

Exploring Purchase Intention Toward Sustainable Fashion: The Role of Attitude, Norms, and Control

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Abstract: This study aims to examine how attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control influence consumers' purchase intentions toward sustainable fashion products. The research is motivated by the growing environmental challenges caused by the fast fashion industry, particularly related to textile waste and ecological degradation. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study focuses on understanding how cognitive and social factors influence Generation Z consumers in Java Island in forming sustainable purchase intentions. A quantitative method with a correlational design was applied, using data collected through an online questionnaire from respondents aged 18–27 years. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results reveal that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control have a positive and significant effect on purchase behavioral intention. These findings confirm the relevance of TPB in explaining sustainable fashion consumption and emphasize the role of individual attitudes, perceived social pressure, and perceived ease or difficulty in adopting pro-environmental behaviors. The study provides theoretical contributions by reinforcing the core constructs of TPB in the context of sustainable fashion and offers practical insights for industry stakeholders and policymakers seeking to promote environmentally responsible consumption among young consumers.

Keywords: Sustainable Fashion, Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry has continued to grow after the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with rapidly changing trends. Previously considered a basic necessity, clothing now serves as a means of self-expression and artistic creativity. These fast-changing trends have accelerated fashion consumption patterns, often overlooking critical issues such as textile waste. Every year, landfills receive approximately 92 million tons of clothing waste, which is equivalent to one truckload of discarded clothing every second (Global Fashion Agenda, 2023). According to Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), fabric and plastic waste ranked second and third in the largest types of national waste in 2023.

The fast fashion phenomenon is a major contributor to this increase in textile demand. Fast fashion is characterized by trendy, inexpensive, and frequently updated products designed for short-term use. However, it poses severe environmental risks, such as non-recyclable clothing waste and the use of hazardous dyes. According to the UK Textile Recycling Association, the fashion industry contributes to 1.2 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions annually, making it the second-largest polluter globally.

The fashion industry has continued to grow after the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with rapidly changing trends. Clothing, which was previously considered a basic necessity, has shifted into a means of self-expression and artistic creativity. These fast-changing trends have accelerated fashion consumption patterns, often overlooking critical issues such as textile waste. Every year, landfills receive approximately 92 million tons of clothing waste, which is equivalent to one truckload of discarded clothing every second (Global Fashion Agenda, 2023). According to Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), fabric and plastic waste ranked second and third in the largest types of national waste in 2023.

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To mitigate these impacts, public awareness of sustainable clothing consumption must be strengthened. Sustainable fashion emphasizes environmentally ethical practices throughout the product life cycle—from design to disposal. Prior research using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has shown that attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control are significant predictor of sustainable purchase intentions.

This study focuses on Generation Z consumers on Java Island. As a digitally connected, socially aware, and increasingly economically independent demographic, their consumption choices significantly influence future sustainability efforts. Survey results conducted with 311 Generation Z respondents across Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya confirmed that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control were the most influential variables on their sustainable fashion purchase intentions.

Thus, this research evaluates the influence of these TPB constructs on sustainable fashion purchase behavioral intentions and contributes to efforts to encourage responsible consumption.

1.1 Problem Formulation

1. Does attitude influence purchase behavioral intention toward sustainable fashion products?
2. Does the intention to purchase sustainable fashion products depend on subjective norms?
3. Does perceived behavioral control influence purchase behavioral intention toward sustainable fashion products?

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is widely applied to predict consumer intentions and behaviors. According to Ajzen (1991), TPB assumes that specific behaviors can be predicted by three core factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Higher behavioral intention is likely to result in the actual performance of the behavior (Fehintola et al., 2024). TPB has been extensively used to analyze sustainable consumption behavior, effectively explaining the gap between intention and actual behavior (Floriano & de Matos, 2022).

Recent studies have integrated new constructs into the TPB framework to enhance its predictive power. For instance, Nicolau et al. (2024) highlighted the emotional aspect, such as eco-shame, as a significant factor in sustainable fashion consumption, indicating the relevance of affective and cognitive dimensions. This study extends TPB by incorporating eco-shame as an independent variable.

Moreover, consumer capability in accessing and utilizing sustainability-related information plays a vital role in purchase decision-making (Bhutto & Rütelioné, 2024). Studies by Tiwari (2023) and Bhutto & Rütelioné (2024) have demonstrated the significant influence of eco-literacy on purchase behavioral intention toward sustainable products. Therefore, this study includes eco-literacy as a moderating variable to examine its role in strengthening.

2.2 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Fashion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), initiated by the United Nations, emphasize responsible production and consumption under Goal 12, which aims to reduce waste through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse by 2030 (SDGS Bappenas, 2024). Sustainable fashion aligns closely with this goal, focusing on environmentally and socially responsible design, production, distribution, and usage of clothing (Djossouvi et al., 2024).

