

GRIFFITH COLLEGE

Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability and Their Impact on Purchasing Decisions in the Indian Textile Industry

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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I certify that the dissertation entitled “Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability and Their Impact on Purchasing Decisions in the Indian Textile Industry” submitted for the degree of MSc Accounting & Finance Management is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

Date: 06/09/2024

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Date: 06/09/2024

Dedication

To my supervisor, parents, and teachers, thank you for your support throughout this journey.

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Abstract

The textile industry has been under tremendous pressure in recent years to adopt the sustainable practices due to surging consumer awareness and ecological concerns. The objective of this study is to explore consumer perceptions towards sustainability in textile products with respect to their purchasing behaviour, influences on decisions made as well as obstacles faced by them. To attain this purpose, the research employed qualitative research design through semi-structured interviews conducted on five participants who were identified from different market segments within the textile industry. The participants of the study included both consumers and professionals from different industries which provided a much broader perspective. Semi-structured interviews were used as means of data collection that were thereafter transcribed and analysed manually using thematic analysis technique with an aim of coming up with major themes and patterns concerning sustainable development.

From these findings, it is evident that there are several factors that affect buying behaviour of consumers such as sustainability in relation to purchase decision making process. Interviewees emphasized the need for eco-friendly materials, ethical ways of production and transparency across supply chains thus they are more likely to support brands showing moral responsibility. Consumer inclination towards brands that show real commitment to sustainable activities is on the rise, and they often rely on certifications and detailed product information to make informed decisions. However, there are several hurdles for sustainability textiles widespread adoption. High costs and the limited availability of sustainable options are major barriers, especially for budget-constrained consumers or people residing in areas where such products are not easily accessed.

This research also points out marketing and consumer trust as other important concerns. A good marketing strategy should be able to communicate clearly how sustainable a product is such that it builds consumer confidence. Nevertheless, there exist a fear over greenwashing whereby companies provide false claims about their efforts in being eco-friendly. In conclusion, this research offers valuable insights into consumer perceptions of sustainability within the textile industry thus identifying some areas which need serious improvements. By dealing with these kinds of blockages as well as enhancing openness, the business will be more capable of meeting customer expectations while driving better ways of operating sustainably.

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List of Abbreviations:

GOTS - Global Organic Textile Standard

Fair Trade - Fair Trade Certification

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

SCC - Sustainability Certification Credentials

TPB - Theory of Planned Behavior

VBN - Value-Belief-Norm Theory

ABC - Attitude-Behavior-Context Model

EPI - Environmental Product Information

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

ISO - International Organization for Standardization

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Indian textile industry, which has a very rich history, is important in the country's economy. This has provided employment opportunities, foreign exchange earnings and general industrialization (Confederation of Indian Textile Industry [CITI], 2023). However, traditional methods used by this industry in producing her commodities have raised significant social and environmental concerns that need to be addressed quickly.

The term “sustainable practices” in textiles refers to a complete perspective involving environmental stewardship as well as socially responsible actions that take place throughout a product's life cycle. Among them are organic cotton or recycled fibres instead of conventional ones obtained through resource extraction and processing (Textile Exchange, 2024). Furthermore, sustainable practices in the textile sector include water saving during production processes, minimizing the use of harmful chemicals and dyes which pollute water bodies and affect ecosystems, as well as ensuring fair labour practices across supply chains (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2020).

The environment is adversely affected by old-fashioned processes for making textiles. It should be noted that cotton cultivation, which is the backbone of Indian textile industry, is a water-guzzler and requires huge amounts of water for irrigation (Chatterjee, 2020). Besides, utilization of poisonous chemicals in dyeing and finishing textile materials contaminates soils and thereby polluting rivers (Fletcher, 2017). The result of this has been dwindling water supplies; degrading soils and pollution of air.

The social implications relating to traditional textiles are no less disquieting. This often results into low wages, unsafe working environments as well as child labour being witnessed in many cases in the industry's global supply chains (Chatterjee, 2020). Conversely, sustainable practices promote fair pay; safe working conditions among others through the entire supply chain. Conventional textile production has increasingly been associated with the environmental and social costs. As such awareness has increased towards “sustainable fashion” whereby consumers now shop for clothes or other fabrics that were made using environmentally sensitive methodologies while also being socially acceptable (Bhardwaj & Jain, 2020). Media coverage, social media have contributed a lot in enlightening the society on these matters.

The increasing knowledge of the consumers about sustainability has not translated to buy decisions. The Indian textile industry needs to understand how sustainable consumption is understood by consumers if it is to bridge this difference. By aligning their practices with consumer expectations of sustainability, Indian textile firms can help reduce this and foster a greener planet as well as fairer labour practices leading to long-term success in an increasingly sustainability-focused market.

1.2 Research Purpose

This research investigates the crucial area of consumer perceptions towards sustainability and how these influence purchasing choices in the Indian textile industry. By utilizing qualitative research techniques such as semi-structured interviews, this investigation aims at understanding factors that influence buyers' decisions regarding sustainable textile products. Understanding customer perceptions is necessary for many reasons; one of which is informing targeted marketing strategies for Indian textiles businesses. Aligning product offerings with what customers are seeking in terms of eco-friendliness will give companies a competitive edge (Chen & Chen, 2019).

Secondly, this research will enable us comprehend what sustainable consumption's "intention-behaviour gap" is all about (Thøgersen, 2007). Many consumers may want sustainable products but not always in their buying patterns. It is the purpose of this study to reveal why people who consciously seek sustainability in textiles do not purchase accordingly.

Lastly, policy makers can utilize these results to make appropriate decisions. Policymakers that understand concerns of customers about sustainability can develop rules and incentives which promote sustainable practices within the textile industry (Charter & Chick, 2020). As a result, the key objective of this study is to contribute towards making Indian textiles more sustainable by closing consumer expectations versus industry practices gaps.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The research is significant because it could empower the customers and provide them with more knowledge on how their purchasing decisions affect the environment and society. This research can help to identify some gaps in consumer awareness of different aspects of sustainability especially in the textile industry. Therefore, they can initiate further customer education campaigns that will enable them to make decisions that are well-informed as per their own believes (Charter & Chick, 2020). It might also point out factors which cause an 'intention-behaviour gap' for sustainable consumption (Thøgersen, 2007). By knowing what these barriers are, they can be overcome so that those who want it may buy sustainable products.

Findings of this research will give valuable insight into how Indian textile companies could meet a growing demand from a consumer base that is becoming increasingly eco-conscious. Businesses understand environmental impacts, ethical production, social accountability etc., matter a lot to buyers hence they can develop products and marketing campaigns tailored around this (Bhardwaj & Jain, 2020). Consequently, increased sales revenue and brand loyalty may occur due to a competitive edge over other enterprises within the marketplace. The findings from this study can inform development of innovative and sustainable production processes, materials and product designs that meet consumers' expectations. This can not only enhance brand image but also contribute to a more responsible and sustainable industry in general (Chen & Chen, 2019).

This research can inform policy decisions that aim at supporting sustainability within the Indian textile sector. Policy makers who understand consumer concerns on sustainability will be able to develop targeted regulations as well as incentives for them. Such may comprise regulations on harmful chemicals used in production or minimum labour standards all through the supply chain (Charter & Chick, 2020). Other than this, policymakers might consider giving financial incentives to organizations that practice sustainability such as tax holidays or subsidies for green technology investments. In effect, the policies would create an environment conducive enough for innovation thereby compelling the Indian textile market towards attaining sustainability. Significantly, this research has great potential of bridging the gap between what customers expect from industries and what is actually done by them.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

1.4.1 Aim-

The Primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of consumer perceptions of sustainability on purchasing decisions within the Indian textile industry.

This research will examine the relationship between consumer understanding and awareness of sustainability with regard to their purchasing behaviour in relation to textile commodities.

1.4.2 Objectives-

Objectives of this study are the following:

O1: To determine the level of consumer awareness and perceptions of sustainability in the Indian textile market.

O2: To identify the key factors that consumers consider when making purchasing decisions regarding sustainable textile products.

O3: To analyse the relationship between consumer perceptions of sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour in the Indian textile market.

O4- To develop a theoretical framework that can be used to assess the influence of consumer perceptions of sustainability on their purchasing decisions

O5- To develop a set of recommendations for Indian textile companies on aligning their practices with consumer expectations of sustainability.

1.5 Methodology

To identify issues about sustainability among Indian consumers in the textile industry, this study utilizes an interpretive qualitative methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this research, a purposive sample of Indian consumers who are conscious of their spending on fabric materials and are interested in sustainable

clothing will be used. Thematic saturation is what they hope to achieve by enrolling 5 consumers to participate in the study. These questions will focus on some aspects like what clients know about durability, those factors that influence them towards buying ecological fabrics as well as possible inconsistencies between knowledge and behaviour. An interpretative approach shall be employed here for thematic analysis involving identifying recurring themes and categories from the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It gives rich qualitative information that explains why sustainable fashion ideas differ from purchase behaviours within India's textile industry.

1.6 Structure of the Study

The structure of this dissertation aims to provide a clear and thorough examination of consumer attitudes towards sustainability in the Indian textile industry. The literature review on consumer behaviour, sustainability in textiles and “intention-behaviour gap” will be considered under chapter 2. Research methodology will be covered by chapter 3 including selected qualitative approach, process of selecting participants as well as data analysis techniques employed in the study. Analysing interview data and emerging themes are some of the things that will be carried out under chapter 4 which presents findings of the study. It will contain an extensive discussion of findings connecting them to literature review while addressing odd results if any are found. Lastly, Chapter 5 will summarize the research providing key takeaways for consumers, textile companies and policy makers. By so doing, it guarantees logicity in relying information thereby enhancing a comprehensive grasp about the topic by readers.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Overview

Bridging consumer perceptions of sustainability and their purchasing decisions is a major challenge for Indian textile industry which forms the backbone of its economy. It is this chapter, that sets the stage for understanding this intricate relationship.

The chapter is divided into four major themes. Section 2.2 “Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability”, seeks to know how environmental impact, ethical production as well as social responsibility are understood and prioritized by Indian consumers as constituent elements of sustainability. Section 2.3 “Sustainability in the Textile Industry” focuses on examining challenges and opportunities related to sustainable practices within textile sector with an emphasis on both environmental and social aspects throughout product lifecycle. Section 2.4 “Consumer Behaviour and Purchasing Decisions” looks at extant theories or models that explain how several factors affect consumer preferences in textile market place. Finally, Theme 2.5, Sustainable Consumption and the Intention-Behaviour Gap, examines what might be a potential conflict between consumers’ desires for sustainable products on one hand and their purchasing habits on the other. A comprehensive understanding of consumer perception, sustainable practices and purchasing decisions in the Indian textile industry will be provided by this chapter through critically examining these themes in relation to relevant research and literature. These key components will help develop a conceptual framework in Section 2.6. This chapter ends with a conclusion.

2.2 Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability

In one study by Peattie (2010), he tried to investigate how people explain the meaning of sustainability and its importance when making purchases. The investigation confirmed that many customers link sustainability to environmental issues like recycling or energy saving as described by Peattie (2010). However, few respondents acknowledged social factors such as fair labour practices. Therefore, Peattie (2010) concluded that holistic understanding about sustainability was missing among customers hence companies should educate their clients about broader aspects pertaining to sustainability. In contrast, Carrigan and Attalla (2001), conducted qualitative research using in-depth interviews with 50 customers in the US to investigate their views on ethical consumption. They realized that people are concerned about ethical matters but this does not necessarily mean they will translate that into their buying decisions. The study introduced the notion of “ethical consumer paradox” where consumers’ stated values do not align with their actual buying habits. Factors such as price sensitivity, convenience and lack of information accounted for this inconsistency.

Many studies have emphasized on the increasing awareness about issues of sustainability among Indian end-consumers. Bhardwaj & Jain (2020) reviewed literature documents within which they concluded that Indian consumers have increasingly been worrying about environmental and socio-cultural effects related

to textile industry. Chatterjee (2019) also explored consumer perception in India and noticed an increase of interest towards ecological clothes and ethical production methods. These findings align with global trends towards sustainable consumption (Chen & Chen, 2019).

Some scholars argue that environmental implications are significant determinants of customer's perception on sustainability indices in Indian Textile Industry. Sinha & Banerjee (2018) conducted a survey of 100 consumers in Kolkata, India, and found that consumers prioritize eco-friendly materials like organic cotton and recycled fibres. This is similar to Sharma & Verma (2019) who conducted survey 80 participants about customer preferences in Delhi and showed water usage and chemical pollution as the main reasons why environmental concerns affect purchasing decisions. These findings imply that consumers from India have an increasing desire for textile products that are least harmful to environment; similar concerns were noted by Fletcher (2017) when he was mentioning on how traditional textile production is harming the planet. However, some studies highlight limitations in consumer knowledge and potential discrepancies between perceptions and actual behaviour. Interviews with consumers in Mumbai conducted by Chaudhary & Singh (2019) revealed low levels of awareness concerning certain sustainability certifications. In Ahmedabad, Jain et al.'s (2020) study discovered many customers who misunderstood such terms as "sustainable" or "ethical production". Even though, there should be consumer education activities targeting these groups in order for them to fill gaps in knowledge base and make better choices.

