

Investigating Consumers' Motivation For Purchasing Sustainable Apparel Through Omni Channel Using Self-Determination Theory

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Abstract

This study explores the psychological and contextual factors driving consumer motivation to purchase sustainable apparel in an omni-channel retail environment, using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a framework. Survey data from 374 Indian consumers reveal that environmental knowledge, locus of control, self-expressiveness, and social influence significantly impact brand trust and engagement—key mediators of purchase intention. Findings emphasize brand trust as a stronger predictor and highlight the role of integrated online–offline (phygital) strategies in shaping sustainable fashion behaviour. The study offers insights for bridging the gap between consumer attitudes and actions in sustainable consumption.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades there has been a steady increase in consumption leading to mass production with the help of technological advances (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011). This phenomenon is particularly salient in the clothing industry wherein clothing's life cycle shortened to react to fast changing consumers' preferences and contemporary styles (Goworek et al., 2012). This fast fashion trend has led to impulse purchasing and excessive waste of valuable resources (Achabou and Dekhili, 2013) Rausch and Kopplin, 2020). To maximize financial profits apparel manufacturing shifted to lower-cost countries with poor working conditions and environmentally unsustainable manufacturing processes. Cotton, found in most clothing, is the most pesticide-dependent crop in the world, using 25% of the world's insecticides and 11% of pesticides. Man-made fibre production involves the usage of number of hazardous chemicals and the fibre itself is not bio degradable hence polluting the environment long after it's functional use. The clothing industry itself is projected to contribute more than one fourth of the earth's carbon budget by 2050 (Jung, Oh and Kim, 2021). Fast fashion has also resulted in creation landfills of apparel waste which are only partially biodegradable and has become a major environmental threat. Globally, only 20% of apparel is collected for reuse or recycling (Pulse of the Fashion Industry 2017). (Okur and Saricam, 2019) Consumers have become aware of sustainable issues related to the fashion industry (Butler, 2018; Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009; Saricam and Okur, 2019) and have started evaluating various sustainability dimensions (economic, social, and environmental) in apparel purchase but until now more has been achieved with the help of promulgating public policies rather than consumers being psychologically driven (Sunstein 2015)

A long line of research in consumer behaviour informs us that consumption choices are not necessarily driven by economic reasons as sustainable products are generally more costlier (e.g. organic foods (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, and Rayp 2005) and lower on functional benefits (e.g. Hybrid engines, Heffner, Kurani, and Turrentine 2005). Rather, consumers are also motivated to consume for symbolic reasons (Solomon 1983) wherein consumption provides consumers with psychological benefits in relation to their identity (Smith and Colgate 2007), it helps them feel good about themselves and facilitates personal growth and self-enhancement but a lot more study needs to be done on the influence of psychological aspects in driving consumers' motivations to consume sustainably (Soroni 2010; Abdulrazak and Quoquab, 2018) The gap between consumers' attitudes and their behaviour is a significant challenge in sustainability fashion marketing. If

consumers are conscious of sustainability principles and express favorable attitudes toward sustainable fashion then :Why do their behaviors not align with these attitudes?

Why do consumers perceive sustainable fashion to be desirable but not want to buy sustainable fashion products?

Consumers often have positive attitudes about green marketing, yet their fashion purchases are not linked to sustainability, revealing an unbalanced psychological state. (Eun-Ju Lee, et al.,2019).

With Omni Channel retailing do consumers prefer to buy online or physically?

Is the brand name more important or sustainability certification more credible?

In apparel and textiles research, consumers' sustainable apparel consumption has also been studied (Sadachar et al., 2016), however, the above questions raised needs to be further studied and researched upon.

Motivation of the study

There is an urgent need to reduce the carbon footprints in the apparel supply chain. Sustainable Apparels have been promoted by global brands for several years, but it forms a very small percentage of their total merchandise being sold. The brands have not been able to successfully convince the customers to buy sustainable apparels and limited studies have been done to identify consumer motivating factors in the Indian context, this formed the motivation to take up this study and contribute to the apparel industry.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to provide insights into the psychological and contextual factors that shape consumer behavior for buying sustainable apparels in an omni-channel retail environment in the Indian context. This study would be extremely useful in developing strategies that would motivate consumers to buy sustainable apparels .

