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The Relationship between Sustainable Fashion Awareness, Attitude and Behaviour of Apparel Consumers in Lagos, Nigeria

Bukola Olamidun Sowemimo*✉, Adetoun Adedotun Amubode, Adijat Motunrayo Ariyo, Comfort Ibironke Sodiya

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Correspondence (*)
Name: Bukola O. Sowemimo

Affiliation: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Email:sowemimobo@funaab.edu.ng

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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigated the relationship between sustainable fashion awareness, attitude and behaviour of apparel consumers in Lagos State.

Methodology/Design: This study adopted a mixed-method research design that involves the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data. Convenience sampling was employed to select 206 apparel consumers for the survey and 12 consumers for the qualitative aspect. A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect data. The quantitative data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, Chi-square and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC). Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data.

Findings: Results revealed that only about one-third (36.9%) of the consumers have heard of "sustainable/green fashion" before. Most of the apparel consumers have a moderate ($\bar{x}$ = 2.21) level of awareness about sustainable fashion, and their attitude towards sustainable fashion is poor/unfavourable ($\bar{x}$ = 1.78). However, consumers' sustainable fashion behaviour (SFB) was found to be moderately positive ($\bar{x}$= 2.65). Chi-square results showed a significant ($p<0.05$) association between the consumers' occupational status ($\chi 2=18.00$, df=5) and their SFB. Correlation results showed a negative and significant ($p<0.05$) relationship between consumers' age (r = -0.15) and their SFB. Also, a significant ($p<0.00$) relationship was seen between consumers' sustainable fashion awareness (r = 0.42) and SFB.

Practical and Social Implications: This study provided insight into the current state of sustainability consciousness of an important player in the fashion industry (consumers), aiming to promote a culture of sustainable apparel consumption, especially now that consumers are following the fashion trends and are a lot more interested in identifying themselves with their dressing.

Originality: Studies about sustainable fashion have been gaining attention for over a decade now, and it has been carried out in different parts of the world. However, there are few published data or studies about the awareness, attitude and behaviour of apparel consumers in Lagos, Nigeria, in the context of sustainable fashion. Hence, this study has been able to make available useful data that was not easily accessible in the field of sustainable fashion.

Keywords
Consumers, attitude, awareness, behaviour, sustainable fashion, sustainability

1 | INTRODUCTION

In the fashion industry, every step of the process considers sustainability, including design concepts, textiles and material development, marketing, and raising customer ethical awareness (Gong, 2014). Although it has been argued that sustainable development and fashion concepts frequently contradict. Since these two ideas are fundamentally in conflict, the notion of sustainable fashion is still unclear, and there is much discussion about whether the sustainability philosophy can be applied to the fashion

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business (Hur & Cassidy, 2019). According to Dhir et al. (2021), being "fashionable" frequently takes precedence over being ethical and sustainability-conscious. This has been a major worry for several relevant entities in the textile and clothing industry. For some years now, studies such as Islam and Khan (2014) have suggested that the adoption of sustainability initiatives has increased dramatically as a result of growing awareness of the social and environmental problems related to the fashion industry. Increasing the amount of used clothing and shoes that are gathered and resold, adopting design methods for cyclability, and raising the proportion of clothing and shoes produced from recycled materials are some of the activities towards achieving sustainability in the fashion industry (Wu & Li, 2019). In the context of textiles and the circular economy, cyclability emphasises designing materials that can be easily disassembled, reused, or recycled at the end of their life cycle, thereby minimising waste and resource depletion (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Fletcher (2013) defines sustainable fashion (SF) as buying well-crafted, long-lasting clothing, respecting the ethical treatment of people, animals, and the environment, and encouraging thoughtful consumption by learning about the origins of our clothing and the people who made it.

A growing trend in fashion has been cheap, fast fashion since the 1960s, when mass production first emerged. With fast fashion, customers can update their wardrobes with little financial outlay since new trends are regularly released at discounted rates (Cline, 2012). However, Haines (2017) pointed out that these advantages also have a fair share of detrimental side effects on people and ecosystems globally. Scholars and activists have suggested sustainable fashion as an alternative to fast fashion, which is sustained partly by slower or less frequent consumption (Cline, 2012; Fletcher, 2013). According to critics of "fast fashion," waste in the fashion sector has increased due to overconsumption (Fletcher, 2013; Loker, 2008). Tokatli (2008), however, said that "fast fashion," or inexpensive clothing reflecting quickly changing patterns, would be the most appealing category of clothing. However, a growing number of blogs, books, and business reports are promoting "sustainable fashion" as a way to offset the negative consequences of "fast fashion" (Gwilt & Rissanen, 2011).

Beyond overcrowding closets, Western societies' growing consumption of cheap, fast fashion is having pervasive, negative effects on society and the environment, including unequal pay, unfavourable working conditions, worker and consumer exploitation, water and air pollution, depletion of natural resources and ecosystems, and excessive waste (Haines, 2017; Cline, 2012; Niinimäki, 2010). Over time, customers in developed nations have changed and gained knowledge about the materials and production process. As a result, they are now more inclined to update their wardrobes with value-added items and make socially conscious purchases (Khandual & Pradhan, 2018). According to Information Resources, Inc. (IRI), around 50% of American consumers take sustainability into account when deciding which brands to purchase or which stores to visit. Organic development (a natural, gradual, and internally driven process of growth or change, rather than one that is externally imposed or rapidly engineered), environmentally friendly ingredients, environmentally friendly packaging, and treating suppliers and staff fairly are some of these considerations (Textile World, 2008). Campaigns, scientists, government organisations and policymakers have attempted to raise awareness of the negative effects of fast fashion in response to society's slow acceptance of sustainable fashion goods (Niinimäki, 2013). More recent studies have perceived that consumers now display better sustainable choices and behaviour in the consumption of fashion products. For instance, Faludi (2025) observes that sustainability as a marketing strategy has shifted consumer perceptions, purchasing decisions, and behaviours over time. Similarly, Hageman et al. (2024) find that female consumers are increasingly aware of and influenced by the sustainable initiatives of fast-fashion companies, thereby affecting their attitudes and purchasing behaviours. Furthermore, research by Siregar et al. (2023) highlights that Gen Z consumers actively engage with social media platforms to make sustainable fashion choices, demonstrating a shift towards more sustainable consumption patterns.