In a study by McDonald and Oates (2006), they tested the efficiency of sustainability education in schools. They used quasi-experimental design on 600 students in UK and discovered that learners who had undergone comprehensive sustainability training were more likely to engage in environmentally friendly practices as well as influence their parents. The authors call for embedding the concepts of sustainability in the curriculum and socializing it to be part of learners' daily routines, thus facilitating change towards sustainable behaviour over a long period of time. Moser (2010), however, argued that media had considerable influence on consumers' perception regarding environmental issues. According to her analysis of US media coverage relating to sustainability, consistent, positive encodings have been found to significantly enhance public awareness and engagement. Moser advised that campaigns through mass media should use economic benefits for instance cost-effectiveness or cost-saving measures.

On other hand, Moser (2010) drew attention to the role played by the mass media on consumer views. In her findings from evaluating how sustainability issues are covered in US newspapers she made known that persistent and positive valences vastly raised societal consciousness about this issue. Moser (2010) recommended that advertising efforts should strategically emphasize on advantages derived from sustainable activities while giving practical hints to buyers.

Kumari et al.'s (2019) finding also showed that higher income groups tend to give more importance towards sustenance depicting possible correlation between income levels and ecological consciousness. However, there is a need for this relation's examination across different socio-economic backgrounds throughout

India so as to get an accurate picture regarding its existence or absence thereof. Sharma & Verma (2019) argue customers show readiness even if it comes at an extra cost or inconvenience. Nevertheless, other scholars such as Jain et al. (2020) complain about the issue of money. Variance between their study and my study could be due to the different respondents involved in both studies or it may be a result of variation in products that were considered in both surveys. Therefore, this area necessitates more research on how elasticity of demand for price interacts with other factors such as product information and brand image in influencing consumer's decision to purchase.

Various methods have resulted into alternative conclusions regarding what consumers think on this issue. For instance, empirical research by Kim and Choi (2005), which had 500 customers from South Korea participating, looked into the factors that influence them when they buy green products. They employed SEM for data analysis and found out that there was a significant influence of two predictors which are eco-consciousness and perceived customer effectiveness on sustainable purchase behaviour. The paper shows that consumers should feel empowered to believe that what they buy can make a difference thus making them to opt for sustainability over non-sustainability.

Likewise, research carried out by Magnier and Crié (2015) among 400 French residents aimed at studying whether eco-labels affect consumer perception and purchase intention with respect to ecological criteria embedded in packaging design elements. According to their results, the use of eco-labels greatly enhances perceived trustworthiness as well as allure towards going green.

There are still many gaps to be filled despite extensive research on consumer attitudes towards sustainability. First of all, more studies must be carried out in developing countries where consumers' knowledge and practices may significantly differ from those of developed countries. Secondly, longitudinal studies will help to understand how perceptions and behaviours change over time. Thirdly, more research is needed to determine the impact of digital platforms and social media on sustainability perception. Lastly, there is little or no research on how consumer demographics (e.g., age, gender, income) intersect with sustainability perception thereby offering richer insights into targeted marketing approaches.

2.3 Sustainability in the Textile Industry

Fletcher's (2008) landmark work attempted to quantify the ecological costs associated with textile manufacturing by breaking them down into water demands, chemical emissions and solid wastes respectively. This study employed life cycle assessment (LCA), which was used to calculate environmental footprint of various textile materials among them including cotton, polyester and wool. The research indicated that growing cotton is extremely water intensive whereas making polyester releases significant amounts of greenhouse gases. Fletcher suggested replacing traditional practices with better ones such as the use of greener inputs.

The role of energy consumption in the textile industry was stressed in research by Allwood et al. (2006) on the other hand. They discovered that energy usage in textile manufacture is diverse depending on the type of textiles and the production processes being used after conducting a comprehensive survey of 50 textile manufacturing facilities across the globe. This meant they were calling for technologies that would save on energy and renewable sources to be used so as to reduce carbon foot print associated with this industry.

They performed a life cycle assessment, highlighting the industry's substantial water use particularly in cotton production and dyeing. According to their research, up to 2,700 litres of water may be used for every kilogram of cotton fabric produced. Similarly, Ritchie & Roser (2020) cite manufacturing energy consumption, transportation and synthetic fibre production as the main sources of pollution caused by textile industry activities. These results support Chatterjee (2020), who discusses the environmental issues facing India's textile industry. For instance, Chatterjee identifies chemical use in processing facilities leading to water pollution while micro-plastic is resulting from synthetic fibres in water bodies. Clark et al. (2020) demonstrate how conventional cotton farming relies on intensive water and pesticide usage. This type of agriculture leads to soil erosion, salinization and loss of biodiversity. Conversely Fletcher (2017) holds that synthetic fibres made from fossil fuels release greenhouse gases across its lifecycle beginning from manufacturing through burying it.

During the textile production process, water pollution and possible dangers to health are raised by the use of chemicals. Among these, dyeing and finishing processes are of particular concern, as they make use of a variety of chemical substances that include dyes, finishing agents and sizing materials (Chatterjee, 2020). These pollutants can contaminate aquatic ecosystems through release of untreated wastewater. This has been supported by Tian et al.'s (2019) work which indicates that textile dyeing processes, in which hazardous chemicals such as heavy metals and aromatic amines are used, have had significant environmental consequences. Also, these chemicals may endanger human beings who get into contact with them either as workers in those industries or consumers using their end products. However, research also looks at ways of achieving cleaner production methods. According to Seuring & Müller (2008), closed-loop water systems should be adopted which will reduce water consumption and waste-water discharge. These enable reuse and processing of water that is treated within factories where textiles are made. The work done by Atil et al. (2011) has delved into natural dyes as a more sustainable option than synthetic dyes for instance Turmeric which is one among many plants that produce natural dyes. Less harmful to the nature is therefore thought about the natural dye formations predominantly obtained from plant extracts or minerals.

Labowitz and Baumann-Pauly (2015) conducted a study which examined labour conditions in Bangladesh, India, and Cambodia's clothing factories. Through interviewing people at work and auditing premises, these authors found out that there are rampant cases of low remuneration, poor working environments, lack of labour rights among many others which were documented by them. Thus, they recommended strong

regulation alongside corporate responsibility interventions aimed at dealing with them. One case supporting this perspective is the study by Anner (2020) regarding how CSR initiatives influence labour practices within ready-made garments sector. He employed mixed methods design using both case studies as well as quantitative analysis involving one hundred factories' labour data. The findings indicated that although there have been some improvements due to CSR initiatives, many of these initiatives have not dealt with the underlying causes of labour exploitation.

Chatterjee (2020), states that there is an increasing interest among consumers for sustainable clothing and ethical production methods which suggests that if industry players are driven by consumer demand for sustainable alternatives, they may take up environmentally friendly practices that are inclusive socially as well as responsible. However, some like Fletcher (2017) argue that changing the demands of consumers cannot alone lead to systemic reform within the sector but it has been argued by others like Fletcher (2017). They insist that effective laws/policies have to be implemented as well as producer responsibility schemes to ensure continual use of sustainable practices in the field.

Singh et al. (2021) explores the possibility of biomass textiles obtained from farming refuse as a more sustainable substitute for ordinary cotton. Similarly, Berger et al. (2020) consider mechanical recycling technologies' potential in converting used plastic bottles into high-quality polyester fibres, which are used to make textiles. Digitalization can also help in sustaining textile sector. In addition, use of digital design tools and 3D printing can reduce fabric waste during production processes (Textile Exchange, 2024).

2.4 Consumer Behaviour and Purchasing Decisions

Carrigan and Attalla (2001) conducted a ground-breaking study that was aimed at determining the driving factors behind consumer's ethical buying behaviours. The research which employed mixed methods approach including questionnaires and focus group interviews with 200 British consumers established that though customers prefer ethical products; their purchasing decisions are frequently influenced by price, convenience, and brand loyalty. According to this research, ethics play a secondary role to these factors in most buying choices. Contrarily, Kim & Choi (2005) investigated the influence of collectivism and environmental concern on green purchase intention. In their quantitative study they survey 400 South Korean consumers who have found that those high levels of both collectivism and environmental concern were more likely to purchase green products. They argued that cultural influences play significant roles in consumer behaviour and thus marketing strategies should be adapted accordingly.

This study was intended to investigate how information or knowledge affects sustainable consumption. This particular study carried out an experiment involving 150 participants in the UK where it indicated that provision of detailed information on the environmental benefits associated with a product greatly increased its purchase probability. The research underlined how consumer behaviour is swayed by information that can be read easily. Besides, Magnier and Cri  (2015) have carried out research to show that environmentally

friendly packaging was able to change the perception of consumers about the product hence impacting their purchasing decisions. The study engaged 300 French consumers in a survey whereby it was observed that labelling of products as eco-friendly positively interfered with customers opinion about quality and sustainability leading to increased intentions of purchase. The importance of clear and credible eco-labelling for guiding consumer decisions was emphasized by the researcher.

Baskaya & Simons (2017) were able to conduct an experiment on 192 participants in the United Kingdom in which they found out that labour exploitation concerns are likely to have adverse impacts on brand image perceptions and purchase decisions. Likewise, Rana & Rehman (2017), who examined ethical fashion consumption orientation among Pakistani consumers, highlighted increasing interests towards fair trade practices and employee welfare. Consequently, these results are consistent with Barrientos et al.'s (2010) documentation of bad labour conditions and labour right violations within global garment industry. However, some people argue that ethics may not always translate into action. For instance, Ha-Brookshier & Hwang (2017) argue that factors like price or convenience can override ethical considerations for certain consumer segments. These differing viewpoints demonstrate the necessity of further exploration into the relationship between ethical concerns and real purchases.

Kumari et al. (2019) conducted a survey on 150 consumers in India and found that sustainability factors were more significant to higher income groups than any other income group when it comes to textile products. This concurs with Chen & Chen (2019) which suggests wealthier customers may have a greater willingness-to-pay a premium for sustainable goods. On the other hand, Jain et al. (2020) state that in some India studies, the culture has changed such that even people with low incomes will look for sustainable goods. The possible implications are shifts in buying trend and affordable alternatives for eco-friendly clothing. There is also a need to carry out more research on approaches of making sustainable textiles available to wide range consumers such as inexpensive ecologically friendly materials, open pricing systems and second-hand cloth market.

According to McDonagh et al. (2010), having access to information about the social and environmental impacts of products plays a role in deciding whether or not someone buys them. On the same note, Charteris et al (2018) stress on the significance of personal values such as environmentalism or social justice in influencing consumer behaviour towards sustainable products. This study is alike that of Peattie & Charteris (2008), who talk about value-action gap which comprises consumers who have pro-environmental values but have a problem while converting them to consistent buying behaviours. To bridge this gap, it is important to develop strategies that link sustainability messages with consumer values and encourage behaviour change.

Brand identity and ethical practices also are very important to influence customers, as cited in Bhardwaj and Jain (2020). Also, according to Rana & Rehman (2017) brands effectively communicating their commitment to sustainability can gain a competitive advantage. However, allegations of "greenwashing"

can damage brand trustworthiness. Baskaya & Simons (2017) demonstrate through their research studies, how lack of substantiation for sustainability claims makes consumers suspicious. Furthermore, Moser (2010) research was focused on the intention-behaviour gap; i.e., the difference between people's intentions regarding environment protection while purchasing goods and real purchase behaviour itself. Among the barriers identified by his qualitative interviews with fifty US consumers were high costs, limited availability of eco-friendly goods and scepticism about their effectiveness. The study recommended ways to lessen these hindrances such as subsidies for sustainable products and making them more available in the market.

This was also investigated by Niinimäki & Hassi (2011) on barriers to sustainability consumption of textile products. Their 500-respondent study done in Finland revealed that lack of knowledge and eco-label confusion were the greatest stumbling blocks. They advised campaigns that would educate people and make labelling more visible; this way, the gap between knowing what is right and doing it could be bridged. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) found out that ethical considerations are often compromised with price and convenience. This finding is consistent with Moser's (2010) identification of several barriers to sustainable purchasing including high prices and limited availability. The two studies suggest that despite consumers' general preference for ethical products, practical issues heavily affect their decisions. Kim & Choi (2005) have identified cultural factors like environmental concern, collectivism etc which shape an individual's green purchase behaviour. Understanding how different regions prioritize sustainability differently from this cultural perspective can provide important insights into why consumers behave in a certain manner.

According to McDonald & Oates (2006), and Magnier and Crié (2015), information and awareness are significant, given that well-informed consumers can make sustainable choices. Better informing customers about sustainability through effective communication strategies may substantially influence what they buy. However, there is a psychological dimension added by White et al. (2019) and Thøgersen (2011) which shows that the feeling factor as well as social norms does have an effect on how people spend money when buying products. According to them, using psychology and sociology in marketing can help promote sustainable consumption.

Carrigan and Attalla (2001) mixed-methods approach used surveys alongside focus groups to examine ethical consumerism in the UK. Conversely, Kim and Choi's (2005) quantitative survey were conducted in South Korea to study cultural influences on green purchasing behaviour. So, these methodological differences might partly explain why we have different results. It has been suggested that research focusing on specific cultural contexts like Kim & Choi (2005), or detailed information interventions such as McDonald & Oates (2006), often emphasize certain factors including cultural values or information availability which may not be widely recognized by other researchers.