Additionally, ethical fashion incorporates fair labor practices, sustainable business models, organic materials, and eco-friendly production processes, aligning with the slow fashion movement that emphasizes sustainability and minimal environmental impact (Gurova, 2024). Thus, the SDGs agenda deeply intertwines with sustainable fashion, which targets significant environmental, social, and economic impacts through responsible consumption and production patterns.

2.3 Purchase Behavioral Intention

Purchase behavioral intention refers to the motivational factors influencing the willingness to buy sustainable fashion products (Nicolau et al., 2024). Positive attitudes are expected to drive purchase intentions (Fiandari et al., 2024), where consumers’ freedom to access product information significantly affects their purchasing decisions (Folkvord et al., 2021).

2.4 Attitude

Attitude refers to an individual’s positiv or negative evaluation of sustainable fashion products. Prior studies, including Nicolau et al. (2024), Floriano & de Matos (2022) and Fiandari et al. (2024), consistently report a positive and significant relationship between attitude and purchase behavioral intention.

H1: Attitude positively and significantly influences purchase behavioral intention.

2.5 Subjective Norm

The influence of subjective norms remains inconsistent. While Nicolau et al. (2024) and Floriano & de Matos (2022) found no significant relationship between subjective norms and purchase behavioral intention, other studies such as Kaur et al. (2023) and Al-Debei et al. (2015) revealed a significant positive effect

H2: Subjective norm positively and significantly influences purchase behavioral intention.

2.6 Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control reflects the perceived ease or difficulty in performing sustainable purchasing behaviors. Studies by Nicolau et al. (2024), Floriano & de Matos (2022), and Fiandari et al. (2024) confirm that perceived behavioral control significantly enhances purchase intention toward sustainable fashion.

H3: Perceived behavioral control positively and significantly influences purchase behavioral intention.

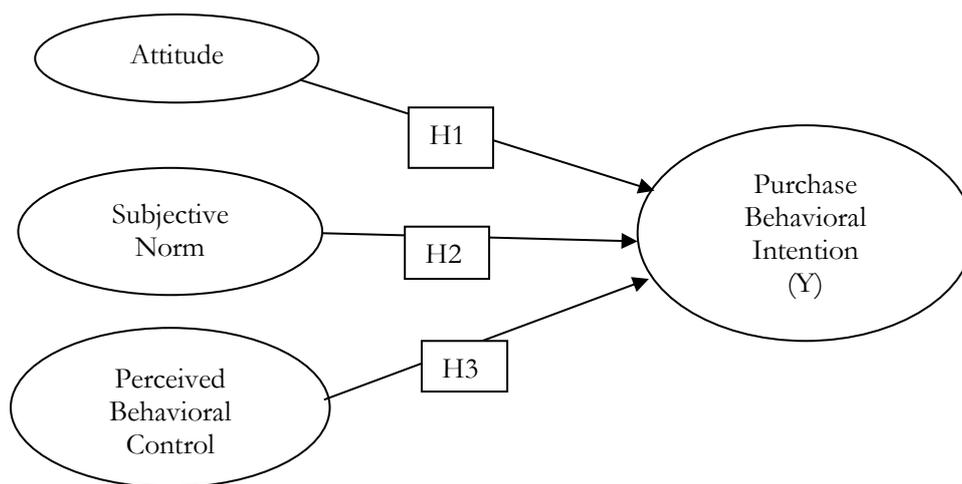


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The table below presents the complete results of the calculations using SmartPLS 4.0.

Tabel. 3 Hypothesis Test

Variabel	Koefisien	t-statistic	p- value	Hasil
Attitude (X1) -> Purchase Bahvioral Intention (Y)	0,188	2,898	0,002	Positive significant
Subjective norm (X2) -> Purchase Behavioral Intention (Y)	0,161	2,928	0,003	Positive significant
Perceived Behavioural Control (X3) -> Purchase Behavioral Intention (Y)	0,334	4,741	0,000	Positive significant

Source: Researcher

3.2 The Influence of Attitude on Purchase Behavioral Intention

The test results indicate that the variable Attitude (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Behavioral Intention (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.188, a t-statistic of 2.898, and a p-value of 0.002. Since the t-statistic > t-table (1.650) and p-value < 0.05, the relationship between the two variables can be considered statistically significant. The findings suggest that the more positive the evaluation or consideration process by Gen Z consumers in major cities on the island of Java regarding environmentally friendly products, the stronger their motivation to purchase sustainable fashion. A positive evaluation reflects the belief that buying sustainable fashion products provides both personal and environmental benefits and that such a decision is considered a meaningful action.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), attitude is one of the main determinants in forming an individual's behavioral intention. In the context of sustainable fashion consumption, consumers who have a positive evaluation of environmentally friendly fashion products tend to have a stronger motivation to purchase such products. This finding is also supported by Simanjuntak et al. (2023), who found that green product purchase motivation is statistically significant. Likewise, Rahayu et al. (2024) found that attitude has a direct and significant effect on the intention to purchase sustainable products. Additionally, a previous study in India by Chandra Pant et al. (2024) also demonstrated that attitude significantly influences purchase intention toward eco-friendly products.