Rationale of the study

The fashion industry, propelled by rapid technological advances and shifting consumer preferences, has increasingly contributed to environmental degradation through unsustainable manufacturing practices and excessive waste. Although consumers today are more aware of sustainability issues, there remains a significant gap between their positive attitudes toward sustainable apparel and their actual purchasing behaviors. The rise of omni-channel retailing, blending online and offline shopping experiences, adds another layer of complexity that demands further exploration.

This study is motivated by the urgent need to uncover the intrinsic and extrinsic factors driving sustainable apparel consumption, using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a guiding framework. By examining variables such as environmental knowledge, locus of control, self-expressiveness, social influence, brand trust, and brand engagement within an omni-channel environment, the research aims to bridge the gap between consumers' intentions and behaviors. Insights gained from this study will help sustainable apparel brands and marketers craft strategies that foster deeper consumer engagement, enhance trust, and ultimately promote more responsible purchasing behavior, contributing to both environmental sustainability and industry growth.

Scope for the study

The scope of this study is centered on understanding the psychological and contextual factors influencing consumer motivation to purchase sustainable apparel within an omni-channel retail environment in India. It focuses specifically on individuals familiar with sustainable fashion concepts, analyzing their behavior through constructs like environmental knowledge, environmental locus of control, self-expressiveness, social influence, brand trust, brand engagement, and phygital orientation. The study is geographically restricted to Indian consumers but spans a diverse demographic profile based on gender, education, and income. By employing Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and using PLS-SEM analysis, the research aims to develop a comprehensive model that captures the underlying motivations and behavioral dynamics in sustainable apparel purchasing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term “sustainable consumption,” officially entered public discourse in 1992, following the Rio Earth Summit that same year (Seyfang 2005). Sustainable clothing, considered as environmentally and socially responsible apparel products, has been described as clothing which incorporates one or more aspects of social and environmental sustainability, (Jin Su, et al., 2017).

2.1 Perceived Environmental knowledge

Perceived Environmental knowledge (PEK) is understood as information that individuals have about the environment, the ecology of the planet, and the influence of human actions on the environment [64]. It is the state of individuals' knowledge about environment, the awareness of environmental issues, and the consciousness about consequences of human actions on the environment (Paço and Reis, 2012; Kwong and Balaji, 2016). The key assumption among researchers has been that an increase in knowledge will increase environmental concern and sustainable behavior, like sustainable apparel consumption. (Jung, Oh and Kim, 2021)

2.2 Environmental Locus of Control

Environmental concern (in some cases referred to as ecological affect) is an individual's extent of concern and emotional attachment towards environmental issues, environmental threats, and environmental protection, respectively (Pinto et al., 2011). It is the individual's sense of responsibility and involvement regarding environmental protection (Rauch and Kapplin, 2020). Consumers' knowledge is a significant aspect to explain the gap between consumers' buying intention and their actual buying behaviour (Brosdahl and Carpenter, 2010). Consumers may have no knowledge about environmental issues and sustainable consumption, so they will not make sustainable consumptions even though they have positive attitudes towards environmental issues.

2.3 Psychological ownership (PO), Self-Expressiveness (SE)

Individuals tend to have a feeling of 'ownership' towards material and immaterial objects (Pierce et al., 2003), and such psychological ownership (PO) results in affective and behavioural outcomes. Psychological Ownership is related to the fulfilment of the human need of self-expressiveness (Madelaine et al. 2017). Individuals use ownership to express their identity and how they want to be perceived in society (Pierce et al., 2003). Thus, both SE and PO tend to affect individuals' sustainable purchase behaviour (Mishra et al, 2022).

