



# An analysis of Social media's impact on consumer attitudes toward Sustainable fashion

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Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in), [www.isca.me](http://www.isca.me)

Received 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025, revised 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025, accepted 20<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## Abstract

*This study explores the impact of social media on consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion. As environmental concerns and social media usage grow, understanding their intersection is critical for stakeholders in the fashion industry. A mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative insights, investigates how social media influences consumer attitudes toward sustainable fashion. Findings show that while social media, especially Instagram, plays a significant role in shaping perceptions, barriers such as cost and availability hinder wider adoption. This research offers recommendations for fashion brands and influencers to leverage social media for promoting sustainability, emphasizing authenticity and transparency.*

**Keywords:** Analysis, social media's, consumer attitudes, sustainable fashion.

## Introduction

The fashion industry is increasingly under scrutiny for its environmental and social impacts, leading to a growing demand for sustainable fashion practices. As consumer concerns about sustainability rise, social media has become a key platform for influencing consumer behavior and perceptions<sup>1</sup>. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok provide an avenue for both fashion brands and influencers to promote sustainable fashion, thereby shaping consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions<sup>2</sup>.

This study investigates the role of social media in shaping consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion. The research aims to explore how social media influences consumers' attitudes toward sustainability in the fashion industry and to understand the barriers preventing the widespread adoption of sustainable fashion practices. By examining the intersection of social media and sustainable fashion, this research seeks to provide insights for brands, influencers, and policymakers aiming to foster more sustainable practices in the fashion industry.

**Literature Review: Customer Awareness in the Fashion Industry:** The fashion industry has long been criticized for its adverse environmental and social effects, such as waste, resource depletion, and unethical labor practices<sup>3</sup>. With increased access to information through media and online platforms, consumer awareness of these issues has grown<sup>4</sup>. Social media has become a vital tool in spreading awareness, with platforms like Instagram offering consumers information about sustainable practices and eco-friendly alternatives<sup>5</sup>.

Studies indicate that awareness levels vary, influenced by factors such as education and age. Younger and more educated

consumers typically show a higher concern for the environmental impacts of fashion<sup>6</sup>. However, despite increased awareness, many consumers remain unaware of the full environmental costs associated with fashion, pointing to a need for greater transparency in the industry<sup>7</sup>.

**Barriers to Adopting Sustainable Fashion:** Despite rising awareness, several barriers hinder the adoption of sustainable fashion. A major barrier identified by 48% of respondents was the higher cost of sustainable fashion. Other barriers included limited availability, lack of consumer knowledge, and misconceptions about the quality and style of sustainable products<sup>8</sup>. These challenges create significant obstacles for widespread consumer adoption of sustainable fashion.

**Role of Social Media in Consumer Engagement:** Social media platforms, especially Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube, have become central to the promotion and consumption of sustainable fashion. Influencers and brands leverage these platforms to showcase sustainable fashion products, share eco-friendly fashion tips, and create campaigns that advocate for sustainability<sup>9</sup>. While social media is a powerful tool for promoting sustainable fashion, issues such as green washing and algorithmic biases limit its effectiveness<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, social media remains crucial in shaping consumer perceptions and fostering engagement with sustainable fashion practices.

## Methodology

This research adopts a positivist philosophy and deductive approach, using a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to assess the influence of social media on consumer perceptions of

sustainable fashion. A structured questionnaire was developed, incorporating multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Purposive sampling was used to select 50 participants from diverse demographic backgrounds, ensuring a broad representation of fashion-conscious consumers<sup>11</sup>.

The survey measured: (1) consumer awareness of sustainable fashion, (2) motivations for adopting sustainable practices, (3) barriers to adoption, and (4) the role of social media in shaping perceptions. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) and Pearson's correlation to explore relationships between social media engagement and sustainable fashion behaviors. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data to identify key themes related to consumer attitudes toward social media's influence on sustainable fashion.

Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring anonymity, and adhering to ethical research guidelines<sup>12</sup>.

