



**Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

**The Role of Social Sustainability on Consumer Purchase  
Intention for Fashion Products**

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB SEM	Covariance based Structural Equation Modelling
CCA	Confirmatory Composite Analysis
CCC	Construct Cross-validated Communalities
CCR	Construct Cross-validated Redundancy
CR	Composite Reliability
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
E-COMMERCE	Electronic Commerce
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
KSH	Central Statistical Office of Hungary
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PBC	Perceived Behavioural Control
PLS SEM	Partial Least Squares based Structural Equation Modelling
SCB	Sustainable Consumer Behaviour
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
UN	United Nation
UNBC	United Nations Brundtland Commission
VIF	Variation Inflation Values
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WFTO	World Fair Trade Organization



# 1. INTRODUCTION

The term sustainability is no longer an issue that can be easily bypassed (SPINDLER, 2013) and can be described as the equal and well-organized division of resources inter-generationally and intra-generationally along with the processes of socio-economic events following the limitations of an ecosystem (VAF AEI et al., 2019). Sustainability has gained much importance publicly (VERBEKE et al., 2007) at the government level, among Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and together with private businesses worldwide since they are promoting this term and "sustainable development" as their primary objectives, in planning and in their policymaking (GECZI, 2007; HARANGOZÓ & ZILAHY, 2015). Sustainability is not limited to one's relationship with the environment; instead, it involves the relationship between us, our institutions, communities, and the economies (DONATO et al., 2020). There are three primary disciplines set for sustainability, i.e., social, environmental, and economic sustainability (URFALI & ARAS, 2019). Social sustainability can be described as an arrangement of quality life for the existing generation, depicting the term "social" followed by maintaining this quality of living for the coming generations, defining the term "sustainability". Moreover, the social sustainability must be compatible with protecting the environment (JEROME et al., 2020). It can be concluded that social sustainability aims at protecting social righteousness, justice, and equality by following a series of actions (DONATO et al., 2020).

For a long period of time, the fashion industry is observed as the highly destructive sector for the environment preceded by the oil industry (MOORHOUSE & MOORHOUSE, 2017), while multiple customers, activists, fashion industries, and researchers have emphasized the sustainability of society and the environment (KONG et al., 2016). Apart from the fashion industry's gross economic success, it has imparted a negative impact on society and the environment, including excessive utilization of natural resources, waste production, and ultimately destroying the environment (PEDERSEN & ANDERSEN, 2015; GRAZZINI, 2020).

Previously, sustainability was not a concerning aspect in the fashion industry, but now with the changing trends, where significant considerations have been laid towards ethical and environmental norms, sustainability has gained more attention (JOY & PEÑA, 2017; DONATO et al., 2020). As a consequence of activists' efforts, a plan was introduced in 2016 May as European Clothing Action to improve the sustainability of fabric's design and prolonged utility (MOORHOUSE & MOORHOUSE, 2017).

Recently the term "sustainable (slow) fashion" has been introduced and gained much significance among the fashion brands and customers, describing the clothing brands following the development of clothing designs for prolonged use by using safer, eco-friendly material and following the processes that do not cause any harm to the workers as well as the environment and involve the principles of a fair-trade (SARICAM & OKUR, 2019).

In contrast, the fast (disposable) fashion industry yields trendy, fashionable, and quality garments for the customers at economical rates. Apart from the industrial expansion, fast fashion is now reinvestigated due to multiple factors, including ethical and environmental issues, i.e., environmental pollution, labour load, massive dye production, waste production (JANG et al., 2012). These factors arise due to the disposability and extraordinary high production and sales levels of fast fashion (PARK & KIM, 2016). It can also be said that fast fashion industry has become the central dynamic factor among young customers' choice of clothing. This has raised the purchases, and these customers tend to attire without considering their needs (RATHINAMOORTHY, 2019).

