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## **Beyond attitude-behaviour debate on sustainable consumption: Factors driving sustainable consumption in the fashion industry**

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## **Beyond attitude-behaviour debate on sustainable consumption: Factors driving sustainable consumption in the fashion industry**

### **Abstract:**

The fast fashion is choking the world, polluting our water, and contaminating our air. The world that we live in now demands that consumers buy sustainable fashion. Prior research has mainly focused on a single influence of consumers' attitudes on sustainable fashion consumption, thus ignoring the impacts of other factors. We investigate multiple factors that drive sustainable fashion consumption. Using online survey data of 156 Finnish consumers and using structural equation modelling, we find that 'awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion', 'sustainable fashion knowledge', 'perceived value of sustainable clothing', 'perceived customer effectiveness', 'sustainable fashion consumption attitude', and 'availability of sustainable clothing' drive sustainable fashion consumption, while 'trust in sustainability claims' is un-related to sustainable fashion consumption. We extend the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by providing a comprehensive understanding of factors driving sustainable fashion consumption, and provide implications for fashion brands.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Sustainable fashion consumption, Fast fashion, Drivers of sustainable fashion consumption.

## 1. Introduction

Globally, the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries. It is not only responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions but also contributes 20% of waste water production (Nikolina, 2019). The advent of fast fashion since the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is largely blamed for large-scale production and consumption of garments (Ronda, 2024). Fast-fashion brands release numerous collections annually, featuring low-durability garments that reflect modern consumer trends, to sell them in huge quantities at cheaper prices (Dangelico et al., 2022). The low quality and durability of these garments make consumers to dispose of them quickly, thus contributing to waste (Ronda, 2024). According to Shirvanimoghaddam et al. (2020), around 15.28% of textile waste is recycled at the global level; 19.03 is incinerated, and the remaining 65.69% is discarded into landfill. Additionally, fast-fashion sellers frequently subcontract production to emerging countries with lower costs of labour, which can result in challenges in managing supply chain activities, substandard labour environment, and possible violations of human rights (Ronda, 2024). Thus, consumers opting for fast fashion are causing significant damage to our planet.

In recent years, the growing consumers' awareness of environmental issues has increased criticism of fast fashion consumption and shown greater interest in more sustainable fashion consumption (Mandarić et al., 2022; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Ronda, 2024). Sustainable fashion consumption involves buying better quality clothes that are produced with eco-friendly raw materials and less pollutant production processes, and they last longer (Bocti et al., 2021; Dangelico, et al., 2022). However, despite the growing positive customer attitudes, the market share of sustainable fashion remains quite thin (ElHaffar et al., 2020; Mandarić et al., 2022; Sharma, 2021). According to White et al. (2019), just 26% of the customers surveyed actually bought sustainable brands, despite 65% of them saying they would. Thus, the positive attitude of customers towards sustainable brands does not necessarily translate into the actual buying behaviour of sustainable brands (i.e. attitude-behaviour gap).

Prior research has investigated the factors leading to consumers' intentions to buy sustainable fashion products (Dangelico, et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2020), the relationship between consumer attitudes and sustainable consumption behaviour (Dhir et al. 2021; Diddi et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2019), reasons behind the attitude-behaviour gap in buying sustainable fashion (Bocti et al., 2021), and moderators reducing or enhancing this attitude-behaviour gaps in buying sustainable fashion (Ronda, 2024). The recent review by ElHaffar et al. (2020) and empirical evidence (e.g., Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019; Rondy, 2024; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018) reported attitude-behaviour gap, thus suggesting that theory of planned behaviour (TPB) – theory postulating that attitude translates into behaviour, has failed to explain the actual purchasing behaviour of customers in the context of sustainable products. To further understand what drives the sustainable consumption behaviour of customers, a growing number of studies propose that future research should extend the TPB by taking into consideration the other cognitive and external factors (Dir et al. 2021; Riesgo et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2019). This study addresses this call by investigating the factors that drive sustainable consumption in the fashion industry. Accordingly, the main research question is: What factors drive sustainable consumption in the fashion industry? We selected Finland as the context for this study because it ranks first in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Sachs et al., 2024). Understanding the factors driving sustainable consumption among Finnish

consumers in the fast fashion industry provides valuable insights into the phenomenon. These insights can help develop sustainable practices applicable to other markets.

