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Consumer Purchase Behaviour towards Sustainable Apparel: Evidence from University Students in Gurugram, India

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ABSTRACT: Sustainable apparel has received growing attention, but favourable views on sustainability do not always result in actual purchases. This study examines that gap among university students in Gurugram, India. This study collected data from 214 students through a formal questionnaire. The participants were selected using convenience sampling. The questionnaire covers awareness, value-based attitude, design and style appeal, price perceptions, accessibility, future purchase intention, and self-reported sustainable apparel purchases in the past 12 months. This study used descriptive statistics, Spearman rank correlations, Holm-adjusted significance tests, and exploratory binary logistic regression. The results show a clear difference between what respondents believe and what they buy. 64% of students agreed or strongly agreed that buying sustainable apparel reflects their beliefs and values, whereas only 10.3% reported purchasing sustainable apparel in the previous 12 months. Limited styles and design were the most common barrier (81.8%), followed by high price (50.5%) and limited availability (47.7%). All five proposed bivariate relationships were statistically significant after Holm adjustment, although the associations were small. In the exploratory logistic model, design and style appeal was the only predictor that reached statistical significance (OR = 1.68, 95% CI [1.13, 2.51], $p = .011$). Only 22 respondents reported buying sustainable apparel. Therefore, the regression results should be considered exploratory. The study also shows that awareness alone may not be enough to encourage purchase. Product design, price, availability, and reliable information may also play an important role in students' buying decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The clothing industry is closely connected with sustainability because garments require raw materials, energy, water, chemicals, transport, and packaging, while unwanted clothing contributes to textile waste. These impacts have made sustainable production and consumption important topics in consumer research, and reviews of the sector show that sustainable clothing buying is positively correlated with antecedents such as environmental awareness, environmental attitude, labelling satisfaction, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural regulation (Abbate et al., 2023). At the same time, changing apparel's environmental impact is not only a production problem. Consumer choices also affect what products are demanded and which business practices are rewarded.

Consumers do not choose sustainable apparel or eco-friendly clothes based only on environmental benefits. Price, design, comfort, availability and trust in sustainability claims can also affect their buying decisions. This is particularly important for university students. They are often exposed to sustainability-focused content on social media, but they may have limited budgets and still want clothes that are fashionable and attractive.

Earlier research has repeatedly identified a gap between positive environmental attitudes and actual green purchasing. Research on green apparel buying shows that increased consumer knowledge and awareness of environmental issues has not

translated into a widespread rise in purchasing, creating the attitude–behaviour gap ([Dhir et al., 2020](#)). A study of Japanese consumers similarly observed that positive purchase intentions towards green apparel have not always translated into actual purchase behaviour, and that the green apparel sector has historically accounted for less than 3.7% of the total clothing market ([Dhir et al., 2021](#)). Research on green apparel in India is more mixed. A study of Indian youth found that green apparel knowledge and peer influence did not significantly shape buying behaviour ([Khare & Sadachar, 2017](#)), whereas a later study reported that past environmental behaviour, peer influence, and green apparel knowledge did shape perceived benefits and purchase-related outcomes ([Khare, 2019](#)). More recent Indian research points towards price, product attributes, and affordability as central issues: research on urban Indian consumers' perceptions of sustainable clothing found that environmental knowledge, environmental attitude, and perceived consumer effectiveness shape purchase intention, with product attributes acting as intervening variables ([Tryphena & Aram, 2023](#)). Work on Generation Z consumers identified affordability as the key barrier to sustainable fashion adoption and reported that social media raised awareness of sustainability without necessarily translating into purchasing behaviour ([Karulkar et al., 2025](#)). Related evidence from the Indian textile and apparel sector reports that the higher price of sustainable apparel, together with the perception that it lacks the variety and style of regular market offerings, inhibits young Indian consumers from embracing it ([Vishwakarma et al., 2024](#)).

This study focuses on university students in Gurugram and looks at their self-reported purchases of sustainable apparel during the previous 12 months. This matters because what people intend to buy and what they actually buy may differ. A student may view sustainable clothing positively but still choose conventional clothing because eco-friendly options are expensive, not easily available, or do not offer the designs they prefer.

1.1 Problem statement

The central problem this study considers is the gap between favourable views of sustainable apparel and actual purchasing. If students understand sustainability yet do not buy sustainable clothing, the reasons for that gap need to be examined at the product and consumer level. The study therefore considers awareness and attitude together with practical elements such as design appeal, price-related willingness, and availability.

1.2 Research objectives

1. To assess university students' awareness of sustainable apparel.
2. To examine students' attitudes and perceived importance of sustainable apparel in clothing decisions.
3. To identify the major barriers that prevent students from purchasing sustainable apparel more often.
4. To examine the relationship between selected perceptions and actual sustainable apparel purchase during the previous 12 months.
5. To examine whether future purchase intention and willingness to buy at lower prices are associated with actual sustainable apparel purchase.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable apparel and consumer behaviour

