. It has revealed a lot of challenges and the need for more sustainable practises [1]. During the pandemic fashion brands have faced huge revenue losses, lay offs in the number of employees and disruptions in global supply chains. This situation caused fashion brands to adopt greener and more ethical practises. However, the research on how the pandemic has influenced consumer behaviour related to sustainable fashion has caused conflicting views. Some studies suggest that the pandemic led consumers to favour sustainable options and engage in activities such as DIY fashion while some others indicated that price sensitivity remained and fast fashion was still popular [1]. The pandemic led to a major economic and social shift including financial instability and new goals. This raised questions about whether these changes could lead to more long lasting changes towards a more sustainable fashion consumption. While many brands have begun incorporating sustainability in their business models, effective and efficient strategies for sustainable consumer behaviour are still unknown [1]. The goal of this study is to explore if and how COVID-19 has influenced consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainable fashion and whether positive emotions can cause long term sustainable consumption [1]. It seeks to understand the pandemic's role in shaping changes in fashion consumption and the strength of positive strategies. The study dug deep into how consumers view sustainability and their

definition for it and their behaviour before and after the COVID-19 pandemic involving 154 participants of various ages and ethnicities [1]. The findings showed that the definitions included conserving resources and recycling more while many people were unclear about the concept. Sustainable fashion was mostly associated with recycled materials and eco-friendly practises [1]. The pandemic led to mixed effects as some reduced fashion purchases due to financial problems while others became more aware of sustainability. Environmental concerns influenced their purchases but the cost was a significant barrier. Post purchase feelings were mostly positive with the buyers feeling happy with their purchase. The study explores how positive psychology can encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable habits and behaviours and how such changes could increase broader social practises. It brings to the notice the role of psychological insights in promoting a sustainable living and improving our understanding of consumer motivations [1]. The research found that while age and gender did not have a significant impact towards sustainability, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased awareness about environmental issues.

Barriers like financial constraint and a lack of clear understanding about sustainability continues to affect the progress. Younger consumers are more likely to opt for brands with authentic sustainability claims but financial limitations during the pandemic have made it less accessible to many people. Even increased awareness, consumers still rely on brands for clear and transparent information about sustainability [1]. The study emphasised the need for business to educated consumers and the use of positive psychology in marketing to drive long term sustainable behaviour. To create meaningful change, both consumers and business must work together by taking advantage of the pandemic driven insights to promote sustainability in fashion consumption. Over the past forty years the fashion industry has grown significantly. We've seen a growth in clothing production by 400% [2]. However, this growth has led to severe environmental and social impacts. The industry emits 1.2 billion tons of greenhouse gases annually, pollutes oceans with microplastics and produces a lot of textile waste. It is assumed that by the year 2030 the fashion industry will use 35% more land for fiber growing which will lead to a further exploitation of resources [2]. The majority of this damage occurs in developing countries while most clothing being purchased in Western nations. Workers in regions like Southeast Asia and Africa also face low wages and exploitation. To address these issues this paper explores the concept of a circular economy which emphasises on reusing and recycling of materials to reduce waste [2]. It reviews the regulations such as the new VAT policy which taxes imports to promote local production and reduce environmental costs associated with activities like transportation [2]. Circular economy promotes designing long lasting products, reduction of wastes and encouraging practises like renting or sharing clothes. For this change to succeed public policies and regulations are important to support sustainable production, consumption and economic models that give more