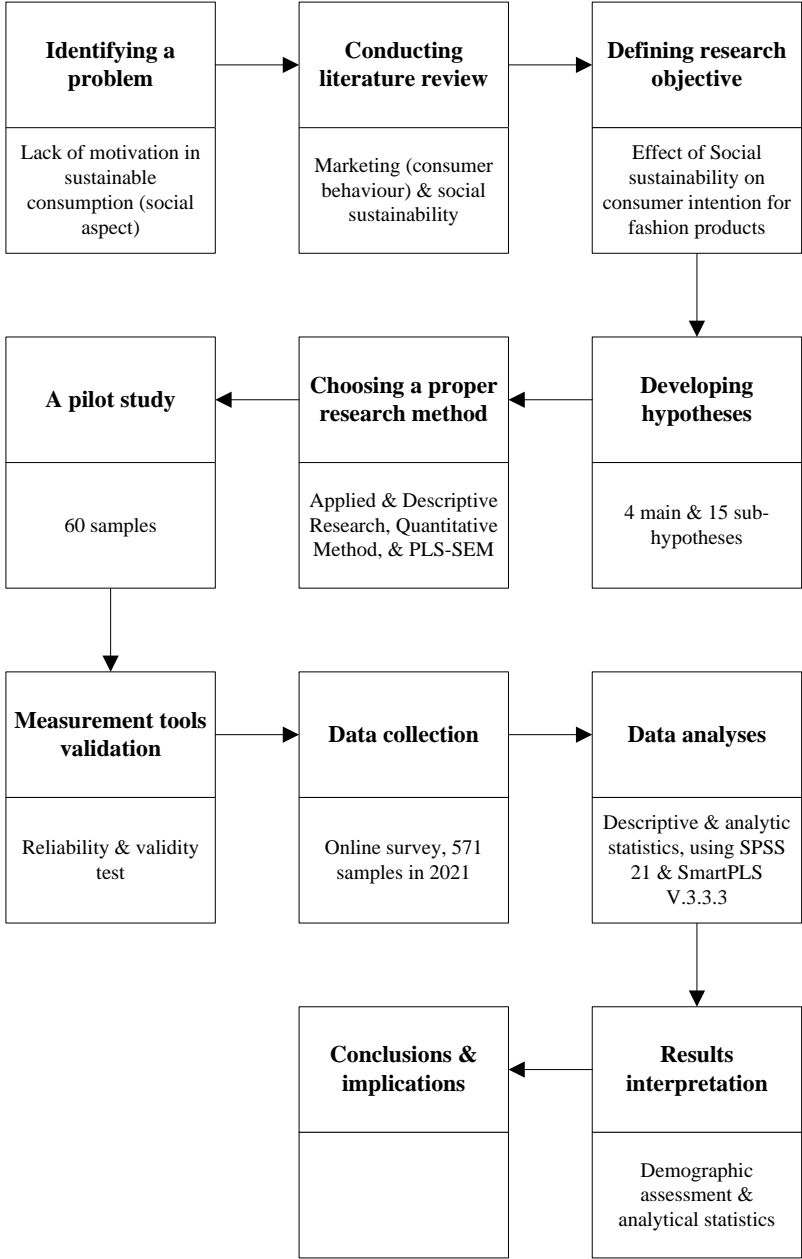
In fact, marketing strategies have been found in contradiction with sustainability. But currently researchers are now emphasizing the link between sustainability and marketing strategies, especially in regards of consumer-centric approaches (VAF AEI et al., 2016). For instance, it has been identified the marketing strategies as dynamic factors in recognizing and fulfilling customers' needs more sustainably (JONES et al., 2008). Consumers also play a fundamental role in connection between sustainability and any organizations. They feel a strong responsibility to involve themselves in sustainable purchasing process which includes the environmental and social actions and emphasizes the needs and demands of coming generations (VERBEKE et al., 2007). To promote and guarantee sustainable purchasing trends, customers must be attracted to the sustainable goods and services (VISSER et al., 2018).

Therefore, for investigating the relationship between the sense of social responsibility and increasing purchase intention, this study intends to address both social sustainability and consumer behaviour for fashion products.

### **1.1. Research Procedure – Flow Chart**

Figure 1 presents a flowchart which is simply a graphical representation of the research process. Problem statement is one of the main steps that should be addressed carefully and explicitly. In fact, by stating the problem, the applicability of the research and its beneficial effects in solving a problem in society could be shown. Then, the related literature should be reviewed in order to set

the research objectives and hypotheses. Choosing an appropriate research method is crucial as well. Afterwards, pilot study needs to be conducted to increase the likelihood of the research success and validating of the measurement tools. Collecting data properly and correctly plays an important role in the research analyses and could guarantee the accuracy of the results. In addition, statistical analyses could provide clear and documented results. Moreover, researcher's findings could be reflected to the audience through them. Results interpretation is of particular importance for supporting or rejecting the hypotheses as well (SEKARAN, 2003).



**Figure 1. Research Procedure**

Source: Author’s own construction

## 1.2. Problem Statement

In September 2015, the United Nations Member States agreed to set a path for sustainable development by approving the 2030 sustainable development agenda. This agenda contains 17 goals and 169 targets, in three sustainable dimensions, meaning social, economic, and environmental, that must be achieved by 2030. These goals and targets set the framework for a joint action entitled "to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity" that must be implemented by all countries and beneficiaries (ARORA & MISHRA, 2019).

**Table 1. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

<b>1. No Poverty</b>	<b>2. No Hunger</b>	<b>3. Good Health</b>	<b>4. Quality Education</b>	<b>5. Gender Equality</b>	<b>6. Clean Water &amp; Sanitation</b>
<b>7. Renewable Energy</b>	<b>8. Good Jobs &amp; Economic Growth</b>	<b>9. Innovation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<b>10. Reduced Inequalities</b>	<b>11. Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b>	<b>12. Responsible Consumption &amp; Production Patterns</b>
<b>13. Climate Action</b>	<b>14. Life below Water</b>	<b>15. Life on Land</b>	<b>16. Peace &amp; Justice</b>	<b>17. Partnerships for the Goals</b>	

Source: Author's own construction based on UNITED NATIONS (2015) assembly

Based on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) presented in Table 1, sustainable consumption and production patterns is one of the main goals which should be achieved by 2030. Therefore, there is a need to change both production patterns and the way how people buy and consume products.

