


# Fashion Sustainability Awareness and Perception in the Philippines: A Review

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sustainable fashion, consumer behavior, textile waste, environmental consciousness, the Philippines fashion industry, qualitative research, the attitude-behavior gap, indigenous textiles, slow fashion movements, market barriers

**Abstract.** In the Philippines, the fashion industry serves as a pivotal reflection of cultural identity while simultaneously grappling with significant environmental challenges. The rapid production of fast fashion has exacerbated textile waste, further intensified by the nation's surprisingly high clothing expenditure. This presents a critical irony: despite a notable rise in consumer awareness regarding sustainability issues, unsustainable consumption practices remain widespread, particularly among younger demographics, who represent a substantial segment of the consumer market. This study aims to analyze the awareness and perceptions of Filipino consumers toward sustainable fashion, while also investigating the multifaceted factors that influence their purchasing behaviors. Employing a qualitative research methodology, this investigation encompasses a literature review focused on consumer behavior viewed through the lens of environmental consciousness. The findings reveal that, although awareness of sustainability is a prerequisite for nurturing eco-friendly purchasing behaviors, it does not automatically result in sustainable consumption. Several influential factors significantly shape consumer decision-making processes, including pricing, product accessibility, and the level of trust in sustainability claims made by brands. Moreover, insights from focus group discussions indicate that emotional connections to clothing, cultural significance, and social peer influences play a crucial role in consumer choices, demonstrating the complexity of their purchasing motivations. While viable solutions to mitigate sustainability challenges exist, such as initiatives promoting the benefits of sustainable practices—such as second-hand fashion, upcycling, and the advocacy for indigenous textiles they encounter market limitations and structural barriers that hinder broader acceptance and integration into consumer habits. The implications of these findings underscore the urgent need for strategic initiatives that bridge the gap between awareness and actionable behavior.

## Introduction

Clothing is an essential facet of human life, integral not only for protection against environmental elements but also as a powerful reflection of culture, identity, and social status. As one of the most dynamic global industries, the fashion and textile sector significantly influences economic landscapes worldwide. However, this industry is also recognized for its substantial environmental impact, producing over 92 million tons of waste and consuming approximately 79 trillion liters of water annually (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

The emergence of fast fashion has dramatically accelerated both production and consumption rates, leading to an alarming rate of textile waste generation. According to the United Nations, a truckload of discarded clothing is either incinerated or landfilled every second globally. Additionally, the sector is responsible for 11% of the world's plastic waste, contributing to 9% of microplastic pollution that enters aquatic ecosystems. These statistics highlight the critical environmental challenges posed by the conventional fashion system.

Mentioning all these, it can be inferred how important language learning is in the lives of the students as it both affects the economic and social aspect of every human qualifying every person's existence.

The root of the issue lies in the prevalent linear fashion model, which operates on a "take-make-dispose" paradigm marked by rapid production cycles and a culture of overconsumption. For instance, in the Philippines, household expenditure on clothing and footwear reached ₱257 billion during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, reflecting a 14.3% increase from the previous year. Although spending had declined to ₱235 billion in 2024, the demand for clothing continues to remain significant (Statista, 2025). This persistent consumption pattern worsens the already pressing challenge of textile waste generation.

In recent years, a notable shift in consumer awareness regarding sustainability issues has emerged, particularly among younger generations. Despite this heightened awareness, unsustainable consumption practices persist, raising critical questions about the effectiveness of sustainability messaging and its influence on consumer behavior. This review aims to critically examine existing literature on fashion sustainability awareness and perception, specifically investigating the complexities of these factors and their impact on consumer behavior within the Philippine context. By understanding these dynamics, we can better address the ongoing challenges associated with sustainability in the fashion industry.

## Methodology

The methodology employed in this review involved a qualitative approach to analyze the awareness and perceptions of Filipino consumers regarding sustainable fashion. A thorough examination of existing literature was conducted, encompassing peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, and reports from reputable organizations focused on sustainability in the fashion industry. Data was gathered from various academic databases, such as Google Scholar, along with local sources from Philippine research institutions and universities. Search terms included "sustainable fashion," "fashion consumption," "Philippines," "intention-behavior gap," and "circular economy."