importance to environmental and social justice. Sustainable fashion aims to reduce the environmental and social costs of the fashion industry by encouraging the use of long lasting, recyclable clothing. However, transitioning to a circular economy where products are reused, repaired, or recycled is still facing barriers. There are other issues like unsafe working conditions in factories. Industry efforts such as the UK's Textiles 2030 and the UN Fashion Charter aim to reduce emissions but real progress needs strong regulations in all the countries to promote sustainability and worker protection [2]. Over the last 10 years many policies and programs have aimed to address fashion's environmental and social impacts. Examples include France's ban on clothing waste, Australia's modern slavery law and California's worker protection law [2]. Many initiatives promote transparency, sustainability and circular economy practices encouraging responsible fashion production and consumer behaviour. The research also brings to notice the organisational issues that arise from manufacturers' reluctance to design for durability and consumers' wasteful usage habits. The study also evaluated different policies aimed at promoting sustainable fashion in Israel. Experts studied these policies based on criterias such as effectiveness, sustainability, equity, political feasibility, and compliance. Educational campaigns and economic help for collaboration received high ratings across most criterias [2]. In contrast, waste removal fees, carbon taxes, and legal liabilities for corporations got mixed results as they balanced potential sustainability benefits against political issues [2]. While normalising sustainable fashion and reducing consumer waste also had advantages, they faced practical challenges. Overall, the analysis brought to light the trade offs between effectiveness and political or economic feasibility, indicating that no single policy can fully address the issue. The demand for clothing and shoes is ever increasing. The fashion industry has seen massive growth in the last 15 years as clothing production has doubled making upto almost 60% of all textile production [2]. A key driver of this growth is fast fashion where trends from celebrity culture and fashion shows quickly become available at affordable prices. Designers have also started producing upto five collections a year and new stock arrives in stores every two weeks. This rapid turnover leads to a lot of waste with 73% of clothing ending up in landfills and less than 1% being recycled into new garments [2]. Upto 140 million euros worth of clothing is sent to landfills each year in the UK alone [2]. The environmental impact of fast fashion is extremely large [2]. It involves high levels of water use, with denim production itself consuming over 5,000 liters of water per pair of jeans [2]. CO_2 emissions, water pollution and plastic waste from microfibers are all sourced from fashion industry factories. Sustainable fashion was once a niche concept but now its considered extremely mainstream. Stylish and ethical garments are bought more by consumers now but sustainable clothing also costs more which leads to some consumers opting for second hand clothes instead. Vintage clothing has

gained popularity as a way to stand out from mass produced fashion and reduce waste. To achieve the goal of sustainability the industry needs to move towards a circular model where garments are continuously reused and recycled. Levi's and Mud Jeans are some brands that are creating a difference by offering take back and recycling services [2]. These brands have also reduced on their seasonal collections to cut down on waste. Educating consumers on garment care and recycling is crucial for this transition. Overall, while the path to sustainability is difficult, both brands and consumers play an important roles in reducing fashions environmental footprint. When mainstream brands like Levi's take up a challenge like this, it also influences other brands to bring certain changes to their production techniques [2]. Consumers also get influenced to buy from such brands after getting influenced by the market trends. Transparency in the fashion industry is something that the consumers have also started creating a demand for as the consumers also want to know where their clothes come from and their environmental and social impacts. Greenwashing is a term for companies that falsely claim to be eco-friendly which is also a term known by the consumers. To talk about this, the brands are being more open about their supply chains and the impact of their products on the environment [3]. An example of this would be Levi's, who conducted a study of the life cycle of their products and found that the textile production and consumer laundry was utilising maximum amount of water and energy. As a result of this study, they devised a water-less finishing process which resulted in 96% lesser use of water [3]. There are other companies also using water efficient dyeing methods and better textile recycling but taking a step in the right direction is the first step towards sustainability. Some brands offer take back schemes where customers can return old clothes but the brands do not disclose what happens to these clothes, thus making them a tough choice for a few customers as they do not trust them entirely. The impact of the fashion industry on the environment is huge, with China being one of the major contributors due to it's large textile production and high levels of clothing waste [3]. China is faced by significant challenges including a very low recycling rate and increasing volumes of textile waste [3].

China is also the largest population in world and is facing the issue of an extreme demand for these products as well. To address these issues adopting sustainable practises like second hand clothing consumption can help increase product life cycles and reduce the impact on the environment. Additionally, China faces unique challenges in its waste management infrastructure with a recycling rate that remains extremely low compared to other countries. Most textile waste ends up in landfills which again adds to the environmental crisis [3]. The country's quickly growing middle class society and changing consumer habits also intensify the issue as more people have greater access to affordable and disposable fashion which leads to shorter product lifecycles. Second-hand clothing markets in China