Despite the numerous studies that have suggested a positive shift among Western consumers, few studies have reported the sustainable fashion behaviour of consumers in developing countries such as Nigeria. Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021) note that while sustainable fashion consumption has been extensively studied in developed nations, there is a scarcity of research focusing on developing countries, particularly in regions like Africa. This gap is concerning, given the rapid growth of the fashion market in these regions and their unique socio-economic and cultural contexts. Given that the market for sustainable fashion is expanding quickly due to rising consumer spending and economic growth, studies on this topic in this region are quite important. According to the report of the European Environment Agency (2025), the fast fashion industry is responsible for around 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and its practices have a greater impact on the environment in developing nations, where a

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large portion of the clothing production takes place. Hence, attention to the sustainable consumption of fashion apparel products is of the essence at this time, when the world is experiencing diverse environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of examining consumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviours together, as people cannot exhibit behaviours that surpass their level of awareness, and their actions are largely guided by what they know and understand. Park and Lin (2020) argued that consumer behaviour towards sustainable fashion cannot be fully understood without also investigating their level of awareness and attitudes. Without adequate knowledge or awareness of an issue, people are unlikely to modify their behaviour in a meaningful or positive way. Sowemimo and Amubode (2025) perceived awareness as a process of accepting and internalising external information, which can be measured using various variables depending on the type of information. Furthermore, Joung and Park-Poaps (2013) suggested that the relationship between consumer attitudes and behaviours towards eco-friendly apparel is influenced by their knowledge and awareness of sustainability issues. Understanding the interplay between awareness, attitude, and behaviour is crucial for developing effective sustainability initiatives in the fashion industry. This connection between awareness, attitude and behaviour, particularly in areas like sustainable fashion consumption, suggests that enhancing knowledge is a critical step toward promoting more responsible actions.

1.1| Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to assess the relationship between sustainable fashion (SF) awareness, attitude and behaviour of apparel consumers in Lagos State. The specific objectives of this study were to;

1. Determine the awareness of the consumers about sustainable fashion.
2. Determine the attitude of the consumers towards sustainable fashion.
3. Evaluate the sustainable fashion behaviour of the respondents.

1.2| Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study were formulated based on the conceptual model below;

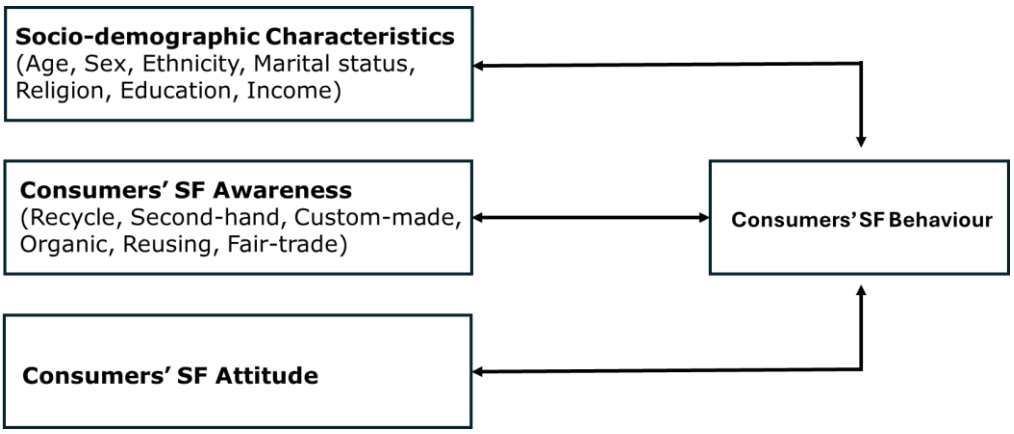


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the study

H01: There is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their sustainable fashion behaviour.

H02: There is no significant relationship between the sustainable fashion awareness, attitude and the sustainable fashion behaviour of consumers.

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2 | METHODOLOGY

2.1| Research Design

This study made use of an explanatory sequential design, a mixed-method research design that involves the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data. The design was adopted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sustainable fashion awareness, attitude, and behaviour of apparel consumers in Lagos, Nigeria. In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires to identify patterns and relationships among key variables. The second phase involved qualitative interviews, conducted to further explain and elaborate on the quantitative findings. Integration of both data sets occurred during interpretation, where qualitative insights were used to deepen and contextualise the statistical results. The sequential combination of both methods ensured that the findings were both statistically reliable and contextually meaningful.

2.2| Study Area

The study was carried out in Lagos State in the southwest of Nigeria. One of the most famous cities in Nigeria is Lagos; it has a thriving and expanding central business district, and this is because of the city's high population and sociality.

2.3| Population for the Study

The population for this study was the customers of selected registered Fashion brands in Lagos. The selected brands are registered under the Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria and the Apparels and Accessories Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, which reportedly have approximately 150 and 50 active members, respectively. This decision to select only registered brands with recognised fashion associations was made to facilitate ease of access to participants and to ensure the availability of a clearly defined population from which to draw reliable data. Registered brands were considered more organised and traceable, allowing for effective communication and data collection. This study targeted two consumers from each of the selected brands. The population for this study comprised consumers of apparel manufacturers who were previously interviewed as part of a broader research project. Based on this, the population for this study consists of 400 customers of registered fashion brands.

2.4| Method for Data Collection

Two (2) phases of data collection were implemented; the first phase adopted a survey method; the quantitative data collected were suitable to contribute widespread findings on the sustainable fashion awareness, attitude and behaviour of apparel consumers since surveys are well-established methods of collecting a large amount of data to provide more generalizable findings. In the second phase, the study focused on collecting data qualitatively from apparel consumers after the survey had been concluded. The interview guide also had questions about awareness, attitude and behaviour of the participants towards sustainable fashion. This was in the quest to provide more insight and additional explanation for the quantitative data.

2.5| Sampling Technique

Respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique based on the availability of customers of the fashion brands who were willing to take part in the study. Two customers of randomly selected fashion apparel brands were selected for the survey. The questionnaire was sent to the respondents via a Google Form link. However, in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face with conveniently selected consumers of the brands.

2.6| Sample Size

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane (1973) formula [N / (1 + N * (e^2))], with a 5% margin of error, Where N= Population of the study; n = sample and e = level of precision (+5) =0.05. However, to account for potential non-responses or incomplete questionnaires, a total of 206 consumers were selected for the survey. Additionally, twelve (12) consumers participated in the qualitative phase of the study through in-depth interviews. This number is sufficient to achieve data

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saturation, allowing for the exploration of diverse consumer perspectives while maintaining manageable data for thorough analysis (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

2.7| Instrument for Data Collection

Structured questionnaires were used for the survey. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections so as to address the objectives of the study. Section A contained questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, gender, marital status, ethnicity, religion, level of education, years of experience and monthly income. The questions in this section were self-structured. Section B measured respondents' awareness about sustainable fashion; the section contained statements that were adapted from the study of Shen et al. (2013), and the scale used was 'not at all aware, slightly aware, moderately aware and very aware'. Section C determined respondents' attitudes towards sustainable fashion; the statements in the section were formulated but guided by the study of Hur and Cassidy (2019). Section D investigated respondents' sustainable fashion behaviour. The questions were adapted from the instrument of Soyer and Dittrich (2021).

Furthermore, in the second phase of the study, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from the consumers. The questions in the interview guide were used to elicit information regarding the awareness, attitude and behaviour of the participants and the objectives of the study were fully considered in formulating questions for the interview guide. Questions were asked in a more practical, relatable way so participants could understand them. Some of the interview guide questions were adapted from Bondarev (2021) and Business Victoria (2022).