The review focused on consumer behavior through the lens of environmental consciousness and purchasing intent, identifying key factors influencing decision-making, including perceived value, pricing, trust in sustainability claims, accessibility, and the convenience of fast-fashion options. Moreover, studies assessing awareness levels among various demographics, particularly youth and students, were critically evaluated, synthesizing findings from surveys and qualitative interviews that measured consumer knowledge and engagement with sustainable fashion initiatives.

The research also detailed barriers hindering the adoption of sustainable practices, including economic constraints, lack of accessible sustainable options, cultural perceptions of fashion, and structural inefficiencies within the local market. Finally, the collected data was synthesized to present a coherent understanding of the gaps between awareness and actual purchasing behavior within the Philippine context, leading to the formulation of recommendations aimed at enhancing consumer engagement with sustainable fashion and proposing strategic initiatives for promoting sustainable practices in the local fashion industry.

## Results and Discussion

### *Awareness as a Foundation*

Consumer awareness is frequently cited as the cornerstone of sustainable fashion consumption; however, existing literature indicates that awareness alone does not necessarily drive sustainable purchasing behavior. For instance, Wagner and Heinzl (2020) discovered that while consumers generally understand sustainability as a concept, this awareness often fails to translate into informed purchasing decisions. This disconnect prompts analysis of the complexities surrounding consumer behavior—specifically, how knowledge about sustainability may be surface-level rather than deeply understood. Consumer knowledge often extends only to general environmental issues, with minimal insight into intricate supply chains and material sustainability. Furthermore, Saricam et al. (2017) highlighted disparities in awareness across consumer demographics, noting that individuals with stronger educational and economic backgrounds tend to exhibit greater understanding, potentially perpetuating inequalities in sustainable consumption practices.

In the Philippine context, research by Malonzo (2023) indicates that students showcase moderate to high levels of awareness regarding sustainable fashion, reflecting a growing trend towards environmental consciousness among younger consumers. Solina and Ocampo (2024) further underscore the importance of this demographic, as they are increasingly motivated to support businesses that align with sustainability principles. This trend highlights a shift in consumer priorities, suggesting that younger generations are willing to act on their values when informed about sustainable options. Intriguingly, Valentin (2023) found that environmental knowledge is a significant predictor of sustainable clothing purchase behavior, with Generation Z demonstrating both greater awareness and more proactive purchasing behaviors.

than Generation X. This shows that environmental awareness directly influences overall apparel sustainability knowledge and perceived green value, which, in turn, impact purchase intentions. This finding is noteworthy, as it suggests a generational shift in priorities and values related to sustainability.

However, inconsistencies in research findings, such as those reported by Cayaban et al. (2023), reveal a concerning trend of low awareness among Filipino consumers. This disparity implies that while some groups show enhanced sustainability engagement, others remain disconnected, which challenges the assumption that awareness uniformly fosters behavioral change across all consumer segments. The lack of a consistent pattern indicates that awareness may not be as stable or effective as previously thought, warranting deeper exploration into the factors that influence it.

These insights collectively suggest that consumer awareness is often superficial rather than functional. While a general recognition of sustainability exists, many consumers lack the practical knowledge necessary to evaluate products or make informed sustainable choices. This gap weakens the assumption that awareness will inherently lead to behavioral change. It calls for a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes “high awareness”—distinguishing between broad environmental concern and the specific knowledge of sustainable fashion practices. This critical analysis reveals the limitations of current literature, as it raises questions about the actual influence of awareness on consumer behavior and the effectiveness of sustainability education initiatives.

#### *Perception, Value, and Consumer Decision-Making*

Consumer perception plays a pivotal role in shaping sustainable fashion consumption. Building on this, Tunacao and Gilitwala (2022) found that among millennials in Metro Manila, environmental attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived value significantly influence purchase intentions. Interestingly, they reported that perceived quality and social media effects were less significant, challenging the assumption that digital influence and product quality are paramount. This calls for a nuanced understanding of consumer habits, advocating for tailored marketing strategies that focus on personal values and community influences rather than relying solely on quality perceptions or social media trends.

Illagan et al. (2024) and Bajar et al. (2024), emphasized the roles of perceived value and social influence. Customers are inclined to purchase eco-friendly goods if the sustainable product meets their requirements and expectations. Furthermore, consumers’ purchasing intentions in buying green products from name-brand shops are also affected by the government, individuals’ environmental concerns and awareness, individuals’ personal needs and beliefs, society, and individual attitudes. For name-brand stores, consumers’ behavioral intentions to purchase environmentally friendly and sustainable goods are the most strongly associated with their perception of their own value, followed by perceived authority support and perceived environmental concern. Together, these studies underline the complexity of consumer motivations where individual and societal factors intertwine to create a broader framework for understanding purchase behavior.