are still under a developing state when compared to countries like the United States of America and Europe [4]. Cultural attitudes and social norms in China such as giving importance to status and privacy also affect the acceptance of second hand clothes. Even after that some of the younger generations and government initiatives are now embracing sustainable practices [4]. Research indicates that environmental concerns and social norms influence sustainable fashion choices. Different theories like the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Value Belief Norm framework are used to understand these behaviours [4]. The Value Belief Norm theory which includes values, beliefs and personal norms is a effective theory for predicting eco-friendly behaviours. This study aims to understand how these factors along with social norms and trust in recycling come into play on the impact of second hand clothing consumption in China. The research has used a cross sectional online survey with over 300 participants residing in China with a well tested questionnaire and ensuring data accuracy through a translation technique [4]. After analysis no significant common method bias was confirmed. The study finds insights into how ecological and social factors increase sustainable consumption. 14 hypotheses were conducted based on the Value Belief Norm and 13 were confirmed [4]. Personal values like biospheric, altruistic and ego were found to have a big influence over the New Ecological Paradigm which affects the individuals awareness of the consequences of their actions [4]. It was found that those who had a strong NEP are more aware of the impact on the environment which comes from a result of their actions which leads to a stronger personal norms that promote sustainable fashion consumption [4]. Social norms and trust in recycling programs also positively influence sustainable fashion choices. Addressing the intention behaviour gap is important to encourage more people to adopt sustainable fashion practices.

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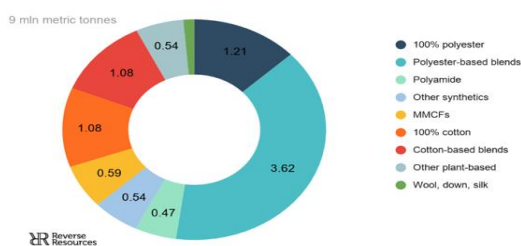

Fig. No. 1 - Waste Produced by the Fashion Industry

Fig. No. 2 - Statistical Data

4. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The fashion industry is known for its significant addition to environmental degradation, social inequality, and resource depletion. Despite a growing awareness of these issues, sustainable fashion remains a niche segment of the market, with many consumers continuing to favour fast fashion options that prioritise low cost and trendiness over ethical and ecological considerations. This presents a critical problem: how can the fashion industry effectively shift consumer behavior towards more sustainable practices? Understanding the psychological drivers behind consumer intentions and behaviors in sustainable fashion is crucial for addressing this problem. Several key questions arise: What motivations encourage consumers to choose sustainable fashion over fast fashion? How do social influences shape consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions regarding sustainability? What perceived barriers such as price, availability, and awareness hinder consumers from adopting eco friendly options?

7. OBJECTIVE

To understand the psychological drivers behind sustainable fashion consumption intentions of consumers.

5. PRIMARY RESEARCH

The purpose of this survey is to investigate the psychological factors that affect consumers' intentions and behaviors with regard to sustainable fashion items. This study aims to bring to focus the dynamics of consumer decision making in the context of sustainability by looking at elements including incentives, social influences, perceived barriers, and the effects of outside events like the COVID-19 epidemic. Understanding these variables is important for marketers and companies that aim to interact with eco conscious consumers in an efficient manner and promote a more sustainable fashion industry. In all, thirty respondents were questioned for this poll. The results of this survey will clarified important aspects that can improve consumers' intents and behaviors while making purchases, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of consumer psychology in sustainable fashion. The main goal of this study was to learn more about the psychological aspects that influence and influence customer intentions and behaviors when it comes to buying sustainable fashion. Understanding consumer behaviour is crucial to promoting the wider acceptance of sustainable choices, particularly in light of the mounting demand on the fashion industry to embrace eco-friendly methods. The purpose of this study, which involved 30 participants, was to identify the major psychological elements that influence the consumption of sustainable fashion, including motivation, perceived hurdles, social influences, and external factors like the COVID-19 effect.

5.1 Methodology: In order to capture a variety of consumer behaviors and perspectives, the study was carried out with 30 individuals who varied in terms of age, gender, income level, and education. Twenty to forty-five male and fifteen female volunteers were included in the sample.