Sustainable apparel refers to clothing produced, distributed, used, and disposed of with greater care for environmental and social impacts. Consumer decisions in this area are affected by both values and practical product evaluations. Research on Indian consumers has found that knowledge of green apparel and past environmental behaviour can influence perceived benefits, while peer influence and product characteristics also matter ([Khare, 2019](#)). Consumer decisions in this domain are also shaped by values: among young consumers in emerging markets, environmental apparel knowledge and green self-concept positively affect attitude towards green apparel, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and purchase intention ([Abrar et al., 2021](#)). Evidence from Chinese consumers reinforces the pattern, showing that attitudes towards sustainable apparel had a strong positive effect on purchase intention, with aesthetic values positively moderating that relationship and conspicuous values negatively moderating it

2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour provides the main theoretical lens for this study. The theory was introduced to explain individuals' decision-making processes, placing an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour at its centre. Behavioural intention indicates an individual's readiness to perform a given behaviour, and it is determined by three conceptually independent constructs: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour; subjective norms to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform it, and perceived behavioural control to beliefs about factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour ([Quintal et al., 2014](#)). The theory is useful here because sustainable apparel purchase involves both personal evaluation and perceived ability to act.

This study does not fully test the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The questionnaire uses single-item measures and does not include all TPB parameters through validated multi-item scales. Instead, TPB provides a basic framework for understanding why students may have a positive attitude toward sustainable apparel but not always act on it when making purchases.

2.3 The attitude–behaviour gap

The attitude–behaviour gap is particularly seen in green apparel. Consumers may support environmental values but continue to buy regular products because sustainable clothes do not fit their budget, style, shopping routine, or access needs. Research based on in-depth interviews has identified price, availability, knowledge, transparency, image, inertia, and consumption habits as barriers that impede consumption of sustainable fashion, and recommended that manufacturers and retailers concentrate on specific product attributes, adopt an efficient digital communication strategy, and make greater efforts to make green apparel attainable ([Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018](#)). Work on green apparel buying behaviour likewise shows that purchase intention and actual behaviour should not be treated as the same outcome, noting that the intention–behaviour gap has kept the green apparel industry in its nascent stages ([Dhir et al., 2021](#)). Comparable evidence comes from research on sustainable apparel shoppers, which notes that consumers with positive attitudes towards sustainable products may still fail to buy them, and that TPB has been widely used to explain such sustainable consumption because it typically results from planned decision making rather than hedonic reasons ([Chang & Watchravesringkan, 2018](#)).

2.4 Price, affordability, design, style and product appeal

Price can be a major barrier to buying sustainable apparel. Students may want to choose sustainable clothing, but their budgets may not allow them to spend more on clothes. Studies in India have also found affordability to be an important factor in purchasing sustainable clothes ([Karulkar et al., 2025](#); [Vishwakarma et al., 2024](#)). Work on millennial consumers in the Indian market similarly reports that price and perceived benefits are major influencing factors and that brands need to create more awareness of sustainable apparel among this group ([Chalapathi & Rajini, 2024](#)).

People view sustainable apparel much like regular clothing. Even if they like the environmental benefits, they may not buy it if the style, design, fit or colour doesn't suit them. So, the overall look and appeal of the clothing could also influence their buying decision. Qualitative evidence from Indian consumers supports this: design-related and economic considerations, along with personal inhibitions, emerged as barriers to sustainable apparel behaviour, and younger consumers practised alternatives such as renting, borrowing, and thrifting while showing greater price sensitivity than older cohorts ([Arora & Chaudhary, 2026](#)).

2.5 Accessibility and trust

Even if people want to buy sustainable clothes, they may not buy them if they cannot find them easily. The availability of these clothes in both online and physical stores can affect their buying decisions ([Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018](#)). Trust is also important because people may not always know whether a product is really sustainable. Clear information and proper labels can help them feel more confident when buying these products. Evidence on labelling points in the same direction: labelling desire, labelling satisfaction, and perceived effectiveness are among the variables proposed to drive green apparel purchase intentions and behaviour ([Dhir et al., 2021](#)). Similarly, consumers' product knowledge, perceived consumer effectiveness, and perceived personal relevance significantly affect young consumers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which in turn affect purchase intentions for environmentally sustainable textiles and apparel.

2.6 Research gap and hypothesis development

Based on earlier studies, this research considers awareness and attitude as factors that may influence students' interest in sustainable clothing. It also looks at design appeal, willingness to buy at a lower price, and future purchase intention as factors that may be linked to actual buying behaviour. The hypotheses are kept simple because the questionnaire uses single-item measures.

Much of the research on sustainable apparel focuses on purchase intention rather than actual buying behaviour. However, having a positive attitude or an intention to buy sustainable clothing does not always lead to an actual purchase. Students may support sustainable fashion and say they are willing to buy it, but factors such as high prices, limited availability, and less attractive designs may prevent them from doing so. This difference between intention and actual behaviour is an important part of the present study, and it has been documented as an attitude-behavioural intention gap in sustainable apparel research (Jung et al., 2020).

The study therefore focuses on respondents' reported purchases over the previous 12 months. It examines whether awareness, attitude, design appeal, willingness to buy at a lower price, and future purchase intention are related to actual purchase behaviour. It also identifies the main barriers reported by the respondents and uses correlation and regression analysis to examine these relationships. By comparing intention-related responses with reported past purchases, the study gives a clearer picture of where the intention-behaviour gap occurs among university students in Gurugram.

H1: Awareness of sustainable apparel is positively associated with actual sustainable apparel purchase behaviour.

H2: A positive value-based attitude towards sustainable apparel is positively associated with actual purchase behaviour.