As a matter of fact, companies should build a good connection with their consumers and even involve them in production if they are willing to have successful products and production developments. In other words, success of any organizations much depends on consumer behaviour since it is the most important way to retain the current customers for a long-term trough satisfying their needs and also attract new customers (SHABBIR et al., 2020). Consumer behaviour can be defined as the process of a person's or a community's purchasing, utilization, and disposal of products and services (AZEVEDO et al., 2008). It is suggested to understand consumer behaviour before planning or introducing any products or services in the market so that the product is according to consumer needs and demands. Also, by understanding consumer behaviour, an organization can easily plan and manage marketing strategies. Moreover, it is crucial to research

thoroughly and understand consumer behaviour so that required products and services can be introduced in the market (GÜRBÜZ, 2018).

Reports have indicated that marketing strategy as a saviour for environmental and social issues, and at the same time as a villain due to marketing strategies' role in maintaining the continuously changing demands of consumers (PEATTIE, 2001). Moreover, governments, organizations, and NGOs have identified a new topic of interest which is sustainable behaviour that gaining significance globally. Green behaviour has become challenging for the policy developers to introduce among the public and engage them in striving for cooperative development and a sustainable economy in the state in the continually deteriorating ecology (LILI & CHAN, 2018). With the spreading awareness regarding green behaviour, people recognize their social and environmental influence and prefer purchasing sustainable products from the market. Consequently, environmental, and social activities have gained a particular place in any organization's marketing strategies (GAM, 2011). Unfortunately, still there is an immense need to understand the harmful effects of unsustainable production by fashion brands (PARK & KIM, 2016). The fashion industry has been observed as a highly profitable industry worldwide; however, its significance is being oppressed now due to its unsustainable nature (VILLA TODESCHINI et al., 2020).

In fact, sustainability and fashion seem to be two opposite terminologies. Fashion has been linked with the high living and trendy, yet with the lower lifecycle. However, sustainability has been linked with ethical norms and long-lasting products (MEINKE & MUSTORP, 2017). Furthermore, the fashion industry is a continuously changing and challenging industry that cannot fulfil sustainability requirements and cannot address the fundamental demanding challenges of consumer behaviour and successful businesses (PEDERSEN & ANDERSEN, 2015).

Generally, the win-win consequences can be attained by which an organization can make higher profits by following the sustainable marketing strategies (FOWLER, 2007). Presently, a trend has shifted towards sustainability in the fashion industry. However, this shift can be successfully adopted only if consumers understand and promote sustainable fashion (MCNEILL & MOORE, 2015). Furthermore, the public awareness regarding the significance of all sustainability aspects including social pillar is growing in most of the organizations (KHADE, 2016). Apparently, there is a gap between sustainable consumer behaviour and their social & ethical attitude (BUBICZ et al., 2020).

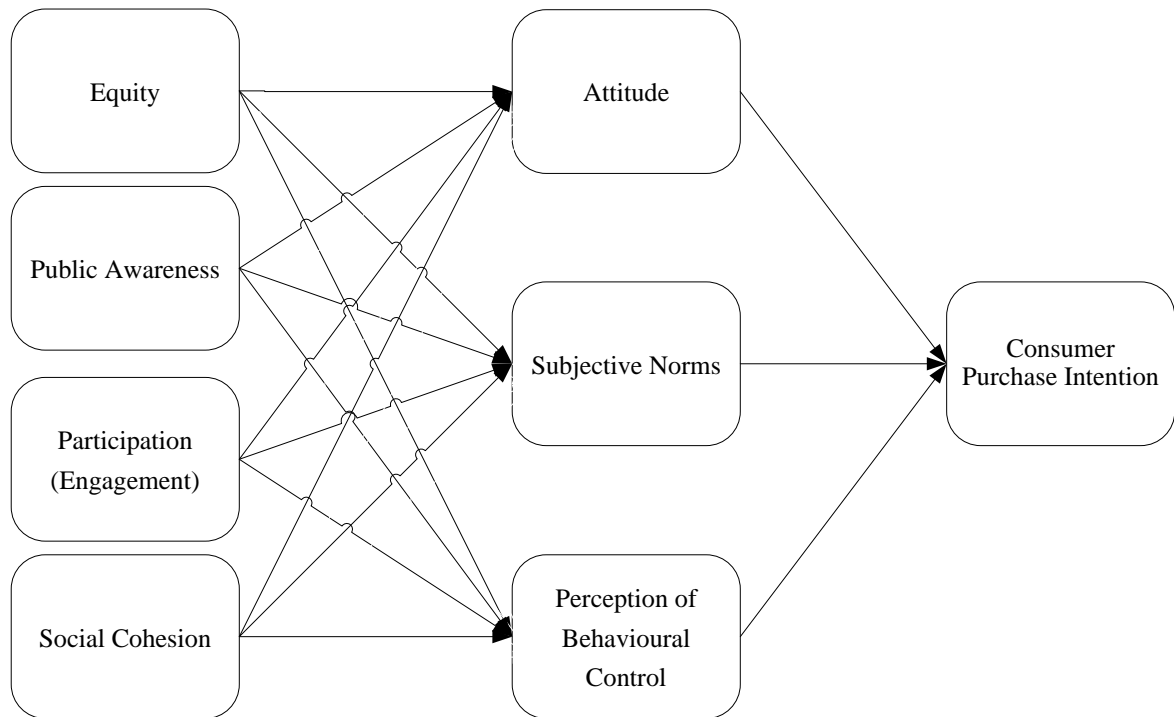
To put it all together, to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns according to the 12<sup>th</sup> sustainable development goal in fashion industry, there is a need to study how people can get motivated to change their consumption and purchasing patterns by considering social sustainability issues. Therefore, this research aims to identify the impact of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention for fashion products. Next step is to design the research model in a way that the requisite data can be gathered and analysed to arrive at a solution.