We have manifold contributions to the existing research on sustainable consumption. Firstly, we developed a comprehensive model based on prior literature and tested it using data collected from 156 Finnish consumers. The findings indicate that the influence of awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion, sustainable fashion knowledge, perceived value of sustainable clothing, perceived customer effectiveness, sustainable fashion consumption attitude, and availability of sustainable clothing drive sustainable fashion consumption, whereas trust in sustainability claims is not related to sustainable fashion consumption. Although these factors have been implicitly and individually mentioned in previous studies, they have not yet been analysed collectively. Secondly, we focused on the actual purchasing behaviour of customers rather than the concept of sustainable fashion intention, and we use the term ‘sustainable fashion consumption’ to denote this. Thirdly, we extend the TPB by investigating the influence of several factors on sustainable fashion consumption, providing a comprehensive understanding of the drivers behind sustainable fashion consumption.

## **2. Theory and hypotheses**

### **2.1. Sustainable fashion consumption**

Due to increased environmental concerns, there is a lot of ongoing discussion about the clothes we wear and how they are made, but what exactly is sustainable fashion? Prior literature has used several terms to define sustainable fashion, such as slow-fashion, eco-fashion, green-fashion, or ethical clothing, and such terms are used interchangeably in prior research (Bocti et al., 2021; Busalim et al., 2022). The basic idea of ‘sustainable fashion’ is rooted in reaction to ‘fast fashion’, which has taken over in the past few years, often comprises low-cost, trend-led, and massively produced low-quality clothes using significant quantities of natural resources, which consumers buy and discard frequently, thus contributing to waste (Ronda, 2024).

Sustainable fashion is primarily linked with the environmental strand of sustainability (Dangelico et al., 2022). Its basic aim is to ensure that high-quality clothes are produced in eco-friendly ways and there is less waste filling up our landfills. This is achieved by creating cloths using organic, biodegradable, and recycled material, using less energy and water in the production process, and using high-quality material so that cloths last longer (Bocti et al., 2021; Ronda, 2024). Sustainable fashion also does not necessarily look at trends — it aims to create clothes that are timeless and never go out of style. In conclusion, sustainable fashion emerged in reaction to fast fashion to preserve ecological resources, minimise their effects, and enable sustainable growth (Ronda, 2024). In this research, sustainable fashion consumption refers to buying better quality clothes that are produced with eco-friendly raw materials and less pollutant production methods, and they last longer (Dangelico et al., 2022; Bocti et al., 2021).

Sustainable fashion consumption has mainly been investigated by using Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB), which is among the most dominant and frequently employed theoretical models in the discipline of social-psychology (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). Ajzen’s (1991) theory suggests that a person’s behavioural intentions reflect their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Therefore, a person’s intention to engage in a particular behaviour is strongly impacted by their personal attitude towards that behaviour (Newton et al., 2015). However, many

scholars have criticized this model, where some scholars have found that consumers' attitudes do not translate into sustainable fashion consumption (e.g. Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019; Rondy, 2024; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018), whereas some assert that it ignores additional variables that might affect consumers' behaviour (Dir et al. 2021; Sun et al., 2019). In response, we extended the TPB by adding additional factors thus to better elucidate this aspect by investigating the role of several factors in predicting sustainable consumption in the fashion industry. In the following, we discuss these factors driving customers to sustainable fashion consumption.

## **2.2. Factors driving sustainable fashion consumption**

Prior research continuously suggested that researchers should explore the role of other cognitive and external factors along with attitudes in explaining sustainable fashion consumption (Dhir et al., 2021; Riesgo et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2019). Based on a review of existing literature, this study focuses on sustainable fashion consumption and analyses the role of 'awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion', 'sustainable fashion knowledge', 'perceived value of sustainable clothing', 'perceived customer effectiveness', 'sustainable fashion consumption attitude', 'trust in sustainability claims', and 'availability of sustainable clothing'. These variables have acquired a prominent role in research on sustainable fashion consumption, and we suggest that they also have discernible effects on sustainable fashion consumption. Knowledge of such drivers is important, as it allows marketers, policymakers, and researchers to improve sustainable fashion consumption. In the following, we discuss each of the drivers and formulate hypotheses (see our conceptual framework in Figure 1).

### **2.2.1. Adverse environmental awareness effects of fast fashion**

It refers to the information individuals have on the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion, such as waste and air pollution (Papasolomou et al., 2023). Ronda (2024) argues that social media influencers, retailers, and educators are raising consumers' awareness of the adverse environmental and social effects of fast fashion. Recent research findings by Papasolomou et al. (2023) show that 75% of respondents in their study were aware and understood the adverse social and environmental impact of fast fashion such as fair-trade violations, child labour, and increased pollution, indicating that an increasing number of consumers are becoming aware of the detrimental impact of fast fashion on the environment. Such awareness creates negative feelings in consumers towards fast fashion and may potentially lead them to buy sustainable fashion. Thus, if people are aware of environmental issues caused by fast fashion, they are more likely to buy sustainable fashion. Ronda (2024) found that increased consumers' awareness of the adverse environmental effects of unsustainable fashion leads them to sustainable fashion consumption. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H1.** Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### **2.2.2. Sustainable fashion knowledge**