5.2 Data Collection: A quantitative online research/survey that was organized and comprised both multiple-choice and open-ended questions was used to gather data. The following important psychological determinants were the focus of the survey: Motivations: Self-expression, ethical considerations, and environmental concerns. Social Influences: Influencer marketing, friends, family, and social conventions. Perceived obstacles include increased expenses, a lack of accessibility, and a lack of sustainability knowledge. External Factors: How COVID-19 and other outside events affect consumer sentiment.
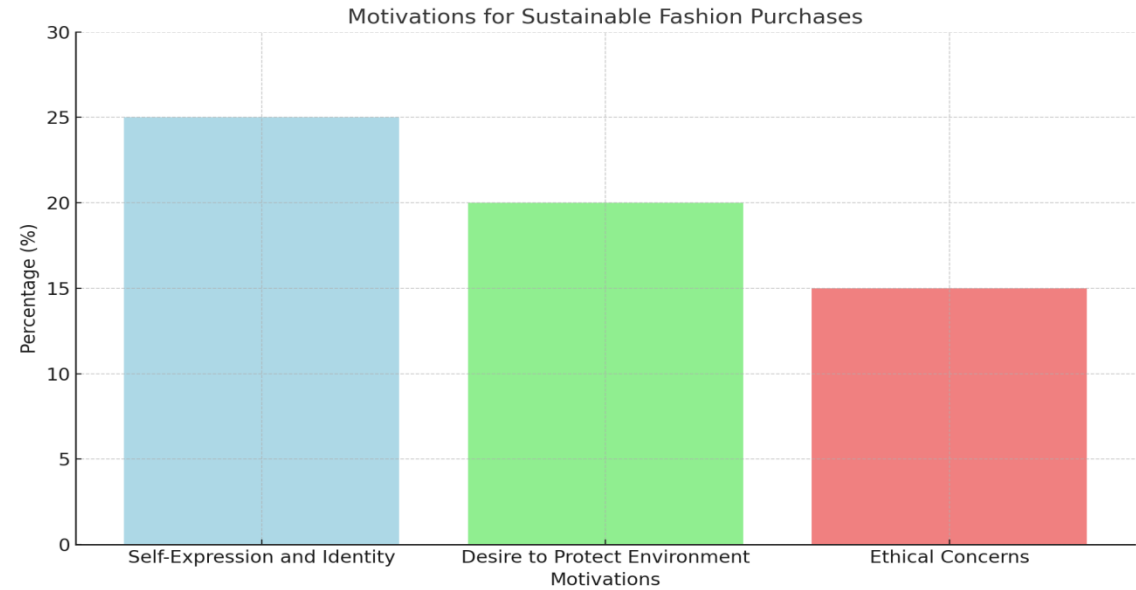

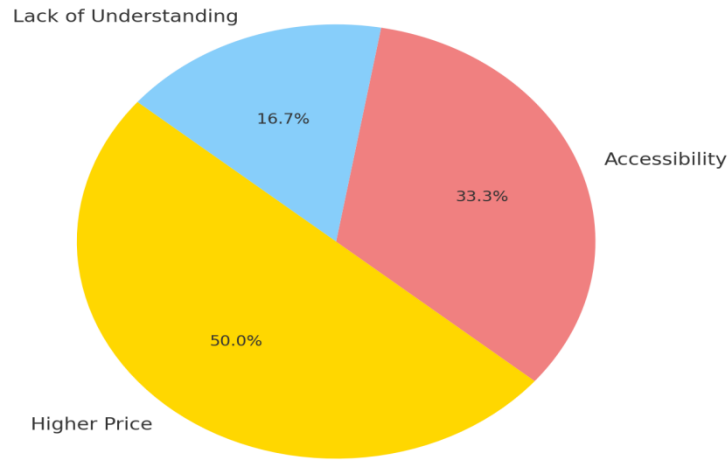*Fig. No. 3 - Bar Graph Depicting the Consumer Prefrences*

Fig. No. 4 - Pie Chart Depicting the Consumer Prefrences

5.4 Findings and Interpretation

5.4.1. Reasons for doing so: According to the study the main drivers behind individuals' decisions to wear sustainable fashion were self-expression and identity, as ranked by 25% of participants. The need to preserve the environment (20%) and ethical considerations (15%) came next. These findings demonstrate that although consumers value environmental concerns, they also place a high importance on matching their fashion choices to their individual identities and values [Fig. No. 3] .

5.4.2. Social Factors: Social influences on consumer behavior, especially those from friends, family, and social networks, were only somewhat significant. 10% of participants said that the attitudes and actions of the people in their immediate social circles gave them hope. Influencer marketing had a marginally stronger effect; 15% of respondents said that social media influencers influenced their choice to buy sustainable clothing [Fig. No. 3].

5.4.3. Viewed Obstacles: One of the biggest obstacles to the adoption of sustainable fashion has been perceived barriers. One of the main deterrents mentioned by 30% of participants was the greater cost of sustainable fashion. According to 20% of respondents, accessibility—including the availability of environmentally friendly options—was another issue. Furthermore, 10% of respondents said they had no idea what sustainable fashion was or how to recognize eco-friendly labels [Fig. No. 3].

5.4.4. Outside Elements: Consumer behavior was greatly altered by the COVID-19 epidemic. A quarter of the participants said the epidemic increased their awareness of sustainable practices, while others said the pandemic's economic uncertainties caused them to revert to fast fashion since it was more affordable.