### **1.3. Scientific Research Model**

Stakeholders directly impact the driving aspects of sustainable development, technology and overall infrastructure, whereas they are influenced by the strategies, including sustainable strategies and organizational goals. Moreover, they can contribute to develop sustainable policies in any organizations (RANGARAJAN, 2013; YAMANE & KANEKO, 2021). The impact of stakeholder's cooperation in developing social and ecological policies is crucial in accomplishing sustainability as it affects the implementation of new processes and promotes entrepreneurship among businesses (VILLA TODESCHINI et al., 2020). Reportedly, consumers are important stakeholders, and ultimately the impact of their behaviour on sustainability is of utmost significance.

On the one hand, four significant factors impact consumer behaviour, i.e., cultural, social, personal, and psychological characteristics (KOTLER & KELLER, 2012) and consumer intention which influences consumer behaviour (MORWITZ, 2012) belongs to psychological category (HUSSAIN et al., 2021). On the other hand, there are three pillars which shape sustainability, i.e., environmental, economic, and social (ZHOU & KUHL, 2011). Previously, much importance was not given to social sustainability in debates or written contexts (PARTRIDGE, 2014). However, with the increasing awareness regarding social sustainability, it has been claimed that it is a more challenging and significant factor than environmental pillar (KANDACHAR, 2014). It can be said that social sustainability has remained underestimated or taken as of lower significance due to which limited data has been published regarding this issue (COLANTONIO, 2009).

According to MURPHY (2012) study, social sustainability has four dimensions, including equity, public awareness, participation (engagement), and social cohesion. In addition, consumer purchase intention is affected by three factors which are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control according to the Theory of planned behaviour developed by AJZEN (1991). The aim of the present study was to develop a comprehensive model of the which interaction between social sustainability and consumer purchase intention that is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Research Model**

Source: Author's own construction

#### **1.4. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Research questions should be formulated and expressed based on the research objectives and variables. Moreover, proper and principled writing of hypotheses is one of the most important steps in any studies. This research consists of 4 research questions and consequently four main hypotheses in order to answer these questions, along with fifteen sub-hypotheses.

➤ Research questions:

- ❖ Q1. What effect does the perception of social equity have on the purchase intention of Hungarian students for fashion products?
- ❖ Q2. How can ethical and social awareness among Hungarian students develop their intention to avoid unsustainable fashion products?
- ❖ Q3. What effect do different participation (engagement) approaches have on the sustainable garments purchase intention of Hungarian students?
- ❖ Q4. What impact have social cohesion had on the sustainable purchase intention of students in Hungary?

- Main hypotheses:
- ❖ H1. Social equity positively influences consumer intention for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H2. Public awareness of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H3. Participation (engagement) of consumers positively influence their intention for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H4. Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention for sustainable garments
- Sub-hypotheses:
- ❖ H5. Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their sustainable attitude for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H6. Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H7. Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H8. Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their green attitude for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H9. Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H10. Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H11. Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their green attitude for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H12. Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H13. Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H14. Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer green attitude for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H15. Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H16. Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments



- ❖ H17. Green attitude of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H18. Green subjective norms of consumers positively influence their intention for purchasing sustainable garments
- ❖ H19. Green perceived behavioural control of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments

## **1.5. Research Area**

The research area refers to the complete evaluation of a situation in which the researcher identifies the need for research and presents the possible solutions for a problem (SEKARAN, 2003), and it is investigated from three perspectives:

- Scope of the study
- Time frame
- Research territory

### **Scope of the Study:**

The scope of the study includes the details regarding which subjects would be evaluated. In other words, it refers to those studies which already conducted and set the parameters that would be followed in the research.

In this research, the scope of the study is related to the field of marketing and sustainability in general. But in particular, it examines the consumer behaviour towards companies' sustainable strategies (especially social policies & corporate social responsibilities (CSRs)) in fashion industry.

### **Time Frame:**

This research was aimed to be conducted in the time frame of 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

### **Research Territory:**

The research was conducted among Hungarian students who are studying in territory of Hungary.

### **Type and Purpose of the Study**

Basically, there are two different types of study: basic research and applied research. basic research involves developing a new body of knowledge, while in applied research, a particular problem is taken, and possible solutions are generated for that (SEKARAN, 2003). Accordingly, this research is an applied research.

Moreover, there are three study purposes, descriptive, exploratory, or for evaluating the hypothesis. This research has an exploratory purpose. Such research is conducted to determine and understand the root cause of behaviours since there is not sufficient information (SEKARAN, 2003).

### **1.6. Data Collection**

The data has been collected by two methods, i.e., by library research for accessing to the secondary data and by questionnaire for having primary data.

By library research, we could define the problem, develop a theory, and then determine multiple possible variables that can impact it (SEKARAN, 2003). Therefore, library research has been done extensively to create a strong command over the background.