Another important factor motivating consumers for sustainable fashion consumption is the consumers' knowledge of sustainable fashion. It refers to the details consumers have about sustainable clothing brands, particularly regarding their production methods and environmental

benefits (Bocti et al. 2021). So, sustainable fashion knowledge means consumers' knowledge of how sustainable clothes are produced and help the environment. Connell (2010) and Bray et al. (2011) suggest that limited knowledge about sustainable fashion hinders consumers from buying sustainable fashion. Ho et al. (2020) mention that if consumers become more informed about the sustainable features of clothing, they are more inclined to purchase sustainable clothes. Thus, due to the increasing environmental concerns of consumers, brands should educate consumers about their sustainable efforts, which can lead consumers to buy sustainable fashion (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2021). A recent study by Bocti et al. (2021) shows that consumers' knowledge of sustainable fashion results in buying sustainable fashion. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H2.** Consumers' knowledge of sustainable fashion enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### **2.2.3. Perceived value of sustainable clothing**

The theory of consumption values proposes that functional value (i.e. perceived benefits) and economic value (i.e. price) are two important functions of the total value of sustainable clothing. The perceived value of clothing refers to the consumer's judgment of the advantage of a product based on what is received (i.e. benefit) and what is given (i.e. price) (Dangelico et al., 2022). Ronda (2024) suggests that consumers are willing to pay a substantial premium for sustainable clothing, particularly when they recognize clear incentives. Bocti et al. (2021) and Öndoğan et al. (2022) suggest that sustainable clothes are heavier on the pocket than fast-fashion clothes as they are produced by using higher quality raw materials, sustainable energy sources, better standards, and fair wages of labour. These sustainable practices increase the overall quality and durability of sustainable clothes. Hence, although sustainable fashion clothes are undeniably heavier on the pocket, they have quality and last longer because they are made from high-quality sustainable materials. Diddi et al. (2019) mention that rational consumers are aware that purchasing a few high-quality clothes that last longer is more cost-effective in the long run than buying many disposable fast-fashion clothes. Thus, the perceived value of sustainable clothing is considered an important factor that affects sustainable fashion consumption. Empirically, Dangelico et al. (2022) and Ho et al. (2020) found that a greater perceived value of sustainable clothing results in buying sustainable fashion. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H3.** The perceived value of sustainable clothing enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### **2.2.4. Perceived customer effectiveness**

Perceived consumer effectiveness is the belief that individual consumers can positively impact the environment by choosing to purchase or use eco-friendly products (Nguyen et al. 2018: 121). It is considered an important factor affecting sustainable purchasing behaviour (Joshi and Rahman, 2019). Nguyen et al. (2018) mention that when consumers believe their sustainable consumption can positively impact the environment, they are more inclined to purchase sustainable products. Conversely, when consumers believe they are powerless to influence via their sustainable consumption, they stop indulging in sustainable consumption (Bocti et al., 2021). Thus, the perception that one cannot influence the world with their purchases is considered a major obstacle to sustainable fashion consumption (Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). Individual consumer choices are important and sustainable behaviour by consumers is essential for driving significant societal change (Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2023). Companies begin producing sustainable products in

response to shifts in the preferences and desires of consumers. If consumers do not alter their purchasing behaviour, companies will continue their usual practices. Empirically, Nguyen et al. (2018) found that consumers buy sustainable products when they believe that doing so will benefit the environment. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H4.** Perceived customer effectiveness enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### **2.2.5. Sustainable fashion consumption attitude**

Attitude is one of three main concepts of TPB, and it pertains to a specific object's positive or negative assessment (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes reflect consumers' perceptions of the product. Prior literature has widely examined the link between consumer attitudes and sustainable consumption intentions and behaviours (e.g. Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019). However, several scholars have observed a gap between attitude and behaviour (Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019; Rondy, 2024; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018), suggesting that a positive attitude towards sustainable consumption does not always translate into a purchase. Thus, the literature is less clear about the link between attitude and behaviour, where some scholars have found that consumers' attitudes have increased sustainable fashion consumption (e.g. Dhir et al. 2021; Sun et al., 2019), while others have reported a gap between behaviour and attitude (Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019; Rondy, 2024; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). This inconclusive finding has driven us to further investigate the relationship between attitudes towards sustainable fashion consumption and actual sustainable fashion consumption among Finnish consumers. We expect a positive correlation between the two, given that Finnish consumers are recognized for their environmental consciousness (Heiniemi, 2024). Therefore, we anticipate that these consumers will buy sustainable fashion to minimise environmental damage, thereby demonstrating pro-environmental behaviour. Based on these arguments, we hypothesise:

**H5.** A sustainable fashion consumption attitude enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### **2.2.6. Trust in sustainability claims**

Consumer's trust in the sustainability claims of fashion companies is an important determinant of sustainable fashion consumption (Ronda, 2024). There is, however, very little agreement in the research as to how exactly trust should be defined in the context of sustainable fashion consumption. In this study, we choose a pragmatic approach and define trust as 'customer trusts the fashion companies if the latter is perceived to be reliable in their sustainable claims'. Since consumers are aware of how the textile industry adds to pollution, climate change, and other adverse effects on the planet, fashion companies are compelled to provide all information about used eco-friendly materials, production processes, product quality, etc. Due to the increased awareness of consumers, fashion retailers are not able to get away with greenwashing. Such detailed information to consumers not only builds their trust in fashion retailers but leads them towards buying sustainable clothes. Therefore, several studies have found that trust in the sustainability claims of fashion retailers has positively impacted sustainable fashion consumption (Bocti et al., 2021; Ronda, 2024). Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

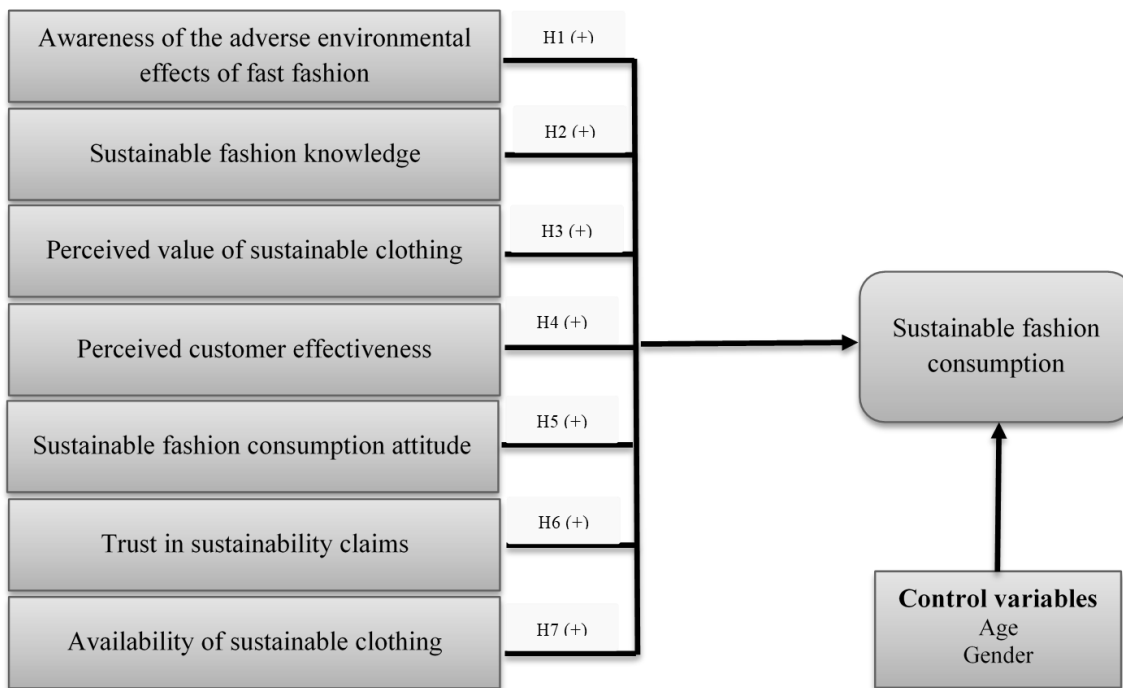
**H6.** Trust in sustainability claims enhances sustainable fashion consumption.

### 2.2.7. Sustainable clothing's availability

The accessibility to retailers who sell sustainable clothing is another key factor causing the customers' shift to sustainable fashion (Jacobs et al., 2018). Currently, many consumers have limited available options for buying sustainable clothes – primarily buying online, and this limited availability has been found a common barrier to purchasing sustainable garments (Ronda, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2018). When sustainable products are more accessible, consumers find it easier to choose them (Brandão and Costa, 2021). As a result, increased availability can motivate consumers to buy sustainable clothing (Nguyen et al., 2018). Brandão and Costa (2021) mention that sustainable fashion retailers should locate their clothing stores near traditional fashion stores, and they should also offer sustainable clothes online. Such wider availability not only motivates consumers to buy sustainable clothes but also makes it easy for them to buy sustainable clothes (Signori and Forno, 2016). Empirically, Ronda (2024) and Dangelico et al. (2022) found that greater availability of sustainable clothing results in buying sustainable fashion. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