Results Bar Graph Visualization: Reasons for Buying Sustainable Clothing:The breakdown of reasons for selecting sustainable fashion is shown in this graph. The most important component is self-expression, which is followed by ethical and environmental concerns [Fig. No. 3].

Pie Chart: Viewed Obstacles to Eco-Friendly Clothing. The pie chart indicates that the largest perceived obstacle was increased prices, which was followed by accessibility and a lack of sustainability awareness. The findings imply that consumers' primary reasons for selecting sustainable fashion are their desire to express themselves and their concern for the environment. In line with earlier research that highlights the significance of individual values in eco-conscious consumption [Fig. No. 4]. Despite compelling reasons, perceived barriers especially greater costs continue to be a major deterrent to the widespread adoption of sustainable fashion.It is interesting to note that social influences, such influencer marketing and peer pressure, had a rather mild impact on consumer behavior; only 15% of participants named social media influencers as a major factor. This suggests that although influencers have the potential to promote sustainable fashion, perceived barriers or personal reasons will likely have a greater effect.Consumer perceptions have changed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak [Fig. No. 4]. Some people's understanding of sustainability has increased as a result of it, but the cheaper cost of fast fashion has also increased demand for it due to economic uncertainty. Conclusion The intricacy of consumer behavior is highlighted in this primary research in a sustainable way. Even while consumers are highly motivated to adopt sustainable behaviors, especially when it comes to self-expression and environmental protection, there are still major obstacles in the way, such cost and accessibility. Social influencers do have some influence, but not a huge one, which suggests that removing obstacles and educating people about sustainability should take precedence.Brands need to lower perceived obstacles by increasing the affordability and accessibility of eco-friendly solutions in order to support a more sustainable fashion sector. Driving long-lasting change in consumer behavior will also need encouraging positive societal norms and raising consumer awareness of sustainability.

6. PROPOSED MODEL

The purpose of the suggested model is to highlight the major psychological factors that affect consumers' attitudes and actions with regard to sustainable fashion. It incorporates a number of elements, such as social influences, incentives, perceived obstacles, and the effects of outside events like the COVID-19 epidemic. The structure of the model is as follows:

6.1 Fundamental Elements

A. Incentives: The degree to which the desire to lessen their carbon footprint and preserve the environment drives consumer behavior. the impact of moral considerations on consumer decisions, such as social justice and fair work standards. The function of fashion as a vehicle for identity and self-expression, encouraging buyers to look for environmentally friendly products that align with their principles

B. Social Factors: the influence of social networks, friends, and family on a person's decision to buy sustainable clothing. Customs and Traditions attitudes in society on sustainability and how they influence the actions of consumers. Influencer marketing is the practice of using celebrities and social media influencers to market environmentally friendly goods and brands [Fig. No. 5].

C. Imagined Obstacles: The perception that sustainable fashion is more expensive than quick fashion and how this affects consumer decision. The availability of eco-friendly clothing options in brick and mortar and virtual shopping

spaces. a lack of knowledge regarding eco-friendly brand identification and what defines sustainable fashion [Fig. No. 5].

D. Outside Factors: Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer attitudes, priorities, and habits, such as a return to quick fashion owing to economic uncertainties or a shift toward more environmentally friendly shopping methods [Fig. No. 5].

6.2 The Connections Among the Elements

A. Social Influences and Motivations: Supportive social reinforcement has the power to strengthen the desire for sustainable fashion. When peers focus and respect sustainability, people may be inspired to follow suit.Perceived impediments, such availability and cost, can impede action, even as consumer intentions may steer them toward sustainable choices. Enhancing the influence of motives can be achieved by addressing these obstacles through accessibility and education [Fig. No. 5].

B. Social Networks and Perceived Barriers: Social networks have the power to affect how barriers are perceived. For example, when eco-friendly fashion is widely embraced in a social group, customers may feel empowered to make eco-friendly choices, thus the perceived cost becomes less of a barrier.

C. External Factors: The COVID-19 epidemic has changed consumer mentality, which presents sustainable fashion with both potential and challenges. Brands and marketers can benefit greatly from knowing how the epidemic influences consumer motives and actions [Fig. No. 5].