2.4 Social Influence:

Social media has become an important way to connect with peers and extend networks of friends, which in turn facilitates communication particularly among peer groups (Zhang and Daugherty, 2009), this has not only changed the way people socialize but also ultimately changed consumer buying behaviour (Muratore, 2008). Social media is the peer communication which has significant influence on consumers' decision-making processes (Zhao et al., 2019), consumers are using social media to gain recommendations, reviews, and opinions from friends, family, experts, and the collective social community (Gao and Bai, 2014). Previous studies in Western countries have confirmed that young consumers are highly engaged in communicating environmental and sustainability issues via social media (Andersson and Öhman, 2017). A favorable attitude towards a specific behavior might not be translated into actual behavior due to a lacking social pressure from the individual's significant others or vice versa, the social pressure not to perform the behavior (Rausch and Kopplin, 2020)

2.5 Brand Trust

Intention is a good reference point to predict an individual's actual behaviour, most people exhibit a substantial gap between their intentions and their subsequent behaviour (Orbell and Sheeran, 1998). Different properties affect the predictive ability of their intentions on actual behaviour. Consumers are unwilling to put sustainable consumption concerns into practice unless they believe their efforts can make a difference to the environment and society hence marketers need a clear understanding of this gap between concerns and actions (Jung, Oh and Kim, 2021).

Brand engagement

Brand engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural connections consumers have with the brands. Park et al. (2023) highlight the multidimensional nature of customer-brand engagement in online shopping, emphasizing that emotional and cognitive engagement strongly influence consumer buying behaviour. This framework can be extended to sustainable apparel, where emotional alignment with a brand's sustainability mission and cognitive recognition of the brand's eco-credentials develop a strong bonding with the consumer. Puligadda et al. (2021) introduce the concept of brand schematicity – the extent to which a brand aligns with a consumer's self-concept – as a key driver of online brand engagement and purchase behaviour.

Proposed conceptual framework:

One of the earliest attempts to predict consumers' motivations was the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), which suggested that 'attitudes' towards a particular behavior and 'subjective norms' could predict consumer behavior. However, the predictive ability of this theory is weakened when the studied behavior is not under volitional control (e.g., in cases of behavior over which the individual does not have full control) (Gentry and Calantone, 2002). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was thereby proposed by Ajzen (1985) as an extension of TRA supplemented by perceived 'behavioral control' to explain behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1985) more holistically. Because of the limitations of TPB to account for more global goal-directed motives, this has led to the development of goal-directed behavior, which has been shown to predict consumers' motivations better than the TPB (Perugini and Bagozzi, 2001; Leone et al. 2004). Although the model of goal-directed behavior has proved to be more robust than its predecessor (i.e., the theory of planned behavior, TPB), several studies have proposed 'self-determined motivation' as a better predictor of behavior (Hagger and Chatzisarantis 2009; Moller, Ryan and Deci, 2006; Ryan). The theories before SDT mainly had an extrinsic focus, and they do not predict intention development due to intrinsic motives (Hagger and Chatzisarantis, 2009). Hence SDT is a more robust to account for different motives when trying to predict behaviour through the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Self-determination theory SDT is a theory of motivation, personality development and well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000). SDT originated in research on the intrinsic and varied extrinsic sources of motivation and the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation arises whenever people find enjoyment and interest in a task (Deci and Ryan, 1985). SDT introduces the concept of three psychological needs – competence, autonomy, and relatedness – which are conditions for intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is present "whenever an activity is done to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 60), where the outcome could be a reward, competition, or punishment of some kind. A central facet of any extrinsic motivation is instrumentality (that is, where a person does something for another purpose), and, in this sense, the individual's behavior is regulated from outside. The notion of self-regulation refers to how people take in social values and extrinsic contingencies and transform these into personal values and self-motivations. Individuals can be extrinsically motivated and yet, through internalization and integration, still be authentically committed to the activity. Therefore, the various types of extrinsic motivation lie on the following continuum of internalization (Ryan and Deci, 2000): External regulation: The individual complies with external rewards or punishments. Internal regulation: The individual engages in certain behavior to avoid anxiety or guilt; developing or maintaining self-esteem and feelings of worth, ego enhancement is important for the individual. Regulation through Identification: The individual identifies with the importance of the activity, and therefore accepts being involved in it. Integration: The individual fully assimilates the new regulations with personal values and needs. The process for internalizing extrinsically motivated behaviors is influenced by the social environment, through support of the basic needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This study involved understanding both the extrinsic and intrinsic motivating factors in an individual to buy sustainable apparels, hence SDT was considered most appropriate theory to study it.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Problem statement, Problem statement plays a vital role in conducting any research as it's a first step in research process (Malhotra, 2004) by defining the key objective of the research being undertaken .For present study, the problem statement is: What are the key variables which motivate the consumer decision making for buying of sustainable apparels in an omni channel environment?