Collecting data by filling questionnaire could be one of the most efficient ways, if a researcher is aware of what type of data is required and how to find out the variables of interests (SEKARAN, 2003). A well-designed questionnaire on the various factors which influence the consumer behaviour by sustainable products or strategies in fashion industry developed for this study.

### **1.7. Research Population**

The research population is the group of people targeted for the research (MAJID, 2018). In fact, younger generation has become the most influential consumer group and they are willing to pay more attention to the sustainable issues (GAZZOLA et al., 2020). Moreover, students are one of the best groups to study sustainability perception among them and also track any perspective changes over time (SPEER et al., 2020). They have a considerable force in fashion industry to lead this market to a right way, since they could push avant-garde ideas to any potential markets (GAO, 2016). Therefore, for this research, the research population includes all Hungarian students studying in Hungary.

### **Sampling**

Sampling is one of the essential and crucial tools for research as the research population may include many people for any projects. It is essential to select a good sample, where the entire population can be represented efficiently, and the sample size should be selected appropriately so that research queries can be justified easily (MAJID, 2018).

Sampling can be done in two ways, probability and nonprobability. Firstly, there are known chances for the population elements to be selected, while in the latter method, there are no known chances to be selected (SEKARAN, 2003). In non-probability method, no matter how large the

sample size, the samples often cannot be a true representative of society. However, sometimes this sampling is the best method since it is cost effective and more time efficient (GALLOWAY, 2005).

This study used convenience sampling which belongs to nonprobability method since the data collection from members of the research population is more convenient, available, and cheaper to provide.

### **Sample Size**

The sample size is a critical factor. A good sample size assists in generalizing the outcomes of an entire research population. The sample size is also essential to achieve the required accuracy (SEKARAN, 2003). While there are several kinds of significance sample size calculation which may be applied to PLS SEM analyses, “A priori sample size model” has been widely used recently. By using this method, the chances of negative results are declined (MOSHAGEN & ERDFELDER, 2016). Based on this method, at least 256 respondents (samples) are needed.

## 2. OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE

On the one hand, each industry has its own effect on overall lifestyle and economy (SCHALTEGGER et al., 2012) and marketing imparts a significant impact on developing relationships between customers and businesses that is beneficial for the livelihood of customers and the businesses (USLAY et al., 2008). In addition, consumer behaviour is considered a vital aspect of marketing (WRIGHT, 2006; WALTERS et al., 2015). The consumer behaviour significantly impacts any company's products, marketing strategies, and services (CHIU et al., 2006; WANG, 2015) and psychological factors influence consumer behaviour, ultimately affecting the marketing strategies (KOTLER & ARMSTRONG, 2012). Consumer intention is one of the most important psychological factors which has significant relationship with marketing strategies (MAHMOUD, 2018). Hence, understating consumer intention regarding purchase is of great significance for every company while planning marketing strategies.

On the other hand, studies have revealed consumers satisfaction and sustainability approaches as the highly significant aspects of success and strategic resources that ultimately result in competitive advantages and higher economic stability (HOFFMANN, 2007; CLAUDY et al., 2016; PARIDA & WINCENT, 2019). Reportedly, conducting the studies regarding consumer behaviour is a complicated process as this is a broad topic that can be analysed from multiple perspectives. Similarly, when we started to study sustainable consumer behaviour (SCB), we observed that even those are quite aware of sustainable issues, do not always follow and act in an environmental and social friendly way (SHABBIR et al., 2020). Moreover, it is not easy to set limits for the consumers concerned regarding human rights and the environment (FRAJ-ANDRÉS, & MARTINEZ, 2006).

The consumer preferences for sustainable products and their activities to preserve the environment and their socially responsible attitudes are termed as sustainable purchase behaviour (SHEN et al., 2013). Most people often claim that they prefer sustainable goods and services, but only a few of them go for them in actuality. Currently, sustainable products do not catch the attraction that much of the public significantly and consumer behaviour is not easy to understand or impacted by rational decisions since various personal, societal, and institutional factors drive consumer behaviour (VISSER et al., 2018).

Research objectives are the goals that have to be achieved during the research (AL-RIYAMI, 2008). Since most of the research in fashion industry focus on environmental dimension (SOLINO

et al., 2020), consequently, this study attempts to evaluate the link between consumer behaviour and social sustainability and research objectives can be described as:

❖ Main objective:

1. Review the effect of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention for fashion products

❖ Specific objectives:

1. Determination of the relationship between social sustainability and intentional variables
2. Assessment of factors which may affect purchase decisions for fashion products