## Results and Discussion

**Demographic Profile of Respondents:** The survey results reveal that the majority of respondents (70%) are between the ages of 18 and 35, a demographic that is highly engaged with social media platforms. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, with equal participation from male and female respondents. Additionally, 67% of respondents held at least a Bachelor's degree, indicating that the sample was well-educated. Household income was spread across various brackets, with a slight concentration in the middle-income group, and the sample represented a mix of urban, suburban, and rural locations.

**Social Media Usage and Engagement:** The data shows a high level of social media engagement, with 50% of respondents using social media daily. Instagram was the most popular platform, with 60% of respondents indicating frequent use. This finding supports the literature that highlights Instagram as a key platform for fashion-related content<sup>13</sup>. A significant portion of respondents (70%) reported using social media for 2-4 hours per day, indicating a high degree of exposure to fashion-related content, including sustainable fashion practices.

**Sustainable Fashion Awareness and Behavior:** The survey indicates that 80% of respondents were aware of sustainable fashion practices, with 60% actively seeking sustainable fashion products when shopping. Environmental concerns (70%) and product quality (50%) were the primary motivations for choosing sustainable fashion. These findings align with prior research, which suggests that consumers are motivated by environmental and ethical concerns when adopting sustainable practices<sup>14</sup>.

**Barriers to Adoption:** Despite the awareness and interest in sustainable fashion, significant barriers remain. A major barrier

identified by 48% of respondents was the higher cost of sustainable fashion. Other barriers included limited availability (22%) and a lack of information (30%). These barriers reflect previous studies, which highlighted cost and accessibility as major hurdles for sustainable consumption<sup>15</sup>.

**Social Media's Influence on Perception:** Social media emerged as a significant influencer, with 70% of respondents who followed fashion-related accounts on social media indicating that it was "very influential" in shaping their perception of sustainable fashion. This finding supports the literature on the critical role of social media in promoting sustainability<sup>16</sup>. However, concerns about green washing were also raised, underscoring the need for greater transparency in how sustainability is communicated on social media<sup>17</sup>.

**Recommendations:** Based on the findings, the following recommendations are provided for stakeholders in the fashion industry:

**Emphasize authenticity and transparency:** Fashion brands and influencers should focus on maintaining authenticity and transparency in their social media sustainability campaigns. Brands and influencers should prioritize authenticity and transparency in their sustainability campaigns on social media. Clearly communicating the steps taken to ensure sustainability will help build consumer trust<sup>18</sup>.

**Promote Educational Content:** Content creators on social media platforms should focus on educational content that informs consumers about the environmental and ethical impacts of their fashion choices. This could include guides on eco-friendly materials and sustainable shopping tips<sup>19</sup>.

**Enhance Inclusivity and Diversity:** Social media should be used to promote diversity and inclusivity within the sustainable fashion space. Representation of different body types, ethnicities, and backgrounds will ensure that sustainability initiatives resonate with a broader audience<sup>20</sup>.

**Address Barriers to Adoption:** Fashion brands should work to make sustainable fashion more affordable and accessible by exploring cost-effective production methods and improving supply chain transparency<sup>21</sup>.

**Regulations and Standards for Transparency:** Policymakers should introduce regulations and standards to ensure transparency in sustainability claims, protecting consumers from green washing and enabling them to make informed choices<sup>22</sup>.

## Conclusion

This study examines how social media shapes consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion, emphasizing its critical role in influencing attitudes and behaviors. The findings reveal that platforms—particularly Instagram—play a substantial role in

driving consumer engagement with sustainable fashion. However, despite increasing awareness of sustainability, challenges such as high costs and limited product availability continue to restrict broader adoption.

The research highlights the importance of authenticity and transparency in the messaging of fashion brands and influencers. Furthermore, it stresses the value of promoting educational content, enhancing inclusivity, and addressing financial constraints to advance sustainability in the fashion sector. By harnessing the influence of social media and implementing more sustainable practices, brands can help foster an ethical and environmentally responsible fashion industry.

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