H3: Perceived design and style appeal of sustainable apparel is positively associated with actual purchase behaviour.

H4: Willingness to purchase sustainable apparel if prices are lower is positively associated with actual purchase behaviour.

H5: Future purchase intention is positively associated with actual purchase behaviour.

2.7 Conceptual framework

The study looks at awareness and attitude as factors that may influence students' interest for sustainable clothing. It also considers practical factors such as design appeal, willingness to buy at a lower price, and availability, as these may affect whether students actually buy. Future purchase intention shows what students plan or are willing to buy, while reported purchases during the previous 12 months show what they actually bought. The analysis brings these five factors together to examine their relationship with actual buying behaviour.

Table 1. Study constructs and operational indicators.

Construct	Operational indicator used in this study	Expected direction
Awareness	Self-rated awareness of sustainable apparel	Positive
Attitude	Agreement that buying sustainable apparel reflects personal beliefs and values	Positive
Design/style appeal	Perceived appeal of sustainable apparel in design and style	Positive
Lower-price willingness	Likelihood of purchase if sustainable apparel were available at lower prices	Positive
Future intention	Likelihood of purchasing sustainable apparel in the future	Positive
Actual behaviour	Purchase of sustainable apparel during the previous 12 months (Yes/No)	Outcome

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design and collected data from university students in Gurugram using a structured questionnaire. The study used convenience sampling because respondents were approached through easily accessible university settings. The analysis included 214 usable responses.

3.2 Sample and data quality

The sample consisted of 112 male respondents (52.3%) and 102 female respondents (47.7%). Of the total respondents, 169 (79.0%) were undergraduate students and 45 (21.0%) were postgraduate students. Some age responses were missing, and the income data were not consistent enough to be used in the main analysis. Therefore, age and income were used only for descriptive purposes or left out of the main hypothesis testing.

Table 2. Respondent profile.

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	112	52.3
Gender	Female	102	47.7
Education	Undergraduate	169	79.0
Education	Postgraduate	45	21.0
Total		214	100.0

3.3 Measures

The questionnaire covered awareness, attitudes, product quality, design, comfort, price, availability, social influence, social media exposure, purchase intention, actual purchase, and barriers to buying sustainable apparel.

For the main behavioural measure, respondents who purchased sustainable apparel in the previous 12 months were coded as 1, while those who did not were coded as 0. Ordered responses were coded in their natural sequence for the correlation and regression analysis.

3.4 Single-item measurement

Several key variables in the study were measured using single questions. This can be suitable when the topic is simple and specific, but single-item measures have some limitations when compared with multi-item scales, particularly from a predictive validity perspective ([Diamantopoulos et al., 2012](#)). Therefore, the study does not report Cronbach's alpha, confirmatory factor analysis, or structural equation modelling. These limitations are clearly mentioned rather than reporting reliability results that cannot be properly supported by the data.

3.5 Statistical analysis

Frequencies and percentages described the sample and key responses. Spearman rank correlation was used because the focal explanatory variables were ordinal and the behavioural outcome was binary. The five hypothesis tests were corrected for multiple testing using the Holm procedure. An exploratory binary logistic regression was then used to examine the five predictors together. The regression is treated cautiously because only 22 respondents reported an actual purchase. The small number of events limits the stability of a five-predictor model even though the total sample is 214.

Because only a small number of respondents reported an actual purchase, the regression analysis was treated as exploratory. The small number of purchase events in this sample limits the statistical power of the multivariable analysis, making it more difficult to detect true associations and increasing the likelihood of unstable estimates. Although simple rules about the number of cases needed for each predictor can be useful, they should not be applied in the same way to every study ([Smeden et al., 2016](#); [Vittinghoff & McCulloch, 2006](#)). Therefore, this study uses the regression results to explore possible relationships rather than make strong predictions about actual buying behaviour.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sample profile

Respondents included 52.3% males and 47.7% females, for a fairly balanced gender mix. Most respondents were undergraduate students (79.0%), while 21.0% were postgraduate students.

4.2 Awareness and attitude

Awareness was mixed. 26.2% of respondents said they were not aware of sustainable apparel. The slightly, moderately, and highly aware groups each accounted for 22.9%, while only 5.1% reported very high awareness.