2.8| Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

The instrument underwent face and content validity by experts in the field. Also, the reliability test for the instrument was determined using the test-retest method. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.88, 0.73, and 0.75 were derived for the awareness, attitude, and behaviour sections, respectively. This adjudged the instrument as being reliable.

2.9| Data Analysis

Descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. The study hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square test and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PMCC). To further understand the results, the data analysed descriptively were categorised using the mean values. The four-point scale was categorised and interpreted as follows: a mean score of 1.00–2.00 indicated low awareness or an unfavourable attitude; 2.01–3.00 represented moderate awareness or a neutral/indifferent attitude; while 3.01–4.00 denoted high awareness or a favourable attitude. Similarly, the five-point scale was interpreted such that scores between 1.00–2.33 reflected low practice or negative behaviour; 2.34–3.67 indicated moderate practice or neutral behaviour; and 3.68–5.00 signified high practice or positive behaviour. The qualitative data collected through interviews were analysed using manual thematic content analysis, a widely accepted method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The process began with the verbatim transcription of all recorded interviews to ensure accuracy and familiarity with the participants' responses. Each transcript was then read multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and to begin the process of open coding, where key phrases, ideas, and expressions relevant to the research objectives were highlighted.

Codes were carefully reviewed and grouped into categories, which were subsequently refined into broader themes that captured the underlying meanings and patterns across the dataset. The themes were developed inductively, allowing the data to speak for itself rather than fitting it into pre-existing frameworks. This manual approach, although time-intensive, allowed for deeper engagement with the data and ensured that emerging insights were grounded in participants' authentic experiences and perspectives. The thematic content analysis provided a structured yet flexible method to interpret consumer responses, offering a rich, contextual understanding that complemented the quantitative findings of the study.

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3 | RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1| Socio-demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

3.1.1| Survey Respondents

The results revealed that the mean age of consumers in the study was 35 years, with most respondents (91.3%) below 46 years and only 8.7% above 55 years, indicating that the majority belonged to Generation Y, which is a group widely recognized for its high fashion consciousness and strong awareness of sustainability issues (Williams & Page, 2011; Colucci & Scarpi, 2013; Hjelmgren et al., 2014). This suggests that the sample comprised consumers likely to possess considerable interest and knowledge about fashion and sustainable practices. In terms of sex, 60.2% of the respondents were female, while 39.8% were male, supporting the notion that women tend to show greater concern for and understanding of fashion-related issues. Ethnically, most respondents (81.3%) were Yoruba, with 6.3% Igbo and 12.1% from other ethnic groups, reflecting the dominant ethnic composition of the study area. Regarding marital status, 64.1% were married, 6.3% single, and 12.1% divorced, indicating that a majority of respondents had spouses, which may influence their clothing and fashion choices. Almost all participants (90.3%) identified as Christians, while 9.7% were Muslims, showing limited religious diversity in the sample. In terms of education, 40.8% held bachelor's degrees and 51.9% held postgraduate qualifications, implying that respondents were well-educated and capable of comprehending the survey questions, which may have contributed to their awareness levels. Occupationally, 15% were civil servants, 36.4% worked in private companies, 14.6% were self-employed, 24.3% were business owners, 6.3% were students, and 3.4% were unemployed, indicating a diverse mix of professional backgrounds. The average monthly income of respondents was ₦189,140.78, with 63.1% earning ₦200,000 or less, 30.1% earning between ₦200,001 and ₦400,000, and 6.8% earning above ₦400,000, suggesting that most consumers in the study fall within the middle-income bracket.

3.1.2| Interview Participants

Table 1 shows participants' demographic information. The participants interviewed in this study were mostly (9 out of 12) females between the ages of 18 and 47 years. However, most were in their 40s. Participants were all educated, ranging from SSCE to BSc to Postgraduate degrees, with most of them having completed tertiary education. This indicates that the participants have a baseline knowledge and possess critical thinking skills that can lead to more informed responses, enabling a deeper analysis of awareness, attitudes, behaviours, and the potential for meaningful engagement with sustainability initiatives.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

Participant ID	Sex	Age	Educational Level
C001	Female	47	Postgraduate
C002	Female	27	BSc
C003	Female	28	BSc
C004	Female	19	SSCE
C005	Female	18	SSCE
C006	Female	33	BSc
C007	Female	42	Postgraduate
C008	Female	44	BSc
C009	Male	37	BSc
C010	Female	42	BSc
C011	Male	45	Postgraduate
C012	Male	43	BSc

3.2| Apparel Consumers' Awareness towards Sustainable Fashion

In the question, have you heard the term sustainable/Ethical/ Green fashion before?, only about one-third (36.9%) of the consumers have heard the term before, while most (63.1%) of the consumers had not. Many studies, especially in developed nations, have considered consumers to be interested in sustainable consumption of fashion items, which is indicative of their knowledge of the subject; this is contrary to what was found in this study. Granskog et al. (2020) reported that European consumers have become even more engaged in sustainability topics, although these consumers are not fully aware of how to find sustainable clothes or what makes clothing sustainable. This study further investigated the level

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of awareness of consumers about sustainable fashion. Data collected through the interviews supported the survey results, as only a few (2 out of 12) of the consumers replied in the affirmative, but they mentioned that they have a general knowledge of sustainability. However, the majority said "No" to the question. A participant further explained by saying,

> *"I've never thought that sustainable can be used along with fashion"* [C007].

3.2.1| Results on Awareness of Sustainable Fashion

The level of awareness of the respondents was measured using 12 statements adapted from Shen et al. (2013). Table 2 revealed that apparel consumers moderately agreed that sustainable fashion can be described as a product that is likely to last, thus reducing the need to buy a new one ($\bar{x}$ = 2.42), second-hand clothes which have been given a new life ($\bar{x}$ = 2.35), a custom-made garment passed down to loved ones ($\bar{x}$ = 2.32), a garment that is made from recycled or already existing materials or fabrics ($\bar{x}$ = 2.30), purchasing locally made products, that is, investing in the local community ($\bar{x}$ = 2.28). The awareness statements were further categorised into recycling, locally made, usage of organic materials, reusing of products, Custom-made, and so on. The results showed that recycling ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36) is an area of sustainable fashion that the respondents seem to be familiar with. This is in line with the findings of Saricam et al. (2017), which suggest that consumers usually associate the term sustainability with having the capability of recycling products after their useful life. Generally, most of the apparel consumers have a moderate ($\bar{x}$= 2.21) level of awareness about sustainable fashion. Although one can assume that some of the apparel consumers guessed that some of the statements are likely linked to sustainability, and that sustainable fashion could mean these things. Hence, this explains the reason for a moderate level of awareness that was revealed.