2.4.1 Research Gaps and Areas for Future Exploration

Several gaps persist in spite of the profound insights from past research. To begin with, additional studies should be conducted to investigate factors influencing the "intention-behaviour gap" (Thøgersen, 2007).

This refers to the difference between consumers verbalized eco-friendly intentions and their actual purchases. Psychological and social aspects could also be considered, as they are among those that prevent consumers from translating their concerns about sustainability into unchanging purchasing behaviour. Accordingly, more complex consumer segmentation is needed with specific attention being paid to various socio-economic demographics, cultural contexts and age groups. Specifically, several studies should look into how these affect customer awareness as far as sustainable textiles are concerned and the resultant buying decisions. Finally, it is important to further investigate whether different interventions for promoting sustainable consumption will succeed or not. For example, educational campaigns can be studied to understand their influence on consumer choices within the textile industry by focusing on; impact of environmental labelling programs; ecolabels and marketing strategies in relation to consumer choice in textile industry may be seen as a possible option for this study. By doing so future research would fill these gaps thereby providing useful tools that organizations involved in making responsible choices can use in order to make their practices sustainable.

2.5 The Intention-Behaviour Gap in Sustainable Consumption

The difference in intention and behaviour is often referred to as the intent behaviour gap (Thøgersen, 2007). This is a discrepancy that exists between the individual's stated objective to engage in some activity and what he or she eventually does. This gap is clearly evident in sustainable consumption where consumers claim to be worried about environmental issues and want to buy green cloths but their buying actions do not always match these intentions. Some studies try to find out why this gap occurs.

The study of Carrington, Neville and Whitwell (2010) aimed to find the reason people not act on their good intentions for purchasing sustainable things. This research targeted three hundred consumers in Australia through the use of mixed methods approach that included detailed interviews as well as surveys. While it has been revealed that a significant proportion of customers have every intention to purchase environmentally friendly goods, actual doing is hampered by factors like: convenience, price and availability. Closing the gap between purpose and action will be impossible unless these practical barriers are addressed according to the findings of this research.

Also dealing with the intention-behaviour gap regarding sustainable food consumption was Vermeir and Verbeke (2006). Their quantitative study involved surveying 500 Belgian consumers who had intended to buy sustainable food. As a result, they found out that despite having strong motives to acquire eco-friendly products with certain features, only few actually made those purchases. Such financings were due to lack of trust in sustainability claims; higher prices; limited availability among others. Hence the authors recommended that consumer's trust could be increased by transparency along with making sustainable products more easily available. This research targeted three hundred consumers in Australia through the use of mixed methods approach that included detailed interviews as well as surveys. While it has been revealed that a significant proportion of customers have every intention to purchase environmentally

friendly goods, actual doing is hampered by factors like: convenience, price and availability. Closing the gap between purpose and action will be impossible unless these practical barriers are addressed according to the findings of this research.

According to Verplanken & Wood (2006) psychological factors play a pivotal role when it comes to influencing people's decision-making process. They have come up with "the theory of planned behaviour" which suggests that our intentions are shaped by our attitudes, subjective norms, social pressure perceived from others and perception of own ability will make the behaviour occur. In this regard, however, positive attitudes towards ecologically friendly clothing might not lead into concrete actions especially if one thinks that expensive or old-fashioned clothes are available only in niche markets. Additionally, behavioural biases such as present bias (prioritizing immediate gratification over long-term benefits) or status seeking can influence purchasing decisions, leading consumers to prioritize other attributes over sustainability (Werff & Knippenberg, 2007).

The study conducted by Schaüfele and Hamm (2018) focused on attitudes and perceptions as factors contributing to the intention-behaviour inconsistency of German consumers towards organic food. In a survey involving one thousand consumer respondents, it was found that positive attitudes towards sustainability and high levels of environmental concern were major determinants of purchasing intentions. On the contrary, real buying behaviours were mainly affected by perceived behavioural control such as simplicity in finding or affording organic products. According to this study, any increase in availability and affordability of organic food would raise perceived control among consumers thus curbing the intention-behaviour gap.

In a different perspective, Young et al. (2010) took into consideration the disparity existing between people's intentions and their actions when it comes to sustainable fashion consumption. By using focus groups as well as surveying two hundred individuals from UK, these authors revealed that regardless of their awareness regarding eco-friendly fashions; they tend to be influenced by fast fashion trends; there seems to be no style available in terms of sustainable options while prices are exorbitant. To encourage more sustainable purchasing behaviour, therefore, the researchers suggested eliminating these perception barriers through promotion of aesthetic and economic values associated with sustainable fashion over other types of fashion wear.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

To comprehend the multifarious factors that affect customer behaviour on sustainable textiles, then one has to use a multipronged approach. This section explores three leading theories that shed light on consumers' decision-making processes: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN) and the Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model (ABC Model). These models provide premises for

examining how individual attitudes, beliefs, social influences and contextual factors shape consumer choices in relation to textile industry.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) postulates that behavioural intentions are influenced by three key components, namely attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control (Ajzen, 1991). TPB argues that people tend to engage in a given behaviour more if they have positive attitudes about it; they perceive social influence from others performing it (subjective norms); and finally think they have some level of control over performing it. Various studies have used TPB to understand sustainable consumption among customers. For example, Joshi & Rahman (2015) carried out a meta-analysis of TPB studies on green purchase behaviour where they established attitudes as well as perceived behavioural control significantly predict intentions to purchase sustainable products. They underscored the importance of subjective norms in shaping sustainable consumption behaviours, and stated that social influences are indispensable in promoting sustainable purchasing decisions.

The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory stresses personal values, beliefs, and norms as important factors driving pro-environmental behaviour (Stern, 2000). The VBN theory holds that individuals who have strong environmental values will tend to develop pro-environmental beliefs and norms which affects their behaviour. This proposition maintains that people will get involved in sustainable actions if they possess an intrinsic value towards environmental protection and sustainability. Empirical work applying VBN theory has examined its implications for sustainable consumption. White et al. (2012) for instance studied how personal values influence beliefs in a just world and intentions to buy ethical products. Their results indicate that consumers who give priority to fairness and ethical issues are more likely to model the buying behaviour around their values according to the principles of VBN.

The Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC) model integrates individual psychological attitudes with external contextual factors to explain sustainable behaviours (Guagnano, Stern, & Dietz, 1995). The model takes into account that consumer attitudes to sustainability are not only dictated by personal beliefs and values but also such contextual factors as social norms, economic constraints and institutional support. Research that has applied the ABC model underscores the importance of context on sustainable consumptions. For example, Schäufele and Hamm (2018) used the ABC model to explore organic wine purchasing behavior in Germany. They found out that, despite a positive attitude towards organic products among consumers, purchasing behaviours are influenced by economic factors and the availability of organic options in retail contexts. The study demonstrates how ABC model helps in understanding how different external forces interact with individual consumers' attitudes towards sustainable consumption.

These three theories offer different perspectives on consumer behaviour with respect to sustainable textiles. The TPB examines direct relationships between attitudes, social influences, perceived control and intention to purchase. This framework highly highlights understanding consumer perceptions as well as identifying barriers against action. On one hand; VBN Theory goes deeper into the value systems and personal norms which underpin environmental concern over time. The role of schooling and communication as it affects the beliefs that consumers have with respect to environmental issues and the feeling of responsibility for sustainable options is underscored by this framework. The ABC Model, on the other hand, is broad enough to also include a few concepts related factors in addition to attitudes and behaviours. It emphasizes that in addressing consumer mindsets through building responsible approaches towards making purchases, several dimensions must be undertaken which include the consumer's environment.

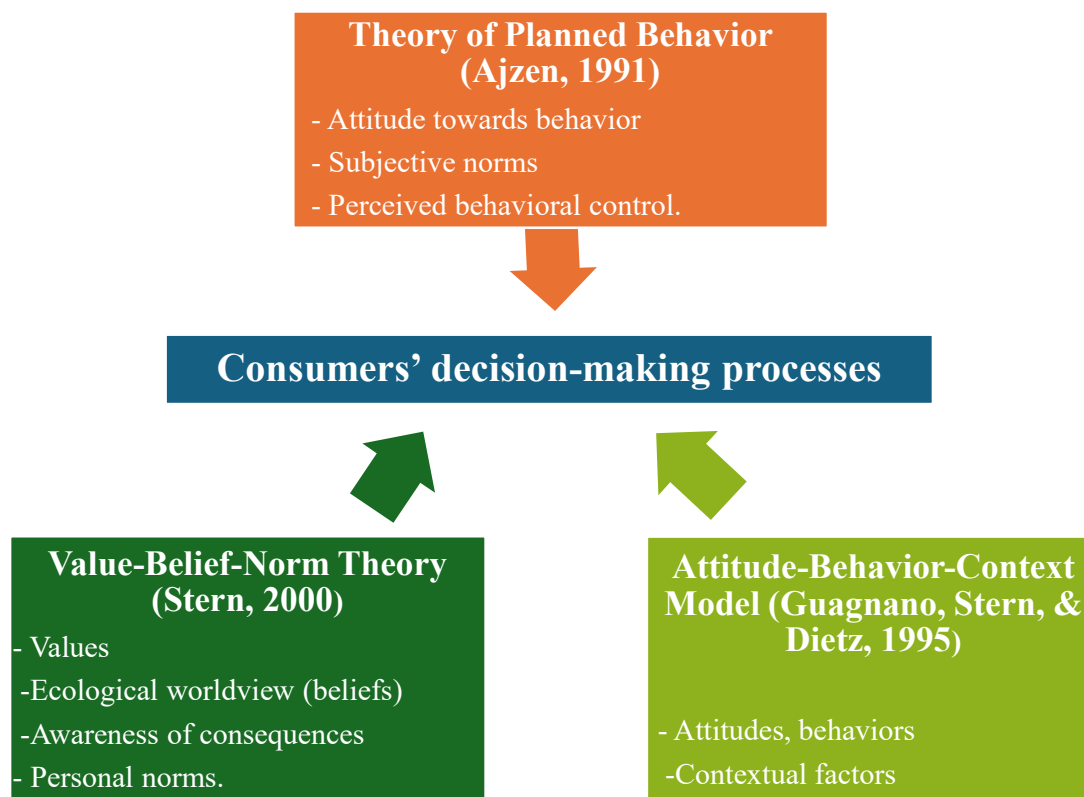


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework

Despite their valuable insights each of these frameworks has limitations. The TPB may not sufficiently capture the complicated interplay between values, beliefs and feelings that influence buyer behaviour. Also, VBN Theory does not directly speak to specific purchasing decisions although it provides useful ideas concerning environmental concern. Further research into contextual factors which are unique to customer choices within textiles industry can enhance ABC Model in its completeness state.

2.7 Conclusion

This review makes an in-depth analysis on what is known about consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions connected with sustainable fabrics. Some vital outcomes indicate that there is a surge in knowledge of environmental and ethical issues among shoppers, playing some role in their buying decisions. Nevertheless, a gap exists between pro-environmental behaviours and pro-environmental intentions. This “intention-behaviour gap” needs to be looked into further. The TPB, VBN Theory, and ABC Model are theoretical frameworks that provide useful insights regarding the interaction between attitudes, values, social influences and contextual factors leading to consumption choices. These aspects must therefore be addressed through approaches that include consumer education, better brand communication skills, policy interventions as well as strategies aimed at enhancing the accessibility and affordability of eco-friendly clothing options. This will lead to bridging the intention-behaviour gap and promoting conscious consumerism for a more sustainable textile future.

3 Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Overview

This study adopts the "Research Onion" model by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). This is a comprehensive approach that guides the research process through several layers; thus, ensuring that researcher explores the topic exhaustively. In this regard, this chapter explains the methodology and design used in research done on consumer perceptions concerning sustainability and its effect on purchasing decisions within Indian textile industry.

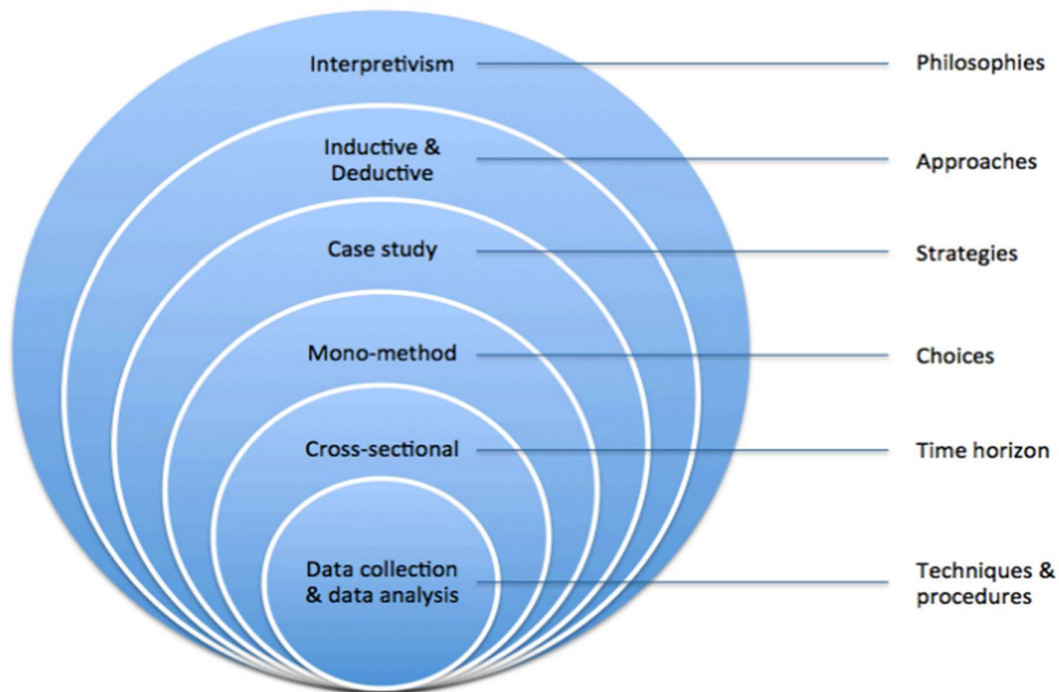


Figure 2-The Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The Interpretive philosophy and deductive methodological approach through qualitative research have been used in this study. Semi-structured interviews are adopted as the main method of primary data collection. Single data collection, or mono method of data collection is discussed in subsequent sections. Lastly, Data Analysis Strategy chapter highlights thematic analysis done manually in Microsoft word for systematic analysis of primary data collected.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

The philosophy of research adopted for this study is interpretivism which aligns with the objective to comprehend customer views and behaviours in their natural contexts. Interpretivism highlights the subjectivity as well as intricacy in human conduct by accepting that reality is created through interactions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2015). This philosophy is particularly relevant to how sustainable

development is perceived by customers in the textile industry since it provides for a fine-grained understanding of individual and collective experiences and interpretations.