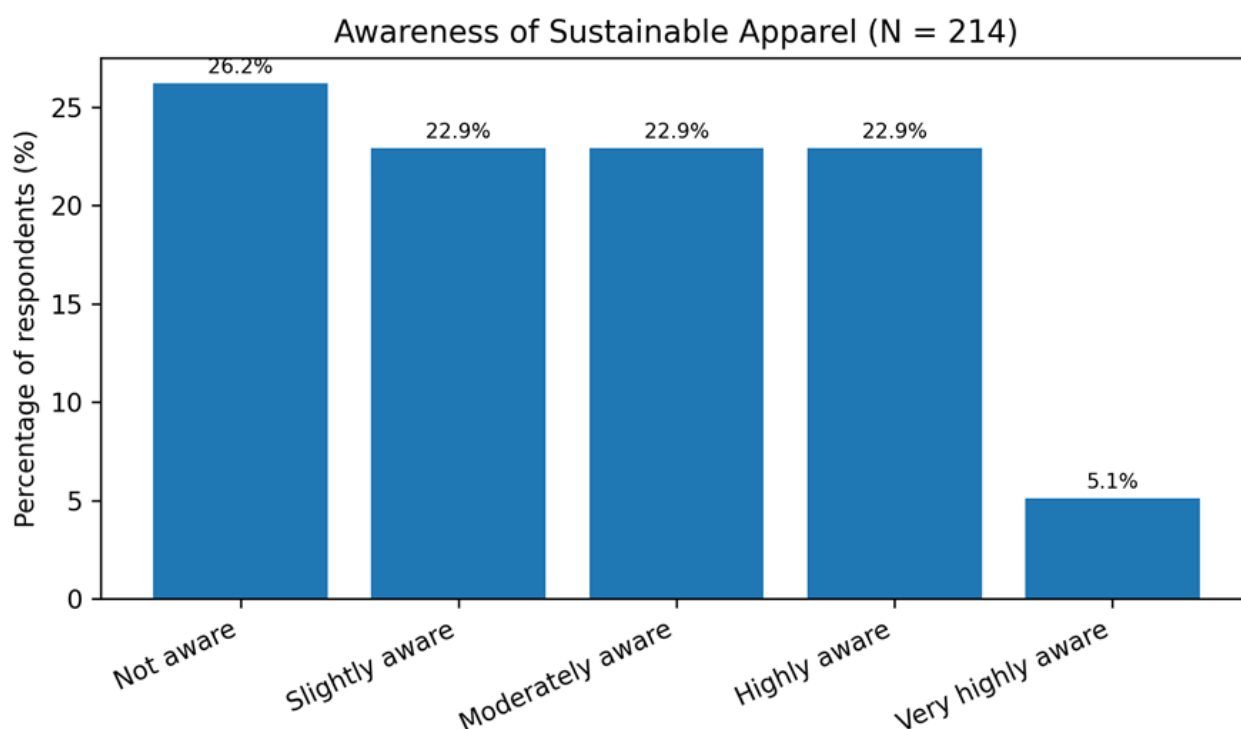


Figure 1. Awareness of sustainable apparel among respondents (N = 214).

A more positive picture appeared for values and beliefs. A total of 137 respondents (64.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that buying sustainable apparel reflects their beliefs and values. This difference between favourable attitudes and reported behaviour becomes important when the purchase results are considered.

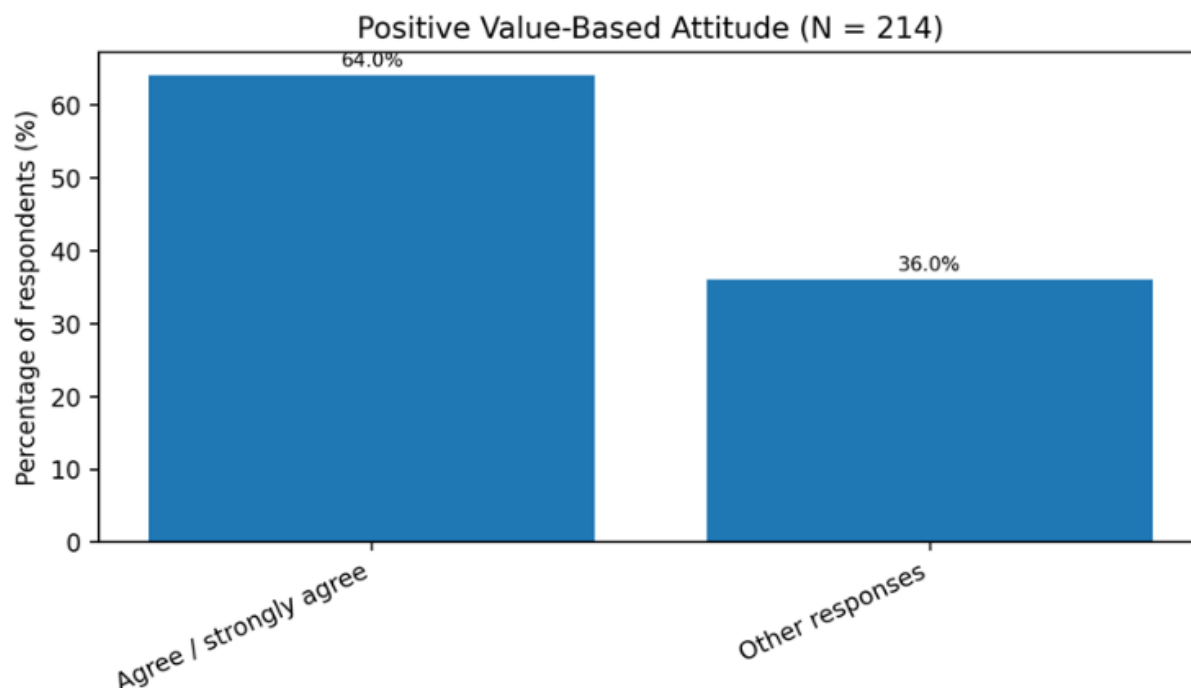


Figure 2. Positive value-based attitude toward sustainable apparel (N = 214).

4.3 Consumer perceptions of sustainable apparel

Price was a major concern. In the detailed responses, 160 respondents (74.8%) described sustainable apparel as expensive and another 9 (4.2%) described it as very expensive. Together, 78.9% therefore viewed sustainable apparel as expensive or very expensive. Design was another important concern: 145 respondents (67.8%) considered sustainable apparel not appealing in design or style. Accessibility was also weak, with 108 respondents (50.5%) describing access as difficult or very difficult.