Table 2. Respondents' Awareness of Sustainable Fashion

S/N	Sustainable fashion is characterised by the following STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	Std.d
1.	A garment that is made from recycled or already existing materials or fabrics	2.30	1.07
2.	A garment that is made by a company that follows standards of environmental and social policy in areas related to the production of goods.	2.14	0.99
3.	Second-hand clothes that have been given a new life through some sort of customisation.	2.35	1.06
4.	Products that have been made without the use of leather or animal tissues.	2.18	1.01
5	When something is made near you, fewer resources are used in transporting the item.	2.14	0.97
6	Where the maker of the garment has comfortable working conditions, is paid fair wages and enjoys a good quality of life.	2.09	0.97
7.	Anything that has been made from already existing materials, fabrics, metals, or fibres.	2.42	1.09
8.	Purchasing locally made products, that is, investing in your local community.	2.28	1.07
9.	A custom-made garment you cherish all your life and pass down to loved ones.	2.32	1.06
10.	A garment made from materials grown without the use of pesticides and other toxic materials.	2.10	0.96
11.	A made-to-order garment rather than mass-produced disposable ones.	2.07	1.05
12.	A garment that is made by a company that follows standards of international labour, such as reasonable work hours, no child labour, and a fair living wage.	2.11	0.97
	Grand mean	**2.21**	**1.02**

Scale: *Not all aware; slightly aware; moderately aware; very aware*

Findings from the qualitative study in Table 3 also revealed the themes that were generated from asking the participants about their interpretation of sustainable fashion. These results suggest that even though the majority of the participants indicated that they had not heard the term before, they were still able to interpret the word correctly. This further supports the idea that respondents could easily link the term "sustainable fashion" to the broader concept of sustainability in fashion. However, it does not

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necessarily confirm their understanding of the subject. This highlights a crucial gap between recognition and comprehension. This distinction is supported by previous research suggesting that while consumers may be familiar with sustainability-related terminology, their grasp of the full implications often remains superficial. McNeill and Moore (2015) argued that consumers frequently associate sustainable fashion with vague notions of ethical or eco-friendly practices but lack concrete knowledge of what sustainability entails across the fashion supply chain. This includes limited awareness of production processes, labour conditions, environmental impacts, and the lifecycle of garments. Consequently, even when terminology is recognised, it does not guarantee informed or responsible behaviour. Furthermore, the majority (8 out of 12) of the participants agreed that fashion has some impact on the environment. They agreed that this impact may result from improper waste management, unethical production processes, the use of chemicals and plant destruction. One of the participants remarked that,

> *"maybe since some fabrics are produced from plants, which means some plants are destroyed. Also, some wastes are produced in the process of making clothes, so I think these two things can affect our ecosystem"* [C007].

This was supported by another participant who said

> *"Yes, because everything we do impacts the ecosystem. For example, fashion raw materials are obtained from the ecosystem, and chemicals are used to process them. Also, when these fabrics are no longer in use, we don't have a good way of disposing of them – these things come back to hurt the ecosystem since they are no longer in their original forms"* [C012].

Contrary to these opinions, some (4 out of 12) of the participants do not think fashion has any environmental impact. A participant remarked that

> *"I don't think fashion impacting on the ecosystem is possible or are related in any way"* [C011].

Although more respondents showed their awareness of the possible environmental impact of fashion, it can be assumed to be mere recognition of sustainability-related issues, and this should not be mistaken for comprehensive awareness or behavioural readiness.

Table 3. Interview Participants' Awareness of Sustainable Fashion

Awareness Questions	Themes
Interpretation of Sustainable Fashion	Fashion that Lasts
	Worn for a long time
	Creating quality fashion
	Re-usable products
Fashion Impact on the Environment	Improper waste management
	Unethical production processes
	Use of chemicals
	Plants destruction

3.3 | Apparel Consumers' Attitude towards Sustainable Fashion

Table 4 revealed that the consumers agreed that they would be willing to practice sustainable fashion if they knew more about it ($\bar{x}$ = 2.73). Respondents showed optimism about the outcomes of sustainable fashion ($\bar{x}$ = 2.28), and they also moderately ($\bar{x}$ = 2.26) agreed that they have a positive expectation of sustainable fashion. The level of consumers' attitude towards sustainable fashion was later categorised using percentages; it was found that none of the consumers had a positive attitude toward sustainable fashion, about one-fourth (24.8%) had a neutral attitude, while the majority (75.2%) had a negative attitude toward sustainable fashion. This was further confirmed with the mean, showing a general unfavourable attitude ($\bar{x}$ = 1.78) towards sustainable fashion. This result contradicts the findings of many studies that found a positive/ favourable attitude among consumers. Hill and Lee (2012) reported that consumers in their study expressed positive sentiments toward sustainability but also acknowledged their lack of knowledge concerning the sustainability of apparel. Kozar and Hiller-Connell (2013) also reported that consumers in their study maintained stronger attitudes towards the environmental impacts of the apparel and textiles industry, indicating a higher pro-environmental orientation. This result also contradicts the findings generated by the most recent studies. For instance, a study by Zhang et al. (2021) found that consumers' attitudes towards sustainability in fast fashion products in the UK are

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improving, and that consumers are increasingly interested in purchasing sustainable clothing. Similarly, Park and Lin (2020) in their study also perceived consumers to possess positive sustainable fashion attitudes, but they also emphasised that while consumers may express positive attitudes toward sustainability, this does not always translate into actual purchasing behaviour.

Table 4. Respondents' Attitude to Sustainable Fashion

S/N	STATEMENTS	$\bar{x}$	Std.d
1.	I am highly interested in sustainable fashion.	1.77	0.96
2.	If I know more about sustainable fashion, I will be willing to practice it	2.73	1.00
3.	I attribute a high level of importance to sustainable fashion	1.33	0.54
4.	Sustainable apparel production is a major concern for me	1.25	0.64
5.	I have a positive expectation of sustainable fashion	2.26	1.06
6.	I am optimistic about the outcomes of sustainable fashion	2.28	1.15
7.	I believe I have a personal responsibility toward sustainability in fashion apparel production	1.36	0.67
8.	I believe I have a responsibility to preserve my environment in the process of producing garments	1.96	0.94
9.	Sustainable fashion is of high priority in my clothing design and production/ choice of clothing, the way I use and dispose of clothes	1.23	0.62
10.	I consider how to achieve sustainability first in my apparel production	1.61	0.49
	Grand mean	**1.78**	**0.81**

Scale: *Strongly disagree; disagree; agree; strongly agree*

Table 5 shows the attitudes of the participants toward sustainable fashion by asking questions such as their thoughts about whether the environmental impact of fashion should be considered in the way we use our clothes and why. Most (9 out of 12) of the participants were positive, some of the major themes derived are concern for climate, environmental sustainability. They remarked,

> "*Yes, we should think about what will happen to our clothes when we're done using it*" [C001]
>
> another said "*Yes, because there has been increasing concern about the climate and the environment that we live in"* [C005],
>
> "*Yes, in order to sustain our environment, maybe in the way we dispose our un-used clothes although if I want to be selfish, I will say it's none of my business"* [C007] and
>
> a male participant stated that *"We can start re-thinking our way of using and disposing clothes but it will take a lot of orientation, effort, training, awareness and mass-education. Although I don't think men's taste will change irrespective of this green fashion but we can always try"* [C012].