Moreover, Hernandez et al. (2025) indicated that perceived behavioral control, green perceived value, and the impact of social media are stronger predictors of purchase intention than traditional factors such as environmental awareness and knowledge. This suggests that while awareness is crucial, it is not sufficient on its own; practical considerations and social validation often drive purchasing choices more effectively. Notably, the finding that green self-identification is low among Filipino Generation Z indicates a gap between awareness and action. This demographic tends to respond more to practical and psychological incentives rather than purely environmental motivations—a critical insight for brands aiming to engage this audience.

Beyond practical considerations, symbolic and cultural dimensions also play a significant role in consumer perception. Butac (2025) highlighted the importance of perceived prestige and innovativeness in sustainable fashion, suggesting that consumers are not only motivated by ethical reasons but also by how these choices enhance their social status. Aldon et al. (2026) further illuminated that identity expression is the primary reason Filipino consumers opt for second-hand fashion, surpassing affordability and social influences. This indicates a shift in consumer behavior where the narrative around sustainable fashion transcends mere cost-saving and becomes a vehicle for personal and social identity.

The influence of digital platforms cannot be overlooked. Diaz (2024) found that social media and electronic word-of-mouth significantly affect fashion preferences, pointing to the critical role of communication in promoting sustainable fashion. Capucao (2024) reinforces this view by noting that social media is a common factor in Gen Z’s purchasing decisions. This reliance on digital platforms underscores the necessity for brands to effectively engage with consumers through these channels to amplify their sustainability narratives. Additionally, Asignacion et al. (2026) explored the phenomena of showrooming and QR-enabled transitions between online and offline shopping as influential in shaping sustainable purchase intentions. This blending of experiences reflects how technology can enhance the shopping journey, encouraging more informed and intentional purchasing decisions.

Collectively, these findings indicate that consumers evaluate sustainable fashion through a cost-benefit framework, where practicality, affordability, and personal values often take precedence over ethical considerations. Moreover, the existing literature tends to rely heavily on rational decision-making frameworks, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior. While these frameworks provide valuable insights, they may overlook the emotional, symbolic, and identity-based influences that are equally crucial in understanding consumer behavior. Recognizing these dimensions could lead to a more comprehensive approach to marketing and promoting sustainable fashion, facilitating deeper connections with consumers and fostering more meaningful engagement with sustainability.

#### *The Intention-Behavior Gap in Sustainable Fashion*

A persistent issue in sustainable fashion literature is the gap between consumer intention and actual behavior. Studies by Diola et al. (2025) and Ricaro et al. (2025) report high levels of awareness and intention among consumers but show limited actual sustainable purchasing practices. Although consumers often express positive attitudes toward sustainable fashion, many struggle to translate these intentions into meaningful purchasing practices. Consumer support for sustainability does not necessarily correlate with corresponding manufacturing or purchasing behaviors. This disconnect suggests that consumer involvement in fashion is not inherently linked to their intention to buy and consume sustainable products. Despite a general awareness of environmental implications, consumers frequently lack the moral motivation necessary for sustainable purchasing. This disconnect reveals a fundamental challenge: while individuals may recognize the importance of sustainability, they often do not feel compelled to act on their beliefs in a consistent manner.

Peña et al. (2023) and Malonzo (2023) further reveal that increased knowledge alone does not guarantee sustainable action. While Philippine youth exhibit some awareness of environmental concerns, this knowledge weakly translates into sustainable purchasing intentions and behaviors (Abeysekera et al., 2022). Although Filipinos recognize the fashion industry's impact on issues like wastewater and solid waste, the relationship between clothing consumption—such as purchase frequency and usage patterns—and overall environmental awareness is only negligible to moderate in strength.

Similarly, Capucao (2024) identifies that although consumers express a preference for sustainable fashion, affordability constraints significantly limit their actual purchasing behaviors. This underscores the argument that practical barriers, including cost, convenience, and product accessibility, disrupt the execution of intentions, indicating that sustainable consumption behaviors cannot be fully understood through attitude-based models alone.