D. Mechanism of Feedback Loop: A feedback loop mechanism in the model emphasizes how changing customer behavior is. Customers' interactions with sustainable fashion have the power to either confirm or modify their reasons, views of hurdles, and social influences. Positive brand experiences have the potential to boost advocacy and loyalty, starting a vicious circle that promotes more sustainable purchasing [Table No. 1]] [Fig. No. 5].
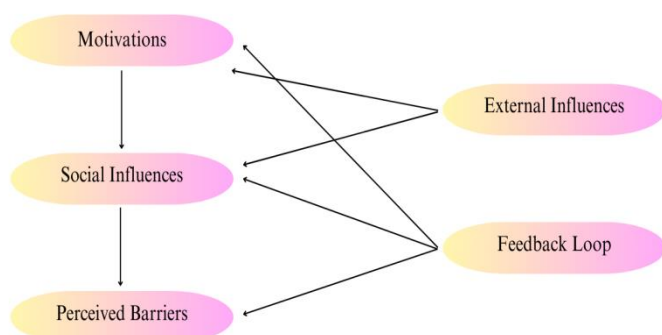

Fig. No. 5 - Understanding of Sustainable Fashion Consumption

7. HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: 20% of consumers' decisions are influenced by their great desire to protect the environment, which makes them far more likely to buy sustainable fashion [22] [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 2: Fifteen percent of the factors driving purchases of sustainable fashion are influenced by ethical considerations, which include social justice and fair labor standards [2] [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 3: Customers' inclination towards sustainable fashion is mostly driven by their need for self-expression and identification. It is estimated that this motivation accounts for 25% of consumers' purchasing decisions, as they want to match their style choices with their personal beliefs and identity [5] [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 4: 10% of consumer decisions are attributed to friends and family, suggesting that social circles have a positive or negative influence on people's propensity to buy sustainable fashion [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 5: Cultural norms have a considerable impact on consumer behavior. A 5% contribution from society attitudes toward sustainability suggests that these norms can have an impact on consumers' intents to purchase [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 5: Cultural rules have a considerable impact on consumer behavior. A 5% contribution from society attitudes toward sustainability points to that these norms can have an impact on consumers' intents to purchase [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 6: Influencer marketing plays an essential role in buyer decision making, accounting for 15% of the total. This implies that social media influencer endorsements can be a powerful tool for supporting sustainable fashion firms Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 7: A substantial barrier to purchase, accounting for 30% of consumer decision making, is the perceived greater cost of sustainable fashion in comparison to fast fashion. This underscores the need for reasonably priced sustainable solutions to develop market penetration [9].

Hypothesis 8: Consumer behaviour is influenced by the availability of sustainable fashion options. Twenty percent of consumers say that their decision to buy is influenced by the presence of environmentally friendly products in retail settings [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 9: Ten percent of the factors impacting purchase intentions are related to an absence of knowledge about sustainable fashion, suggesting that consumer education is crucial to promoting the adoption of sustainable fashion [Fig. No. 4].

Hypothesis 10: The COVID-19 pandemic has had an important impact on consumer values and priorities. As a result, consumers are now 25% more likely to purchase sustainable fashion because they are revaluating their purchasing patterns and placing a higher priority on sustainability in an uncertain economic climate [1] [Fig. No. 4] [Table No. 1].

The table 1 provided below provides an overview of the model, showing how each element and interaction contributes to consumer decisions on sustainable fashion.

Table1: Over view of the model

Model Component	Description	Key Interactions
1. Fundamental Elements	Important psychological factors influencing sustainable fashion behavior.	- Every element influences the others via motivations, social networks, and perceived obstacles.
A. Incentives	Motivation for buyers to reduce carbon footprint, driven by environmental, ethical and self expression values.	- Connects with Social & Motivational Influence: Motivations can be made stronger by social support.- Interacts with Feedback Loop: Positive experiences reinforce incentive.
B. Social Factors	Impact of social networks, cultural norms and influencer marketing on sustainable fashion choices.	- Connects with Social Networks & Perceived Barriers: Social acceptance can reduce these obstacles.- Links with Feedback Loop: Positive societal influence encourages sustainable actions.
C. Imagined Obstacles	Perceived cost, limited availability, and lack of information about sustainable options influence consumers choices.	- Links to Social & Motivational Influence: Perceived barriers can reduce sustainable intentions.- Connects with Feedback Loop: Knowledge may decrease perceived obstacles over time.
D. External Factors	Role of events (e.g., COVID-19) in shifting consumer priorities towards (or away from) sustainability.	- Impacts Social & Motivational Influence: Pandemic reshaped motivations and attitudes.- Connects with Feedback Loop: Experiences during events like the pandemic can alter sustainability preferences.
2. Interconnections	Interactions that increase or moderate each element's influence on sustainable behavior.	- Social & Motivational Influence: Combined impact of social factors and incentives on sustainable choices.- Social Networks & Perceived Barriers: Peer acceptance reduces cost related or awareness-based obstacles.
3. Feedback Loop Mechanism	Sheds light on the dynamic nature of consumer behavior; positive experiences can reinforce motivations and reduce perceived barriers.	- Reinforces motivations: Satisfied consumers may continue sustainable purchases.- Strengthens social influence: Positive experiences can inspire others.- Reduces obstacles: Knowledge gained from experience lessens perceived barriers.