Table 3. Key consumer perceptions of sustainable apparel (N = 214).

Measure	Key response	n	%
Positive value-based attitude	Agree/strongly agree	137	64.0
Design/style appeal	Not appealing	145	67.8
Price perception	Expensive/very expensive	169	78.9
Lower-price purchase likelihood	Likely/very likely	77	36.0
Accessibility	Difficult/very difficult	108	50.5

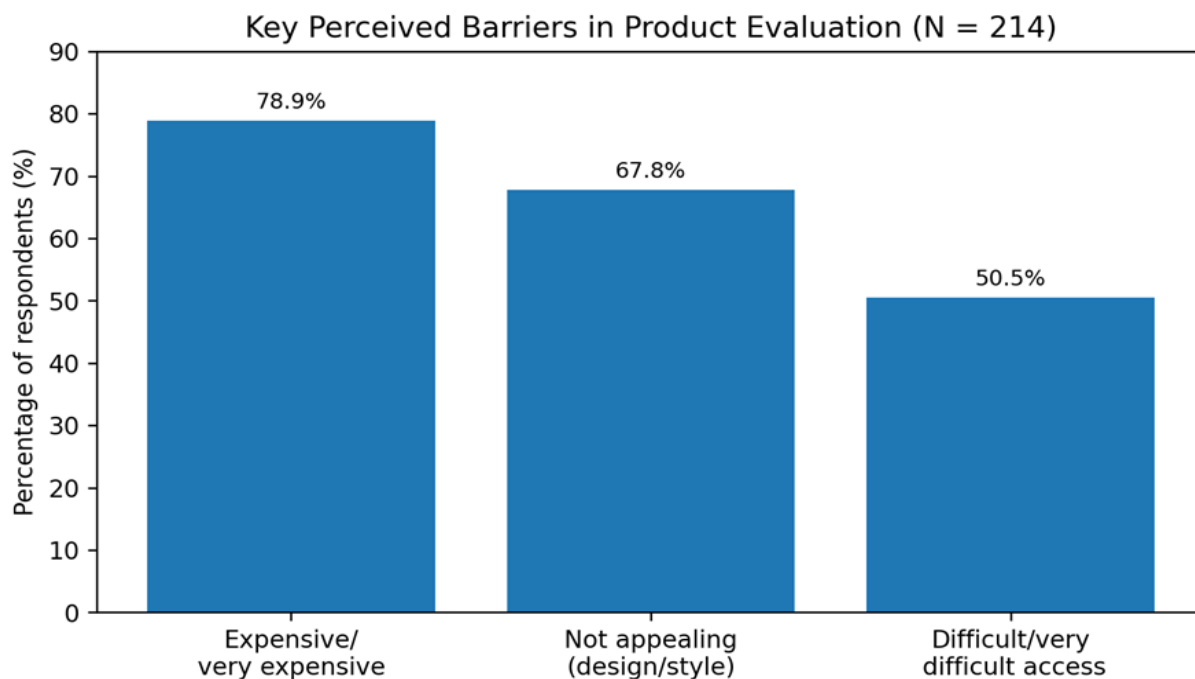


Figure 3. Key perceived barriers in product evaluation (N = 214).

4.4 Future purchase intention

Most respondents were unsure about buying sustainable apparel in the future. About 69.6% were unsure, 23.4% said they were likely to buy it, and 2.3% said they were very likely to do so. Only 4.7% said they were unlikely or very unlikely to purchase sustainable apparel.

Table 4. Future purchase intention distribution (N = 214).

Response	n	%
Very unlikely/unlikely	10	4.7
Not sure	149	69.6
Likely	50	23.4
Very likely	5	2.3
Total	214	100.0

