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## Consumer Resistance to Sustainable Fashion: Evidence from the USA and India

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## Consumer Resistance to Sustainable Fashion: Evidence from the USA and India

### Abstract

**Purpose-** Despite increasing awareness among fashion consumers about the positive environmental and societal impacts of sustainable fashion as a viable alternative to fast fashion, their actual adoption behavior often diverges. This study aims to empirically investigate consumers' resistance barriers to sustainable fashion clothing.

**Design/methodology/approach-** This study utilizes innovation resistance theory to examine the barriers of consumer intention to buy sustainable clothing. The study collected a large sample ( $N = 745$ ) of fashion consumers from the USA and India to test a research model.

**Findings –** The study finds that value, social risk, tradition, and image barriers significantly reduce consumers' intentions to buy sustainable fashion clothing. Additionally, the findings highlight that environmental concern moderates the relationship between social risk barriers and buying intentions.

**Originality/value –** The study findings contribute to the existing sustainable fashion literature by highlighting the main barriers for sustainable clothing consumption and emphasizes the crucial role of social elements, economic values, and the image of sustainable fashion products in shaping consumer behavior within the fashion landscape.

### 1. Introduction

The fashion industry plays a vital economic and cultural role globally. The clothing industry alone is valued at US\$1.3 trillion, employing over 300 million people along the value chain (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Not only does it significantly contribute to global GDP, but it also influences societal norms and individual identities through the expression of style (MacGillivray and Hann, 2003). This comes at a cost. Research has revealed that the fashion industry contributes significantly to environmental degradation and societal inequities (Hill and Lee, 2012; McNeill and Venter, 2019). The European Environment Agency notes that clothing accounts for more than 60% of total textile usage, leading to an annual generation of over 57 million tons of waste (European Environment Agency, 2022). In 2018, the global fashion industry was responsible for approximately 2.1 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, constituting 4% of the total global emissions (Berg *et al.*, 2020). This environmental impact is largely attributed to shifts in production and consumption patterns, particularly associated with the proliferation of fast fashion—a sector characterized by inexpensive manufacturing, frequent turnover in consumption, and short-lived garment usage (Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020).

Sustainable fashion, viewed from a consumer perspective, is increasingly seen as a solution to escalating environmental and social challenges, including issues like pollution, energy, and fair trade (Diddi *et al.*, 2019; McNeill and Venter, 2019). It is specifically defined as "clothing that incorporates one or more elements of social and environmental sustainability" (Su *et al.*, 2019, p.1141). These elements encompass adherence to fair trade principles, production free from sweatshops, and the use of environmentally friendly (Chang and Watchravesringkan, 2018). Despite the well-documented concerns associated with fast fashion and the growing awareness of sustainable alternatives, a disparity remains between consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion and their actual purchasing behaviors. Studies reveal that consumers often resist adopting sustainable fashion, suggesting that heightened awareness does not automatically lead to behavioral change (Han *et al.*, 2017; Hill and Lee, 2015; McNeill and Moore, 2015). Extant research suggests that this may be due to a wide range of factors including lack of environmental knowledge and concerns (Connell, 2010; Harris *et al.*, 2016; Hustvedt and Dickson, 2009) aesthetic concerns (Connell, 2011; Rausch and Kopplin, 2021) and economic aspects (Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021; Moon *et al.*, 2015; Ritch and Schröder, 2012; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023). In response, this study explores the reasons behind sustainable fashion resistance in the USA and India.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Sustainable fashion consumption and cultural values

Sustainable fashion, often referred to as “slow fashion,” aims to provide an eco-friendlier and socially responsible alternative to fast fashion (Haines and Lee, 2022). The term lacks a standardized definition and varies across different contexts (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). However, previous studies have emphasized that sustainable fashion is a holistic approach where designers, buyers, retailers, and consumers consider the impacts of products on workers, communities, and ecosystems (Fletcher, 2007, p.2). This perspective reshapes fashion production and consumption (Busalim *et al.*, 2022). A defining trait of sustainable fashion is its commitment to balancing consumption with environmental and social responsibilities. Existing research often frames sustainable fashion within the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic. For instance, Reimers *et al.* (2016) describe sustainable fashion as clothing designed to minimize negative effects on the environment, employees, and animals. Similarly, Goworek *et al.* (2012) argue for a definition that includes both social and environmental sustainability, such as fair-trade manufacturing and the use of organically grown materials. This comprehensive view ensures that sustainable fashion addresses broader sustainability goals.

Consumer characteristics and values play a crucial role in shaping their perceptions and consumption behaviors (Dabas and Whang, 2022; Ozkan and Kurtulus, 2024). Fashion consumers in India and the USA demonstrate distinct traits influenced by their respective cultural, economic, and social contexts (Hofstede, 2024). Indian fashion consumers often prioritize traditional and cultural attire that reflects their unique identity, while also integrating contemporary styles (Kautish *et al.*, 2020). Economic factors significantly influence their purchasing decisions, with affordability being a key consideration. Additionally, social influences and community norms heavily impact their fashion choices (Kautish *et al.*, 2020; Kumar *et al.*, 2009; Sarkar and Sarkar, 2022). In contrast, research suggests fashion consumers in the U.S. are driven by individualism and self-expression (Tkhayet, 2023). U.S. consumers value current trends and brands made in the USA (Kim and Bye, 2022; Kim and Yim, 2022). While economic status does influence their fashion choices, there is an increasing awareness and preference for sustainable fashion among certain segments (Chi *et al.*, 2021; Kim and Bye, 2022). Cultural values significantly influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions in the fashion industry (Dabas and Whang, 2022). As the values that Indian culture emphasizes are different from those in American culture, and this contrast between Indian and American cultural values provides a valuable perspective for understanding differences in sustainable fashion consumption patterns. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence sustainable consumption behavior across cultures can foster sustainable fashion and benefit businesses that operate in multicultural markets when developing and promoting sustainable fashion clothing (Jung *et al.*, 2021). By identifying and addressing the unique motivations and barriers faced by consumers in different cultural contexts, companies can create more effective marketing strategies and product offerings (Jung *et al.*, 2021; Khan *et al.*, 2024; Lang *et al.*, 2019).