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

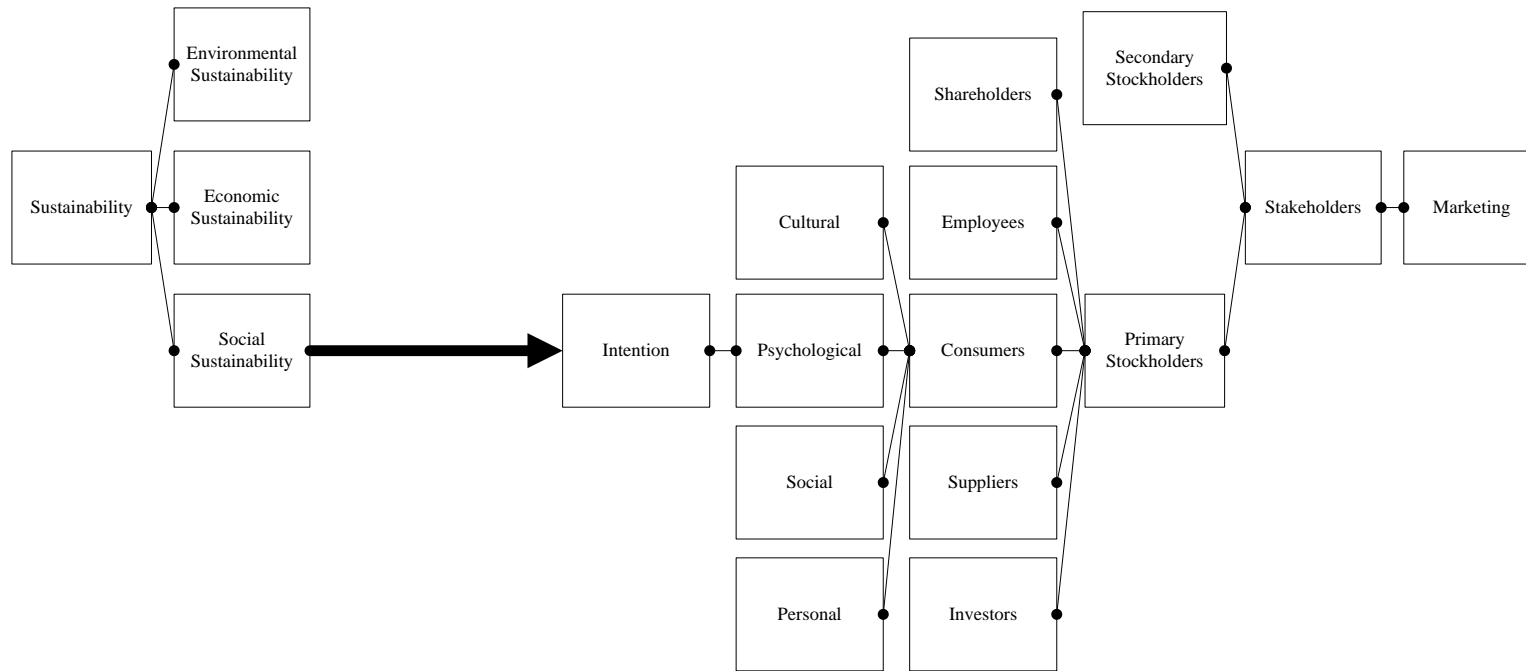
To perform the literature review, a complete set of capabilities is required by which a researcher can search out critical data, evaluate it followed by processing that data (FERRERAS-FERNÁNDEZ et al., 2016). In addition, to enhance research credibility, it is essential to mention the theories and studies conducted in the current research domain, in order to support the research findings. In this study, the theories in fields of marketing and sustainability are used, with emphasizing their link to consumer behaviour.

Studies on marketing and especially consumer behaviour offer an opportunity to understand the primary human intentions and motivations in detail (GRISKEVICIUS & KENRICK, 2013). It has been reported that when consumers get to know about the impact of their consumption behaviour on the environment and societies, most of them tend to improve their behaviour for the betterment of upcoming generations (URIEN & KILBOURNE, 2011).

Consumer intention can be defined as consumers' inner driving forces towards specific behaviour (AGAG & EL-MASRY, 2016). Consequently, it is quite critical to understand consumer intention, which is the fundamental driving force of consumers' purchasing decisions (ALAVI et al., 2015; RIAZ et al., 2020). Recently, sustainable behaviour has gained much attention in market research. However, it has not been understood yet why and when the consumers get involved in environmental actions (ZOU & CHAN, 2019).

Furthermore, Sustainability means creating a dynamic balance between many effective factors such as natural, social and economic ones. Social sustainability which is one of the three dimensions of sustainability that focuses on human rights such as justice, equity, well-being and etc (IKRAM et al., 2020).

Figure 3 provides a block diagram which reveals the logic behind the literature review. As It is shown, this research tries to connect marketing via consumer intention to the social dimension of sustainability.