Scope of the study

The study will focus on exploring and identifying the motivating factors for buying sustainable apparel in India in an Omni-channel environment.

3.3 Hypotheses of the Study

In connection with the objectives set above, an effort is made to test following hypotheses:

- H1: Perceived environmental knowledge significantly affects brand engagement
- H2: Perceived environmental knowledge significantly affects brand trust
- H3: Environmental locus of control significantly affects brand engagement
- H4: Environmental locus of control significantly affects brand trust
- H5: Self-expressiveness significantly affects brand engagement
- H6: Self-expressiveness significantly affects brand trust
- H7: Social influence significantly affects brand engagement
- H8: Social influence significantly affects brand trust
- H9: Brand engagement significantly affects purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H10: Brand trust significantly affects purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H11: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands.
- H12: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between environmental locus of control and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H13: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between self-expressiveness and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H14: Brand engagement mediates the relationship between social influence and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H15: Brand trust mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H16: Brand trust mediates the relationship between environmental locus of control and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H17: Brand trust mediates the relationship between self-expressiveness and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands
- H18: Brand trust mediates the relationship between social influence and purchase intention toward sustainable apparel brands

3.4 Research Design

The study focuses on understanding consumer motivation for purchasing sustainable apparel through omni-channel platforms using Self-Determination Theory (SDT). The research adopts an exploratory design to evaluate the relationships between variables perceived environmental knowledge, environmental locus of control, self-expressiveness and social influence and Sustainable Purchase Intention mediated by Brand Engagement & Brand trust and moderated by Phygital orientation.

3.5 Sampling method and sample size

A purposive sampling approach was used to target respondents who were familiar with sustainable apparel and the sample population was restricted geographically within India but was selected based on prior knowledge of sustainability.

3.6 Sample Size

In this study collected 380 responses via an online survey and after removing 6 responses that failed attention checks, 374 valid responses were considered for further analysis.

On the Demographics of the sample, they were classified under three categories based on gender, educational qualification and Monthly Income:

Gender: 42.2% Male (n=158), 57.8% Female (n=216).

Education: 66.3% Undergraduate (n=248), 30.7% Graduate (n=115), 2.9% Doctorate (n=11).

Monthly Income: 24.6% (<50K INR), 23.0% (50K-90K INR), 20.9% (90K-125K INR), 31.6% (>125K INR).

Instrument for data collection

A structured questionnaire was designed based on insights from prior literature review and this was modified based on expert recommendations in the domain of market research. The questionnaire was divided into two major segments:

Collection of demographic Information: Gender, income, education

Collection of information on latent variables.