### 2.2 Sustainable fashion clothing: the attitude-behavior gap

While consumers may recognize the positive impact of sustainable fashion on the environment and society (Ronda, 2024), their actual behavior in adopting sustainable fashion clothing often suggests a different inclination (Diddi *et al.*, 2019; Niimäki, 2010). This disconnection between consumers' attitude and behavior poses a significant challenge to the development and growth of sustainable fashion (Diddi *et al.*, 2019; Jacobs *et al.*, 2018; Park and Lin, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2024). Prior research emphasizes the need for further investigation to comprehend the reasons behind this gap, as well as to identify drivers and barriers to consumers' decisions, particularly in the sustainable fashion context (Jacobs *et al.*, 2018; Ronda, 2024; Sehnem *et al.*, 2024; Yadav *et al.*, 2024)

Researchers, employing various theories such as the theory of planned behavior, stimulus organism response model, balance theory, and behavioral reasoning theory, have explored numerous factors contributing to this gap in consumer behavior. For instance, Ronda (2024) utilized the theory of planned behavior and the behavioral reasoning theory to investigate five critical barriers in fashion consumption that affect the relationship between motivations for sustainable fashion and actual consumer behavior. The study identified significant obstacles, including a lack of knowledge, limited availability and variety, and a lack of trust in sustainability claims. Similarly, Blas Riesgo *et al.* (2023) employed a mixed-method approach to examine the drivers and barriers to sustainable fashion consumption, finding that a lack of trust in fashion businesses and higher prices are the primary barriers preventing consumers from purchasing sustainable fashion products. Diddi *et al.* (2019) used focus groups to understand why young adult consumers do not engage with sustainable fashion. Their findings suggest that barriers such as lack of sustainable fashion variety, premium price, lack of knowledge, and emotions attached to product consumption, are the main reasons for not engaging with sustainable fashion. Park and Lin (2020) examined the consumers' attitude-behavior gap in two types of sustainable fashion

practices; recycled and upcycled products. The study shows that predictors such as environmental concern, utilitarian values, and subject norms positively influenced consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, recent studies have demonstrated that consumers' environmental values—such as biospheric and altruistic values—along with their beliefs and norms, play a significant role in shaping their behavior toward sustainable fashion consumption (Khan *et al.*, 2024; Yang *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the study highlighted that the factors influencing the consumers' gap were contingent on the type of product. While existing studies in sustainable fashion have explored individual behavior and product-related factors, they have not adequately addressed the functional and psychological barriers to the consumption of sustainable fashion. Innovation resistance theory is frequently used in sustainable consumption literature to explain consumers' responses to new and sustainable products and services. This study seeks to understand attitude-behavior gaps in sustainable fashion by incorporating innovation resistance theory to experimentally model and test the relationship between a set of innovation resistance barriers and purchase intention.

### 2.3 Innovation resistance theory

In one of the seminal pieces in the innovation resistance literature, Ram and Sheth (1989) defined innovation resistance as “the resistance offered by consumers to an innovation, either because it poses potential changes from a satisfactory status quo or because it conflicts with their belief structure” (p. 6). This work emphasized that innovation resistance affects the adoption time, extends across different product categories, and can involve functional barriers or psychological barriers. Functional barriers encompass factors such as product usage patterns, perceived product value, and the risks associated with product utilization. In contrast, psychological barriers arise from consumers' adherence to traditions and norms, as well as their perceptions of a product's image (Laukkanen, 2016; Ram and Sheth, 1989). Studies involving general innovation adoption theory, for example, Arts *et al.* (2011) have found that consumers have higher adoption intentions for innovations that are more complex, match their needs, and have lower uncertainty, while consumers are more likely to actually adopt innovations with less complexity and greater relative advantage. However, this approach does not take into account consumers' potential internal approach-avoidance motivational conflicts regarding innovation adoption, nor does the literature help predict consumer adoption intentions for specific and unique product categories, such as sustainable fashion. A recent study by Busalim *et al.* (2022) revealed a need for more research that is grounded in theory. The majority of the studies grounded in theoretical frameworks have employed the theory of planned behavior, developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) and extended by Ajzen (1991). This theory serves as the foundation for explaining the disparity between consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions, as well as the gap between intention and the actualization of purchase behavior.

Extant research on general innovation resistance has provided mixed results. Laukkanen (2016) built on the work by Ram and Sheth (1989) to empirically test how five adoption barriers influence consumer adoption decisions in Internet and mobile banking. Specifically, the study examined how the barriers (product usage, value, risk, tradition, and image) interacted with three consumer demographic variables (gender, age, and income). Results revealed that the product value, image, and tradition barriers significantly inhibited Internet and mobile banking adoption along with the gender and age variables. In a similar vein, White *et al.* (2019) developed a framework proposing that “consumers are more inclined to engage in pro-environmental behaviors when the message or context leverages the following psychological factors: social influence, habit formation, individual self, feelings and cognition, and tangibility” (p. 1). Heidenreich and Handrich (2015) found that passive innovation resistance inhibits adoption intention as well as actual new product adoption.

### 3. Research model and hypotheses development

This study explores the impact of functional barriers—specifically, usage barriers, value barriers, and social risk barriers—and psychological barriers, including tradition and image barriers, on consumers' intention to purchase sustainable fashion clothing. Additionally, the study examines the moderating role of consumers' environmental concerns in the relationship between these barriers and their intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing, as shown in Figure 1.