Interestingly, while many studies acknowledge the intention-behavior gap, they often overlook a critical examination of the structural conditions that perpetuate it. This gap suggests that the concept remains underdeveloped within the sustainable fashion literature. Addressing these structural conditions—such as economic disparities, access to sustainable options, and broader cultural attitudes toward sustainability—may be crucial for bridging the gap between intention and behavior in sustainable fashion. By delving deeper into these complexities, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play, ultimately fostering a more effective movement towards sustainable consumption in the fashion industry.

#### *Structural Barriers to Sustainable Consumption*

##### *Economic Reality*

Affordability remains one of the most significant barriers to sustainable fashion adoption, particularly in price-sensitive consumer markets like the Philippines. Research by Padua (2023) highlights a concerning trend: income levels are inversely correlated with awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to sustainable fashion. This suggests that lower-income consumers may not only be less informed about sustainable options but also face greater challenges in prioritizing them amid competing financial pressures.

Capucao (2024) further reinforces this notion by indicating that consumers perceive sustainable clothing as significantly more expensive than fast-fashion alternatives. This perception underscores a critical psychological barrier; price sensitivity strongly influences purchasing decisions, often eclipsing environmental and ethical considerations. The allure of lower prices in fast fashion can create a misleading narrative that sustainability is a luxury, further entrenching the belief that responsible consumption is out of reach for many.

According to Alvaro et al. (2022), the intention-behavior gap in sustainable fashion within the Philippines is shaped by Socially Oriented Behavior and Key Determinants such as the quality and availability of green apparel. However, it is notable that emotions do not play a significant role in influencing these purchasing behaviors. This finding suggests a pragmatic approach among consumers; while they may acknowledge the importance of sustainability, it is ultimately the tangible costs and perceived value of products that drive their choices.

Moreover, price sensitivity emerges as a critical determinant of purchasing intentions, indicating that affordability is a fundamental barrier to the adoption of sustainable fashion (Ricaró et al., 2025). This conclusion is particularly relevant for Generation Z, who, despite demonstrating high levels of environmental awareness, often find themselves deterred by the premium pricing of sustainable options. This raises an important question: Are we doing enough to bridge the gap between sustainable practices and accessibility for younger consumers?

These findings collectively illustrate that economic realities profoundly shape consumer decisions, often overriding sustainability values. While many consumers may support sustainability in principle, their purchasing choices tend to prioritize affordability under the pressures of daily financial constraints. However, it is essential to approach this issue with a broader perspective. The literature frequently treats affordability as a limitation faced by individual consumers, overlooking the structural dynamics of the fast fashion industry. The low-cost production systems of fast fashion not only distort market competition but also set unrealistic consumer expectations regarding pricing and quality. By addressing these systemic issues, stakeholders can work towards creating a more level playing field that fosters both sustainability and affordability. Ultimately, a multifaceted approach that considers economic, social, and industry-wide factors is crucial for promoting the adoption of sustainable fashion.

#### *Availability and Accessibility*

Another significant barrier to the adoption of sustainable fashion is the limited availability and accessibility of eco-friendly products. Even when consumers express a strong interest in sustainability, their purchasing behavior is heavily influenced by the limited access to sustainable alternatives. These constraints not only inhibit production but also impact how readily consumers can find sustainable options in their local markets. Furthermore, Jiu and Sethi (2025) highlight the technical and scalability challenges associated with upcycling materials, which further restricts the availability of sustainable products. For many consumers in developing markets, such as the Philippines, sustainable fashion options are often less visible in physical retail spaces and are overshadowed by fast fashion brands in digital marketplaces. This discrepancy reveals a troubling trend: while consumer interest in sustainability continues to grow, the market's response fails to meet that demand.

These findings indicate that consumer behavior is strongly shaped by market availability. When sustainable choices are difficult to find, less visible, or harder to obtain, awareness and willingness to support sustainability do not necessarily translate into actual purchasing behavior. This gap reinforces consumer dependence on fast fashion, which is not only widely available but also aggressively marketed through various channels.

One critical aspect that existing studies often overlook is the framing of accessibility as merely a logistical issue. This perspective limits a deeper understanding of how retail systems, supply chain structures, and digital platform algorithms influence product visibility and market dominance. For instance, algorithms that favor popular fast-fashion brands over smaller, sustainable labels skew the representation of available options, thereby perpetuating consumer reliance on less sustainable products.