Interpretivism deviates from positivism, which seeks explanation through objective, quantifiable data often acquired through experimental and survey methods to test hypotheses. Positivism's domain is usually physical sciences with aim at obtaining generalizable results using statistical analysis (Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2015). Nonetheless, for the current study, an interpretivist approach was considered more appropriate because it focuses on what meanings were attached by participants thus providing rich detailed insights that are vital to understanding consumer behaviour in a sustainability context.

The methodological approach used in this study is deductive. Deductive approach entails data collection and theory development as an outcome of analysing data, especially for qualitative research like the interpretivist philosophy. Rather than testing pre-existing theories or hypotheses, this method facilitates the comprehension of complex social phenomena since it generates insights from collected information (Bryman, 2016).

The qualitative research approach selected is suitable for exploring the subtleties of customer perception and affording more profound understanding of how customers decide (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research gathers non-numerical data like words, images or objects to comprehend people's experiences and their way of perceiving them. This method is particularly ideal in capturing the intricacies and depth of consumer attitudes and behaviour towards sustainability in textile industry (Flick, 2017).

Qualitative methodology facilitates for the collection of detailed and rich information that enables a better understanding of phenomena under study. This involves methods such as interviews, participant observations and focus groups among others which help to explore participants' perspectives in-depth (Gray, 2017). The main method used to collect primary data in this study is semi structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are guided by a prepared set of questions but allow flexibility regarding the order of questions asked as well as allowing follow up questions depending on responses from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It helps the researcher to go deeper into specific areas she/he wants to investigate further by providing insights that would not be apparent otherwise.

3.3 Research Strategy

The literature review indicated that there exists major gap in studies addressing how consumer perceptions of sustainability impact their purchase decisions in the Indian textile industry. In spite of numerous investigations into sustainable consumption and consumer behaviour, there are few investigations about the detailed mechanisms or factors driving these behaviours within this sector under specific geographic contexts. Hence, to ensure that this gap is filled as well as meet the aim of this study; a semi-structured interviews is conducted to know consumer decision-making towards sustainable textiles. The purpose of the research is to gain insights into why consumers buy certain products rather than others by using semi-

structured interviews that give individual experience and perspective within this specific context. Interpretivism posits that it is crucial for person’s ideas to be regarded as such and unknown nature of human experiences should be considered (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.4 Collection Primary Data

This section outlines the sources of data and addresses the ethical considerations associated with the research process.

3.4.1 Sources

5 consumers of sustainable textile products will be interviewed in a semi-structured format for this research. The selection criteria for the participants will be based on their active involvement in purchasing textile products that are considered sustainable. Thus, this purposive sampling guarantees that the insights collected are important and useful to the study purposes (Flick, 2017).

In-person interviews shall be organised with those who can be reached within my nearby location. These personal interviews would take place in calm and relaxed surroundings to enable open and candid discussions. Consentingly audio-recorded, the discussions will ensure precise information collection as well as analysis later. Zoom, Microsoft Teams or telephone calls can be used to conduct digital interviews for participants who reside far away geographically. This technique enables people to participate in research activities even if they are not physically located near it by offering location flexibility from home or office comfort zones. The digital interviews follow a semi structured questionnaire like face-to-face ones hence ensuring uniformity in data collection pool.

Table 1-Interview Questions and references from literature review

Interview Questions	Literature Review Theme	Reasoning and References
1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?	Introduction	This question helps to break ice and establish rapport with the respondent. Besides it gives background information about the participant and his/her textile interest which will enable in depth understanding of their responses (Saunders et al., 2015).

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?	2.2 Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability	To evaluate awareness levels among individuals as per Johnstone and Tan (2015) as well as Wiederhold and Martinez (2018), it would be necessary to know how people define sustainability personally.
3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?	2.2 Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability	Henninger et al. (2016) and Niinimäki (2010) have proved sustainability is important when deciding on what to purchase.
4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?	2.3 Sustainability in the Textile Industry	Identifies key factors influencing sustainable purchases, as discussed by Claudio (2007) and Choi et al. (2012).
5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?	2.3 Sustainability in the Textile Industry	Assesses consumer information sources and aligns with research by Shen (2014) and Han et al. (2017).
6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?	2.4 Consumer Behaviour and Purchasing Decisions	Explores the impact of sustainability on actual behaviour, supporting findings by McNeill and Moore (2015) and Hiller Connell (2010).
7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?	2.5 The Intention-Behaviour Gap in Sustainable Consumption	Identifies barriers to sustainable consumption, discussed by Joshi and Rahman (2015) and Ghvanidze et al. (2016).
8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?	2.5 The Intention-Behaviour Gap in Sustainable Consumption	Vermeer and Verbeke (2006) together with Bray et al. (2011) pointed out that there was a gap between intention and behaviour which manifested itself through availability issues coupled with pricing challenges.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?	2.5 The Intention-Behaviour Gap in Sustainable Consumption	Gathers consumer recommendations for industry practices, aligning with suggestions from Ritch (2015) and Jägel et al. (2012).
10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?	2.4 Consumer Behaviour and Purchasing Decisions	Evaluates marketing effectiveness, supporting findings by Kumar and Christodouloupoulou (2014) and Ertz et al. (2017).
11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?	2.2 Consumer Perceptions of Sustainability	Assesses trust in sustainability claims, linked to research by Thøgersen et al. (2010) and Janssen and Vanhamme (2015).
12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?	Conclusion	Provides participants with an opportunity to share any additional thoughts or insights that were not covered in the previous questions (Saunders et al., 2015).
13. Thank you for your time and insights. How do you feel about participating in this study?	Conclusion	Participants are given an opportunity to air any other ideas or insights not covered in prior questions by offering additional comments or thoughts they may have had in mind during the interview session (Saunders et al., 2015).

The questions for the interviews, and the references used in justifying the questions asked are contained in Table 2. If asked, participants can obtain a copy of the interview questions that will enable them to prepare adequately for discussion thus keeping it on track and focused (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues

Access to potential respondents will be facilitated by using already existing contacts of researcher with people who have already given their consent to take part in this study. Furthermore, this group will be expanded through referrals from initial contacts thereby increasing the number of participants while maintaining data relevance and reliability. Each likely participant shall receive a formal invitation as well

as consent letter explaining research intention, level of involvement and confidentiality measures taken to ensure ethical compliance.

This research has ethical considerations particularly needed due to the nature of private materials being gathered. All participants will be informed about what they should know about why they are participating voluntarily so that they may pull out at any stage without prejudice. However, the agreement document will explicitly express these ideas and verbal approval will be re-confirmed before each interview starts. This procedure is in line with the ethical guidelines suggested by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2015) that make sure that the research follows the topmost standards of ethical behaviour.

All information obtained during research will remain confidential and anonymous. When transcribing data, personal identifiers will be removed whereas pseudonyms will be used for reporting findings to ensure participants' confidentiality. The audio recordings and transcriptions will be safely kept for only the researcher and in case of need, supervisors ensuring unauthorized entry to information (Smith et al., 2015).

3.5 Approach to Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis in this study adopts a thematic analysis approach which is a process of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This method suits well qualitative studies as it provides an opportunity to have richly textured interpretations while focusing on the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The collection from semi-structured interviews was done verbatim to enable accuracy and completeness. The next step will be the analysing of these transcriptions one by one manually in Microsoft word, and identifying relevant codes and selecting extracts from each interview. This will stimulate systematic coding upon which it becomes easier to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data (Flick, 2014).

Gaining familiarity with data is the first stage of thematic analysis whereby the researcher reads or rereads the transcription till he/she gets entirely immersed on it. Consequently, initial codes are created as certain tags that will help identify crucial details in response to research questions. In other words, codes would be developed directly from the data rather than an existing framework (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The next step after coding is to search for themes by sorting out codes into potential themes and bringing together all relevant data for each theme. Later on, they are then reviewed and refined so as to be representative of the information but being distinct and coherent among them all. Finally, these themes must be defined and named through providing clear definitions as well as insightful labels that capture their very essence (Saunders et al., 2015).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research methods used in this study, which is based on the "Research Onion" model developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). It looked at interpretivist philosophy,

qualitative research approach and semi-structured interviews as data collection tools. The data will be analysed through thematic analysis technique through manual analysis. Ethical considerations and access to participants were also discussed. This methodology framework ensures a thorough and extensive exploration of how consumer perceptions about sustainability affect purchasing decisions in the Indian textile industry.

4 Presentation and discussion of the findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter describes and analyses the results of semi-structured interviews carried out with five subjects who show interest in sustainable textiles. The major aim is to investigate the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of consumers towards sustainable textiles. Therefore, this chapter will look into such themes as patterns emerging from data collected thus far that shed light on factors influencing consumer choices in sustainable fashion domain. Section 4.2 focuses on presenting the major findings obtained during interviews. This section contains subsections that are systematically placed following identification of themes and codes linked to the research aims and objectives. Each sub-section will highlight significant themes arising from interviews accompanied by literal quotes from interviewees indicating their thoughts and experiences.

This part discusses key issues including: important sustainability, specific factors swaying purchases as well as difficulties involved in purchasing a green cloth. The information captured covers various aspects like perceived relevance of sustainability, material concerns; hindrances for instance high cost or non-availability thereof. The findings of the previous section are interpreted in Section 4.3: Meaningful Insights and Implications. In this part, the broader context of sustainability in the textile industry is connected with identified themes and codes. The author shows how interviewee statements relate to what has been documented by scholars in other cases as well as market dynamics.

This section investigates how these patterns are revealed through discussions on the importance of sustainability, material considerations, certification issues, greenwashing, cost barriers and marketing strategies that can be effective in enhancing sustainable practices. Moreover, it explores the efficacy of current marketing approaches and potential impacts of respondents' suggestions regarding improving sustainability efforts. Therefore, this analysis will give a complete insight into what these findings add to existing knowledge on sustainable textiles and what they say about consumer demands and business modes. Finally, section 4.4 Conclusion sums up significant discoveries made and their implications for research contributions to the literature along with its future directions.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Consumer Awareness and Knowledge of Sustainable Textiles

In the interview, consumer awareness and knowledge of sustainable textiles emerged as a significant theme. Different participants showed different understanding levels of sustainability as it relates to textile products. All the respondents were interested in sustainability although what they knew about it differed significantly. Interviewee 1, on the other hand, was highly aware and had a good understanding of environmental and social implications brought about by the textile industry. *"I'm passionate about promoting sustainability in all sectors, including textiles, because of its deep connection to environmental health, ethical labour*

practices, and resource conservation" (Interviewee 1). In contrast, Interviewee 2, possessed basic familiarity regarding sustainability but did not have comprehensive insight into specific production processes neither material.

Participants presented diverse perspectives on sustainability concerning textiles. In general, there was consensus regarding environmental impact involving talks about materials used, production procedures used as well as waste reduction. However, participants differed in their understandings of social aspects of sustainability including fair labour practices. The importance of the environment and social aspects of sustainability is what Interviewee 3 stressed. *"Sustainability means ensuring that the textiles I buy and use are produced in a way that minimizes environmental harm and supports fair labour practices."* (Interviewee 3).

Various sources were used by the participants for information on sustainable textiles. Online research, including brand websites, sustainability reports, and social media platforms was commonly used. For example, Interviewee 4 mentioned using industry reports and trade shows as key sources of his information while Interviewee 5 explained how her knowledge about sustainable fashion has been shaped by some blogs and influencers. Some participants cited difficulty in obtaining accurate and reliable information on sustainable textiles. Specifically, Interviewee 2 pointed out lack of detailed production process information as well as material sourcing challenges. Similarly, greenwashing was also mentioned by Interviewee 4 when discussing why it was hard to differentiate between real sustainable claims or misleading promotion designs.