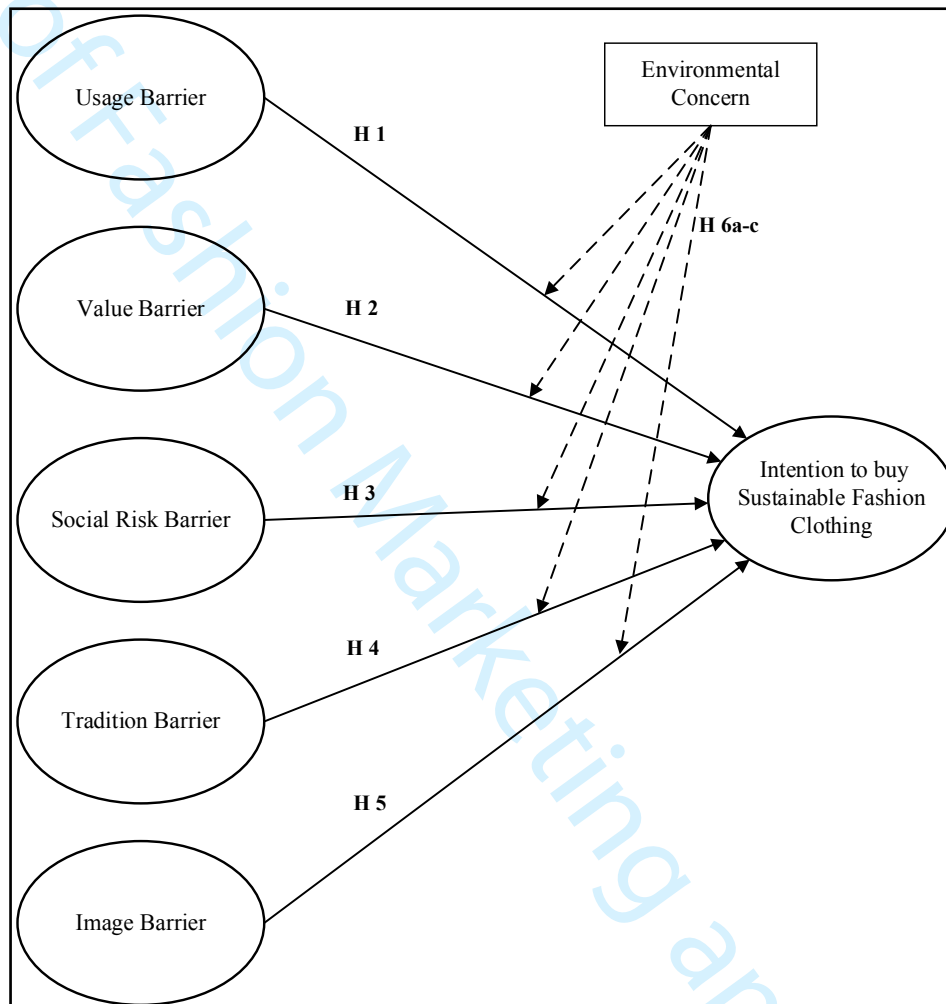


Fig 1. Research model and proposed hypothesis

Usage barriers refer to the consumers' perception regarding the adjustments required to adopt or utilize new innovations (Mani and Chouk, 2018). Chen and Kuo (2017) propose that resistance arises due to users' lack of knowledge about innovation. Consequently, innovations demanding more time for consumers to understand may encounter delays in adoption, given that resistance to change often stems from ingrained habits developed over extended use of the same product (Chen and Kuo, 2017). Sustainable fashion represents an innovative fusion of sustainable development and fashion (Aakko and Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013). Prior research has indicated that usage barriers exhibit a negative correlation with users' intentions to buy innovative products such as eco-friendly cosmetics, mobile payment solutions, Internet of Things (IoT) banking, and hydrogen-electric motorcycles (Mani and Chouk, 2018; Kaur *et al.*, 2020; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). In the context of sustainable fashion, studies underscore that limited availability of sustainable fashion products and unequal consumer access pose challenges (Carey and Cervellon, 2014; McNeill and Moore, 2015). For example, Park and Lin (2020) found that availability risk, and limited product range design, style, and color have a positive impact on the gap between consumer intention and purchase. Similarly, Diddi *et al.* (2019) explored reasons why young consumers refrain from adopting sustainable clothing and identified a perceived lack of variety and style as a specific hindrance. Thus, this research posits:

**H1:** Usage barriers have a negative effect on consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing.

Value barriers refer to the perceived value of a new product when compared to its alternatives, considering both performance and monetary aspects (Kushwah *et al.*, 2019). Previous research has indicated that elevated prices constitute a significant deterrent for consumers when it comes to purchasing sustainable fashion clothing (Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021; Moon *et al.*, 2015; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023; Ritch and Schröder, 2012). For instance, Ritch and Schröder (2012) emphasize that consumers are unwilling to compromise on product price and style for sustainability purposes, as they perceive sustainable clothing to be more expensive and less fashion oriented. Carey and Cervellon (2014) found that consumers' perception of sustainable fashion prices could vary from one country to another. For example, higher prices may represent higher quality products for UK consumers, while it is associated with higher social status among French consumers. Carey and Cervellon (2014) confirmed that the price of the product is one of the choice criteria that motivate consumers to buy sustainable fashion. Similarly, Brandão and Gonçalves (2021) confirmed that perceived higher prices have a strong negative influence on consumers' willingness to pay for sustainable fashion. Therefore, this research proposes:

**H2:** *Value barriers have a negative effect on consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing.*

Social risk barriers refer to consumers' concerns whether their social circles will accept a particular innovation or not (Kleijnen *et al.*, 2009). Ram and Sheth (1989) outlined four types of risks linked with innovation, including social risk, physical risk, economic risk, and functional risk. Consumers may resist adopting the innovation when they feel that they will be socially excluded (Kleijnen *et al.*, 2009; Ram and Sheth, 1989). Previous studies have shown that these risks have a negative impact on consumer behavior across various domains such as mobile payment solutions (Kaur *et al.*, 2020), sharing knowledge on social media websites (Chen and Kuo, 2017), mobile commerce adoption (Mun Yee *et al.*, 2015), and eco-friendly cosmetics (Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023 found that the behavior of sustainable fashion consumers is strongly influenced by social pressure from friends, family, and society. Furthermore, the extant literature highlights that new eco-friendly products have low acceptance among consumers due to lack of social trust in these products, or due to the influence of perceived greenwashing associated with it (Kushwah *et al.*, 2019; Zhang *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, we argue that social risk barriers discourage consumers from buying sustainable fashion clothing. Thus, we posit:

**H3:** *Social risk barriers have a negative effect on consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing.*

Tradition barriers are psychological barriers that occur when innovation forces consumers to deviate from established traditions, society norms, and values (Ram and Sheth, 1989), which may create a conflict with the consumer's traditional culture (Lian and Yen, 2014). Prior research highlights that sustainable fashion clothing is associated with lack of styles and unfashionable options in comparison to fast fashion products (Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021). This discourages consumers from making a change from their usual way of dressing. Previous studies confirmed that tradition barriers are influenced by consumers' psychological states and negatively affect their behavior with respect to buying sustainable products (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). Thus, we posit that consumers will resist buying sustainable fashion clothing due to tradition barriers which conflict with their cultural traditions, values and beliefs and as this conflict gets stronger, the resistance will increase. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H4:** *Tradition barriers have a negative effect on consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing.*

Image barriers are also psychological barriers but related to the identity of innovation (Mani and Chouk, 2018). Ram and Sheth (1989) argue that an innovation acquires a certain identity from its origin, such as the product class or the industry to which it belongs or the country where it is produced. Thus, image barriers could influence consumer intentions and usage behaviors with respect to new products (Kushwah *et al.*, 2019). Prior research has consistently highlighted consumers' trust issues when examining the purchase of sustainable clothing (Eifler, 2014; Jacobs *et al.*, 2018). This is due to the skepticism among consumers that these products are not sustainable, and these brands may be practicing greenwashing behavior, which creates distrust in both products and the whole industry (Singh *et al.*, 2022; Wang *et al.*, 2020). Wang *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of greenwashing behavior on consumers' purchase intention. The results have shown that greenwashing behavior and the perceived greenwashing of the entire sustainability industry negatively affect consumers' intention to buy green products. Therefore, this study argues that the image associated with sustainable fashion inhibits consumers' intention to buy sustainable clothing products. Thus, we propose the following:

**H5:** *Image barriers are negatively associated with consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing.*

The environmental impact of the fashion industry has increasingly attracted attention from researchers and the public alike. Significant concerns include the substantial volume of textile waste, the use of toxic dyes, overproduction, and

water pollution (Bailey *et al.*, 2022; Niinimäki *et al.*, 2020). These issues highlight the urgent need for more sustainable practices within the fashion sector to mitigate its adverse environmental effects (Stringer *et al.*, 2020). Consumers' awareness of the environmental impact of the fashion industry is increasing (Kong *et al.*, 2016). Environmental concern refers to the degree to which consumers are aware of environmental problems and efforts to support solving them or willingness to contribute personally to the solutions (Dunlap and Robert, 2002). It also could be referred to as both a specific attitude directly influencing intention, or a more general attitude or value orientation (Fransson and Garling, 1999). Consumer concern for the environment plays a significant role in sustainable fashion research (Ellis *et al.*, 2012; Lang and Armstrong, 2018). Mateen *et al.* (2023) emphasize that environmental concern strongly influences pro-environmental behavior, which can be enhanced through effective environmental management practices. Additionally, environmental concern drives consumers toward more socially responsible behaviors within their communities (Cesarina Mason *et al.*, 2022). Joung (2014) notes that environmentally-conscious consumers are more hesitant to purchase fast fashion. These consumers also tend to support corporate environmentally responsible behaviors (Pérez *et al.*, 2022) and purchase more sustainable and green products, including sustainable clothing (Jin Gam, 2011; Khare and Varshneya, 2017). Consequently, those with high environmental concerns are expected to prefer sustainable fashion clothing, which is more eco-friendly than fast fashion alternatives.