Moreover, the lack of critical examination regarding retail systems means that the broader structural barriers in the fashion industry remain underexplored. Understanding accessibility as a multifaceted issue—shaped by economic, technological, and regulatory elements—can provide valuable insights into how to improve the market landscape for sustainable fashion. Only by addressing these structural challenges can we hope to create an environment where sustainable fashion is not just a niche market but a viable and accessible choice for all consumers.

#### *Trust and Credibility*

Trust in sustainability claims plays a pivotal role in influencing consumer willingness to purchase sustainable fashion products. Without credible and verifiable information, consumers may be hesitant to support brands that assert environmental responsibility. Research by Riesgo et al. (2022) highlights that distrust in sustainability claims is a significant barrier to sustainable fashion consumption, primarily due to growing concerns about greenwashing—where brands exaggerate or misrepresent their environmental initiatives to appeal to eco-conscious consumers.

In the Philippine context, Mendoza et al. (2025) reported that sustainability labels only sway purchasing decisions when consumers perceive them as credible. This highlights an essential aspect of consumer behavior: the importance of credibility in sustainability messages. When brands fail to provide clear evidence or certified claims regarding their sustainable practices, they risk losing potential sales from a market increasingly driven by ethical considerations. This suggests that beyond mere awareness of sustainability issues, consumers need to feel a sense of trust toward brands in order to translate intentions into actions. It underscores the argument that trust acts as a crucial bridge between intention and action, emphasizing that even when consumers acknowledge sustainability issues and express favorable attitudes,

skepticism toward brand claims can disrupt actual purchasing behaviors. Consequently, this highlights the urgent need for brands to prioritize transparency and accountability to build consumer confidence.

Despite these insights, the literature exhibits a notable gap concerning how trust can be reinforced on an institutional level. There is limited discussion about the role of certification systems, stronger regulatory frameworks, and robust brand accountability mechanisms in fostering trust. This oversight presents a significant challenge: trust is frequently framed as a consumer perception issue rather than a governance challenge requiring structural solutions. To address this, there is a compelling need for enhanced regulatory measures that mandate clarity in sustainability claims and promote third-party certifications. Regulatory bodies could help establish standardized frameworks for what constitutes 'sustainable' or 'eco-friendly,' reducing the risk of greenwashing and fostering an environment where consumers can make informed choices. By strengthening the governance of sustainability claims, brands can enhance their credibility, foster greater consumer trust, and ultimately facilitate a transition towards more sustainable consumption patterns.

#### *Fast Fashion Convenience and Digital Reinforcement*

The allure of fast fashion primarily stems from its convenience, which poses a substantial barrier to the uptake of sustainable fashion practices. Fast fashion appeals to consumers through its affordability, accessibility, and the promise of immediate gratification. Cayaban et al. (2023) highlight that in the Philippines, high levels of fast fashion consumption are largely attributable to its cost-effectiveness and responsiveness to current trends. Fast-fashion brands sustain consumer demand through rapid production cycles, aggressive marketing strategies, and extensive retail availability.

Bivek (2025) also draws attention to specific tactics employed by these brands, such as low pricing, limited product drops, and personalized marketing, which foster deep emotional connections between consumers and their purchases. This emotional investment, coupled with the impulsive nature of fast fashion purchases, enhances the appeal of these brands. With easy access to trendy items, frequent product updates, and streamlined shopping experiences, consumers are increasingly drawn to fast fashion over sustainable alternatives.

In the digital landscape, these consumption patterns are reinforced through sophisticated advertising techniques, discounts, and algorithm-driven recommendations. Consumers' daily engagement with digital platforms amplifies their exposure to fast fashion products, eroding their consideration for sustainability in favor of immediate satisfaction. As a result, it becomes evident that consumer choices are profoundly shaped by the design of the digital shopping experience, which prioritizes speed and convenience above environmental consciousness.

#### *Social Influence and Cultural Expectations*

Social influence and cultural expectations play a pivotal role in shaping fashion consumption behavior, often leading consumers to favor fast fashion over sustainable alternatives. Research indicates that various factors, including trends, peer behavior, and societal pressures, make fast fashion particularly appealing. This preference is largely due to its affordability, wide variety, and alignment with the latest fashion trends.

For instance, Tunacao and Gilitwala (2022) emphasize that subjective norms significantly influence consumers' intentions to make sustainable purchases. This suggests that if surrounding peers prioritize fast fashion, individuals may feel compelled to conform, irrespective of their personal values regarding sustainability. Similarly, Ilagan et al. (2024) highlight how social influence affects consumer behavior, reinforcing the notion that purchasing decisions are rarely made in isolation but are guided by the expectations of those around us.