The participants were also asked if they care that the garments they buy are environmentally friendly. Half of the participants expressed concern for the environmental friendliness of garments they purchase, while the other half do not care. This underscores the persistent divide in consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion. This result is reflective of a broader pattern in consumer behaviour research, where awareness and concern about environmental issues often fail to manifest uniformly across populations. According to Niinimäki (2010), consumer concern for environmental issues in fashion is often influenced by personal values, awareness levels, and socio-demographic factors. To confirm this, one participant said,

> *"No I don't, because I didn't think fashion could be harmful to the environment"* [C005].

Usually, those who prioritise environmental sustainability are more likely to consider eco-friendly attributes when purchasing clothing. However, a significant portion of consumers either lacks sufficient awareness or prioritises other factors such as price, style, and convenience, in which these factors often overshadow sustainable considerations (Niinimäki, 2010). Furthermore, participants were asked to

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describe their personal interest in sustainable fashion; 4 out of 12 had low interest, 5 had moderate interest, while only 3 had high interest. One participant said,

> *"I'm quite interested if I can get more information about it"* [C002], and
>
> another said, *"I have moderate interest. The more I know about the beneficial and harmful effects, the more I'm Interested"* [C007].

The participants' responses reflect a crucial insight in sustainability research that information access and knowledge are key drivers of consumer interest and engagement in sustainable fashion. The expressions of moderate interest, paired with a desire to learn more, suggest that consumer curiosity can evolve into active participation if the right educational tools and messaging are made available. This finding aligns closely with the theory of consumer environmental literacy, which posits that informed consumers are more likely to develop pro-sustainability attitudes and behaviours (McNeill & Moore, 2015). When individuals understand both the harmful impacts of fast fashion (e.g., environmental degradation, labour exploitation) and the benefits of sustainable alternatives (e.g., ethical sourcing, lower carbon footprint), they become more receptive and engaged.

Table 5. Interview Participants' Attitude to Sustainable Fashion

Attitude Questions	Themes
Necessity of Environmental Impact Considerations	Concern for climate
	Environmental sustenance
	Fashion waste impact
	Clothing usage and disposal re-thinking
Concern for Eco-friendly garments	Low sustainable fashion knowledge
	Fashion is harmless
Describe personal interest	Knowledge would increase interest
	Low fashion interest

3.4 | Apparel Consumers' Behaviour towards Sustainable Fashion

Table 6 shows the sustainable purchasing, usage and disposal behaviours of apparel consumers. Consumers indicated moderate practice of purchasing quality clothing because they last longer ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57), they moderately partake in donating clothes to a good cause ($\bar{x}$ = 3.37), they wash their clothes carefully to extend garment lifetime ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35), give clothes to friends or family ($\bar{x}$ = 3.30). The consumers reported that they sometimes use eco-friendly products to wash their garments ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15) and sometimes repair small defects in garments themselves ($\bar{x}$ = 3.14). This result indicates that the consumers of this study are somewhere in between the scale of good and poor practice of sustainable clothing consumption. It can be argued that some of the consumers exhibit positive behaviour for socio-economic, cultural and personal value reasons and not necessarily for their socio-environmental awareness or sustainability concerns. In many developed countries, sustainability is embedded in consumer consciousness due to education, public policies, and social norms. Meanwhile, in developing countries, traditional consumption patterns may either align with or oppose sustainable practices, depending on local beliefs about resource use, but most importantly, positive sustainable behaviours may ensue out of the need to manage available resources. Similarly, Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021) argued that the adoption of sustainable fashion consumption can be influenced by cultural and economic differences between developed and developing countries. Consumers in industrialised nations can prioritise sustainable items, even if they are more expensive, due to their higher levels of income and purchasing power. In contrast, because of lower income levels, the emphasis in many developing nations is frequently on affordability, making it more difficult to choose sustainable consumption over necessities. A study carried out in South Africa by Madinga et al. (2025) suggested that socio-economic challenges often lead consumers to prioritise affordability over sustainability in developing countries. This explains why the apparel consumers in this study showed better sustainable usage ($\bar{x}$ = 2.84) than sustainable purchasing ($\bar{x}$ = 2.71) and disposal ($\bar{x}$ = 2.37).

Furthermore, apparel consumers in this study exhibited a low practice of refusing clothes when they know that the people who made the clothes worked in unsafe conditions ($\bar{x}$ = 2.33). An important question to ask is: do these consumers have adequate knowledge about the clothing companies they patronize or are they even interested in knowing the working conditions of their garment producers? If

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they do not have such information, then it is not likely to influence their behaviour towards sustainable fashion. This result is contrary to the finding of Granskog (2020), who reported that 67% of respondents said that use of sustainable materials was a crucial consideration when making a purchase, and 63% said that a brand's commitment to sustainability was important to them. In this present study, results revealed that the respondents rarely use the good parts of old garments to make a different product before discarding them ($\bar{x}$ = 2.33), and they had a very low practice ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79) of donating garments in recycling bins (for the purpose of recycling). In the same vein, they do not engage in selling garments via second-hand stores ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79) or in swapping clothes with friends or family or via a swapping platform ($\bar{x}$ = 1.67). Summarily, the consumers generally had a moderate ($\bar{x}$ = 2.65) level of sustainable fashion behaviour (SFB). Figure 2 shows the categorisation of consumers' behaviour using percentages; most (60.7%) of the consumers had moderate SFB, 34.5% had poor SFB, while only 4.9% had a high SFB. This distribution suggests that while sustainable fashion has entered public discourse, actual behavioural adoption remains limited for most consumers. Moderate SFB may involve occasional sustainable choices, such as reusing clothing or donating to charity, but often lacks consistency. Also, consumers may be lagging in other core areas of sustainable fashion consumption. According to Shen et al. (2012), even among well-informed consumers, competing motivations such as trend alignment, price sensitivity, and social influence often override ethical considerations. This helps explain why sustainable behaviours are typically practised sporadically rather than habitually. Meanwhile, 34.5% with poor SFB indicates that a significant portion of consumers either lack the necessary knowledge or motivation to integrate sustainability into their fashion consumption. This group may be influenced more heavily by fast fashion culture, where affordability and trendiness take precedence over ethics (Joy et al., 2012).