Previous research has predominantly examined the direct influence of environmental concern on consumer purchase behavior (Khare and Varshneya, 2017; Stringer *et al.*, 2020) and motivations towards sustainable fashion consumption (Ronda, 2024; Yadav *et al.*, 2024). However, the potential role of environmental concern as a moderating factor has not been thoroughly explored in the context of sustainable fashion research. Previous studies have shown that higher environmental concern leads to a greater preference for and selection of sustainable products (Kushwah *et al.*, 2019; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, it is likely that environmental concern will mitigate the negative impact of consumer resistance towards sustainable and eco-friendly products (Kushwah *et al.*, 2019). This study examines the moderation role of environmental concern on the association between both functional and psychological barriers (i.e., usage, value, social risk, tradition, and image), and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing. Thus, we propose:

**H6a:** *The influence between usage barriers and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing is moderated by environmental concern.*

**H6b:** *The influence between value barriers and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing is moderated by environmental concern.*

**H6c:** *The influence between social risk barriers and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing is moderated by environmental concern.*

**H6d:** *The influence between tradition barriers and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing is moderated by environmental concern.*

**H6e:** *The influence between image barriers and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing is moderated by environmental concern.*

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Measures

A set of multi-item scales was utilized to measure innovation barriers, environmental concerns, and intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing. These items were adapted from previous studies and refined to fit the context of this research. To measure usage barriers, three items were adapted from Sadiq *et al.* (2021). Four items for assessing value barriers were adapted from Kushwah *et al.* (2019), Lian and Yen (2013), and Torres-Ruiz *et al.* (2018). Three items for assessing social risk barriers were adapted from Joachim *et al.* (2018), and three items for assessing tradition barriers were adapted from Hew *et al.* (2019) and Jin Gam (2011). Three items for measuring image barriers were adapted from Sadiq *et al.* (2021), and environmental concern was assessed using items adapted from Jin Gam (2011). Finally, the intention to buy sustainable clothing was measured using three items adapted from Kaur *et al.* (2020) and Sadiq *et al.* (2021) (see Appendix 1).

To ensure the quality of the measurement items, we validated these items using an expert panel comprising two Information Systems professors, two post-doctoral fellows, and two independent researchers. Based on the feedback from the panel, the survey was refined. The final version of the survey employed a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), to measure all the variables. The survey was administered in English in both the USA and India.

### 4.2 Data collection and sampling

The nature of this study is quantitative, therefore, we collected data through an online survey in both the USA and India. The survey was developed in Qualtrics and distributed through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Mturk is an online crowdsourcing tool that enables rapid and reliable data collection for researchers (Matherly, 2019; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). Separate batches were used to collect data from each country, with each batch being open for two months (from July to September 2023). Following the quality criteria suggested by Peer *et al.* (2014), only respondents with an approval rating of over 95% from previous survey tasks were included. Additional criteria were specified on Mturk. For example, participants needed to be 18 years or older, fall within the "clothing and shoes" category, and be located in the USA or India. The reward per response was set at 0.50 USD, taking into account the time required to complete the survey.

A total of 745 completed responses were received, with 395 from the USA and 350 from India. After removing suspicious responses, such as straight-lining answers, and outliers (Hair *et al.*, 2022), 702 responses were deemed suitable for analysis—372 from the USA and 330 from India. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample.

**Table 1.** Respondents' demographic characteristics

Profile of respondents	USA ( <i>n</i> =372)	India ( <i>n</i> = 330)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	188 (50.5%)	218 (66%)
Female	184 (49.5%)	112 (34%)
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	21 (5.6%)	143 (43.3%)
26-35	100 (26.8%)	170 (51.53%)
36-45	153 (41.1%)	15 (4.5)
46 or above	98 (26.3%)	2 (0.6%)
<b>Education level</b>		
High school	112 (30.1%)	-
Bachelor	203 (54.5)	268 (81.2%)
Postgraduate Degree	35 (9.4%)	62 (18.8%)
PhD		
Other	5 (1.3%)	-
	17 (4.5%)	-
<b>Buying fashion clothing</b>		
Several times a month	97 (26%)	160 (48.5%)
Once every few weeks	251 (67.4%)	111 (33.6%)
Several times a week	23 (6.18%)	50 (15.15%)
Almost every day	1 (0.27%)	9 (2.7%)

## 5. Data analysis and results

### 5.1 Measurement model assessment

We first assessed the readability and validity of the model variables and items using internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), and composite reliability (CR). As shown in Table 2 the values of Cronbach's Alpha exceed 0.7 (ranged from 0.71 to 0.94), and the CR values ranged from 0.76 to 0.96, exceeding the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2022). Second, we tested the convergent validity of all constructs using outer loading and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the outer loading for all items surpassed 0.55, except for two items, namely IB1 and EC4. In accordance with best practices, these two items were consequently removed before proceeding with the remaining analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2019, 2022). Furthermore, the AVE values of all variables exceeded the threshold value of 0.50, which indicates that convergent validity has been established.

**Table 2.** Measurement model reliability results

Construct	Items	Loading	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Usage barriers	UB1	0.88	1.49	0.83	0.91	0.84
	UB2	0.92				
	UB3	0.957				
Value barriers	VB2	0.944	2.27	0.71	0.76	0.62
	VB3	0.603				
	VB4	0.791				
Social risk barriers	SRB1	0.909	1.84	0.93	0.95	0.88
	SRB2	0.958				
	SRB3	0.952				
Tradition barriers	TB1	0.898	1.79	0.78	0.86	0.68
	TB2	0.681				
	TB3	0.891				
Image barriers	IB1	0.895	1.96	0.83	0.89	0.74
	IB2	0.877				
	IB3	0.807				
Environmental Concern	EC1	0.901	2.04	0.85	0.90	0.70
	EC2	0.946				
	EC3	0.934				
Intention to Buy Sustainable Fashion Clothing	INT1	0.969	-	0.94	0.96	0.89
	INT2	0.923				
	INT3	0.951				

Finally, we used Fornell–Larcker's criterion and the heterotrait-to-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) to examine discriminant validity. As shown in Table 3, the AVE of each variable is greater than other variables across the model. HTMT, which has been recently introduced as an alternative measure for discriminant validity, refers to “the average of the correlation indicators across constructs measuring different phenomena, relative to the average of the correlations of indicators within the same construct” (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The threshold value for HTMT is 0.90 (Benitez *et al.*, 2020; Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The results, as shown in Table 4, indicate that the HTMT values for each variable is less than 0.90, which demonstrates that discriminant validity is not an issue in this study.