**Figure 3. Literature Review Block Diagram**

Source: Author's own construction

### **3.1. Marketing**

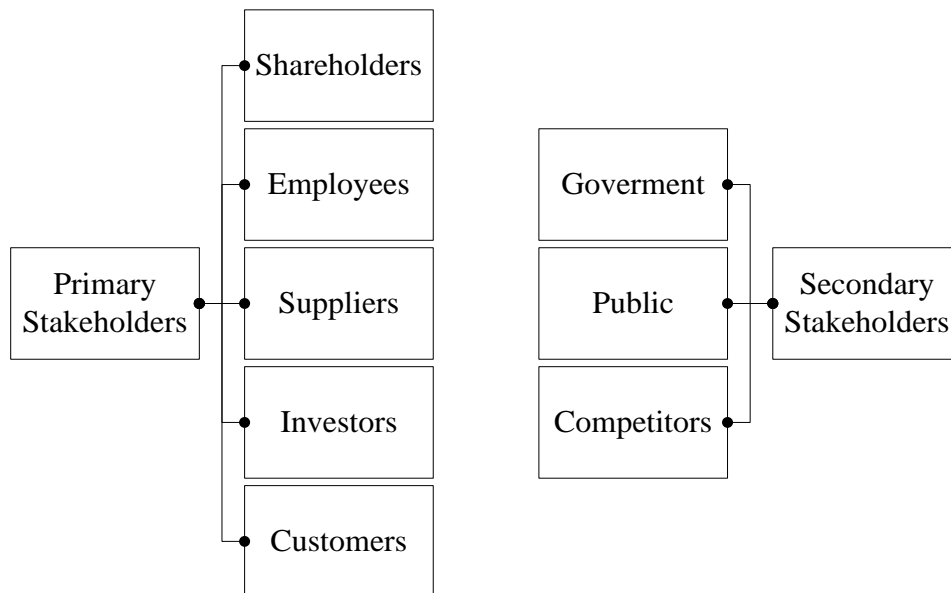
Marketing field has been continuously evolving, reflecting the influences of a variety of marketing circumstances factors (BRUNSWICK, 2014). After an extensive literature review, it can be concluded that, the trend has been shifted towards taking marketing as a whole group of values and procedures in which every function takes part in implementation, rather than taking the marketing as a function. Due to this trend, marketing has involved everyone that might spread the role of the marketing functions and values (MOORMAN & RUST, 1999). With these continuous evolutions, the definitions have been changed for the field and process of marketing (BRUNSWICK, 2014). For example, the term marketing can be defined as the companies' methods to develop a value for customers and a good relationship with them to achieve value (KOTLER, & KELLER, 2012). According to American Marketing Association, marketing is a complete series of procedures followed by organizations, which involve the development of value, communicating as well as delivering the value to customers and also maintaining a strong relationship with consumers in such a way that is beneficial for the company and shareholders (GRÖNROOS, 2006).

Based on these definitions, there is a need to understand the significance of marketing in the conventional sense of selling and the new purpose of meeting customers' demands and developing a good relationship with the organization's stakeholders. Hence, stakeholders and customers are going to be described in the following sections.

### **3.2. Stakeholders & Customers**

Since the 1960s, the term "stakeholders" has been used in business journals, but this terminology is often confused with the word "shareholders" (LEE, 2007). Stakeholders can be defined as a group of people that are influenced or influence an organization as they possess significance in every area of the organization (LAUESEN, 2013). The stakeholders can be primary or secondary as it is shown in Figure 4. Primary stakeholders include owners of organizations, employees, suppliers, investors, and even customers. Secondary stakeholders involve government, the public, and competitors. Stakeholders hold a strong influence in the organization, and hence it is essential to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with them, which ultimately leads to a successful organization (FERENC et al., 2017).





**Figure 4. Primary and Secondary Stakeholders**

Source: Author's own construction based on FERENC et al. (2017)

Customers can be defined as a person or a business involved in acquiring products and services from an enterprise, seeking specific paybacks (benefits). Customers are considered as significant external but primary stakeholders for any enterprise (MAJAVA et al., 2013). Moreover, their role is of utmost significance in making an enterprise successful as they buy, use, and encourages others to use the products and services also they are involved in the generation of revenue for an enterprise (KHANIWALE, 2015). Some severe issues regarding economic and environmental development have been observed among customers and the rest of the stakeholders, i.e., suppliers, and shareholder. Customers often analyse organizations' performance and are aware of environmental issues that affect buying and consuming different products (FERRELL, 2004). It has been evidenced that those customers who have some connections to an enterprise's supply chain and concern with sustainable issues, often enforce the enterprises to implement and follow environmental and social approaches (KIRCHOFF et al., 2011). Therefore, they are one of the best driving forces for sustainable development.

As one of the basic principles of marketing, customers should be considered as the centre of all activities of any organizations. This issue is especially important when the organization is operating in a relatively saturated market such as garment markets. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to study consumer behaviour in order to increase chances of success of an organization (ANDRONICEANU, et al, 2020).

### **3.3. Consumer Behaviour**

In today's highly competitive and saturated markets, consumers are considered as the key to the success or failure of a company (WIRTZ & DAISER, 2018). As a matter of fact, consumers are those who keep the businesses alive and consequently, marketers need to understand the consumers behaviour in order to sell their products and services (MAKAREWICZ, 2013).

consumers are faced with too many options to choose from. Basically, a consumer chooses the products or services that give him/her the most value. Therefore, companies should find a specific way to attract more consumers, understand their behaviours and demands in order to have a unique competitive advantage comparing their competitors (HUBER et al, 2001).

The term "consumer behaviour" is defined as understanding the process by which any person or group choose, utilise, and dispose of any goods, or services to meet their needs (HAWKINS et al., 2010). The purpose of marketing is to satisfy the demands of targeted customers. Companies spend a lot of money and time on research and study in consumer behaviour field. The purpose of these costs and time is to understand how consumers make a decision and what factors influence this decision (MEHTA et al., 2020). In fact, consumer behaviour could be affected by several factors. These factors are considered important information in any organisation' marketing strategies that directly or indirectly serves consumers (BARMOLA & SRIVASTAVA, 2010). Basically, it is not easy to understand consumer behaviour as it may change from time to time. Consumer behaviour often changes under the influence of multiple external and internal factors (YAKUP & DIYARBAKIRLIOGLU, 2011) and companies often seek the factors that direct consumer purchasing behaviour to enhance their sales (KHANIWALE, 2015).