The findings of this study are important: marketing strategies for sustainable fashion aimed at Gen Z in big cities on Java Island should work on creating positive views among consumers by educating them about the benefits of eco-friendly products and highlighting the social and environmental values of these fashion items. Positive views can be built through clear brand messaging, reliable information, and emotional connections to the product and the environmental values that consumers care about.

3.3 The Influence of Subjective Norm on Purchase Behavioral Intention

The test results indicate that the subjective norm variable positively affects purchase behavioral intention, with a path coefficient of 0.161, a t-statistic of 2.928, and a p-value of 0.002. Since the t-statistic is greater than the t-table value (1.650) and the p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. The findings indicate that the stronger the social influence from close individuals (such as family, friends, and the social environment), the higher the purchase motivation among Gen Z individuals in Java Island. In the context of consumer behavior, subjective norm acts as an external factor influencing Gen Z's purchasing decisions due to social pressure and the desire to be accepted within a particular social group.

This finding aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which identifies subjective norms as one of the key determinants of intention. Consumers in the Gen Z segment in Java Island tend to follow social norms, meaning they are likely to adopt sustainable fashion purchasing behaviors when they observe those around them doing the same. In other words, close social circles significantly influence Gen Z's motivation to purchase. Supporting studies such as He & Sui (2024) also found that subjective norm significantly affects the motivation to purchase environmentally friendly products and that support from friends and family is a key factor in purchase decision-making for such products. Likewise, Carrión Bósquez et al. (2023) stated that subjective norm significantly influences green purchase intention, as individuals feel encouraged to make eco-conscious purchases based on social influences from their environment.

Further, Surahman et al. (2023) found that subjective norm plays an important role in motivating the purchase of sustainable products, especially within peer groups and communities focused on environmentally conscious lifestyles. This is in line with (Wang & Hassan, 2024), who concluded that the higher the level of social pressure and support, the more likely an individual is to adopt environmentally caring attitudes.

This study shows that the subjective norm is an important factor in motivating Gen Z consumers in Java to make purchases. Sustainable fashion businesses can leverage this social influence by utilizing strategies such as testimonials, influencers, and community engagement to enhance purchase intentions among the Gen Z demographic in Java.

3.4 The Influence of Perceived Behavioral Control on Purchase Behavioral Intention

The study's results show that Perceived Behavioral Control (X3) positively affects Purchase Behavioral Intention (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.334, a t-statistic of 4.741, and a p-value of 0.000. It can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted—meaning the higher the individual's perceived control, the greater the likelihood of purchasing environmentally friendly products. This finding shows that perceived behavioral control is key to determining purchase behavioral intention and reflects the extent to which Gen Z individuals in Java feel they have the ability, opportunity, and control to take action—in this case, to purchase sustainable fashion products.

Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is recognized as a primary determinant of behavioral intention. Purchasing behavior and an individual's belief in their control over purchasing decisions serve as strong drivers in forming such motivation. This aligns with findings from (Ramos-Meza, 2023), who concluded that when individuals feel they control their purchasing decisions, their motivation to buy environmentally friendly products significantly increases. Supporting this, Nguyen et al. (2016) also found that among Gen Z, perceived behavioral control is a dominant factor in determining green purchase intention.

Similarly, Maichum et al. (2017) found that PBC has a significant influence on green purchase intention among consumers in developing countries. The analysis results suggest that perceived behavioral control plays a crucial role in shaping the intention to purchase. Therefore, marketing strategies should aim to enhance perceptions of ease, convenience, and availability of eco-friendly products. This, accompanied by adequate and accessible information, can effectively boost purchase motivation among Gen Z consumers in Java.

4. Conclusion

The research on Generation Z in major cities across Java Island leads to the following conclusions:

1. Attitude has a positive and significant effect on purchase behavioral intentions. The more positive Generation Z's attitude toward environmentally friendly clothing products, the higher their intention is to purchase them.
2. The subjective norm also positively and significantly influences purchase behavioral intention. Social influences from close circles such as family, friends, and community play an important role in shaping the motivation to buy sustainable clothing.
3. Perceived behavioral control shows a positive and significant effect on purchase behavioral intentions. Generation Z's ability to access, afford, and feel confident in purchasing environmentally friendly clothing

serves as a strong predictor of purchase intention.

In general, attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are key factors that influence Generation Z's motivation to buy sustainable clothing in Java. These findings bolster the Theory of Planned Behavior framework and establish a strategic basis for more focused promotion and education initiatives.

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