**Table 3.** Fornell–Larcker's criterion results

Construct	EC	IB	INT	SRB	TB	UB	VB
EC	<b>0.84</b>						
IB	-0.41	<b>0.861</b>					
INT	0.779	-0.52	<b>0.948</b>				
SRB	-0.333	0.495	-0.242	<b>0.94</b>			
TB	-0.558	0.508	-0.583	0.413	<b>0.829</b>		
UB	0.011	0.34	-0.175	0.15	0.185	<b>0.919</b>	
VB	-0.608	0.581	-0.725	0.335	0.64	0.319	<b>0.792</b>

**Table 4.** HTMT Results ratio

	EC	IB	INT	SRB	TB	UB	VB
EC							
IB	0.449						
INT	0.817	0.582					
SRB	0.351	0.558	0.255				
TB	0.536	0.576	0.557	0.552			

UB	0.071	0.402	0.188	0.181	0.265	
VB	0.514	0.691	0.741	0.295	0.658	0.524

## 5.2 Measurement invariance

Collecting data from two different countries necessitates an examination of measurement invariance. Measurement invariance refers to “whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute” (Horn and McArdle, 1992, p.117). Given our use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), it is recommended to utilize the measurement invariance of composite models (MICOM) for variance-based SEM (Hair *et al.*, 2022; Henseler *et al.*, 2016). The MICOM procedure consists of three steps: (1) **configural invariance**, which ensures the model's structure, such as the number of variables and items, is consistent across groups; (2) **metric invariance**, which ensures that item loadings remain invariant across groups; and (3) **scalar invariance**, which confirms the equality of measurement intercepts (Henseler *et al.*, 2016). If all three steps are met, a full multigroup analysis is possible (Hair *et al.*, 2022; Henseler *et al.*, 2016). However, if only the first two steps are achieved, partial comparisons can still be conducted. To fulfill step 1, configural invariance, we ensured that the items used in each measurement model were identical, applied the same data treatment for both datasets, and used the same algorithm setting criteria. **The results from step 2 indicate that metric invariance was established for each variable, confirming that partial measurement invariance was achieved (see Table 5). This allows for a partial comparison between the two groups** (Hair *et al.*, 2022; Henseler *et al.*, 2016).

**Given that partial measurement invariance was established, it was deemed appropriate to compare the standardized coefficients of the structural model across the two groups. As indicated in Table 6, while there are some marginally significant differences in the relationships between the groups, the overall effect of the independent variables remains negative in both cases. For example, tradition-related barriers do not significantly influence the intention to purchase sustainable fashion in the U.S. group ( $p=0.217$ ), and similarly, image-related barriers have no effect on purchase intentions in the Indian group. Since these comparisons revealed no substantial differences between the relationships in the two datasets, we proceeded by combining the datasets for the main analysis. This decision was further justified by the structural model results which were consistent across both samples, suggesting that the combined data offers a valid representation of the relationships being studied.**

**Table 5.** Metric invariance results

	Original correlation	Correlation permutation mean	5.0%	Permutation p value
EC	0.991	0.999	0.997	0.001
IB	0.999	0.708	0.127	0.998
INT	0.999	1.000	1.000	0.000
SFK	0.998	0.999	0.997	0.150
SRB	0.999	0.999	0.998	0.335
TB	0.997	0.422	-0.501	0.988
UB	0.757	0.981	0.932	0.001
VB	0.699	0.972	0.907	0.001

**Table 6.** Partial Comparison between the two groups

	Original (India)	p value (India)	Original (USA)	p value (USA)	Invariant
IB -> INT	-0.148	0.105	-0.128	0.000	No
SRB -> INT	-0.196	0.005	-0.147	0.000	Yes

TB -> INT	-0.224	0.008	-0.029	0.217	No
UB -> INT	-0.163	0.050	-0.038	0.121	Yes
VB -> INT	-0.069	0.206	-0.302	0.000	No

### 5.3 Structural model assessment

To ensure the structural model is free from collinearity issues, we first employed the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to assess collinearity among the predictor constructs, namely UB, SRB, TB, IB, and EC (Hair *et al.*, 2022). VIF values of 3 or below indicate that collinearity does not significantly impact the model (Hair *et al.*, 2022). As shown in Table 2, all VIF values were below this threshold. Next, we evaluated the structural model by analyzing the path coefficients and the variance explained by the dependent variables (R<sup>2</sup>). We employed a bootstrapping technique with 10,000 subsamples, using a bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrap and a two-tailed test (Hair *et al.*, 2022); we employed a significance level (p value) of 0.10 as a cutoff (Busalim *et al.*, 2021; Goyal Chin *et al.*, n.d.; Liu *et al.*, 2019). The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.77 indicates that 77% of the variance in the intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing was explained, demonstrating a substantial level of predictive power (Hair *et al.*, 2022). According to the hypothesis testing results in Table 7, usage barriers (*path coefficient* = -0.01, *t*=0.405) had no significant effect on the intention to buy sustainable fashion (INT), thus H1 is not supported. However, value barriers (VB) (*path coefficient* = -0.27, *t*=3.957), social risk barriers (*path coefficient* = -0.34, *t*= 6.896), tradition barriers (*path coefficient* = -0.081, *t*= 1.974), and image barriers (*path coefficient* = -0.11, *t*=1.717) all had a negative effect on INT, supporting H2, H3, H4, and H5.

**Table 7.** Structural model results.

	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Significant
UB -> INT	-0.015	0.405	0.343	Insignificant
VB -> INT	-0.271	3.957	0.000	Significant
SRB -> INT	-0.34	6.896	0.000	Significant
TB -> INT	-0.081	1.974	0.024	Significant
IB -> INT	-0.11	1.717	0.043	Significant

**Note:** UB= Usage barriers; VB = Value barriers; RSB = Social risk barriers; TB= Tradition barriers; IB= Image barriers

### 5.4 Moderation analysis

The findings, presented in Table 8, indicate that environmental concern does not exert a moderating influence on the relationship between the intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing and usage barriers (H6a), value barriers (H6b), tradition barriers (H6d), and image barriers (H6e). However, a significant positive moderation effect of environmental concern on the relationship between the intention to buy sustainable fashion clothing and social risk barriers was identified. This implies that individuals who exhibit higher levels of environmental concern may be more prone to overcome social risk barriers when considering the purchase of sustainable fashion clothing.