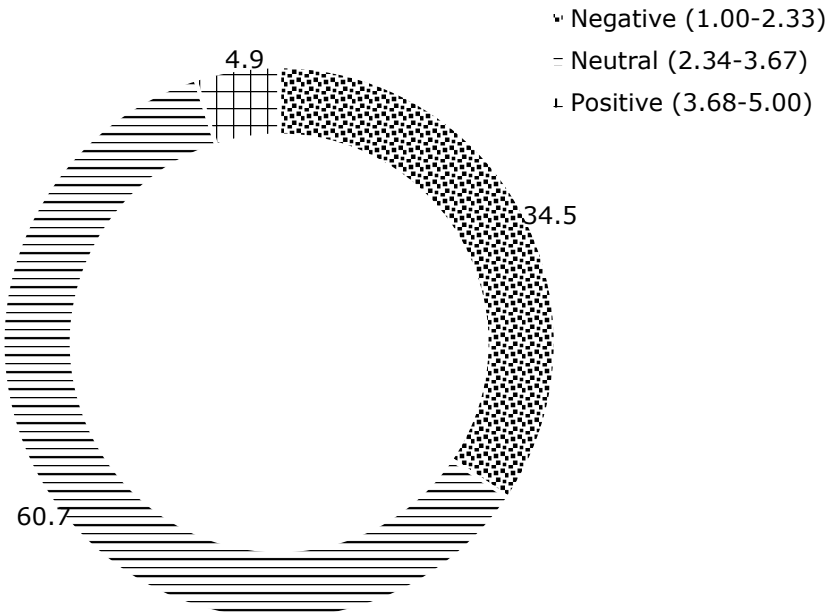


Figure 2. Level of Sustainable Fashion Behaviour of Consumers

Error bars indicate the standard error of the mean (SEM)
Decision rule: 1.00 - 2.33= Low practice/Negative; 2.34 – 3.67= Moderate practice/Neutral
3.68 – 5.00= High practice/Positive

Hill and Lee (2012) reported poor SFB among consumers even though they had favourable attitudes towards SF, showing a discrepancy between attitudes and actual behaviours among the respondents. Many studies have reported a gap between consumers' attitudes and behaviour towards SF. For instance, Wierderhold and Martinnez (2018) reported that even though 30% of consumers in their study wanted to purchase sustainable products, just 3% eventually made ethical purchases. Moreover, Joy et al. (2012) found that although many fashion consumers express concern for ethical and environmental issues, this concern rarely translates into sustainable purchasing decisions, partly due to a lack of detailed understanding. In this study, however, the attitude–behaviour gap is on the reverse, where consumers exhibited a poor/negative attitude and moderately positive behaviour towards sustainable fashion.

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Table 6. Consumers' Behaviour towards Sustainable Fashion (n=206)

S/N	Categorisation	Statements	$\bar{x}$	Std.d
	Sustainable purchasing		**2.71**	
1.	Rethinking	I choose clothes from environmentally friendly brands	2.61	1.06
2.		I read the clothing label to check what material the product is made of	2.78	1.19
3.		I purposely select fibres that require cooler washing temperature, shorter drying time or less ironing	2.66	1.07
4.		I intentionally do not buy clothes that are harmful to the environment	2.62	1.27
5.		I consider the sustainability aspects of the clothes that I buy or rent	2.71	1.36
6.		I refuse clothes when I know that the people who made the clothes work in unsafe conditions	2.33	1.26
7.	Reusing	I buy second-hand clothes	2.49	1.14
8.	Reducing	I buy clothes that do not follow fashion trends	2.60	1.15
9.		I buy quality clothes because they last longer	3.57	1.17
	Sustainable usage		**2.84**	
10.	Retain	I continue wearing garments with a small defect (such as a hole in the fabric or a missing button)	2.45	1.15
11.		I continue wearing garments that are out of fashion/trend	2.71	1.11
12.		I wash garments carefully to extend their lifetime	3.35	1.21
13.		I use eco-friendly products to wash my garments	3.15	1.15
14.	Repair	I repair small defects in garments myself	3.14	1.14
15.		I renovate, or have someone else renovate, old clothes to make them fit or fashionable again	2.60	1.15
16.	Refurbish	When a garment is damaged, I use it for a different purpose (e.g.: as a cleaning cloth/rag)	2.98	1.01
17.		I use good parts of old garments to make a different product before discarding them.	2.33	1.16
	Sustainable disposal		**2.37**	
18.	Reuse	I give clothes away to friends or family	3.30	1.18
19.		I partake in donating clothes to a good cause	3.37	1.22
20.		I engage in selling garments via second-hand stores or to friends or family	1.78	1.03
21.		I engage in swapping clothes with friends or family or via a swapping platform	1.67	0.91
22.	Recycle	I donate garments in recycling bins (for the purpose of recycling)	1.79	1.03
23.	Repurpose	Before discarding clothes, I remove items such as labels, buttons and zippers to use these again	1.76	1.04
24.		I use old clothes as rags for cleaning purposes	2.89	1.12
		Grand mean	**2.65**	**1.14**

Scale: *Never (N), Rarely (R), Sometime (S), Often (O), Always (A)*

Table 7 shows the qualitative results of consumers' sustainable fashion behaviour; respondents were further asked, "*What prompts you to acquire new sets of clothes*?" The reasons they provided included: fashion trend, size issues, occasion, a need for change and wanting to give to the needy, and impulse buying. They said,

> *"If I come across an item that I like and can afford it; I need a change and sometimes size issues"* [C005],
>
> *"I buy new clothes because I don't want to think of what to wear and I get tired of clothes easily. I am also a fashion forward person, I like to go with the trends"* [C007], and another said
>
> *"A need to refresh, although, I'm not fashion led. Also, I'm conscious of the less privileged so when I give out what I have, I get new ones to replace them".* [C008].

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Fashion trends and a need for change were repeated by more consumers as their reasons for purchasing new clothes. This reflects a well-established pattern in fashion consumption, where clothing purchases are often driven not by necessity but by psychological, emotional, and social motivators. This "need for change" can be interpreted as a desire for variety, novelty, or personal renewal, which aligns with consumer behaviour in the fast fashion paradigm. McNeill and Moore (2015) emphasised that the fast fashion industry's success is largely based on fuelling consumers' constant desire for something "new." This desire is intensified by short trend cycles, aggressive marketing, and social media influence, all of which contribute to frequent wardrobe turnover. Furthermore, a majority (10 out of 12) identified ready-to-wear as the category of clothes they acquire the most, followed by thrift (5 out of 12) and tailor-made (2 out of 12). The participants also ascertained that donating to charity and passing down to friends and family are the common methods they use for their clothing disposal. These disposal choices not only reduce landfill waste but also extend the life cycle of garments, aligning with the principles of circular fashion and sustainable consumption.

Armstrong et al. (2015) highlighted that clothing donation is one of the most common post-consumption strategies among individuals who are at least moderately aware of sustainability issues. While it helps reduce textile waste, it can also contribute to over-reliance on second-hand markets, which in some cases are becoming oversaturated. Although a few mentioned burning as a means of garment disposal used rarely. The study also established the reason for the chosen disposal methods. A participant said,

> "*I pass down because I do not overuse my clothes and I have family members who will like them. I burn my inner wear because they are used to cover my inner area and I do not like to pass them down"* [C007]*;*
>
> *"I donate my clothes because I think some people may need them"* [C012].
>
> Participants who burn said, "*I burn my old underwear because I heard that they could be used for* rituals*"* [C006].
>
> "*I burn my underwear because they are personal close effects and the opportunity of donating them does not exist. Also, I'm not aware of any known way of recycling them, so I feel that burning is the safest form of disposing of them. On the other hand, I donate and pass down my clothes in other to meet a need in my immediate environment"* [C008].