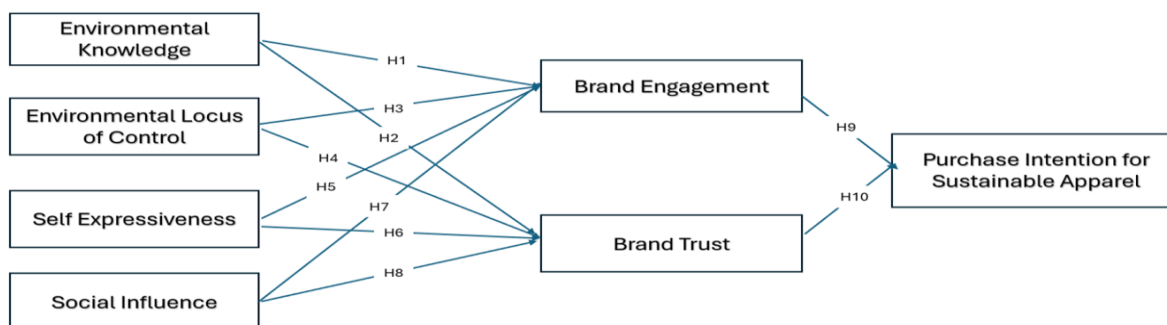
The questionnaire was divided into seven sections of broadly based on the latent independent variables being measured – Perceived Environmental knowledge , Environmental locus of control , Self Expressiveness , Social Influence , Brand Trust, Brand Engagement and Phygital Orientation .

The Likert scale was adjusted to a 7-point format for better psychometric accuracy based on the recommendation of the experts. All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

Proposed Framework

Fig: 3.1

Proposed Framework



3.9 Measures

Reliability and validity of scale

Before analyzing the relationships between sustainable apparel purchase Intention and influencing factors, the strength of the scale was evaluated for reliability and validity. The Internal Consistency Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha , the key constructs exceeded the recommended threshold ($\alpha > 0.6$), ensuring constructs had acceptable reliability .

Table 3.1:

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Environmental Knowledge	2	0.732
Environmental Locus of Control	4	0.711
Self-Expressiveness	3	0.678

Social Influence	4	0.702
Brand Engagement	6	0.759
Brand Trust	5	0.781
Purchase Intention	4	0.747

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Validity Analysis

Hair et al. (2000) defines validity as the extent to which a measure or set of measures correctly represents the concept of the study “measure what they are supposed to measure”.

1. Content Validity:

Established through expert reviews (three experts validated the questionnaire, ensuring face validity).

2. Construct Validity:

Construct Validity was tested via PLS-SEM analysis of measurement models, to ensure that the constructs were discriminant a Discriminant Validity test was conducted using HTMT ratios, all values were below 0.85, thereby confirming distinctiveness of constructs.

Table 4.1:

	ENGAG	LOC	PEM_	PI	SEFEX	SOINF	Trust
ENGAG							
LOC	0.523						
PEM_	0.563	0.607					
PI	0.449	0.746	0.655				
SEFEX	0.421	0.54	0.644	0.739			
SOINF	0.599	0.384	0.452	0.423	0.455		
Trust	0.616	0.593	0.748	0.721	0.608	0.349	

Convergent Validity was tested using the average variance extracted (AVE), this exceeded 0.5 for all constructs, thereby confirming that more than 50% of the variance in observed variables was explained by their respective constructs.

Table 4.2:

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Engagement	0.928	0.944	0.736
Environmental Locus of Control	0.922	0.951	0.866
Perceived Environment Knowledge	0.625	0.841	0.725
Purchase Intention	0.925	0.943	0.769
Self Expressiveness	0.906	0.941	0.841
Social Influence	0.765	0.866	0.684
Brand Trust	0.918	0.943	0.804

4.2 Multicollinearity Analysis

Multicollinearity checks if two or more variable in a model are highly correlated, if multicollinearity is above 5 then it makes it difficult to interpret contribution of each variable leading to unstable estimate of the regression co-efficient.