**Table 8.** Results of moderation analysis

Moderation path	Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Moderation?
EC x UB -> INT	0.045	1.165	0.122	No
EC x VB -> INT	0.052	1.152	0.125	No
EC x SRB -> INT	0.062	1.768	0.039	Yes
EC x TB -> INT	0.053	1.537	0.062	No

EC x IB -> INT	0.01	0.464	0.321	No
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**Note:** UB= Usage barriers; VB = Value barriers; SRB = Social risk barriers; TB= Tradition barriers; IB= Image barriers, EC= Environmental concern.

## 6. Discussion, implications, and future research

### 6.1 Key findings

The results indicate that usage barriers do not significantly influence consumer purchasing intentions for sustainable fashion (H1), contrasting with most prior studies (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Joachim *et al.*, 2018; Leong *et al.*, 2019; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). However, this finding aligns with certain previous studies conducted in different contexts e.g., Talwaret al. (2020). One possible explanation for this outcome could be that the participants are already familiar with sustainable fashion and comfortable with their purchasing habits, as suggested by previous research (Chan and Wong, 2012; Rahman and Gong, 2016; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, the result of H2 is supported, showing that value barriers negatively affect sustainable fashion purchases, a finding aligned with previous studies (Chen *et al.*, 2018; Kaur *et al.*, 2020; Kushwah *et al.*, 2019; Leong *et al.*, 2019; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021), which highlights the significant role of value barriers in hindering consumers' purchase of sustainable fashion clothing. Notably, price emerges as one of the primary reasons for consumer resistance in both the USA and India (Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021; Moon *et al.*, 2015; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023; Ritch and Schröder, 2012). For instance, Blas Riesgo *et al.* (2023) recently found that consumers perceive sustainable fashion products as more expensive, with price being a primary factor in the purchasing decision-making process. Consistent with prior research, we argue that consumers would be more willing to buy sustainable fashion products if they were available at comparable and affordable prices (Carey and Cervellon, 2014; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021).

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that social risk barriers significantly reduce consumers' intention to purchase sustainable fashion clothing, thus supporting H3. This outcome is consistent with earlier research by Sadiq *et al.* (2021) and Kaur *et al.* (2020). Social risk barriers include various uncertainties linked to the adoption and use of innovative products (Kaur *et al.*, 2020). As uncertainty levels rise, the likelihood of adopting and using innovations diminishes (Ram and Sheth, 1989). Purchasing sustainable fashion clothing involves several uncertainties and risks related to trust, pricing, and product quality (Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023). This result further highlights the role of social pressure from peers and family in influencing consumer trust (Park and Lin, 2020; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023). For example, Park and Lin (2020) suggest that subjective and social norms—perceived social pressures to conform to or deviate from certain behaviors—are crucial in differentiating green buyers from non-green buyers. Similarly, research by Yang *et al.* (2024) suggests that social norms significantly influence consumers' sustainable consumption behaviors. When individuals have close relationships with family, friends, or colleagues who prioritize environmental protection, they may feel greater pressure to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors.

The psychological barriers of tradition and image (H4, H5) are also shown to be significant. The H4 results provide strong evidence of a notable negative association between tradition barriers and consumers' intention to buy sustainable fashion. These findings support earlier research by Chen *et al.* (2022), Gupta and Arora (2017), and Sadiq *et al.* (2021). For instance, Moon *et al.* (2015) pointed out that sustainable fashion design often adheres to more traditional aesthetics, which are perceived as less stylish. This can negatively impact consumer appeal and ultimately hinder the widespread adoption of sustainable fashion. Additionally, sustainable fashion products often fail to convey key characteristics such as self-expression, hedonic benefits, and social meanings (Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021; Harris *et al.*, 2016). Ronda (2024) found that while consumers are willing to pay for sustainable fashion clothing, they struggle to find styles that meet their preferences. To overcome these challenges, recent research by Brandão and Gonçalves (2021) suggests that incorporating attributes like style, fashionability, and versatility into sustainable fashion products can significantly enhance consumers' positive attitudes toward sustainable fashion consumption.

The results also extend support regarding the impact of image barriers (H5) i.e., the image of sustainable fashion clothing has a negative impact on consumers' intention to buy them. This result resonates with prior studies (e.g., Chen *et al.*, 2022; Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). Previous studies in sustainable fashion context have consistently suggested that sustainable fashion brand image is one of the main barriers towards the adoption of sustainable fashion as alternative fashion practice (Eifler and Diekamp, 2013; Strähle and Köksal, 2015; Tran *et al.*, 2022; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018). Another explanation for this resistance is the greenwashing behavior of some brands that have created distrust of the sustainable fashion product and the whole industry (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Consumers may not be certain whether they are

buying sustainable or greenwashed clothing (Sadiq *et al.*, 2021). For instance, Zhang *et al.* (2018) highlight that the perception of greenwashing has a negative impact on consumer's green purchase intention, and more recently, Singh *et al.*, (2022) found that greenwashed word of mouth plays a significant influence in consumer green behavior.

The findings on consumer resistance to sustainable fashion in India and the USA can be discussed through the cultural values of each country using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. This can provide valuable insights into the values that shape consumer behavior in both contexts. According to Hofstede (2024), Indian consumers are characterized by high power distance and collectivism. Collectivism underscores the importance of group norms and social conformity. High power distance signifies a hierarchical society where authority and social status heavily influence behavior. Consequently, sustainable fashion may struggle to gain widespread acceptance unless it is endorsed by influential figures or perceived as a status symbol. For instance, Khare *et al.* (2022) found that online communities and celebrities positively impact Indian consumers' involvement in green clothing and their purchasing behavior. This suggests that sustainable fashion is less likely to be adopted if it is not widely accepted within social groups. Additionally, traditional values contribute to resistance, as many consumers prefer conventional clothing styles and materials, viewing sustainable fashion as a deviation from cultural norms (Kautish *et al.*, 2020). Economic barriers are also significant in India. The perceived high cost of sustainable fashion is a major deterrent, and the limited availability and variety of such products exacerbate this issue, making it difficult for consumers to find styles that meet their preferences and needs (Mandarić *et al.*, 2022; McNeill and Moore, 2015). Yadav *et al.* (2024) similarly found that high prices, lack of availability, and skepticism towards sustainable apparel are significant barriers to Indian consumers' intention to buy green apparel.

In the U.S., individualism and indulgence are key cultural dimensions influencing consumer behavior. High individualism indicates a society that values personal choice and self-expression. Consumers may resist sustainable fashion if it does not align with their personal style or social status (Jung *et al.*, 2021). Indulgence reflects a preference for immediate gratification and consumerism, which can conflict with the principles of sustainable fashion that emphasize mindful consumption and long-term environmental benefits (Iran and Schrader, 2017; Kim and Bye, 2022; Thorisdottir *et al.*, 2024). The short-term orientation of American culture suggests a focus on immediate rewards rather than future benefits. This trait can lead to resistance to sustainable fashion, as consumers may not prioritize long-term environmental impacts over current fashion trends and immediate satisfaction (Palomo-Lovinski and Hahn, 2020). Economic barriers also exist, similar to India, where the higher cost of sustainable fashion products can deter consumers, especially if they do not perceive a corresponding increase in value or quality (Kim and Bye, 2022).