Table No. 1 - Understanding of Sustainable Fashion Consumption

8. LIMITATIONS

8.1 Diversity and Sample Size

The possible absence of a sufficient sample size and responder demographic diversity is a major study constraint. For results to be generalized across a range of demographics, such as age groups, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic positions, the sample must be representative. The results might not accurately represent the beliefs and actions of the general public if the sample is not sufficiently varied [1].

Younger consumers, for example, might be more motivated by other factors to support sustainable fashion than older generations, who might put tradition or financial gain ahead of environmental concerns [21-45]. In a similar vein, cultural variables have a big impact on how people view sustainability, which influences their preferences and purchase decisions. In order to guarantee that the sample appropriately represents the intricacies of consumer behavior across demographic spectrums, future research should strive

to include a more diverse participant pool. This may strengthen the validity of the study's conclusions.

8.2 Data from Self Reports

A crucial constraint is the dependence on self-reported information. Questionnaires and surveys frequently rely on respondents' subjective assessments of their intentions and actions. Due to the social desirability bias, which occurs when people present themselves in a more favorable light in order to conform to prevailing societal norms, consumers may exaggerate their commitment to sustainable behaviors. Inaccuracies in the recollection of prior purchases or misinterpretations of respondents' motivations could also result in differences between stated intentions and actual acts. Future research must include additional objective metrics because this reliance on subjective data may distort the study's conclusions [16]. An improved understanding of consumer behavior may be obtained, for instance, by examining purchase data or using observational techniques. This would enable a more precise evaluation of the connection between psychological factors and the consumption of sustainable fashion.

8.3 The Adaptive Character of Consumer Behavior

Consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion are dynamic by nature and are prone to sudden shifts in response to changing trends, the state of the economy, and outside events like pandemics or environmental crises. The research's methodology might not adequately account for this mobility, which could eventually restrict how far the findings can be applied [22] [11]. It is expected that the factors influencing consumer behavior will change as new sustainable methods become available and consumer knowledge increases. Future research should think about using longitudinal study designs, which monitor shifts in consumer views and actions over time, to solve this constraint [11]. By using such techniques, researchers would be able to see how outside influences and evolving trends affect consumers' motivations and decision-making processes, leading to a more complex knowledge of sustainable consumer behavior.

8.4 Correlation versus Causality

The current study can not clearly show causal linkages, even though it may find correlations between several psychological variables and consumer behavior. For instance, just while there may be a positive association between ethical concerns and sustainable purchasing behavior, it does not follow that the conduct is caused exclusively by ethical concerns [5]. More rigorous research techniques, such as experimental designs or longitudinal studies that change independent factors and track how those changes affect dependent variables, are needed to establish causation [10]. To improve the validity of future research, establishing sustainable causal linkages between psychological variables and consumer behavior should be given top priority.

8.5 Pay Attention to Particular External Factors

While the COVID-19 pandemic's impact is acknowledged in the study as a noteworthy external influence, it is possible that other important elements that influence consumer behavior are overlooked [1]. Social movements, political issues, and understanding of climate change can all have a big impact on people's views and behaviors regarding sustainable fashion [1]. The model's lack of consideration for these factors restricts its overall scope. Subsequent investigations ought to aim at delving deeper into an expanded array of exogenous factors, scrutinizing their interplay with psychological factors in shaping consumer conduct.

8.6 The Restricted Use of Sustainable Clothing

Last but not least the notion of sustainable fashion spans a broad spectrum of behaviors and ideologies, such as moral manufacturing techniques, environmentally friendly materials, and circular economy ideas [14]. This entire spectrum might not be sufficiently covered by the current study, which would result in a limited knowledge of consumer behavior. In order to fully understand the complexity of consumer motives and preferences and improve the application of the research findings, future studies should endeavor to investigate a variety of aspects of sustainable fashion [7].