Although the level of knowledge differs significantly, these findings show an increasing understanding of sustainability among textile consumers. Generally speaking, participants have a good grasp of environmental impacts.

Table 2- Consumer Awareness and Knowledge of Sustainable Textiles

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Extracts from Interviews
Consumer Awareness and Knowledge of Sustainable Textiles	Level of Awareness	High awareness	<i>"I'm very aware of the environmental impact of the fashion industry."</i> (Interviewee 1)
		Moderate awareness	<i>"I've heard about sustainability but don't know much about it."</i> (Interviewee 2)
		Low awareness	
		Clear definition	

	Understanding of Sustainability	Vague understanding	<i>"Sustainability means using eco-friendly materials and fair labor practices."</i> (Interviewee 2)
		Focus on environmental aspects	
		Social aspects	
	Information Sources	Online research	<i>"I rely on online research and sustainable fashion blogs."</i> (Interviewee 3)
		Brand websites	
		Certifications	
		Media	<i>"I follow some influencers who talk about sustainable fashion."</i> (Interviewee 5)
		Word-of-mouth	
		Social media	

4.2.2 Importance of Sustainability in Purchasing Decisions

Through interviews, it was identified that "Importance of Sustainability" became a major topic for discussion. It was established that sustainable development in textile products influences personal values, professional significance and ethical consumerism. This theme is important because it encompasses why individuals choose sustainability and how the same impacts their decisions to buy and act. For Interviewee 1, the central purpose is sustainability as an integral part of his/her personal values. *"Sustainability is extremely important to me. I try to make conscious decisions by choosing products that are sustainably sourced and produced."* Such remarks indicate strong commitment to sustainable practices, meaning that buying preference are rooted in sustainability principles rather than just being like.

The similar view on this matter has been expressed by Interviewee 5 who said that the environmental effect of what they buy reflects their own ethics. *"I try to make sure that everything I buy, from clothes to home textiles, is as sustainable as possible"* This underline how individual's choices are driven by what they believe in which makes sustainability a vital aspect of internalizing morals into consumption. The interviewee 1 underscored the professional aspect of sustainability, noting that consumers are increasingly looking for sustainable products. They stated, *"As someone studying sustainable development, I feel a strong responsibility to practice what I preach"* (Interviewee 1) This proves that being aware and interested in sustainability is not only on personal grounds but also influences professionals' understanding their customers' needs.

Interviewee 4, who works in textiles, took an industry-centered view: *“I see how consumer preferences are changing towards more eco-friendly products.”* Consequently, this suggests that the move to sustainability is becoming one of the major consumer behavioural determinants influencing industrial activities and market trends. Another sub-theme within the significance of sustainability was ethical consumption. The interviewee 3 defined this as a process which considers all aspects of a product’s life span taking into account the moral nature of purchasing decisions. *“It’s about being mindful about what happens to the thing from cradle to grave”* (Interviewee 3).

Table 3-Importance of Sustainability in purchasing decisions

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Extracts from Interviews
Importance of Sustainability in purchasing decisions	Prioritization of Sustainability	Personal Values	<i>"Sustainability is extremely important to me."</i> (Interviewee 1)
		ethical concerns	<i>"It's important to me that what I wear reflects my values."</i> (Interview 5)
		Environmental responsibility	<i>"Sustainability is extremely important to me"</i> (Interviewee 1)
	Trade-offs and Compromises	Cost-benefit analysis	<i>"I consider sustainability, but price is also a factor"</i> (Interviewee 2)
		Practical considerations	
		Lifestyle factors	<i>"I'd love to buy all sustainable, but it's not always practical."</i> (Interviewee 4)
	Motivations for Sustainable Choices	Social image	<i>"I want to be seen as someone who cares about the environment."</i> (Interviewee 5)
		Peer influence	
		Personal satisfaction	<i>"It makes me feel good to support sustainable brands."</i> (Interviewee 1)

4.2.3 Sustainability Factors

The theme "Sustainability Factors" will examine the specific items that participants consider as they evaluate the sustainability of textile products. In addition to this, the theme identifies key aspects influencing purchasing decisions and offers an understanding on what consumers value when it comes to eco-friendly textiles.

One of the primary sustainability factors mentioned by interviewees is the type of materials used in textile products. Material choice, for example, should be considered by Interviewee 1 who said in his words "*I think about the material used like organic cotton or recycled fibres.*" This underscores a more general concern of product environmental effects thus advocating for textiles made from sustainable sources. Also, according to Interviewee 3, important materials include "*Organic or recycled materials*". When looked at critically, this preference indicates a trend where customers are looking for goods that do not harm the environment right from production stage. The selection of materials is regarded as a foundational factor towards evaluating overall sustainability of a product.

Among other things critical factors identified were methods employed during textiles production. "*I look at whether the product is made from organic or recycled materials and if the brand is transparent about its manufacturing processes*" (Interviewee 2). Manufacturing processes being focused on like this demonstrate that sustainability is more than a matter of material production. The use of low-impact dyes and other eco-friendly techniques help to lower the ecological footprints for textile products overall. "*I look for organic or recycled materials, and I check if the product is made in a way that reduces environmental impact, like using less water or avoiding harmful chemicals*" (Interviewee 5). Here, the focus is on considering how sustainable the process is. This involves looking into both what it is made from and how it is manufactured so as to minimize its environmental effects at all costs.

For some participants, certifications and brand ethics are key indicators of sustainability. For example, interviewee 1 noted that they "*look for certifications such as 'Fair Trade or GOTS'*" which are reliable yardsticks for ethical and environmental practices. Certifications offer a common benchmark against which to measure sustainability thereby empowering consumers with information necessary for making informed choices based on predetermined standards. Another thing that stood out from Interviewee 2 was their emphasis on certification, "*I also check for certifications like Fair Trade or organic labels to ensure that the products meet certain standards*" (Interviewee 2). In regard to sustainable fashion, this trust in external validation points out why transparency and accountability remain essential aspects when determining the pace of change required for a more environmentally responsible industry.

Crucial issues of transparency and availableness of information were underscored by Respondent 3, who said: "*I look up information on brand websites, sustainability reports and third-party certificates.*" This vision emphasizes the significance of information that is easy to get and trust for taking informed decisions about sustainability. "*I do a lot of research online, checking brand websites, looking for certifications, and*

reading reviews” (Interviewee 5). The focus on transparency and information availability implies consumers’ demand for accurate and testable details concerning practices in sustainability.

Table 4- Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Extracts from Interviews
Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions	Materials Used	Organic Certifications	Interviewee 1: <i>“I look for materials like organic cotton or recycled fibres.”</i>
		Recycled	Interviewee 4: <i>“I also look at the company’s commitment to sustainability, including their policies on waste reduction.”</i>
	Production Methods	Low-Impact Dyes	Interviewee 3: <i>“I also look at the production methods—whether they use low-impact dyes, for example—and the company’s overall commitment to sustainability“</i>
		Waste Reduction	Interviewee 2: <i>“I consider the company’s overall commitment to sustainability.”</i>
	Company Practices	Transparency, Fair Trade	Interviewee 1: <i>“I consider whether the brand has certifications like Fair Trade.”</i>
		Circular Models	Interviewee 5: <i>“Companies should adopt circular fashion models.”</i>

4.2.4 Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing

This theme is “barriers to sustainable purchasing” which focuses on challenges facing customers when they want to buy sustainable textile products. It highlights various problems which hinder individuals from making choices that are eco-friendly. One key obstacle often mentioned is the price of sustainable textiles. *“The main barrier is cost. Sustainable products often come at a premium, which can be a challenge”* (Interviewee 2). *“Pricing is major concern– it’s hard to buy sustainably when the products are so expensive”* (Interviewee 5). Consumers with limited budgets are faced with the challenge of higher prices for sustainable products as compared to their conventional versions.

The availability of sustainable textile options also presents a barrier to consumers. Availability is an issue, especially in local stores where sustainable options are limited according to Interviewee 1. This has forced clients who desire such things to shop online which can be problematic and does not always ensure the quality or durability of the product being purchased. Similarly, the third respondent argued that they were not easy to find saying that “*Sustainable products are not always easy to find, especially in certain markets*” (Interviewee 1). Such scarcity hinders access and limits consumer’s choice in favour of sustainability when it comes to purchasing.

Significantly, there is a lack of clear and accessible information on product sustainability. As Interviewee 2 noted sometimes “*There’s sometimes a lack of clear information about how sustainable a product really is.*” This makes it difficult for buyers who do not have any idea on what they should purchase and from whom because they cannot rely on the information provided by manufacturers or suppliers who often lack transparency about their supply chain and material sourcing policies like Interviewee 4 stated, “*I look for transparency about their supply chains and the sustainability of their materials, but it’s not always available*”. When detailed and transparent information is not available, it can lead to skepticism about the truth of claims about sustainability.

Still, consumer choices can be influenced by perceived value of sustainable goods. “*Sustainable products are usually more costly as a result they may discourage some customers*” (Interviewee 1). This perception might affect consumers’ willingness to buy into such products since they feel that sustainable products do not add value for the price. The higher prices could make shoppers question if sustainability is worth the additional costs.

Table 5- Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Extracts from Interviews
Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing	Cost	Premium Pricing	Interviewee 2: “ <i>Sustainable products often come at a premium.</i> ”
		Budget Constraints	Interviewee 5: “ <i>Pricing is a major concern—it’s difficult to buy sustainably when the products are so expensive.</i> ”
	Availability	Limited Options	Interviewee 3: “ <i>Availability is an issue, especially in local stores.</i> ”

		Online Shopping	Interviewee 4: <i>“Sustainable textiles are not always easy to find, especially in certain markets.”</i>
	Information and Transparency	Greenwashing	Interviewee 2: <i>“Many brands make claims that aren’t backed by solid evidence.”</i>
		Certification Gaps	Interviewee 5: <i>“I look for certifications and detailed information before believing a brand’s sustainability claims.”</i>

4.2.5 Marketing and Trust

This theme "Marketing and Trust" explores how marketing strategies and consumer trust influence perceptions and purchasing decisions in relation to sustainable textile products. This theme especially analyses the effectiveness of current marketing approaches employed by companies selling sustainable textiles and level of trust consumers have on these products. Various brands utilize different techniques to market their eco-friendly apparels. *“Some strategies work well while others do not deliver”* (Interviewee 2). The marked variations suggest that whilst some enterprises manage to convey their practices in importance of green business, other organizations fail in this aspect. Similarly, interviewee 5 noted *“the focus should be on educating consumers about products rather than just trying to sell.”* This means effective marketing does not only bring attention to features that are sustainable in nature of the product but also teaches customers why those features are important.

Greenwashing, making false claims about the environmental benefits of a product, is a major concern for consumer trust. *“I’m cautious. There’s a lot of greenwashing in the industry, so I don’t take claims at face value”* (Interviewee 1). This skepticism regarding sustainability claims is part of a larger unease surrounding the integrity of marketing campaigns. Similarly, mistrust with regard to transparency was also brought up by Interviewee 4 who said *“I rely on brands that are honest and show proof”*. The ubiquity of greenwashing weakens consumer confidence thus complicating the decision-making process.

Consumer trust can be established through transparency and certifications. Furthermore, Interviewee 2 emphasized on need for standards such as GOTS or Fair Trade which act as reputable references on how sustainable it might be from an organizational point of view. This dependence upon third-party confirmation makes evident demand for evidence-based sustainability. According to interview 5, *“I check for certifications and in-depth information before I believe any sustainability claims made by the brand.”* Consumers can distinguish genuinely sustainable products from those that overstate their environmental

benefits through transparency in marketing and the availability of certified products. To ensure effective marketing, consumers have to be educated on issues about sustainability. For instance, according to interviewee 3, brands should focus on enhancing consumers’ understanding of why sustainability matters and how they are genuinely becoming responsible citizens. Consequently, this is more than educating customers but also helping them make better choices while buying.