**H7.** When sustainable clothing is readily available, it positively affects the consumption of sustainable fashion.

To summarize, this research develops a comprehensive model of sustainable fashion consumption in which seven factors drive sustainable fashion consumption (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Hypotheses and proposed model

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Data collection

This study comprises Finnish consumers. Before the final data collection stage, a pilot study was done with four consumers and research team members to see whether the questionnaire respondents would understand the questions. Based on their feedback, some questions were rephrased and reordered. Dillman et al. (2009) proposed that web surveys can efficiently, swiftly, and cost-effectively reach a vast number of widely dispersed respondents, delivering real-time numerical data (Dillman et al., 2009). Therefore, data for this study was collected via an online survey created in Webropol, and published on two social media platforms (i.e. Instagram and LinkedIn) for three weeks during Spring 2024. The pilot test and survey were conducted in English without any issues, as it is the most widely studied and commonly used foreign language in Finland (Leppänen et al., 2011). Additionally, using English avoided the need for back-and-forth translation, which was particularly important since some of the authors lacked sufficient proficiency in Finnish. To increase the number of responses, respondents were guaranteed anonymity. Ultimately, 156 usable questionnaires were obtained.

#### 3.2. The characteristics of the sample

The characteristics of the sample (see Table 1) show that 156 respondents were living in thirteen different cities, with the majority living in the city of Oulu (n=49) and the city of Helsinki (n=34). Respondents' ages varied from under 18 to over 56, with 70% being between 18 and 30 years old. Further, the sample comprised 64% females (n=100), and the majority (28%, n=44) had a monthly income between 2300 € to 3 599 €.

**Table 1**

Sample characteristics (156 respondents)

Respondents' cities represented in the sample	Oulu (n=49, 31%), Helsinki (n=34, 22%), Turku (n=13, 8%), Vaasa (n=11, 7%), Tampere (n=11, 7%), Espoo (n=7, 5%), Jyväskylä (n=5, 3%), Lappeenranta (n=5, 3%), Other cities (n=21, 14%)
Age of respondents	Younger than 18 years (n=4, 3%), 18 – 30 years (n=105, 67%), 31 – 43 years (n=16, 10%), 44 – 56 years (n=19, 12%), Over 56 years (n=12, 8%)
Gender of respondents	Female (n=100, 64%), Male (n=56, 36%)
Monthly income of respondents	Less than 1 000 € (n=26, 17%), 1 000 € - 2 299€ (n=31, 20%), 2 300 € - 3 599 € (n=44, 28%), 3 600 € - 4 899 € (n=35, 22%), More than 4 900 € (n=20, 13%)

#### 3.3. Measures

The items used to operationalize each construct were developed based on current literature (see Appendix A). After reviewing previous studies, we adapted 6 items (composite reliability .93) for the construct of sustainable purchase consumption (Duong, 2022; Newton et al., 2015; Diddi et al., 2019). 'Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion' was operationalised with three items (composite reliability .86) from Papasolomou et al. (2023) and Ronda et al. (2024). We drew two items (composite reliability .71) from Ronda (2024) for our construct of 'sustainable fashion knowledge'. 'Perceived value of sustainable clothing' was measured using three items (composite reliability .85) from Brandão and Costa (2021) and Ronda et al. (2024). We adapted three items (composite reliability

.88) from Riesgo et al. (2023) for measuring our constructs of ‘perceived customer effectiveness’. Our five-item construct (composite reliability .82) of ‘sustainable fashion consumption attitude’ was measured from prior work done by Nguyen et al. (2018), Papisolomou et al. (2023), and Ronda (2024). ‘Trust in sustainability claims’ was measured using two items (composite reliability .82) drawn from Ronda (2024). We used two items to measure ‘Availability of sustainable clothing’ (composite reliability .76) from Brandão and Costa (2021). Additionally, we included consumers’ age and gender as control variables due to their possible impact on ‘sustainable fashion consumption’.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### 4.1. Measure validation

We used PLS-SEM by applying SmartPLS 4 software to analyse the data. The following two features made PLS-SEM especially appropriate for this study. First, the dependent and independent variables of this study were not measurable in an absolute manner, thus making PLS-SEM appropriate for testing structural models with latent constructs (Ali and Larimo, 2016; Ali et al., 2021). Second, rather than aiming to produce the covariance matrix as close as possible to the theoretical model (i.e. theory testing), the aim has been to predict the level of ‘sustainable fashion consumption’ as explained by independent variables (i.e. prediction). Although, the role of ‘sustainable fashion consumption attitude’ has been discussed in previous research concerning ‘sustainable fashion consumption’, no study has addressed the role of other independent variables in explaining ‘sustainable fashion consumption’. In such a situation, the variance-based PLS-SEM approach seemed suitable (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014).