9. FUTURE WORK

Researchers must overcome the shortcomings of previous work and look into fresh approaches to comprehending customer behavior as the subject of sustainable fashion expands. Subsequent investigations have to concentrate on multiple crucial domains that will augment the profundity and relevance of discoveries in this crucial field.

9.1 Comprehensive Demographic Research:

The inclusion of a bigger and more diverse sample size that includes a range of demographics, including age groups, cultures, and socioeconomic levels, is an important subject for future research [1]. Numerous recent research might have small or homogeneous sample sizes, which might distort the results and restrict how broadly they can be applied. Younger consumers, for instance, might be more motivated to buy sustainable fashion than elderly consumers, whose purchase decisions might be impacted by various ideals or financial constraints [21]. Through the expansion of demographic studies, scholars can unearth complex perspectives on how various demographic groups view and interact with sustainable fashion. This diversity can help to develop tailored marketing strategies that appeal to different groups and will enable a more thorough understanding of consumer behavior.

9.2 Perpetual Research

Longitudinal studies represent a room for future investigation. Consumer views and actions about sustainable fashion are dynamic; they vary over time in reaction to outside factors, shifts in society, and new trends [2]. These changes in consumer motives and purchase patterns can be monitored through longitudinal research, which offers important insights into how social movements, economic downturns, and climatic catastrophes affect consumer behavior [20] [18]. Through longitudinal observation, researchers can spot trends that could help marketers and businesses modify their approaches to better suit changing consumer preferences. These studies can also be used to assess the sustainability efforts' long-term efficacy and their influence on advocacy and customer loyalty.

9.3 Mixed Techniques Strategies

Adopting mixed-methods approaches which blend quantitative surveys with qualitative research techniques like focus groups or interviews could greatly assist future work. Qualitative research can offer deeper insights into the motivations and behaviors of consumers whilst quantitative data can draw attention to trends and correlations. [21] In order to find emotional and psychological aspects that quantitative surveys could miss, qualitative interviews, for example, can investigate the underlying values and beliefs that influence customers to pick sustainable fashion over quick fashion [11]. This all encompassing strategy can improve the data collection's richness and provide a more sophisticated comprehension of the variables affecting sustainable consumption.

9.4 Examining Additional Outside Factors

Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, a plethora of additional exogenous factors can exert a substantial influence on consumer behavior concerning sustainable fashion [1]. These extra variables, such as political influences, economic situations, and awareness of climate change, should be investigated in future studies. When it comes to positioning a brand effectively in the market, brands can gain significant insights from understanding how these external elements impact consumer views [1]. For instance, customers' purchasing decisions may be influenced by the rise in climate activism and the political emphasis on sustainability, which may cause them to feel more urgently aware of the issue [1]. Through the integration of these wider settings, scholars can cultivate a more comprehensive comprehension of sustainable fashion consumption, furnishing brands with the knowledge they need to align their pracvtices with consumer expectations

10. CONCLUSION

The model under consideration helps us understand the fundamental psychological aspects that drive consumer intentions and behaviors with respect to sustainable fashion.

These factors include motivations, social influences, perceived hurdles, and external factors, like the COVID-19 pandemic [1]. This study emphasizes how important intrinsic reasons are in influencing consumer choices, such as the desire to preserve the environment and ethical considerations. Furthermore, social factors such as the influence of peers and cultural norms are crucial in promoting sustainable consumption. Notwithstanding the positive results, perceived obstacles particularly the increased cost of sustainable clothing present significant obstacles to consumer adoption. It is essential to address these obstacles by providing accessibility and knowledge in order to promote a more sustainable fashion ecosystem. The dynamic character of consumer behavior, shaped by outside factors such as the COVID-19 epidemic, adds to the complexity of the scene and highlights the necessity for companies to modify their approaches in response to consumers' evolving priorities [1].The limitations of the study, such as its reliance on self-reported data and its restricted research scope, indicate the need for additional research. To provide a more thorough understanding of consumer habits in a sustainable manner, future research should examine a range of demographics, use mixed-methods approaches, and take into account other external effects [2]. In the end, this article highlights the relationship between psychological aspects and consumer decision-making in a market that is becoming more environmentally conscious, offering insightful information to brands, marketers, and legislators who want to encourage sustainable purchase.

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