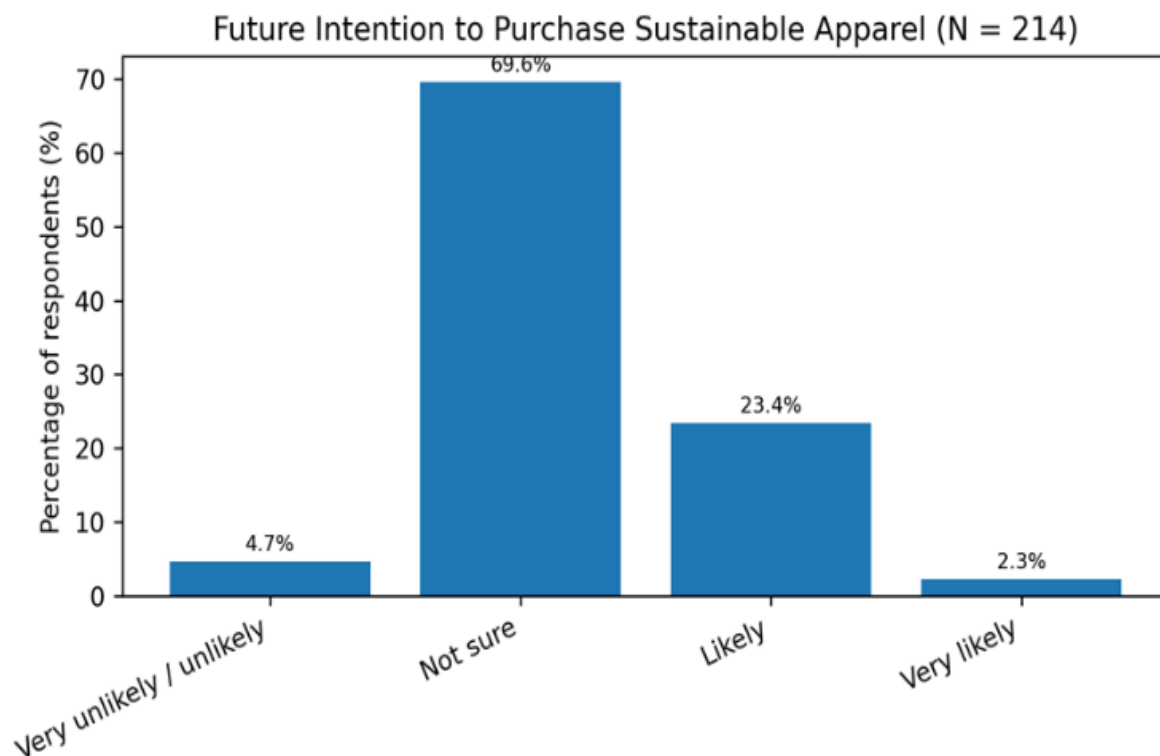


Figure 4. Future intention to purchase sustainable apparel (N = 214).

4.5 Actual buying behaviour

Only 22 respondents (10.3%) reported purchasing sustainable apparel during the previous 12 months, while 192 (89.7%) reported no purchase. This is the clearest descriptive evidence of the attitude–behaviour gap in this sample: 64.0% expressed a positive value-based attitude, but only 10.3% reported an actual purchase.

Table 5. Actual sustainable apparel purchase during the previous 12 months (N = 214).

Purchase	n	%
Yes	22	10.3
No	192	89.7
Total	214	100.0

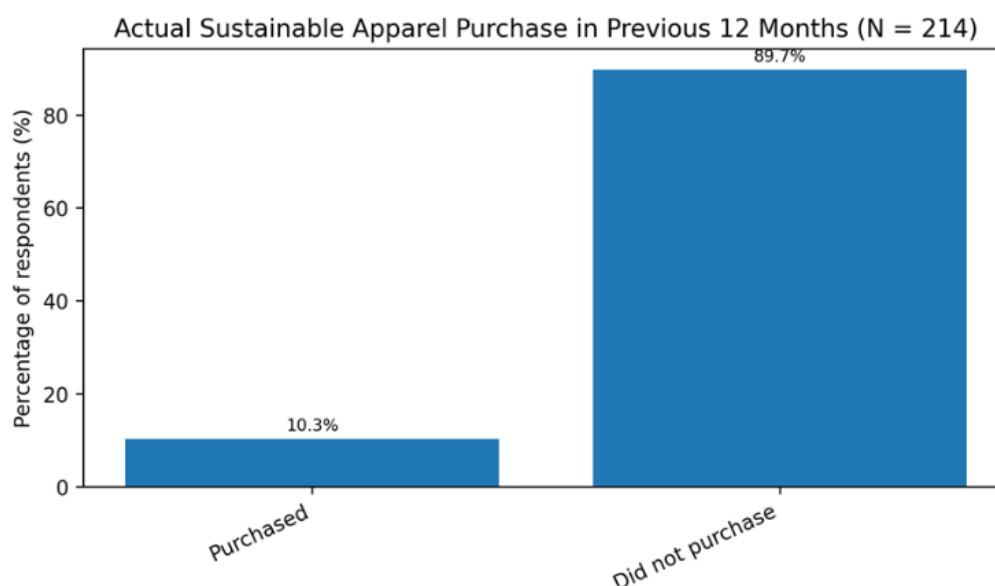


Figure 5. Sustainable apparel purchase during the previous 12 months (N = 214).

4.6 Barriers to purchase

The barrier question allowed respondents to select more than one answer. Limited designs or styles was the most frequently reported barrier, selected by 175 respondents (81.8%). High price was reported by 108 respondents (50.5%), limited availability by 102 (47.7%), lack of awareness by 90 (42.1%), and lack of trust in sustainability claims by 74 (34.6%).

Table 6. Reported barriers to sustainable apparel purchase (N = 214; multiple responses permitted).

Barrier	Mentions (n)	% of respondents
Limited designs/styles	175	81.8
High price	108	50.5
Limited availability	102	47.7
Lack of awareness	90	42.1
Lack of trust in sustainability claims	74	34.6

Note. Since participants could choose more than one option, the percentages do not sum to 100%.