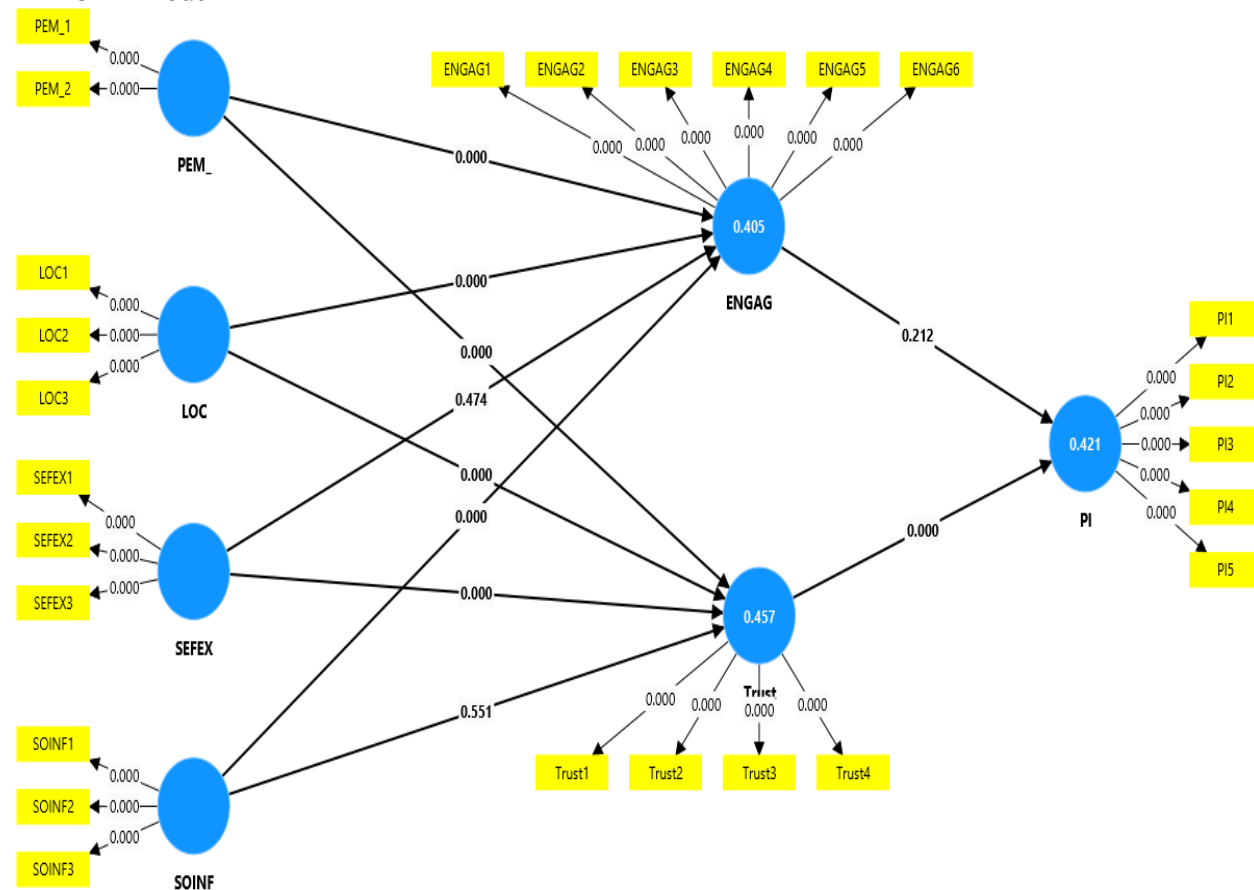
Multicollinearity was tested using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

The VIF value (4.112) is below the threshold of 5, indicating no significant multicollinearity issues (Peng & Lai, 2012).

This ensures that independent variables are not excessively correlated, allowing for stable regression estimates. To summarize the the scale used in the study is reliable, valid, and free from multicollinearity issues, making it suitable for further statistical analysis

Fig:4.1:

PLM SEM Model



Path Analysis:

PLS SEM was used to identify significant predictors of purchase intention with the key independent variables being Perceived Environmental Knowledge, Environmental locus of control, Self-Expressiveness and Social Influence, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust and Phygital Orientation. The SEM analysis gives the below results:

Table 4.3:

Paths	Path Coefficients	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Perceived Environmental Knowledge> Brand Engagement (H1)	0.18	0.05	3.626	0
Perceived Environmental Knowledge _> Brand Trust(H2)	0.314	0.052	5.989	0
Environmental Locus of Control -> Brand Engagement(H3)	0.269	0.051	5.245	0

Environmental Locus of Control → Brand Trust (H4)	0.267	0.054	4.922	0
Self-Expressiveness→Brand Engagement (H5)	0.033	0.047	0.716	0.474
Self Expressiveness → Brand Trust (H6)	0.237	0.054	4.365	0
Social-Influence→Brand Engagement(H7)	0.359	0.052	6.902	0
Social Influence → Brand Trust(H8)	0.031	0.053	0.597	0.551
Brand Engagement→ Purchase Intention (H9)	0.06	0.048	1.247	0.212
Brand Trust → Purchase Intention (H10)	0.612	0.06	10.202	0

Inferences derived from the results highlight that all the observed variables are significant, and the R square values indicate the proportion of variance – which is 45.7 % is for Brand Trust and 40.5 % is for Brand Engagement – there by indicating Brand Trust plays an important role . The relationship between Self Expression to Brand Engagement and Social Influence to Brand Trust are found to be insignificant.

4.3 Mediation Analysis:

The relationship of the latent variable on Purchase Intention of sustainable apparel through the mediation variables of Brand Engagement and Brand Trust was tested using the Hayes process model 4 (H11 to H18) , the key findings were

Mediation via Brand Engagement

Independent Variable → Mediator → Dependent Variable	Direct Effect (B)	Indirect Effect (Boot SE)	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Mediation Supported?
Environmental Knowledge → Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.4331	0.1705 (0.0369)	0.1027	0.2476	Yes
Environmental Locus of Control → Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.5318	0.0548 (0.0158)	0.0255	0.0871	Yes
Self-Expressiveness → Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.7545	0.1093 (0.0256)	0.0622	0.162	Yes
Social Influence → Brand Engagement → Purchase Intention	0.1991	0.1768 (0.0339)	0.112	0.2452	Yes

All indirect effects are significant (LLCI & ULCI do not include zero), confirming mediation by Brand Engagement.

2. Mediation via Brand Trust

Independent Variable → Mediator → Dependent Variable	Direct Effect (B)	Indirect Effect (Boot SE)	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Mediation Supported?
Environmental Knowledge → Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	0.2417	0.362 (0.0606)	0.2493	0.4862	Yes

Environmental Locus of Control → Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	0.4127	0.1739 (0.0336)	0.1138	0.2464	Yes
Self-Expressiveness → Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	0.5788	0.285 (0.0533)	0.1858	0.3923	Yes
Social Influence → Brand Trust → Purchase Intention	0.1821	0.1938 (0.042)	0.1156	0.2825	Yes

*All indirect effects are significant (LLCI & ULCI do not include zero), confirming mediation by Brand Trust.

Both Brand Engagement and Brand Trust mediate the relationships between independent variables and purchase intention. All hypotheses (H11 to H18) are supported, confirming the role of these mediators in influencing consumer motivation for purchasing sustainable apparel.

Hence, this mediation analysis highlights the importance of Brand Engagement and Brand Trust in driving sustainable apparel purchase intention through Environmental Knowledge, Locus of Control, Self-Expressiveness, and Social Influence.

4.4.4 Summary of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1	Perceived environmental knowledge affects brand engagement	Supported
H2	Perceived environmental knowledge affects brand trust	Supported
H3	Environmental locus of control affects brand engagement	Supported
H4	Environmental locus of control affects brand trust	Supported
H5	Self-expressiveness affects brand engagement	Not Supported
H6	Self-expressiveness affects brand trust	Supported
H7	Social influence affects brand engagement	Not Supported
H8	Social influence affects brand trust	Not Supported
H9	Brand engagement affects purchase intention	Supported
H10	Brand trust affects purchase intention	Supported
H11	Brand engagement mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention	Supported
H12	Brand engagement mediates the relationship between environmental locus of control and purchase intention	Supported
H13	Brand engagement mediates the relationship between self-expressiveness and purchase intention	Supported
H14	Brand engagement mediates the relationship between social influence and purchase intention	Supported
H15	Brand trust mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and purchase intention	Supported
H16	Brand trust mediates the relationship between environmental locus of control and purchase intention	Supported