Table 6- Marketing and Trust

Theme	Subtheme	Codes	Extracts from Interviews
Marketing and Trust	Effectiveness of Marketing	Clear Claims	Interviewee 4: <i>“Marketing needs to be clear and honest, focusing on educating consumers.”</i>
		Educational Focus	Interviewee 5: <i>“Marketing should help consumers understand why sustainability matters.”</i>
	Trust in Claims	Greenwashing	Interviewee 1: <i>“I’m cautious. There’s a lot of greenwashing in the industry, so I don’t take claims at face value”</i> <i>“Trust is earned through transparency and consistency in actions, not just marketing” (Interviewee 1).</i>
		Certification Verification	Interviewee 2: <i>“I trust brands that are transparent and provide evidence of their practices.”</i>
	Consumer Awareness	Education	Interviewee 3: <i>“Education is key—companies should help consumers understand why sustainability matters.”</i>
			Misleading Claims

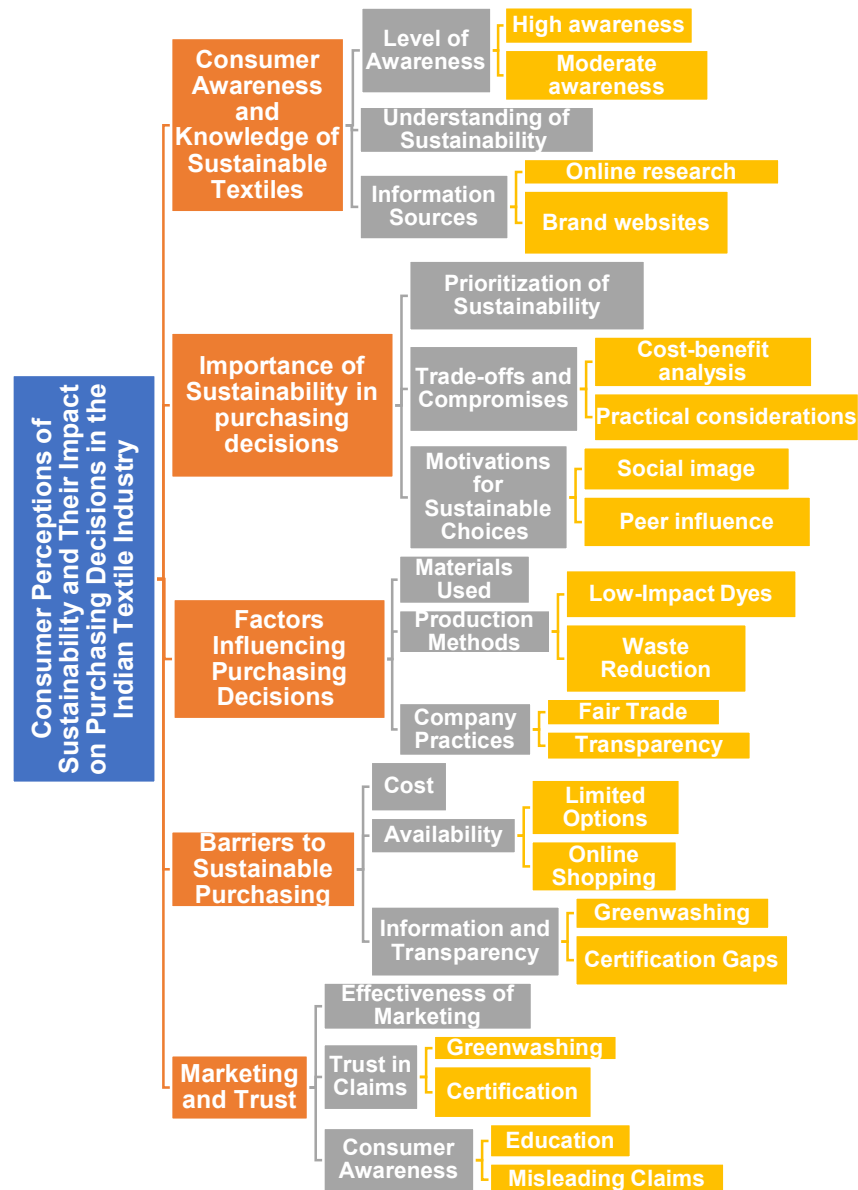


Figure 3- Thematic Analysis

4.3 Discussion

This section presents an analysis of the data obtained in section 4.2 vis-à-vis the existing literature on consumer behavior and sustainable textiles. This part will put interpretations into context by applying established theoretical frameworks when examining the data. The review builds upon concepts derived from three major theories viz Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991); Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000) and Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz, 1995) which together provide a comprehensive explanation about how people behave with regards to sustainable textiles.

The findings indicate the increasing importance of sustainability in textile purchasing which is in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This theory argues that personal attitude towards behavior

plus subjective norm and perceived behavioural control influence personal behavior. The study found that sustainability was an important factor for buyers suggesting that consumers have a positive perception of green products. This agrees with previous research which has found that consumers are increasingly focusing on environmental and social issues when making purchases (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011). The increasing awareness of environmental issues such as climate changes and depletion of resources has led to consumer preference for more sustainable products (Joy et al., 2012). According to the interviews, consumers consider sustainability an essential part of their purchasing decisions; they see it as a way of reconciling consumption with values. Furthermore, buyers' motivations to buy textiles, based on their own values as well as community expectations, demonstrate that they are aware of the environmental footprint associated with the use of this material and committed to supporting its sustainable production.

Another theoretical framework is the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000) which coincides with customers' growing consciousness about sustainability in textiles. This theory holds that individual values and beliefs affect environmental norms and behaviors. Participants' concentration on sustainability as one of the most basic purchase criteria underlines how personal values like ecological awareness or ethical concerns drive people's decisions. Consequently, these values are manifested through textile products reinforcing consumer behavior towards sustainable consumption.

Sustainability factors findings indicate that customers consider a variety of aspects like material quality, production methods and company transparency. This is in line with Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz, 1995) which underscores the interplay between attitudes and contextual factors on one hand and behavioural intention on the other. The approach to materials (for instance organic or recycled), as well as production practices reflects a wider approach towards responsible consumption that is influenced by information context and product transparency.

Certification importance plus detailed information also supports the idea that consumer attitudes toward sustainability depend on whether there are proofs available. Meanwhile, the necessity for sustainability communication to be explicit and trustworthy corresponds to emphasis this model places on context affecting conduct. Effective marketing and transparency play a crucial role in reducing the gap between consumer attitudes and actual purchasing behavior.

The identified barriers—costs, availability, and information transparency—highlight major obstacles to adoption of sustainable purchasing behaviour. These barriers are consistent with Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), especially when it comes to perceived behavioural control. Consumer sustainable choices are influenced by high prices and limited availability, which reflect limitations on perceived control over purchases; hence this requires systemic changes to decrease costs and increase access to sustainable goods.

Moreover, a lack of explicit data also affects perceived control since consumers find it difficult to accurately evaluate the sustainability of products. In accordance with the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000), this issue means that insufficient information undermines the match between one's values and behavior. These barriers require more transparency and education that would empower consumers to make eco-friendly decisions based on their environmental ambitions or concerns.

Understanding consumer behavior in terms of sustainable textiles demands a focus on marketing and trust. The study findings showed that despite some market strategies being used effectively for sustainability communication purposes, trust is hindered by greenwashing as well as vague claims. This aspect relates with the Attitude-Behaviour-Context Model (Guagnano, Stern & Dietz 1995) that explains how context influences consumers' attitude towards products and their behaviour as buyers. It is a must for effective marketing strategies to have clear and honest information that avoids misleading claims in order to build and maintain consumer trust.

According to some interviews, while some marketing approaches effectively depicts sustainability, others do not. In general terms this shows how difficult it is to create marketing messages that are both compelling and truthful. Peattie & Crane's (2005) studies however assert that honesty and transparent marketing helps build trust with customers which prevents them from labelling companies' activities as deceitful.

Greenwashing is when corporations overstate or make false claims about their environmental achievements hence breaking down trust on such claims concerning their sustainability. Greenwashing destroys consumer confidence and may result in doubts about any sustainability claims that are made (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). To establish and keep customer trust, brands need to be transparent and obtain trustworthy certifications from independent organizations as proof of their sustainability claims.

Consumer education is also a necessity. As stated by the interviews, informing customers about sustainability's importance and how it is being sorted out by brands can enhance marketing strategies. Clear details on product sustainability and brand practices can facilitate better customer choices while fostering stronger connections with a brand's principles.

4.4 Conclusion

The text describes the findings that emerged out of interviews conducted to investigate sustainable textile purchasing. It is presented as a detailed analysis on key themes, which include importance of sustainability, barriers to sustainable purchasing, sustainability factors and marketing and trust. In turn, these themes allow one to comprehend how the consumer behavior can be shaped and developed in relation to sustainable textiles. The study demonstrates that sustainability has a significant effect on consumers' decisions regarding buying textile products. Sustainability was not merely seen as a personal preference but also as a growing necessity influenced by environmental issues and ethical concerns according to participants across

the interview sections. This aligns with Theory of Planned Behavior which shows how attitude towards sustainability impacted by personal values and perceived behavioural control influence purchase decisions.

Customers identified several important features they use in evaluating eco-friendly properties in fabrics. These range from utilization of organic or recycled materials, fair trade production process up to transparency in company activities. The focus on certifications such as GOTS and Fair Trade is a testament to the importance of reliable and trustworthy arguments about sustainability. The findings are also consistent with Attitude-Behavior-Context Model that point out how available information as well as context, affect buyer conduct. Moreover, obstacles to sustainable purchases were significant. While the key barriers are high costs and low availability of sustainable products coupled with inadequate reliable information. These obstacles conform to perceived behavioural control which is a concept associated with Theory of Planned Behavior where even though consumers may have positive attitudes towards sustainability, practical constraints prevent them from acting on their beliefs. For instance, overcoming these barriers requires systemic changes aimed at increasing the accessibility and affordability of sustainable options.

Marketing and trust were other issues that came up a lot in relation to consumer confidence in sustainability claims. Participants raised concerns regarding greenwashing and ambiguous marketing messages which destroys faith and affects buying decisions. In order to build consumer trust, effective marketing must be characterized by openness and truthfulness. This supports the emphasis of The Attitude-Behavior- Context Model on how marketing activities affect consumers' perceptions towards products. The findings have profound implications on both the consumers and textile companies. On the consumers' part, sustainability has been a priority showing a growing consciousness and commitment to environmentally responsible choices. Nonetheless, for them to fully take advantage of their potential impacts, such customers need more easily accessible, less expensive and dependable information about sustainable products. Improved transparency and availability of green options can help narrow the gap between consumer attitudes and actual buying behavior.

Textile companies should improve transparency and genuineness in marketing processes as indicated by these results. Firms should concentrate on providing explicit facts about their efforts towards sustainability which are verifiable thus enhancing trustworthiness among buyers. Additionally, overcoming obstacles like high costs or limited availability can make sustainable products available to greater numbers of people. Investments in innovation plus improvements in production procedures could reduce cost and enhance product sustainability. The study's findings suggest some further areas for research. For example, subsequent ones could focus on the impact of different marketing strategies on promotion of sustainable textiles as well as building consumer trust.

5 Concluding thoughts on the contribution of this research, its limitations and suggestions for further research

5.1 Comparison of Findings with Literature Review

This study seeks to evaluate how consumer's sustainable perception affects their purchase decisions in the Indian textile industry. Its specific focus is on how the knowledge and understanding of sustainability among consumers shape their buying behaviour about textile products.

5.1.1 Consumer Awareness and Perceptions of Sustainability

Firstly, this objective was set towards determining the level of awareness and perception that consumers in India have with regards to sustainability vis-à-vis apparel. According to existing literature; however, global awareness of such issues varies extensively across emerging markets including India. Some research papers by Shen et al. (2012) or Mukherjee et al. (2019) highlighted factors like education, media exposure and socio-economic status influencing buyer behaviour in these territories.

The findings from this report are consistent with previous studies showing varied levels of awareness among different demographic groups. This is because, for example, individuals with more education and those living in municipalities tend to have a better comprehension of the concept of sustainability, which has been demonstrated by previous studies as influenced by education and urbanization (Siddiquee et al., 2020).

Table 7-Comparison of Literature Review and Findings on Consumer Awareness

Aspect	Literature Review Insights	Research Findings
General Awareness	Increasing globally, variable in emerging markets	Confirmed variability across demographics
Influencing Factors	Education, exposure to global media	Education, social status, and urbanization emerged as key factors

This table illustrates how the findings align with the literature; however, it also provides an insight into how different factors of demographics affect awareness. For example, the study revealed that young people are exposed to global fashion trends through social media and therefore, they have higher consciousness levels towards environmental issues. By doing so, this discovery diversified on existing knowledge on understanding demographic variations related to sustainability awareness from Indian perspective.

Besides, it was discovered that while many consumers may be aware about sustainability there is often lack of clarity on what constitutes real sustainable products. This contrast between recognition and

comprehension indicates that companies need to communicate their brands more clearly to customers who might bridge knowledge gap in such cases. This aspect has not been given adequate attention in the current literature but it is crucial for corporate communication practitioners' intervention in minimizing consumer ignorance or misinformation about branding.

5.1.2 Key Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions

This aimed at identifying the main determinants which influence consumers when purchasing sustainable textile goods. The literature review pointed out that traditional factors such as cost, quality and brand image are crucial in the determination of consumers' choice (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Gleim et al., 2013). However, these considerations always interplay with other aspects like ethical issues and environmental concerns which are now more significant in developed markets.

In India, the results of this study indicated that while price and quality continued to be dominant factors, there were additional cultural specificities at play. As evident from this research findings, cultural values and peer influence were identified as the most important aspects determining buying decisions especially among young people who depend on social networks and community norms.

Table 8-Key Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions

Factor	Literature Review	Research Findings
Price	Critical barrier to sustainable purchases	Confirmed, but cultural factors also significant
Quality	Essential, often more valued than sustainability	Confirmed
Brand Reputation	Important for trust in sustainability claims	Trust in domestic vs. international brands noted
Cultural Values	Not extensively covered	Identified as a major influence in Indian market
Peer Influence	Minimal emphasis	Emerged as significant, particularly among younger consumers

This comparison shows that although global trends still show traditional issues like price and quality being relevant in some cases (Table 8). Nevertheless, Indian market is unique with its distinct characteristics where cultural values and peer influence dominate. For instance, the study found out that customers are more likely to buy sustainable products when they perceive these alternatives as consistent with

conventional values or when they enjoy support from influential peers within their social circles. Therefore, this is important information for marketing sustainable products in India that are not only about their intrinsic qualities but also their conformity to the culture and social endorsements.