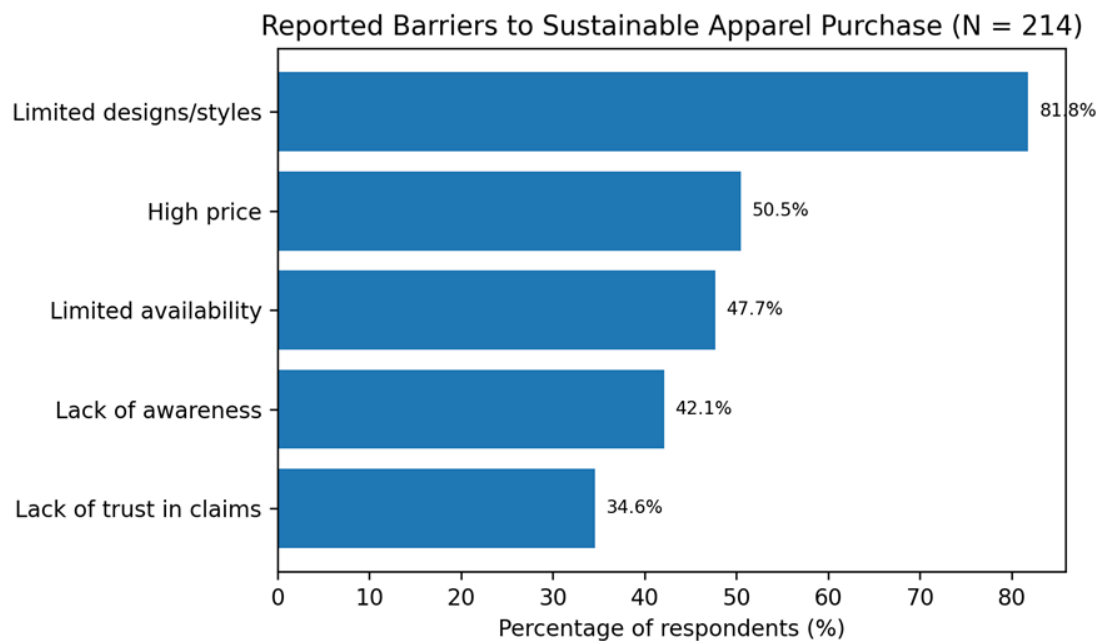


Figure 6. Reported barriers to sustainable apparel purchase. Multiple responses were permitted.

4.7 Hypothesis testing

All five relationships were positive and remained statistically significant at the 5% level after the Holm adjustment. However, the correlations were small, suggesting these relationships were relatively weak. Therefore, the statistical significance should not be taken to mean that the relationships had a strong practical effect.

Table 7. Spearman correlation results and hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis	Relationship	ρ	p	Holm-adjusted p	Decision
H1	Awareness → actual purchase	.177	.0095	.0358	Supported
H2	Attitude → actual purchase	.178	.0089	.0358	Supported
H3	Design/style → actual purchase	.187	.0061	.0306	Supported
H4	Lower-price likelihood → actual purchase	.165	.0155	.0358	Supported
H5	Future intention → actual purchase	.136	.0477	.0477	Supported

4.8 Exploratory logistic regression

The multivariable model included awareness, attitude, design/style appeal, lower-price purchase likelihood, and future intention. Design/style appeal was the only predictor that reached conventional statistical significance after adjustment for the

other predictors ($B = 0.521$, $OR = 1.68$, 95% CI [1.13, 2.51], $p = .011$). Awareness, attitude, lower-price likelihood, and future intention did not reach $p < .05$ in the multivariable model.

Table 8. Exploratory binary logistic regression predicting actual sustainable apparel purchase.

Predictor	B	OR	95% CI for OR	p
Awareness	.254	1.29	0.84–1.99	.251
Attitude	.546	1.73	0.87–3.44	.121
Design/style appeal	.521	1.68	1.13–2.51	.011
Lower-price likelihood	.356	1.43	0.60–3.42	.423
Future intention	.487	1.63	0.64–4.14	.306

These regression results should be read as exploratory, because only 22 respondents had bought sustainable apparel. With five predictors and so few purchase cases, the estimates may be unstable and the confidence intervals wide. The results point to patterns worth exploring with a larger sample, but they are not proof that design appeal causes purchase.

5. DISCUSSION

The central finding is that students in this sample held a positive attitude towards sustainable apparel that did not carry through into their recent buying. Many linked sustainable apparel to their personal beliefs and values, yet only a small number had actually bought it. This matches earlier work that documented an intention–behaviour gap in green apparel ([Dhir et al., 2020, 2021](#)).

Awareness was positively associated with actual purchase behaviour, but only weakly. Knowing about sustainable apparel may help, but it is unlikely to overcome the practical obstacles respondents identified on its own. Indian research points the same way: knowledge matters, but it works alongside product and situational factors ([Tryphena & Aram, 2023](#)).

Attitude was also positively related to purchase. Respondents who tied sustainable apparel more closely to their values were somewhat more likely to have bought it. This fits the basic logic of TPB, where attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control shape intention, and intention in turn predicts behaviour ([Quintal et al., 2014](#)). The size of the observed gap nevertheless shows why a favourable attitude cannot be treated as a guarantee of behaviour, since positive attitudes towards sustainable apparel do not always convert into consistent intentions ([Jung et al., 2020](#)).

Design and style showed the strongest relationship with actual purchase in the bivariate analysis and were also the only factor to reach significance in the exploratory logistic model. How sustainable clothing looks and whether it suits a buyer's taste may therefore weigh heavily at the point of purchase. Students may support sustainability in principle but still want sustainable clothing to look attractive and reflect current fashion trends. This is in line with previous research, which found that product design and other product features can influence consumers' decisions to buy sustainable apparel in India (Arora & Chaudhary, 2026). This is also supported by earlier research, which found that aesthetic appeal can strengthen the effect of positive attitudes toward sustainable apparel on purchase intention, while conspicuous consumption values can reduce this effect (Jung et al., 2020). However, since the regression analysis in the present study was exploratory, these relationships should be interpreted with caution and considered as possible associations rather than established causal relationships.