H17	Brand trust mediates the relationship between self-expressiveness and purchase intention	Supported
H18	Brand trust mediates the relationship between social influence and purchase intention	Supported

5.0 CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the psychological and contextual factors that motivate consumers to purchase sustainable apparel through omni-channel retail platforms, using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as the conceptual framework. The research identified key influencing variables such as perceived environmental knowledge, environmental locus of control, self-expressiveness, and social influence. It was observed that these variables significantly impact brand engagement and brand trust, which in turn drive purchase intentions toward sustainable apparel brands. The analysis also revealed that while brand engagement plays an important role, brand trust emerged as a stronger predictor of purchase intention.

Through mediation analysis, it was confirmed that both brand engagement and brand trust act as critical bridges between consumers' psychological factors and their actual buying intentions. This highlights the importance for brands not only to build trust through transparency and ethical practices but also to emotionally engage consumers by aligning with their personal identities and environmental values. Furthermore, the role of omni-channel strategies was emphasized, showing that an integrated online and offline experience strengthens consumer relationships, especially when social influence is high.

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights for academics, marketers, and sustainability advocates by offering a deeper understanding of the motivational drivers behind sustainable apparel consumption. It emphasizes that strategies aiming to promote sustainable fashion must focus on building emotional connections, enhancing brand credibility, and leveraging omni-channel experiences effectively. By addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, brands can successfully bridge the gap between consumer attitudes and actual purchase behavior, ultimately fostering more responsible and sustainable consumption patterns.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Managerial Implications:

For managers and practitioners in the apparel industry, the study offers critical insights into how brands can effectively influence consumer behavior toward sustainable apparel. Building brand trust through transparency, consistent communication of sustainability efforts, and credible certifications is vital. Brands must also focus on enhancing emotional engagement by aligning their messaging with consumers' personal identities and values. Moreover, managers should design seamless omni-channel experiences—integrating online and offline channels—to appeal to consumers with high phygital orientation, using digital platforms to strengthen social proof, provide detailed sustainability information, and foster a stronger emotional bond with consumers.

6.2 Theoretical Implications:

The study contributes to existing literature by applying Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the context of sustainable fashion consumption, highlighting the importance of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. It extends the understanding of how psychological factors like environmental knowledge, locus of control, self-expressiveness, and social influence interact with brand engagement and trust in an omni-channel environment.

6.3 Social Implications:

On a societal level, the study emphasizes the importance of shaping social norms and peer influences to promote sustainable consumption. Social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and community-driven initiatives can play a crucial role in amplifying the message of sustainable fashion. By encouraging environmentally conscious behavior and enhancing awareness at the grassroots level, society can help create

a culture where sustainable apparel purchasing becomes a norm rather than an exception. This ripple effect through social influence can gradually transform consumer mindsets and build a broader movement toward responsible consumption.

6.4 Policy Makers' Implications:

For policymakers, the findings underline the necessity of supporting sustainable consumption through regulatory frameworks, awareness programs, and incentives. Policies promoting transparency in sustainability claims, standardization of eco-labeling, and corporate accountability can help bridge the gap between consumer attitudes and actual behaviors. Additionally, integrating sustainability education into public campaigns and encouraging businesses to adopt omni-channel strategies for greater consumer engagement can facilitate a faster transition toward a more sustainable apparel industry. Incentivizing sustainable practices for both consumers and brands will be crucial to drive systemic, long-term change.

Limitations

Sample Scope:

Respondents were selected based on familiarity with sustainable apparel, which may limit generalizability.

Geographical Diversity:

While the survey did not restrict geographically, more diverse regional data could provide richer insights.

Cross-Sectional Design:

A longitudinal study could better capture evolving consumer motivations.

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