This behaviour reflects a form of community-oriented sustainability, where consumers aim to extend the utility of garments while supporting others within their social or familial networks. This result aligns with findings by Bianchi and Birtwistle (2012), who noted that clothing donation is often driven by more than environmental considerations; many consumers are motivated by a desire to help others in need. This is especially common in contexts where there is a strong cultural or familial value placed on sharing and mutual support. The participants were asked if they had ever purchased an eco-friendly fashion product consciously. Almost all of them said "no", except for one person, and she mentioned that it was expensive. However, the jacket still looks as good as new. Participants were further asked if they would consider purchasing such products. The majority said "maybe" if it meets their style, if the garment is attractive and if they know the benefits. This finding is strongly supported by McNeill and Moore (2015), who argued that for sustainable fashion to be successfully adopted by mainstream consumers, it must not only be ethical but also fashionable. Consumers are unlikely to compromise their sense of style or self-expression for sustainability unless the garment also meets their aesthetic expectations. Fashion, for many, is a form of identity construction, and unless sustainable garments allow for this, interest often remains superficial. Moreover, Shen et al. (2012) emphasised that product attractiveness and design quality are significant predictors of green apparel purchase intention, often outweighing even the environmental attributes. This highlights the importance of integrating sustainability with innovation in design to ensure sustainable fashion is both ethical and desirable. Furthermore, the role of consumer education is also critical, as the findings of this present study revealed that consumers are more willing to buy when they know the benefits; this aligns with the knowledge-attitude-behaviour framework, which posits that awareness and understanding of environmental impacts positively influence attitudes and purchasing behaviour (Dhir et al., 2021). Consumers are more empowered to act sustainably when they understand how their choices contribute to environmental well-being.

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Table 7. Interview Participants' Behaviour towards Sustainable Fashion

Behaviour Questions	Themes
Reasons for Clothing Purchase	Fashion trend
	A need for change
	Weather change
	Occasion
	Change in size
	Impulse buying
	Wear and tear issues
Clothing disposal methods	Donation to charity
	Pass down
	Burning
Reason for disposal method	Way of life
	Clothes are in condition
	To meet a need

3.5| Hypotheses Testing

3.5.1| Test of significant association between Consumers' socio-demographic characteristics and their Behaviour towards sustainable fashion

Tables 8 and 9 show the test of the significant relationship between apparel consumers' socio-demographic characteristics and their sustainable fashion behaviour. Chi-square analysis showed a significant ($p<0.05$) association between consumers' occupational status ($\chi2=18.00$, $df=5$) and their sustainable fashion behaviour. Chi-square showed that consumers' occupational status is a predictor of their sustainable fashion behaviour. This implies that the kind of work a person does may influence one's behaviour. Occupational status often reflects levels of education, income, exposure to environmental information, and lifestyle orientation, all of which significantly influence an individual's consumption patterns and values. This result aligns with the work of Niinimäki (2010), who found that social and economic status, including professional roles, shapes consumers' attitudes toward sustainable clothing. Professionals in occupations that emphasise innovation, education, or environmental awareness are more likely to adopt sustainable behaviours due to their access to information and value systems aligned with environmental responsibility. In this study, for example, one of the participants who was interviewed, who works in a multinational organisation, was found to have good knowledge and positive behaviour towards sustainable fashion. She mentioned that her organisation trains them on eco-friendliness, SF was not strange to her.

Correlation results in Table 9 showed a negative and significant ($p<0.05$) relationship between consumers' age ($r = -0.15$) and their sustainable fashion behaviour. This implies that as the age of the consumers increases, their sustainable fashion behaviour is likely to decrease. Although this relationship is a weak one, an increase in age implies a possible decrease in the practice of sustainable fashion among consumers. This suggests that younger consumers are more likely to engage in sustainable fashion practices than older consumers. This result is consistent with existing literature that explores how generational values and cultural trends influence fashion-related sustainability behaviour. According to McNeill and Moore (2015), younger consumers, particularly those from Gen Z and late Millennials, demonstrate greater interest in ethical and sustainable consumption due to increased environmental awareness and exposure to sustainability movements through digital media. These younger demographics are also more likely to view fashion as a platform for social expression and activism, which aligns with pro-environmental behaviours.

Table 8. Test of significant association between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their sustainable fashion behaviour using Chi-Square

Variables	Df	χ^2	p-Value	Decision
Gender	1	4.17	0.12	Not sig.
Educational level	2	5.92	0.21	Not sig.
Ethnicity	2	4.41	0.35	Not sig.
Religion	1	2.87	0.24	Not sig.
Marital status	3	12.54	0.12	Not sig.
Occupational status	5	18.00	0.05	Significant

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Table 9. Test of the significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their sustainable fashion behaviour using PPMC

Variables	r	p-Value	Decision
Age	-0.15	0.03	Significant
Estimate monthly income	-0.12	0.09	Not sig.

3.5.2 |Test of significant association between SFC and SFB of the respondents

The correlation result in Table 10 showed a significant ($p<0.00$) relationship between consumers' sustainable fashion awareness ($r = 0.42$) and sustainable fashion behaviour. This implies that as consumers' awareness of sustainable fashion increases, their SFB also increases. The strength and significance of the correlation indicate that as consumers become more informed about sustainable fashion, that is, its environmental, social, and ethical implications, they are more likely to make behaviorally aligned decisions, such as purchasing eco-friendly garments, recycling clothing, or supporting ethical brands. This aligns with the findings of Dhir et al. (2021), who explored green apparel consumption using a knowledge-attitude-behaviour-context perspective. Their study revealed that environmental knowledge and awareness play pivotal roles in motivating consumers to engage in sustainable apparel consumption, particularly when supported by enabling contextual factors such as trust in eco-labels and perceived product value. Similarly, Kozar and Hiller-Connell (2013) affirmed that although the respondents in their study exhibited fairly low scores for engagement in socially and environmentally responsible apparel-purchasing behaviour, the behaviours of purchasing clothing were significantly predicted by the respondents' knowledge. This suggests that consumers who are more aware of environmental issues pertaining to apparel are more likely to be willing to pay a premium for goods produced in an environmentally responsible manner to boycott companies that violate the environment, and they are more likely to investigate a company's environmental policies before making a purchase. Furthermore, Jacobs et al. (2018) emphasise that consumers with higher sustainability awareness are not only more likely to adopt sustainable practices but also serve as influencers within their social networks, further spreading sustainable values through peer-driven channels. However, they also caution that awareness alone is not always sufficient; without accessible, sustainable options or visible social norms, the behaviour may not follow.