Price was an important concern in the study. Nearly four out of five respondents considered sustainable apparel expensive or very expensive, and about half identified high price as a barrier. In the bivariate analysis, respondents who were willing to buy sustainable apparel at a lower price were more likely to report an actual purchase, but this relationship was not significant in

the exploratory regression. Therefore, the descriptive and bivariate findings should be considered together with the multivariable results. The importance of price is also consistent with Indian studies that identified affordability as a major barrier among young consumers ([Karulkar et al., 2025](#)) and price and perceived benefits were major influences on millennial consumers ([Chalapathi & Rajini, 2024](#)).

Future purchase intention showed the weakest of the five correlations, although it remained significant after the Holm adjustment. The high level of uncertainty is also worth noting, with 69.6% of respondents unsure about making a future purchase. For these respondents, concerns about quality, price, availability and trust may need to be addressed alongside sustainability awareness. Simply providing more information about sustainability may not be enough to encourage purchase.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Implications for sustainable apparel brands

- Treat design as a core product requirement. Sustainable collections should offer styles that compete with conventional apparel on appearance, fit, colour and variety.
- Offer clear entry-level price points, student discounts, smaller sustainable ranges, repair services and reuse options where commercially feasible.
- Improve availability through e-commerce visibility, campus pop-ups, multi-brand sustainable sections and clear product filters.
- Use specific and verifiable sustainability information instead of broad environmental claims. Consumers need to know what makes a product more sustainable.
- Use social media for product demonstrations and practical information, not only general awareness messages.

6.2 Implications for universities

- Move beyond awareness campaigns by giving students practical information on how to compare sustainable apparel products.
- Support clothing exchanges, repair activities, upcycling workshops and responsible-fashion events.
- Work with credible brands and researchers to provide students with real examples of eco-friendly materials, labelling and product claims.

6.3 Implications for the policymakers

- Support clearer sustainability labelling and stronger evidence requirements for environmental claims.
- Encourage consumer education that helps young consumers distinguish meaningful sustainability information from vague marketing.
- Support circular textile initiatives, repair and reuse systems, and marketplace conditions that make lower-impact clothing more accessible.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined sustainable apparel purchase behaviour among 214 university students in Gurugram. The results point to a gap between positive attitudes and actual buying. Although 64.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that buying sustainable apparel reflects their beliefs and values, only 10.3% had bought sustainable apparel in the previous 12 months.

The findings offer a practical explanation for that gap. Limited designs or styles were the most frequent barrier, followed by high price, limited availability, lack of awareness and lack of trust in sustainability claims. All five hypothesised variables had small positive bivariate associations with actual purchase after Holm adjustment. Design/style appeal was the only significant predictor in the exploratory logistic model, but the small number of purchase events means this result needs careful interpretation.

The main implication is that sustainable apparel adoption cannot be treated as an awareness problem alone. Consumers still judge clothing as clothing: it has to look good, be easy to find, fit the budget and be backed by information they trust. These results are consistent with the broader logic of TPB, where actual purchase is shaped not only by attitudes and awareness but also by perceived control and situational factors such as price, design and availability (Quintal et al., 2014). The gap observed here also echoes the attitude–behaviour gap literature, which shows that favourable views do not automatically turn into action (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). Larger studies with stronger measurement and more actual purchase events are needed to test whether these patterns hold beyond this university sample.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- The study was carried out at a single point in time. It can describe what students reported, but it cannot show what causes what.
- Students were reached through convenience sampling in accessible university settings. The findings therefore describe this group of students in Gurugram better than they describe students anywhere else.
- Whether a student had bought sustainable apparel rests on what that student told us. Memory fades, and people sometimes give the answer that sounds better, so the purchase figure should be read with that in mind.
- Several key variables were captured with a single question each. One question is quick and easy for respondents to answer, but it cannot hold the detail a longer scale can. Future work should use multi-item scales and report reliability and validity statistics alongside the results.
- Only 22 students reported having purchased sustainable apparel. Given the small number of actual purchase cases, the logistic regression should be considered exploratory. The results may indicate possible patterns, but they should not be interpreted as a strong or reliable predictive model.
- The questionnaire left it to respondents to decide what counts as sustainable apparel. Two students answering the same question could have had very different products in mind.

The findings point to several ways a follow-up study could improve. A larger, more varied sample would produce more purchase events and allow stronger tests, including mediation, moderation, multi-group comparisons, factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. Measuring the full set of Theory of Planned Behaviour constructs would let a study test the theory properly instead of using it only as background framing. It would also help to separate what people believe they know about sustainability from what they actually know, since the two are not the same thing. On measurement, future work should move away from single items towards scales that have already been tested. Attitude, for instance, is normally measured with a set of bipolar rating items placed at opposite ends of a scale, and intention measures should come from instruments with established reliability and validity, ideally ones built for apparel and clothing rather than borrowed from other product categories. Finally, rather than asking people to remember what they bought, a study could ask them to keep a purchase diary or use transaction records. Recall-based answers are convenient, but a record made at the time is more dependable.

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