Social norms and peer influence play significant roles in both countries but manifest differently. In the U.S., social norms around fashion and sustainability can either drive or hinder adoption (Chi *et al.*, 2021; Davis and Dabas, 2021). If sustainable fashion is seen as trendy and supported by influential social groups or celebrities, it can gain traction. However, if it is perceived as less fashionable or associated with a particular social movement, it might face resistance (Jung *et al.*, 2021; Palomo-Lovinski and Hahn, 2020). In India, social pressure within close communities can either facilitate or obstruct the adoption of sustainable fashion, depending on how it aligns with communal values and practices (Kaur and Bhardwaj, 2021).

## 6.2 Theoretical implications

The findings of this study make a significant contribution to the extant literature, and in particular the literature on sustainable fashion consumption. First, this study serves to extend ongoing discourse surrounding consumer attitudes-behavior gaps, by examining the barriers of sustainable fashion consumption. We applied innovation resistance theory to better understand the functional and psychological barriers that influence consumers' purchasing intention to buy sustainable fashion products. The results of the study provide empirical support to the applicability of the innovation resistance theory to explain the intention to buy sustainable clothing; the theoretical model explained 77% of the variance by the five studied barriers.

Second, this study makes a noteworthy advancement by extending existing innovation resistance theory through the incorporation of environmental concern as a moderator. This study examined the moderation effect of environmental concern on all functional and psychological barriers, as proposed by Ram and Sheth (1989). Although prior research in the domain of consumer sustainable consumption has effectively employed innovation resistance theory (e.g., Kushwah *et al.* 2019; Tang and Chen, 2022), the aspect of moderating influences of environmental concerns on innovation barriers has regrettably been ignored, particularly concerning the domain of sustainable fashion. Our findings reveal that

environmental concern significantly moderates the impact of certain barriers on consumers' purchasing intentions. For instance, the study found that high levels of environmental concern can mitigate the negative effects of social risk barriers on the intention to buy sustainable fashion. Consumers who are more environmentally conscious are less likely to be deterred by social risks, such as fear of social disapproval or perceived lack of social acceptance when choosing sustainable fashion products. This insight is crucial, as it underscores the potential of leveraging environmental concerns to overcome specific psychological barriers that hinder sustainable consumption. The study's novel integration of environmental concern as a moderating variable not only extends the theoretical boundaries of innovation resistance theory but also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between consumer psychology and sustainable behavior. By empirically demonstrating the differential effects of environmental concern on various barriers, this research offers a nuanced perspective on how internal motivations can influence resistance to sustainable innovations

Third, the extant sustainable fashion clothing literature primarily leans towards an adoption-centric perspective (e.g., Brandão and Gonçalves, 2021; Park and Lin, 2020; Rausch and Kopplin, 2021; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023) to explain the gap between consumers' attitudes and actual behavior. Innovation resistance theory has been notably absent in these research endeavors. Our study enriches the literature on sustainable fashion by investigating a less explored context, innovation resistance. To the best of our knowledge, our study is one of the first to study sustainable fashion from the innovation resistance perspective using data from two burgeoning markets in the realm of sustainable fashion, namely the USA and India, and offers an evidence-based study that examines consumers' resistance in the context of these markets.

Fourth, this research underscores the importance of cultural context in understanding sustainable fashion consumption. By comparing data from the USA and India, we provide insights into how cultural differences impact innovation resistance and sustainable consumption behaviors. This cross-cultural analysis highlights the necessity of tailoring sustainable fashion marketing strategies to different cultural contexts, thus contributing to a more nuanced understanding of global sustainable fashion consumption.

### 6.3 Practical implications

This study yields valuable implications for fashion brands, marketers, and designers. First, our results show that social risk barriers are the strongest barriers in this context, thus indicating that consumers who opt for sustainable fashion may encounter social pressures stemming from peer influence and prevailing age-related social norms. This, in turn, may engender a sense of exclusion from their social circles. Consequently, making sustainable fashion clothing socially acceptable and attainable is imperative. Therefore, fashion brands and retailers should offer potential interventions to overcome these barriers among consumers. Additionally, in line with Ram and Sheth's (1989) recommendations, eliciting endorsements and testimonials from other consumers serves as a potential communication strategy. For example, fashion brands and marketers can empower social media influencers to champion sustainable fashion clothing and propagate positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) concerning the environmental and ethical merits of embracing sustainable fashion choices. Furthermore, brands can facilitate trial experiences where consumers have the opportunity to try on sustainable clothing.

Second, value barriers emerged as the second strongest barriers to buying sustainable fashion. Specifically, consumers tend to associate sustainable clothing with a higher price compared to conventional apparel. Moreover, many consumers perceive that purchasing sustainable fashion fails to offer any discernible advantages. In light of these findings, it becomes imperative for marketers and retailers to reassess not only their pricing structures but their communication strategies. For instance, explicitly articulating the multifaceted benefits of investing in sustainable fashion clothing, particularly in terms of its positive environmental impact and long-term durability, can be highly effective. This approach reframes sustainable fashion as a wise and responsible long-term investment. Furthermore, addressing the issue of perceived overpricing demands innovative strategies. Fashion brands could contemplate alternative financial incentives for consumers, such as providing discounts on initial sustainable clothing purchases, instituting comprehensive loyalty programs or rewards for environmentally conscious shoppers, and fostering a sense of community among consumers who embrace sustainability.

Third, the findings regarding the potential impact of psychological barriers on consumers' intention to purchase sustainable clothing provide new and valuable insights. As highlighted in previous research, sustainable fashion buying decisions have been primarily influenced by factors such as price, product quality, and style (Harris *et al.*, 2016; Park and Lin, 2020; Perry and Chung, 2016). Additionally, issues of mistrust and skepticism stemming from concerns about greenwashing and negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) have stood as prominent obstacles to the adoption of

sustainable fashion (Harris *et al.*, 2016; Rausch and Kopplin, 2021; Blas Riesgo *et al.*, 2023). The result of this study corroborates these findings and demonstrates consumers' traditional perceptions that sustainable fashion is poorly designed and lacking in style, while also highlighting their comfort with the familiarity of fast fashion clothing. Thus, to address these barriers, fashion designers should consider improving the design of sustainable fashion and creating more attractive options. Additionally, both policy makers and brands could embark on a co-creation strategy that actively involves consumers in both policy and the design of sustainable clothing.