Furthermore, a significant ($p>0.05$) relationship was not found to exist between consumers' attitude towards sustainable fashion ($r = -0.07$) and sustainable fashion behaviour. This reveals a critical gap between what consumers say they believe and what they actually do. This discrepancy, often referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap, is well-documented in sustainable consumption literature. The study of Shen (2013) suggested that the discrepancies between consumers' attitude and their actual behaviour deserve serious attention, as many studies have found that a positive attitude towards SF does not always result in positive behaviour. Statistics in Europe indicated that half of consumers there say they would be willing to pay more for sustainable products, although the final market share was eventually less than 1% (De Pelsmacker et al., 2005). Although positive attitudes toward sustainability are often expected to predict corresponding behaviours, numerous studies have shown that favourable attitudes do not always translate into action. For instance, Carrington, Neville, and Whitwell (2014) argue that consumers frequently experience intent-behaviour inconsistencies due to barriers such as limited product availability, higher costs, lack of convenience, or simply habitual purchasing behaviour. Similarly, Shaw, McMaster, and Newholm (2016) found that even ethically minded consumers sometimes fail to act on their attitudes due to competing priorities, time constraints, or a lack of clear product information.

Table 10. Test of the significant relationship between respondents' awareness, attitude and their sustainable fashion behaviour using PPMC

Variables	r	p-value	Decision
Sustainable fashion awareness	0.42	0.00	Significant
Sustainable fashion attitude	-0.07	0.32	Not sig.

4 | IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

This study contributes to the theoretical discourse on sustainable consumer behaviour by underscoring the disjunction between awareness, attitude, and behaviour. While traditional behavioural models such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour posit that attitude is a key determinant of behaviour,

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the current findings suggest that sustainable actions may still occur in the absence of strong attitudinal support or comprehensive awareness. This insight invites further empirical exploration into alternative motivational factors, such as social influence, habitual behaviour, or perceived behavioural control, that may better explain sustainability-related consumer practices. The study reveals a broader societal challenge in aligning values with consumer practices in the context of sustainability. Despite some engagement in sustainable fashion behaviour, the generally poor attitudes suggest that sustainable fashion has not yet been normalised within mainstream consumer culture. This highlights a need for cultural and social transformation, whereby sustainability is embedded as a core element of fashion identity, promoted not only through individual action but also via collective norms, media representation, and community engagement. The findings also indicate a significant need for enhanced consumer education and outreach regarding sustainable fashion. With only 36.9% of respondents having prior awareness of the term "sustainable/green fashion", it is imperative for stakeholders, including fashion retailers, educators, and advocacy groups, to develop and implement targeted awareness campaigns. These may include consumer workshops and digital marketing strategies designed to foster informed purchasing decisions and promote more sustainable consumer behaviour. Furthermore, the low level of consumer awareness and unfavourable attitudes toward sustainable fashion underscore the need for public policy interventions to support sustainable consumption. Policymakers may consider introducing regulations for standardised sustainability labelling, incorporating sustainability into national education curricula, or offering incentives for sustainable production practices within the apparel industry. These measures could promote informed consumer choices and reinforce the integration of sustainability principles into mainstream fashion consumption.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by critically engaging with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control predict behavioural intentions and subsequent actions. However, the findings of this research reveal a notable disconnect between consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion and their actual behaviours. Despite limited awareness and sometimes unfavourable attitudes, many respondents reported engaging in sustainability-related practices such as reuse and repair. This contradiction suggests that the TPB may not fully capture the complexity of sustainable behaviour in contexts where socio-cultural norms, economic necessity, or habitual practices play a dominant role. The study thus extends the TPB by proposing that behavioural engagement can emerge independently of positive attitudes, driven instead by culturally ingrained practices, resourcefulness, or environmental constraints. This insight underscores the need to adapt behavioural models to reflect the lived realities of consumers in the developing regions, where the drivers of sustainable behaviour may differ significantly from those in Western settings.

5 | LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to customers of fashion brands registered under selected fashion design associations in Lagos, Nigeria. As such, the findings may not be fully generalizable to consumers in other cities or regions of the country, where cultural norms, purchasing power, and fashion preferences may differ significantly. Furthermore, the sample was drawn exclusively from brands affiliated with the Fashion Designers Association of Nigeria and the Apparels and Accessories Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, potentially excluding consumers of unregistered or informal brands that make up a large portion of the fashion ecosystem in Nigeria. Additionally, while 206 respondents were surveyed to account for possible non-responses, this remains a relatively small sample size given the diversity of fashion consumers in Lagos, Nigeria. There is also the possibility of self-selection bias, as those who agreed to participate may have stronger opinions or higher engagement with sustainable fashion than the general population. Response bias may also have occurred, with some participants potentially providing socially desirable answers, particularly on sustainability-related questions. These limitations suggest the need for broader studies involving more geographically and demographically diverse populations, as well as the inclusion of informal-sector consumers and brands, to enhance the robustness and generalizability of future findings.

6 | CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study provides critical insights into consumer engagement with sustainable fashion, revealing that while only 36.9% of respondents had prior knowledge of the term "sustainable/green fashion," their

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actual behaviour was moderately aligned with sustainable practices. However, the generally poor or unfavourable attitudes towards sustainable fashion indicate a disconnect between awareness, attitude, and behaviour. This paradox underscores the complexity of consumer decision-making in the sustainability context and highlights the need for targeted interventions to foster both cognitive and emotional engagement with sustainability in the fashion sector. The findings suggest that raising awareness alone is not sufficient to change attitudes or ensure consistent, sustainable behaviour. Therefore, a more holistic approach is necessary, one that addresses not only information dissemination but also the emotional, cultural, and social dimensions of fashion consumption. Stakeholders must recognise the importance of both individual motivations and broader societal narratives in shaping consumer choices.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data for the study is available upon request.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Grammarly in order to grammar, clarity and overall language quality. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

ORCID

Bukola Olamidun Sowemimo - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6584-9131
Adetoun Adedotun Amubode - https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3133-7522
Adijat Motunrayo Ariyo - https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4495-6569
Comfort Ibironke Sodiya - https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7170-2841

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Bukola Olamidun Sowemimo (PhD) is a Lecturer in the Department of Home Science and Management (Clothing and Textile Unit) at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State, Nigeria. She obtained her PhD in Clothing and Textiles from FUNAAB in 2024, having previously earned a First-Class Honours degree (2011) and an MSc (2016) in the same field. Her teaching and research span clothing and textile studies, with a focus on consumer behaviour in fashion, psychological aspects of fashion, and sustainability within the clothing and textile industry.

Adetoun Adedotun Amubode (PhD) is a Professor of Clothing and Textiles in the Department of Home Science and Management, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria. She obtained her PhD in Textile and Fashion in 2010 and has benefited from international academic exposure, including a Commonwealth Academic Staff Scholarship in the United Kingdom. Her research and teaching focus on clothing and textiles, fashion, and cultural dress practices. She has received several academic and professional recognitions, including awards for excellence in teaching and research. Prof. Amubode has contributed significantly to fashion education, mentoring students and promoting indigenous textile heritage in Nigeria.

Adijat Motunrayo Ariyo (PhD) is a Professor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, FUNAAB, Nigeria. She specialises in Human Development and Family Studies, with a focus on child development, family dynamics, and social well-being.

Comfort Ibironke Sodiya (PhD) is a Professor of Agricultural Extension at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria. Her research focuses on agricultural communication, rural development, gender issues in agriculture, and extension service delivery.