Although PLS-SEM estimates both the measurement model and the structural model simultaneously, we evaluated the models based on the procedure suggested by Hulland (1999) and Hair et al. (2014). The estimated model was analysed and interpreted in two stages: first the adequacy of the measurement model, and then the testing of the structural model. We checked the adequacy of the measurement model by evaluating the individual-item reliabilities, convergent, and discriminant validity (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2011). We first evaluated the individual item reliabilities by examining the loading values of indicators on their respective latent variables.

**Table 2**  
Individual item loadings and composite reliability

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Composite reliability
Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion	1	0.88	.86
	2	0.85	
	3	0.89	
Sustainable fashion knowledge	1	0.88	.71
	2	0.88	
Perceived value of sustainable clothing	1	0.84	.85
	2	0.91	
	3	0.88	
Perceived customer effectiveness	1	0.91	.88
	2	0.90	

	3	0.88	
Sustainable fashion consumption attitude	1	0.71	.82
	2	0.74	
	3	0.75	
	4	0.78	
	5	0.78	
Trust in sustainability claims	1	0.92	.82
	2	0.92	
Availability of sustainable clothing	1	0.92	.76
	2	0.86	
Sustainable fashion consumption	1	0.92	.93
	2	0.90	
	3	0.85	
	4	0.88	
	5	0.86	
	6	0.87	

All indicator loadings exceeded the Gotz et al., (2010) recommended threshold level of 0.7 on their respective latent variables, thus indicating a high degree of individual item reliability. The construct reliability for each of the latent constructs was calculated by means of composite reliability. The composite reliability for all the constructs exceeded the Gotz et al. (2010) recommended threshold level of 0.6, thus indicating that the reliabilities of all the constructs were good (see Table 2). To test the convergent validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) with a value higher than 0.5 has been recommended in the literature (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As can be seen from Table 2, all latent constructs exceeded the recommended minimum level of 0.5. For that reason, all the latent constructs were valid. To test whether latent constructs were sufficiently different from each other, discriminant validity was inspected. The discriminant validity is proven if the square roots of the AVEs of the latent variables are larger than the correlations among the latent variables (Chin 1998; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Gotz et al., 2010). Table 3 demonstrates that all constructs used in this study passed this test too and therefore discriminant validity is assured. Taken together, these results lend sufficient confidence that the measurement model is sound. Furthermore, we also checked the correlations between the main constructs to evaluate the level of multi-collinearity between independent variables. All independent variable correlations were lower than the 0.7 thresholds suggested by Gotz et al. (2010), indicating that multi-collinearity was not an issue.

**Table 3**  
Correlations, AVE, and square roots of AVE along the diagonal

Constructs	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion	0.77	0.88							
2. Sustainable fashion knowledge	0.78	0.665	0.88						
3. Perceived value of sustainable clothing	0.77	0.602	0.495	0.88					

4. Perceived customer effectiveness	0.81	0.648	0.538	0.689	0.90				
5. Sustainable fashion consumption attitude	0.74	0.396	0.254	0.455	0.510	0.86			
6. Trust in sustainability claims	0.84	0.503	0.457	0.538	0.536	0.426	0.92		
7. Availability of sustainable clothing	0.80	0.602	0.513	0.510	0.522	0.303	0.570	0.90	
8. Sustainable fashion consumption	0.71	0.695	0.586	0.677	0.676	0.487	0.548	0.636	0.84

## 4.2. Structural estimates

We assessed the main effects of the structural model by looking at  $R^2$  (i.e. coefficient of determination) for the dependent variable, path loadings (i.e. standardized  $b$ ), and their significance values (Gotz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2011). To do so, we used the bootstrapping procedure of sampling on the basis of 5000 bootstrapping runs. Table 4 indicates the results of the structural model. The  $R^2$  value for sustainable fashion consumption is 0.77, suggesting that our independent and control variables explain 77% percent of the variance in the dependent variable.

**Table 4**  
Results of structural model

Hypotheses	Model path	Beta estimates	P Value	Accept/Reject
Hypothesis1	Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.285	.000***	Accept
Hypothesis2	Sustainable fashion knowledge => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.105	.062*	Accept
Hypothesis3	The perceived value of sustainable clothing => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.208	.001***	Accept
Hypothesis4	Perceived customer effectiveness => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.161	.039**	Accept
Hypothesis5	Sustainable fashion consumption attitude => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.200	.000***	Accept
Hypothesis6	Trust in sustainability claims => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.044	.473	Reject
Hypothesis7	Availability of sustainable clothing => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.186	.012***	Accept
Control variables	Gender => Sustainable fashion consumption	-0.070	.159	
	Age => Sustainable fashion consumption	0.081	.082*	
Construct $R^2$		Sustainable fashion consumption = 0.77		