These findings indicate that fashion consumption is intricately linked to identity formation, social belonging, and self-expression. Many consumers prioritize fitting in with social trends and maintaining a desired public image, which often overshadows their awareness of sustainability concerns. Thus, even among those who recognize the environmental impact of fast fashion, the allure of trendy attire can make the adoption of sustainable fashion alternatives challenging, particularly in cultures that place a high value on trends and immediate gratification.

#### *Sustainable Alternatives and Circular Practices*

Recent studies underscore the importance of sustainable choices in the fashion industry, focusing particularly on second-hand fashion, upcycling, and the use of natural fibers. These alternatives resonate with the principles of circular fashion, aiming to extend product life cycles, reduce textile waste, and minimize environmental impact while providing consumers with more responsible consumption options.

In the Philippine context, second-hand fashion, notably known as ukay-ukay, has emerged as one of the most accessible forms of circular fashion. Researchers Biana (2020) have identified ukay-ukay as a practical circular economy practice that promotes clothing reuse and waste reduction. More recent findings by Aldon et al. (2026) reveal an evolution in second-hand fashion consumption—shifting from a necessity-driven motivation to a more identity-driven perspective. Consumers are increasingly engaging in thrift shopping not merely for affordability but as a form of self-expression and a lifestyle choice. This cultural shift indicates that second-hand fashion is now more socially and culturally relevant, reinforcing its position as a sustainable alternative.

Upcycling presents another compelling practice within the circular fashion model, emphasizing the transformative process of converting waste materials into higher-quality or more environmentally valuable products. In the realm of fashion, upcycling operates both as a design philosophy and a sustainability strategy, minimizing material waste while fostering creativity and innovation. Techniques such as reconstructive cutting, patchwork, collage, and modular design systems (as discussed by Gwilt & Rissanen, 2011) exemplify established upcycling practices, textile reuse, and recycling that generate significantly lower environmental impacts compared to methods such as landfilling and incineration. Furthermore, Jiu and Sethi (2025) highlight the practicality of upcycling in regions lacking access to advanced textile technologies like the Philippines. Additionally, Yezhova et al. (2024) demonstrated that upcycling can effectively incorporate ethnic styles into contemporary fashion, thus preserving cultural heritage. These insights affirm that upcycling serves as both an environmental solution and a cultural innovation strategy.

Natural fibers and indigenous textiles also represent sustainable material alternatives. Research by Unal et al. (2020) highlights the environmental advantages of using natural fibers such as piña and abaca, which are known for their biodegradability and lower ecological footprint. Incorporating indigenous woven fabrics into clothing production not only enhances sustainability but also contributes to cultural preservation, particularly in the Philippines.

Beyond production and material innovation, post-consumption practices such as donation, resale, and clothing exchange further contribute to sustainability by extending garment life cycles. These practices reduce clothing disposal and encourage more responsible consumer behavior, fostering a culture of reuse that is essential for sustainable development.

#### *Summary*

The findings of this review confirm that sustainable fashion consumption in the Philippines is a complex issue influenced by multiple interconnected factors. Although the literature consistently reports growing awareness of environmental issues related to fashion, awareness alone does not appear sufficient to disrupt the dominant fast-fashion consumption model, which aligns with the problem identified in the introduction. Despite increasing recognition of fashion's environmental impact, unsustainable consumption practices persist.

While awareness is a necessary starting point, it is not a direct predictor of behavior. Consumers may understand the environmental implications of fashion consumption, but their knowledge is often general and lacks practical depth. This distinction between general awareness and functional sustainability knowledge is important, as it helps explain why environmentally conscious consumers may still engage in unsustainable practices. Inconsistencies across studies regarding levels of awareness further suggest that consumer knowledge is uneven and socially differentiated, influenced by factors such as education, age, and socioeconomic conditions.

Beyond awareness, consumer perception plays a more significant role in shaping purchasing decisions. The literature indicates that consumers evaluate sustainable fashion based on practical and personal value systems, where factors like affordability, quality, identity expression, and social acceptance often outweigh ethical considerations. This suggests that sustainable fashion is not judged solely on environmental grounds but within a broader consumer framework in which self-expression and utility are central. In the Philippine context, economic considerations greatly influence purchasing behavior, often leading sustainable choices to compete with immediate financial realities.