#### 6.4 Limitations and future research

Our study has some limitations. Firstly, we utilized innovation resistance theory, which predominantly focuses on functional and psychological barriers. Future research could enhance and offer more insights by incorporating additional dimensions, such as cognitive, social, and ethical considerations. Secondly, the data for this study was collected from two countries, the USA and India, which represent emerging markets in sustainable fashion. Future research could replicate and test the model across diverse countries and cultures e.g., China, Japan, and Brazil, to explore cultural disparities and their influence on consumer behavior. Thirdly, our study relied on quantitative data collected through surveys, which employed self-reported measures. To gain deeper insights into consumers' perspectives on sustainable fashion, future research might consider employing alternative methods, such as semi-structured interviews or in-depth interviews. Furthermore, employing longitudinal data can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the moderating role of environmental concerns. Fourthly, we did not examine age as a control variable in this study. Future research could investigate the impact of age on sustainable fashion consumption decisions, particularly focusing on young consumers. Young consumers in different countries may have varying levels of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors toward sustainable fashion due to cultural, economic, and social factors. Finally, as this study examines consumers' intentions to buy sustainable fashion clothing, we recommend that future research build on our findings by incorporating longitudinal designs or experimental approaches that track consumers from intention to actual purchase. Such methodologies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the entire decision-making process and offer empirical validation for the theoretical link between intention and actual behavior proposed in our study.

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## Appendix 1. Scale items

### Usage Barriers

- There is little availability in choice for sustainable fashion clothing consumption.
- The reason I'm not purchasing sustainable fashion clothing because it's unavailable in the store.
- The variety or range of sustainable fashion clothing is poor.

### Value Barriers

- Buying sustainable fashion clothing does not offer any advantage to me.
- Buying sustainable fashion apparel is not economical.
- The price difference between sustainable and non-sustainable clothing is high.
- I fear that I am paying more money for sustainable fashion clothing.

### Social Risk Barriers

- It is likely that many of my friends might advise me not to buy sustainable fashion clothing.
- There is a chance that my friends might respond negatively if I purchase sustainable fashion clothing.
- Having bought sustainable fashion clothing, my social network might react negatively towards it.

### Tradition Barriers

- Fast fashion apparel is enough for me.
- I prefer buying "on trend" styling clothing.
- I am used to buying fast fashion clothing and I find it difficult to switch to buying sustainable fashion clothing.

### Image Barriers

- I have doubts towards the sustainable fashion clothing labelling.
- I believe that sustainable fashion clothing currently sold in the market are not really sustainable.
- My image of sustainable fashion clothing is that they are basic and not fashionable.

### Environmental Concern

- I am concerned about the impact of fast fashion production on the environment.
- More retailers need to sell environmentally friendly clothing.
- It would mean a lot to me if I could contribute to protecting the environment.
- The dye and chemicals used in apparel production can be harmful to the environment.

### Intention to Buy Sustainable Fashion

- I intend to buy sustainable fashion clothing in the future.
- I plan to buy sustainable fashion clothing frequently.
- I intend to buy sustainable fashion clothing because they are more environmentally friendly.

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Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management

## Revision Response for the manuscript titled:

**“Consumer Resistance to Sustainable Fashion: Evidence from the USA and India”**  
**(ID: JFMM-02-2024-0052.R1)**

<b>Reviewer #1</b>	
<b>Comment 1</b>	The revised paper is better. However, it will be better for the authors to further check the writing and ensure the grammar is all fine.  For example, in "Findings", the authors write: "The study found that barriers..." "Furthermore, the findings highlight that environmental..."  I do not know why two different tenses are used. I suggest the authors use the present tense for both.
Response	Thanks for your comment. We have updated the section accordingly

<b>Reviewer #2</b>	
<b>Comment 1</b>	I still have concerns about using combined data when the characteristics of the participants in these two samples were not comparable, particularly in terms of gender and age distribution. This issue needs to be addressed in the text that final analysis was based on the combined data.
Response	Thank you for your insightful comment. We have revised the text to clarify that the final analysis was conducted using the combined dataset (see p. 9). We have also included an explanation of the rationale behind this decision, taking into account the differences between the two groups."
<b>Comment 2</b>	Please move 5.3 section on Measurement Invariance earlier as this issue needs to be discussed prior to conducting SEM (this section should be 5.2 and 5.2 Structural model assessment should be 5.3). More importantly, since the authors combined data from two different samples (USA and India), the measurement invariance test should be conducted on each individual variable before combining them, not on each hypothesized relationship.
Response	Thank you for your comment. We have revised the section by moving the Measurement Invariance analysis to section 5.3. Additionally, the measurement invariance we already conducted and reported the measurement invariance test for each individual variable, as shown in Table 5
<b>Comment 3</b>	Could the authors clarify what they mean by 'classified within the clothing and shoes category' (section 4.2, 2nd paragraph, p. 7)?"
Response	Thank you for your comment. The phrase "classified within the clothing and shoes category" refers to an option in MTurk settings, allowing us to target participants with relevant experience or interest in fashion-related products. By selecting this category, we ensured that respondents were more likely to have prior purchasing habits or familiarity with clothing and shoes. In response to this comment, we have revised this explanation in Section 4.2, p.7 to enhance clarity.
<b>Comment 4</b>	When specifying the coefficients from exogenous to endogenous variables, it should be gamma, not beta (section 5.2, p. 9). Please update this information accordingly.
Response	Thank you for your comments. In our analysis using PLS-SEM, the beta coefficient reflects the standardized path coefficient, which is the standard practice in most studies when reporting structural model assessments. For example, recent studies published in the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management (Hwang et al., 2024; Gil et al., 2024) illustrate this approach." In response to this comment, we have replaced 'beta' with 'path coefficient' to improve clarity.
<b>Comment 5</b>	While I have no concerns with the use of $p < .10$ as a baseline for significance, the authors should indicate that this study employs a significance level of .10 as a cutoff (an additional citation is needed besides Hair et al., 2022; are there any empirical studies that use this significance level?). In general, a threshold p-value of .05 is arbitrary, as we use it to measure evidence against the null effect, and a p-value of .10 is considered less stringent.
Response	Thank you for your comment. We have clarified that a significance level of .10 was used as the cutoff for this study, and we have cited additional empirical research that has utilized this significance level."

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<b>Comment 6</b>	In Table 8, it is still written as 'T value' and 'P value,' but it should be 't-value' and 'p-value.' Please correct this information.
Response	Thank you for your comment. We have corrected this in the manuscript.
<b>Comment 7</b>	In the Reference section, 'et al.' should be italicized. I have found some citations where 'et al.' is not italicized; please check and correct this. Additionally, please consult JFMM's refereeing guidelines to ensure that Volume, Number, and page numbers are included in the references. Also, some DOI information is missing 'https://'; please correct this as well.
Response	Thank you for your comment. We have reviewed and fixed all the references

**References**

Hwang, C., Jin, B., Song, L., & Feng, J. (2024). Factors influencing older adults' intention to use virtual fitting room technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 28(3), 444-459.

Gil, M. S. S., Su, J., Watchravesringkan, K., & Taras, V. (2024). Do cosmopolitans care about the world? The effect of cosmopolitanism on the consumption of sustainable apparel. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 28(3), 480-502.