\*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*  $p \leq 0.1$

Overall, results support six out of seven hypotheses. ‘Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion’ has an extremely strong positive effect on sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.285$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), thus supporting H1. The H2 ( $\beta = 0.105$ ;  $p < 0.1$ ) was also supported showing that ‘sustainable fashion knowledge’ has a strong positive effect on sustainable fashion consumption. As expected, H3

is also supported, showing that there is an extremely positive effect of the ‘perceived value of sustainable clothing’ on sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.208$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). The supporting findings for H4 depict that ‘perceived customer effectiveness’ has a very strong positive effect on sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.161$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The results further support H5, indicating that ‘fashion consumption attitude’ has also an extremely strong positive effect on sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.200$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). However, contrary to expectation, ‘trust in sustainability claims’ is not significantly related to sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.044$ ;  $p > 0.1$ ), thereby no support is found for H6. The results further support H7, indicating that the ‘availability of sustainable clothing’ has an extremely strong positive effect on sustainable fashion consumption ( $\beta = 0.186$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). In terms of control variables, the influence of consumer age ( $\beta = 0.081$ ;  $p < 0.1$ ) was significant, while we found no significant effect of consumer gender ( $\beta = -0.070$ ;  $p > 0.1$ ) on sustainable fashion consumption.

## 5. Discussion and implications

The fast fashion is choking the world, polluting our water, and contaminating our air. The world that we live in now demands that consumers buy sustainable fashion. Prior scholarly work on sustainable fashion consumption has largely focused on TPB to increase our knowledge of the connection between consumer attitudes and sustainable consumption intentions and/or sustainable consumption behaviour (e.g. Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019). However, the widespread acceptance of sustainable fashion consumption remains elusive, as demonstrated by the gap between attitudes and behaviours (Nguyen et al., 2018; Diddi et al., 2019; Ronda, 2024; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018), which indicates that a positive attitude towards sustainable fashion consumption does not always translate into actual purchases. Recent studies have called for exploring other factors to better understand sustainable fashion consumption (e.g., Dir et al. 2021; Riesgo et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2019). In this study, we aimed to go beyond the traditional TPB focus on attitudes to explain sustainable fashion consumption behaviour. Building on previous research, we created a comprehensive framework for enhancing sustainable fashion consumption that comprises seven factors ‘awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion’, ‘sustainable fashion knowledge’, ‘perceived value of sustainable clothing’, ‘perceived customer effectiveness’, ‘sustainable fashion consumption attitude’, ‘trust in sustainability claims’, and ‘availability of sustainable clothing’, and empirically tested the framework. Thus, we advance the early work in three specific ways: First, we focus on the actual purchasing behaviour of customers, rather than the concept of sustainable fashion intention, and use the term ‘sustainable fashion consumption’ to denote this. Second, we extend previous research by providing empirical insights into how several factors enhance sustainable fashion consumption. Third, we extend the TPB by providing a comprehensive understanding of factors driving sustainable fashion consumption.

Based on the analysis of 156 responses from Finnish consumers, several interesting results are discovered. We find that ‘awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion’, ‘sustainable fashion knowledge’, ‘perceived value of sustainable clothing’, ‘perceived customer effectiveness’, ‘sustainable fashion consumption attitude’, and ‘availability of sustainable

clothing' drive sustainable fashion consumption. These results are aligned with the earlier research that has proposed that 'awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion' (e.g. Ronda, 2024), 'sustainable fashion knowledge' (e.g., Bocti et al., 2021; Papasolomou et al., 2023), 'perceived value of sustainable clothing' (e.g. Dangelico et al., 2022; Diddi et al., 2019; Ho et al., 2020), 'perceived customer effectiveness' (e.g. Nguyen et al., 2018), 'sustainable fashion consumption attitude' (e.g., Dhir et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2019), and 'availability of sustainable clothing' (Brandão and Costa; 2021; Dangelico et al., 2022; Ronda, 2024) are important factors for enhancing sustainable fashion consumption. For academia, our findings therefore extend the TPB by supporting the proposition that several factors, including the attitude towards sustainable fashion consumption, encourage consumers for sustainable fashion consumption. For practitioners like fashion brands, findings suggest that Finnish consumers spend money on sustainable fashion because they are well aware of the adverse effects of fast fashion, have positive knowledge and attitude towards sustainable fashion, consider sustainable fashion valuable, and know the availability points of sustainable fashion and believe that their purchase makes a positive impact on the environment. They are leading a change towards sustainable fashion consumption, and therefore fashion companies should be reactive to Finnish consumers, and join this change by producing sustainable fashion, creating more awareness about their sustainable fashion, and increasing the availability of their sustainable products. Unexpectedly, we find that 'trust in sustainability claims' is not significantly related to sustainable fashion consumption. This is in contradiction to the argument developed by Ronda (2024) and Riesgo et al. (2023) that consumers are sceptical of the sustainable claims of fast fashion brands, and their lack of trust is a barrier to sustainable fashion consumption. One possible explanation for this may be that Finnish consumers buy sustainable clothes from few known and reputable sustainable fashion brands, and therefore their general trust in the sustainability claim of all fashion brands is not a relevant factor in explaining their sustainable fashion consumption behaviour. Therefore, instead of analysing the general trust, future research should examine the specific trust on sustainability claims of fashion retailers from where customers buy sustainable fashion.