The results of the research further revealed that trust in sustainability claims is crucial especially within the Indian context where skepticism over greenwashing practices is rampant. Brands with authenticity and transparency, therefore, attract more consumer trust which directly influences them on what to buy. This finding adds another layer of complexity to the existing literature, which demonstrates how brands can build and maintain trust with consumers through straightforward and honest communication regarding their sustainability initiatives.

5.1.3 Barriers to Sustainable Consumption

The literature has frequently pointed to high costs, limited availability, and lack of information as main barriers to sustainable consumption (Guagnano et al., 1995; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). This study validated these obstacles and went beyond that by examining the relationship between cost and trust. In other words, even though costly products have always been seen as unaffordable, research observes otherwise because customers are willing to pay extra premium on goods they think satisfy the sustainability claims. This nuanced result contributes to existing scholarship because it suggests that trust may counterbalance the impact of cost as a barrier which has not been fully investigated before.

5.1.4 Role of Marketing and Trust

According to Ottman et al. (2006), marketing strategy is one of the most important determinants of consumer behaviour. However, previous research concentrated more on general marketing practices without considering trust's specific role in sustainability marketing. This study extends Ottman et al.'s (2006) work by revealing that transparent, evidence-based marketing is necessary for building trust. This is due to the fact that firms will need to more actively develop clear, verifiable information about themselves in regards to sustainability because of the growing skepticism among consumers of unclear and unsupported sustainability claims. This discovery enhances the understanding that now exists about how trust can be created and sustained within the context of sustainability.

Table 9-Comparison of Findings with Literature

Objective	Key Literature Insights	Research Findings	Contribution
Factors Influencing Sustainable Purchasing	Environmental awareness, social values, perceived benefits (Ajzen, 1991; Thøgersen & Schrader, 2012)	Environmental concern is a primary motivator; perceived	Highlights the role of perceived authenticity in sustainability

		authenticity is crucial	
Barriers to Sustainable Consumption	High costs, limited availability, lack of information (Guagnano, Stern, & Dietz, 1995)	High costs are a barrier, but trust can mitigate cost concerns	Introduces the interdependence between cost and trust
Role of Marketing and Trust	Importance of clear marketing strategies (Ottman, Stafford, & Hartman, 2006)	Trust is built through transparency and evidence-based claims	Advances understanding of trust-building in sustainability marketing

Table 9 summarizes key insights from literature compared with findings of this research. The table has indicated original contributions made by this study particularly on perceived authenticity, interaction between cost and trust as well as specific mechanisms of trust building in sustainability marketing.

5.1.5 Relationship Between Perceptions and Purchasing Behaviour

Third objective is to examine how sustainable consumption beliefs affect actual purchase decisions. The literature has widely documented an attitude-behaviour gap where a favourable attitude towards sustainability does not always culminate into a corresponding behaviour (Vermeir & Verbeke 2006). A number of barriers have been shown to be responsible for this discrepancy such as perceived high cost of sustainability related products, unavailability among others; or even low confidence levels in sustainability claims.

These findings confirmed the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap in Indian textile market and provided new insights into the moderating role of trust. In particular, the study discovered that while many consumers express positive attitudes towards sustainability, their actual buying behaviour depends on their trust in sustainability claims made by brands.

Table 10-Relationship Between Perceptions and Behaviour

Relationship Aspect	Literature Review Insights	Research Findings
Attitude-Behaviour Gap	Well-documented across various markets	Confirmed, but trust is a critical moderating factor
Influence of Trust	Important, especially in brand perception	Trust in sustainability claims found to be pivotal in purchase decisions
Role of Marketing	Can bridge the gap through clear messaging	Confirmed, with emphasis on transparency and local relevance

As shown in this table, literature correctly acknowledge that attitude-behaviour gap is a big problem; however, research findings highlight that trust is a critical factor in bridging such a gap. For instance, through this study it was established that consumer can only make sustainable purchases if they are convinced that the brand is genuinely committed to practicing sustainability rather than greenwashing. This means transparency should be emphasized during marketing and companies must create long-term relationships based on trust with buyers.

The results also imply that marketing strategies designed to be appropriate for local cultures and values of consumers are effective at reducing the attitude-behaviour gap. This is consistent with a body of literature that calls for context-sensitive approaches to sustainability marketing, but it goes further by giving specific illustrations of how such strategies can be applied in the Indian market.

5.2 Managerial Implications of the Research

The implications for managers in the Indian textile industry are significant as they seek to understand how the consumer landscape is changing with a noticeable shift towards sustainability as one of the key drivers influencing purchase decisions. This study's main question is: "So what?" What do these findings mean for businesses operating in this sector, and how can they leverage this knowledge to enhance their competitive advantage? Thus, it addresses these issues by discussing practical lessons companies can learn from its research.

5.2.1 Enhancing Consumer Trust

Among the most important discoveries made in this research is that trust can be a critical factor in bridging the gap between attitudes and behaviours among Indian customers. This means that although consumers are increasingly aware of sustainability issues and hold positive attitudes towards them, their actual buying

behaviours are largely influenced by how much they trust brands' claims on sustainability. It brings to the fore the transparency and authenticity that managers need to imbibe in their sustainability initiatives.

It is important for firms to ensure that they communicate clearly and honestly about their sustainability practices, with verifiable data supporting these claims. Perhaps, they could do this through getting certified by recognized certifying bodies such as GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) or Fair-Trade Certifications which will improve upon credibility. Similarly, being transparent about all steps of supply chain from sourcing raw materials to manufacturing processes will help build and retain consumer confidence. Brands without discernible commitment to genuine sustainable practices may be tagged greenwashing thereby resulting in customer outrage hence loss of market share.

5.2.2 Cultural Values and Social Influences in Marketing Strategies

The study also revealed that cultural values and peer influence are major drivers of buying decisions in the Indian textile sector. This points out, therefore, that tailoring marketing strategies to fit local cultural norms and social dynamics would be profitable for firms. For example; the fact that sustainable products align with traditional values of responsibility and community welfare may interest consumers who prioritize these aspects.

Secondly, using targeted marketing campaigns through social influences such as community leaders, influencers or peer networks can drive consumer behavior. Brands could employ local influencers who have established trust within their respective communities to endorse their sustainable merchandise thereby, taking advantage of the strong social power influencing purchasing decisions. Consequently, this move not only connects the brand with cultural values but also makes it relevant and appealing to specific consumer segments.

5.2.3 Addressing Price Sensitivity

Price has been confirmed by this study as still a prevailing factor that influence customer's decision on making purchase. However, the study also brought out that buyers can pay more for environmentally conscious products if they bring about viable solutions. The point here is about managers finding better and clearer ways of explaining the advantages of sustainable products in terms of not only the environment but also durability, quality, and long-term savings.

Consumer education is very essential in this aspect. Organizations should undertake campaigns that enlighten consumers on the actual cost of unsustainable practices as well as the far-reaching gains of buying sustainable commodities. This shift from initial costs to overall value provides opportunity for companies to match premium prices charged against green products with consumers' acceptance.

5.2.4 Integrating Sustainability into Corporate Strategy

This research has important implications for managers suggesting that they should make sustainability a part and parcel of their firm's main business strategy rather than just an add on activity. The findings

indicate that sustainability must form an integral part of brand identity so as to influence all other areas within the organization; ranging from product development up to marketing and customer relationships.

Concerning management, corporate executives should strive to introduce a holistic approach towards sustainability by incorporating environmental, social, and economic aspects into their company's missions, visions and day-to-day operations. Such actions might be delineated through setting targetable goals on sustainability plus regular disclosure mechanisms as well as synching business activities with those objectives.

5.3 Limitations of the research

This study has limitations also. It is important to recognize these limitations in order to appreciate the setting under which research conclusions were made and for a balanced view of the contribution of the study.

5.3.1 Sample Size and Demographics

One major limitation of this research was the issue of sample size and its demographic composition. The research, though extensive in approach, was limited to a relatively small and specific sample group only. Efforts had been made to include participants from diverse socio-economic backgrounds; however, the sample may not capture all aspects of India's population that is very broad and varied. Indian society has diverse income groups, educational qualifications and cultural influences which lead to significant variation in consumer behaviour across different regions. However, due to a relatively small number of respondents, this diversity could not be fully expressed which could limit generalization.

5.3.2 Methodological Constraints

The methodology of this study was robust but with limitations. Interviews and focus groups formed the mainstay qualitative methods that were used to have a deep understanding about customer feelings and behaviours. A point not to be forgotten is that qualitative data gives more details though it is also subjective meaning its interpretation depends on the researcher's perspective. This can introduce some bias in the results thereby impacting their reliability as well as validity.

5.3.3 Temporal Limitations

Another limitation is that the research had a limited time frame. Besides, consumer perceptions and behaviors towards sustainability are not static but change over time due to changed socio-economic conditions, environmental awareness, and market dynamics among others. This means that the findings of this study only reflect consumer views at a particular point in time, which may be different in the future.

Additionally, this research failed to fully investigate other exogenous shocks such as COVID-19 pandemic which had significant impacts on global consumer behavior. COVID-19 has made people more conscious of issues relating to sustainability but it also brought economic woes that can either affect their purchasing power or decisions.

5.3.4 Contextual and Cultural Limitations

Lastly, these findings cannot be easily applicable to other industry sectors or geographical areas since they are contextual. There are unique features in the Indian Textile Industry like deep cultural roots and importance of textiles in society. These factors may limit this study's generalizability to markets outside India because there could be absence of some of them for example when specifically discussing about cultural influences; Indian culture varies greatly from region to region within India and globally too

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

There are some limitations as identified in the previous section which can be addressed by future research to build on this study and fill in these gaps. These recommendations aim to develop a better understanding of how consumers perceive sustainability and its impact on the choice of products, mostly in the context of Indian textile industry.

5.4.1 Expanding the Sample Size and Diversity

One of the main recommendations for future research is increasing sample size and ensuring more participants' representation with diversity. This implies that the current study cannot adequately account for all Indians since it fails to cover all social classes, different educational backgrounds or geographic locations proved earlier. Future research should be directed towards having a wider representative sample encompassing consumers from various regions across India including rural areas where information about sustainability may not reach them.

Other studies may examine variances in customer conduct among diverse demographic groups such as age brackets, sex and income categories. Consequently, such investigation will bring out detailed findings on how different variables influence perception regarding sustainability and purchasing decisions among distinct groups within consumer market.

5.4.2 Longitudinal Studies

Another suggestion would be to carry out longitudinal research that observe changing patterns of consumer attitudes and behaviors over time. Moreover, consumer attitudes towards sustainability are not static; they can change depending on a number of factors like economic conditions, environmental consciousness or events like the COVID-19 pandemic as mentioned in the limitations. This would provide an opportunity for researchers to understand better how these variables shape up with respect to time thereby leading them into more flexible understanding about relationship between buying decisions and perceptions about sustainability.

5.4.3 Cross-Cultural and Cross-Industry Comparisons

Sustainability perceptions' influence among different cultures and industries could be a novel area for future research. The present investigation centered on the Indian textile industry, which may have unique characteristics not found elsewhere. Through cross-cultural comparisons, universal factors underlying

sustainable purchasing decisions could be identified as well as those that are specific to culture in certain areas.

Also, in other sectors like food, electronics or automotive industries, there is the possibility of getting consumers' perception about sustainability through making comparison across fields. Examining this aspect would show what each industry goes through as far as encouraging sustainable consumer behavior is concerned thus helping businesses that operate at varied markets.

5.4.4 Exploring the Role of Technology and Digital Platforms

Finally, researchers might also want to explore how technology and digital platforms shape consumers' understanding of sustainability. Today's customers can access a large amount of information on products and brands thanks to e-commerce and social media; hence their purchasing choices can be influenced by these channels. In the forthcoming studies it would be very useful to find out whether consumer trust in sustainability claims and other ecolabels can be affected by digital platforms including social media online reviews or even applications used for promoting sustainable living.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?
2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?
3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?
4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?
5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?
6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?
7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?
8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?
9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?
10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?
11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?
13. Thank you for your time and insights. How do you feel about participating in this study?

Appendix B – Interview Transcript 1

Interview number	1
Venue	In person
Interviewee	Interviewee 1

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?

Interviewee: I'm XXX, currently pursuing my MSc in Sustainable Development with a focus on Agri-Food. My interest in textile products grew alongside my studies, particularly when I realized the significant environmental impact of the fashion and textile industry. I'm passionate about promoting sustainability in all sectors, including textiles, because of its deep connection to environmental health, ethical labour practices, and resource conservation.

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability in textiles, to me, means creating and consuming products in a way that minimizes harm to the environment and ensures fairness across the supply chain. This includes using eco-friendly materials, reducing waste, conserving water and energy, and ensuring fair wages and working conditions for everyone involved in the production process.

3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?

Interviewee: It's extremely important. As someone studying sustainable development, I feel a strong responsibility to practice what I preach. I try to make conscious decisions by choosing products that are sustainably sourced and produced, even if it means spending a bit more or doing additional research.

4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?

Interviewee: I look at the materials used, the manufacturing processes, and the company's overall environmental policies. Organic cotton, recycled fabrics, and dyes that don't harm the environment are important. I also consider certifications like Fair Trade, GOTS, and Blue sign, which ensure that products meet high sustainability standards.

5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?