A notable pattern across the literature is the persistence of the intention-behavior gap. Consumers frequently express support for sustainability but struggle to translate this into actual purchasing behavior. This gap indicates that positive attitudes toward sustainable fashion are insufficient without addressing structural barriers. Price sensitivity, limited availability, distrust in sustainability claims, and the convenience of fast fashion create practical constraints that weaken behavioral intentions. This reinforces the argument that sustainable consumption is not merely an individual moral choice but is shaped by market structures and consumption systems.

Structural barriers emerge as one of the most significant themes in the review. Affordability remains a major limitation, particularly as sustainable products are often priced higher, while fast fashion is economically accessible. Accessibility is also a challenge, as sustainable options are less visible and less available in both physical and digital marketplaces. Trust

complicates consumer decision-making further; skepticism towards sustainability claims diminishes confidence in brands and increases consumer hesitation. Collectively, these barriers reveal that consumer behavior is heavily influenced by the broader fashion ecosystem rather than awareness alone.

Additionally, fast fashion continues to dominate due to its speed, accessibility, and strong digital presence. Social media, algorithm-driven marketing, and rapid trend cycles normalize frequent purchasing and reinforce impulsive consumption, placing sustainable fashion alternatives at a structural disadvantage as they often cannot match the convenience and immediate satisfaction offered by fast-fashion systems. This suggests that digital platforms serve not merely as communication tools but as active mechanisms that perpetuate unsustainable consumption patterns.

Despite these challenges, the review identifies sustainable alternatives, such as ukay-ukay (second-hand shops), upcycling, and natural fibers, as promising pathways toward circular fashion. These alternatives are already culturally and economically embedded in the Philippine context, indicating that sustainability solutions need not be entirely imported or newly created. However, their broader integration into mainstream fashion remains underdeveloped due to issues of scale, market visibility, and consumer trust.

Overall, promoting sustainable fashion in the Philippines requires a shift from awareness-centered strategies to systemic interventions. While consumer education remains important, meaningful change also necessitates improvements in affordability, accessibility, market visibility, and institutional trust. Sustainable fashion must be both ethically desirable and competitively priced in the consumer market.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

This review highlights the complex environmental challenges posed by the fast-fashion industry, emphasizing that addressing these issues requires more than raising consumer awareness. While Filipino consumers are becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues in the fashion sector, this knowledge alone is insufficient to drive consistent changes in behavior. The literature reveals that a multitude of factors—such as individual knowledge, societal perceptions, economic realities, social influences, and structural market conditions—significantly shape sustainable fashion consumption patterns.

Practical considerations—namely, affordability, accessibility, convenience, and trust—heavily influence consumer decision-making. Often, these factors overshadow environmental values, which explains the persistent intention-behavior gap in sustainable fashion. Even when consumers express positive attitudes toward sustainability, these attitudes frequently do not translate into actual purchasing behaviors. This disconnect is compounded by a fast fashion ecosystem designed to prioritize immediate accessibility, rapid consumption, and low cost, which continues to dominate the market.

In contrast, sustainable alternatives—such as second-hand fashion, upcycling, and the use of indigenous natural fibers—present viable opportunities for establishing more circular fashion systems in the Philippines. These alternatives not only hold cultural significance but also promise substantial environmental benefits. They serve as effective strategies for mitigating textile waste and fostering responsible consumption patterns within the community. However, for these sustainable practices to gain traction, they require robust support from multiple stakeholders, including market actors, policymakers, and educational initiatives.

For sustainable fashion adoption to take root in the Philippines, a multidimensional approach is essential. Policymakers must work to enhance sustainability regulations, promote transparency mechanisms, and create incentives for both consumers and businesses. Industry players should prioritize improving the accessibility and affordability of sustainable products while also promoting ethical sourcing and production practices. Meanwhile, educational institutions need to deepen consumer understanding by going beyond generic environmental awareness to provide nuanced insights into the implications of fashion choices and their broader context.

Future research should also shift its focus from individual attitude-based models to a more holistic examination of structural, cultural, and digital influences on fashion consumption. Understanding these broader systemic factors is crucial for translating awareness into tangible action and fostering a more sustainable fashion landscape in the Philippines. Addressing the multifaceted nature of these challenges will be key to achieving meaningful progress in the adoption of sustainable fashion practices among Filipino consumers.

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The authors declare no competing interests.

## Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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## Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.