### **5.1. Limitations and further research**

This research has a few limitations that should be noted. Firstly, the study only includes Finnish consumers in its sample, so further attentions are needed when generalizing the results to other contexts. Further studies should check the applicability of our model by collecting data from consumers of different countries. Second, this study merely focused on buying sustainable fashion and did not consider the different forms of sustainable fashion consumption like buying second-hand clothes and up-cycling of clothes. Therefore, future research should also investigate other forms of sustainable fashion consumption. Third, future research should extend our model by including 'perceived behavioural control' and macro-level variables such as 'government rules and regulations regarding sustainable consumption', and 'national culture' that may influence sustainable fashion consumption. Finally, we encourage researchers to explore the viewpoint of fashion retailers what factors drive them in implementing sustainable fashion, and what barriers they face while implementing sustainable fashion.

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## Appendix A. Constructs under study

Constructs	Questions	Item source (s)
Awareness of the adverse environmental effects of fast fashion	<p><b>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: (strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree)</b></p> <p>(a) I am aware of the negative environmental and social impacts of fashion consumption.</p> <p>(b) I have a lot of information about the adverse effects of fast fashion in the environment and society.</p> <p>(c) I know how my fashion purchase choices impact the environment and society.</p>	<p>Item a: Papasolomou et al. (2023)</p> <p>Item b and c: Ronda (2024)</p>
Sustainable fashion knowledge	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I know what sustainable fashion is.</p> <p>(b) I have a lot of knowledge about the materials used in fashion and their impact on the environment.</p>	<p>Item a: Developed for this study</p> <p>Item b: Ronda (2024)</p>
Perceived value of sustainable clothing	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I think it is fair that sustainable clothing is more expensive to cover higher production costs.</p> <p>(b) Sustainable fashion is good value for the money.</p> <p>(c) Sustainable fashion is durable and high quality.</p>	<p>Items a: Ronda (2024)</p> <p>Items b and c: Brandão &amp; Costa (2021)</p>
Perceived customer effectiveness	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I believe that each consumer's behavior can have a positive impact on society and environment.</p> <p>(b) I believe that sustainable clothing can help in dealing with sustainability issues.</p> <p>(c) I believe my behavior of buying sustainable clothes can have a positive impact on the environment.</p>	<p>Riesgo et al. (2023)</p>
Sustainable fashion consumption attitude	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I think the fashion industry should change to be more sustainable.</p> <p>(b) I am concerned about environmental pollution caused by fashion consumption.</p> <p>(c) I feel good when I buy from sustainable fashion brands.</p> <p>(d) I feel guilty when I purchase fast fashion.</p> <p>(e) I am willing to pay a higher price for clothing that has been produced in a sustainable manner.</p>	<p>Items a and b: Nguyen et al. (2018)</p> <p>Item c: Papasolomou et al. (2023)</p> <p>Items d and e: Ronda (2024)</p>
Trust in sustainability claims	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I trust fashion companies when they say they are sustainable.</p> <p>(b) When companies are transparent about their sustainability, I trust them.</p>	<p>Ronda (2024)</p>
Availability of sustainable clothing	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) I know where I can buy sustainable clothing.</p> <p>(b) Sustainable clothing is easy to find.</p>	<p>Items a and b: Brandão and Costa (2021)</p>
Sustainable fashion consumption	<p><b>Strongly disagree 1-5 strongly agree</b></p> <p>(a) While buying clothes, I look at ingredients to see if it contains things that are environmentally damaging.</p> <p>(b) If I have a choice between two clothes, I pick the one that is made more sustainably.</p> <p>(c) I avoid buying clothes from companies whose actions damage the environment.</p> <p>(d) I buy sustainable clothes even if they are more expensive.</p> <p>(e) I prefer to buy clothes that I can wear for a long time instead of trendy clothes that go out of style quickly.</p> <p>(f) I always buy sustainable clothes.</p>	<p>Items a, b &amp; d: Duong (2022)</p> <p>Item c: Newton et al. (2015)</p> <p>Item e: Diddi et al. (2019)</p> <p>Item f: Developed for this study</p>