

Chapter 15

Weaving the Future: Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention and Behaviour of Sustainable Sportswear and Footwear

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ABSTRACT

This study explores consumers intentions and behaviour when purchasing sustainable sportswear and athletic footwear, using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) as a framework. The research examines how subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and attitudes influence purchasing decisions. Data was collected through an online survey with 118 Spanish consumers and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings confirm that all three factors play a significant role in shaping purchase intentions, supporting previous research. However, the novelty is that this study reveals that the factor that becomes more important is the subjective norm, that is, social pressure and influence of the close

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circle. Furthermore, the study highlights that purchase behaviour is closely linked to purchase intention. These findings provide useful insights for brands aiming to create more effective marketing strategies that resonate with consumers' values and encourage the adoption of sustainable sportswear and footwear.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing competitiveness of the market, coupled with the significant rise in fashion demand and the ever-shorter life cycles of garments, are forcing companies in the fashion sector to adopt production practices that are contrary to sustainability (Liu et al., 2024). This has led to a visible increase in production among companies in this sector in recent years, which has caused clothing brands to become one of the most polluting industries and the second most water intensive (Spindler et al., 2023).

This pollution from the fashion sector comes not only from the production process where large amounts of energy resources are required, but also from the waste it generates (Suzianti et al., 2024). Moreover, it is now increasingly affected by business models such as 'fast fashion' that promulgate consumerism, in order to maximise corporate profits, at the expense of consumers purchasing clothes more frequently (Zhang et al., 2021). This has led to reports that 60% of the clothes purchased in the last year end up in landfills before the end of the year, highlighting a lack of environmental responsibility, since these clothes are mostly made of synthetic raw materials that release methane gas in their degradation process, contributing to global warming (Hageman et al., 2024).

Due to all the problems in the fashion sector and the textile industry in general, consumers have shown their opposition to the practices of most companies. Therefore, an increase in environmental awareness, ecological attitudes and therefore in the demand for sustainable garments has been observed, especially among the new generations of consumers. The literature suggests that these consumers are the ones who most empathise with the willingness to pay a higher price for clothes that have a lower negative impact on the environment (Al-Jundi et al., 2019). Sustainable garments made from natural raw materials or produced through processes that minimize negative environmental impacts, aiming to protect natural resources. A recent study argues that in most cases consumers tend to purchase this type of garment to show their pro-environmental attitudes (Khare, 2020). For all these reasons, the market share of consumers towards sustainable garments has increased, with a forecast growth in demand of 6% by 2026 (Liu et al., 2024).

In recent years, this has led to an increase in studies examining the factors that influence sustainable purchasing behaviour in the fashion sector in general. However, limited attention has been paid to understanding what factors encourage

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