Interviewee: I rely on a combination of research from reliable online sources, company reports, and certification labels. Academic articles and sustainable fashion blogs also help me stay informed. Sometimes, I even reach out directly to companies for more information.

6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?

Interviewee: Yes, several times. If I find out that a brand is engaging in greenwashing or if their sustainability claims aren't backed by certifications or transparent data, I choose not to buy from them. My choices are driven by the desire to support brands that genuinely care about the planet and people.

7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The biggest barrier is often the price. Sustainable products tend to be more expensive, which isn't always feasible for students like me. Additionally, there's still limited availability, especially in local markets, which makes access to these products a challenge.

8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The availability is growing, but it's still not where it needs to be, especially in regions outside major urban centres. Pricing is a significant issue. While I understand the reasons behind higher prices, it makes sustainable products less accessible to a broader population, which could hinder the movement's growth.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?

Interviewee: Companies need to invest more in sustainable raw materials and innovative production processes that reduce environmental impact. Transparency is key—brands should openly share their supply chain practices. Additionally, making sustainable products more affordable through economies of scale could help expand their reach.

10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?

Interviewee: There's room for improvement. While some companies do a great job of marketing their sustainable products, others are vague and risk misleading consumers with greenwashing. Clear, honest communication is crucial. I think brands need to educate consumers more on why sustainability matters, rather than just labelling products as 'green' or 'eco-friendly.'

11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?

Interviewee: I'm cautious. There's a lot of greenwashing in the industry, so I don't take claims at face value. I look for third-party certifications and detailed explanations of what a brand is doing to be sustainable. Trust is earned through transparency and consistency in actions, not just marketing.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?

Interviewee: I'd like to see a greater emphasis on circular fashion—where products are designed with the end of their life cycle in mind, so they can be easily recycled or upcycled. Also, consumer education is vital. The more people understand the impact of their choices, the more they can drive the demand for sustainable options.

Appendix C – Interview Transcript 2

Interview number	2
Venue	Zoom
Interviewee	Interviewee 2

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?

Interviewee: I'm XXX, and I work as a medical coder in India. I've always had an interest in fashion and textiles, but in recent years, I've become more conscious of the impact my purchases have on the environment. I'm now more focused on finding sustainable options whenever possible.

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?

Interviewee: For me, sustainability in textiles means choosing products that are made from natural or recycled materials and produced in a way that doesn't harm the environment or exploit workers. It's about ensuring that the products I buy are not contributing to pollution or unethical labour practices.

3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability is quite important, but I also have to consider practicality and affordability. I try to prioritize sustainable options, but sometimes, it's not always possible due to cost or availability.

4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?

Interviewee: I look at whether the product is made from organic or recycled materials and if the brand is transparent about its manufacturing processes. I also check for certifications like Fair Trade or organic labels to ensure that the products meet certain standards.

5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?

Interviewee: I usually do online research, read reviews, and check the brand's website for information about their sustainability practices. I also follow a few sustainable fashion influencers who recommend brands and products that align with my values.

6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?

Interviewee: Yes, I have. For example, if I find out that a brand, I was planning to buy from is involved in unethical labour practices or uses harmful chemicals, I'll avoid purchasing from them. It's important to me that my purchases don't contribute to environmental damage or exploitation.

7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The main barriers are definitely cost and availability. Sustainable products can be quite expensive, and they're not always available in local stores, especially in smaller towns in India. This makes it challenging to consistently buy sustainable products.

8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: I think there's a lot of room for improvement. While there are more options now than there were a few years ago, sustainable products are still relatively expensive and hard to find in many areas. More affordable and widely available options would encourage more people to make sustainable choices.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?

Interviewee: Textile companies should focus on reducing their environmental footprint by using eco-friendly materials and processes. They should also work on making their products more affordable without compromising on sustainability. Additionally, greater transparency about their supply chains would help build trust with consumers.

10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?

Interviewee: Some marketing strategies are effective, but others can be misleading. I've noticed a lot of greenwashing, where companies claim to be sustainable without backing it up with real action. Effective marketing should focus on educating consumers about why sustainability matters and what the company is doing to make a positive impact.

11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?

Interviewee: I'm sceptical about many claims. There's so much greenwashing in the industry that it's hard to know which brands are genuinely sustainable. I trust brands that are transparent and have certifications from reputable organizations.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?

Interviewee: I think there needs to be more education for consumers about the importance of sustainability in textiles. Many people don't realize the impact their clothing choices have on the environment, and if more were aware, they might be willing to pay a bit more for sustainable options.

Appendix D – Interview Transcript 3

Interview number	3
Venue	In person
Interviewee	Interviewee 3

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?

Interviewee: I'm XXX, a cardiac physiologist working at the University of Galway, originally from India. My interest in textiles is both practical and cultural. I've always loved traditional Indian textiles, but now I'm also very conscious of how the choices I make affect the environment and society.

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability means ensuring that the textiles I buy and use are produced in a way that minimizes environmental harm and supports fair labor practices. It's about being mindful of the entire lifecycle of the product—from raw materials to disposal—and choosing options that are better for the planet and people.

3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability is very important to me. I try to make sure that the clothes and textiles I purchase are from brands that prioritize ethical and sustainable practices. It's a way of aligning my values with my consumption habits.

4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?

Interviewee: I consider the materials used, such as organic cotton or recycled fibers, and whether the brand has certifications like Fair Trade or GOTS. I also look at the production methods—whether they use low-impact dyes, for example—and the company's overall commitment to sustainability.

5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?

Interviewee: I usually rely on brand websites, sustainability reports, and third-party certifications. I also follow a few sustainable fashion platforms and blogs that provide in-depth reviews and analyses of different brands' sustainability practices.

6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?

Interviewee: Yes, I've changed my mind on several occasions. For example, I've stopped buying from brands that were found to be involved in unethical labour practices or didn't meet environmental standards. It's important to me that my purchases align with my ethical beliefs.

7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The main barrier is cost. Sustainable products often come at a premium, which can be a challenge. Availability is also an issue, especially in local stores where sustainable options are limited. This sometimes forces me to shop online, which isn't always ideal.

8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: Availability has improved over the years, but it's still not where it should be. Pricing is a major concern because it limits who can afford to buy sustainably. If companies could find ways to lower costs, it would make a big difference in accessibility.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?

Interviewee: Companies could start by being more transparent about their supply chains and the sustainability of their materials. They should also invest in more sustainable production methods and make an effort to reduce costs so that sustainable products are accessible to a wider audience. Additionally, adopting circular fashion models—where products are designed to be reused or recycled—would be a huge step forward.

10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?

Interviewee: I think some brands do a good job, but overall, there's a lot of room for improvement. Too many companies rely on vague claims without providing concrete information. Marketing should focus on educating consumers about why sustainability is important and how the brand is making a genuine effort to be responsible.

11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?

Interviewee: I'm cautious. Many brands make claims that aren't backed by solid evidence, so I tend to trust only those that are transparent and have credible certifications. It's easy to be misled by greenwashing, so I do my research before making a purchase.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?

Interviewee: I think we need to shift towards a mindset of consuming less but consuming better. The textile industry has a huge impact on the environment, and if more people were aware of this, they might choose to invest in fewer, higher-quality items that last longer and have less environmental impact.

Appendix E – Interview Transcript 4

Interview number	4
Venue	Zoom
Interviewee	Interviewee 4

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?

Interviewee: My name is XXX, and I work as a sales associate in a textile company in India. Being in the industry, I've developed a strong interest in the various aspects of textiles, especially the growing trend of sustainability. I see firsthand how consumer preferences are shifting towards more eco-friendly products, and that's something I'm very interested in.

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability in textiles means creating products that have minimal environmental impact and are produced ethically. It's about using materials and processes that are not only good for the planet but also for the people involved in making the products. It's a balance between quality, ethics, and environmental responsibility.

3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?

Interviewee: For me, sustainability is quite important, both personally and professionally. As someone working in the textile industry, I'm aware of the environmental impact of textiles, so I try to choose products that are sustainable. It's also something customers are increasingly asking about, so it's important to be informed.

4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?

Interviewee: I consider the materials used—whether they are organic or recycled—and the production processes. I also look at the company's overall commitment to sustainability, including their policies on waste reduction, water usage, and labour practices. Certifications like GOTS or Fair Trade are also key indicators for me.

5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?

Interviewee: I get a lot of information from the industry itself—trade shows, supplier meetings, and industry reports. I also follow various sustainability forums and websites to stay updated on new developments and certifications in the field.

6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?

Interviewee: Yes, I have. For instance, if I find out that a product or brand is not as sustainable as it claims, I might choose not to purchase it. As a consumer and someone in the industry, I feel it's important to support brands that are genuinely making an effort to be sustainable.

7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The main barriers are cost and availability. Sustainable textiles can be more expensive, and they're not always easy to find, especially in certain markets. Additionally, there's sometimes a lack of clear information about how sustainable a product really is.

8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: Availability is improving, but it's still not as widespread as it needs to be. Pricing is a big issue—sustainable products tend to be more expensive, which can be a deterrent for many consumers. There's a need for more affordable options to make sustainable products accessible to a wider audience.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices? Interviewee: Companies should focus on transparency and educating consumers about why sustainability matters. They should also invest in research and development to find ways to make sustainable products more affordable. Additionally, adopting a circular economy model—where products are designed for reuse and recycling—could greatly improve sustainability.

10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?

Interviewee: Some companies do a good job, but overall, the marketing strategies can be hit or miss. There's a lot of greenwashing out there, where companies make vague or misleading claims about sustainability. Effective marketing should be clear, honest, and informative, helping consumers make truly informed decisions.

11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not? Interviewee: I'm sceptical of some claims, especially when they aren't backed by certifications or detailed information. There's a lot of greenwashing in the industry, so I prefer to rely on brands that are transparent and have a strong track record of sustainability.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?

Interviewee: I think the industry is moving in the right direction, but there's still a long way to go. More transparency, better pricing, and a stronger commitment to ethical practices are needed. Consumers also have a role to play by demanding more sustainable options and supporting companies that are doing things right.

Appendix F – Interview Transcript 5

Interview number	5
Venue	Zoom
Interviewee	Interviewee 5

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your interest in textile products?

Interviewee: I'm XXX, a student in India, and I've always been interested in fashion and textiles. Over the years, I've become very conscious of the impact of my choices on the environment, so I make it a point to buy sustainable products whenever possible. It's important to me that what I wear reflects my values.

2. Can you describe what sustainability means to you in the context of textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability in textiles means choosing products that are made with respect for the environment and the people who produce them. It's about using natural, organic, or recycled materials, ensuring fair labour practices, and minimizing waste and pollution throughout the product's lifecycle.

3. How important is sustainability when you are purchasing textile products?

Interviewee: Sustainability is very important to me. I try to make sure that everything I buy, from clothes to home textiles, is as sustainable as possible. I believe that every purchase is a vote for the kind of world I want to live in, so I take it seriously.

4. What specific sustainability factors do you consider when buying textiles?

Interviewee: I look for organic or recycled materials, and I check if the product is made in a way that reduces environmental impact, like using less water or avoiding harmful chemicals. I also consider the brand's ethics—whether they treat their workers fairly and if they're transparent about their supply chain.

5. How do you gather information about the sustainability of textile products?

Interviewee: I do a lot of research online, checking brand websites, looking for certifications, and reading reviews. I also follow sustainable fashion blogs and social media accounts that highlight eco-friendly brands and products.

6. Have you ever changed your purchase decision based on a product's sustainability credentials? Can you explain why?

Interviewee: Yes, many times. For example, I've decided against buying from certain brands that don't meet my sustainability standards, even if I liked their products. I believe it's important to support brands that are genuinely committed to sustainability, so I'm willing to change my decisions based on that.

7. What are the main barriers you face when trying to purchase sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: The main barrier is usually price. Sustainable products tend to be more expensive, which can be challenging on a student budget. Availability is also an issue, as not all stores carry sustainable options, especially in smaller cities.

8. How do you feel about the availability and pricing of sustainable textile products?

Interviewee: Availability has improved, but it's still not as widespread as it should be. Pricing is a major concern—it's difficult to buy sustainably when the products are so expensive. I wish more affordable options were available, so more people could make sustainable choices.

9. Can you suggest ways textile companies could improve their sustainability practices?

Interviewee: Companies need to be more transparent about their sustainability practices and work on making their products more affordable. They should also invest in innovations that reduce environmental impact and promote fair labor practices throughout their supply chains. Education is key—companies should help consumers understand why sustainability matters.

10. What do you think about the current marketing strategies for sustainable textiles? Are they effective?

Interviewee: Some strategies are effective, but others fall short. I often see brands making vague claims without backing them up with facts or certifications. Marketing needs to be clear and honest, focusing on educating consumers rather than just trying to sell products.

11. Do you trust the sustainability claims made by textile companies? Why or why not?

Interviewee: I'm careful about trusting claims. There's a lot of greenwashing out there, so I look for certifications and detailed information before believing a brand's sustainability claims. I trust brands that are transparent and provide evidence of their practices.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about your views on sustainability in the textile industry?

Interviewee: I think the industry is moving in the right direction, but we need more accessible and affordable sustainable options. Consumer awareness is growing, and it's important for companies to meet that demand with genuine, transparent practices. Everyone has a role to play in making the industry more sustainable, from consumers to companies.