As previously mentioned, several factors influence consumers' purchasing behaviour, such as cultural, social, personal and psychological aspects as they are shown in Table 2. Mostly, marketers are not capable of controlling or affecting all factors. However, marketers must consider these elements whenever they are planning to develop a new products or services in a market (KOTLER & ARMSTRONG, 2011)

**Table 2. Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour**

<i>Buyer</i>			
Cultural	Social	Personal	Psychological
Cultures are dynamic and evolving over the time. The impact of culture on consumer behaviour is always a major concern for marketers.	Each person is influenced by people whom he/she interacts or groups which he/she belongs to, such as family.	Personal characteristics, such as age, gender, personality, occupation, self-esteem and etc could affect the behaviour.	There are several psychological factors that can drive consumer behaviour in a certain direction. These factors are mostly unconscious items such as attitude, motivation, etc.

Source: Author’s own construction based on KOTLER & ARMSTRONG (2011)

**3.4. Psychological Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour:**

The psychology of consumer behaviour addresses why people are willing or reluctant to buy certain goods and services. Marketers use psychological principles to understand consumer behaviour in order to better identify consumer needs (LICHEV, 2017).

In fact, there has been a lot of studies about customer-centric marketing lately. But when we take a closer look, we can see that many companies do not pay attention to this crucial issue properly (ANDRONICEANU, et al, 2020). As depicted in Table 2, consumer purchasing behaviour is highly influenced by different internal and external factors and intention is one of the most important factors which can affect it. (WANG & YU, 2017).

Indeed, with the help of different methods of motivating consumers and affect their intentions, there is a possibility to create a competitive advantage which provides a great opportunity to compete more powerfully with other competitors and achieve greater success (KUMAR & PANSARI, 2016). Therefore, how consumer purchase intention could be affected is going to be explained in the next part.

**Consumer Purchase Intention**

There are emotional and rational factors which collectively impact the purchasing decision. The purchase decision always varies from person to person. The emotional factors are the intents that encourage the consumers depending on their feelings without logically considering the need for purchase. In emotional factors, the consumers purchase products to satisfy their ego, pride, and desire to do something different. Rational factors include the desires of customers that arise after logically considering the need for purchase. Certain consumers make a rational purchasing decision after a complete analysis of the product's purpose, cost analysis, available alternatives, and logical reasoning for purchase (ROY et al., 2018).

Rational and emotional factors have distinct positive impacts on customer purchasing power, yet it is unclear which of these aspects have a stronger impact. For instance, in one study the rational aspect was observed as stronger as compared to emotional one (ROY et al., 2018), while in another study the researcher claimed emotional factors are stronger than the rational ones (ČATER & ČATER, 2009; KAHNEMAN, 2011).

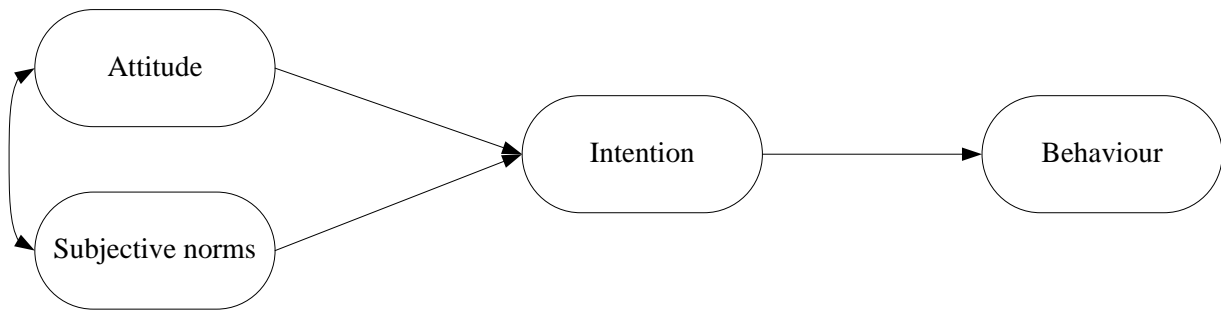
The term intention can be defined as any ideas, plans or even commitments in order to achieve a goal or perform certain behaviour (BAGOZZI, 2010). One of the main tasks of marketers is to try understanding the buyer's intention to predict his/her behaviour (HAQUE et al, 2015). It can be said that understanding intention is like understanding why a consumer acts in a particular way (CHEN & CHENG, 2009). This terminology often indicates the qualitative research performed to determine the secret and subconscious of consumers (MARTIN & MORICH, 2011).

“Purchase intention” is known as a good predictor of behaviour and understood as subjective likelihood of the desire to buy (XU et al, 2020; LIU at al., 2020). As a matter of fact, stronger intention of performing certain behaviour leads the higher possibility of the performance of respective behaviour. In other words, by manipulating the intention, consumer behaviour could be shifted to the certain action. (HAQUE et al, 2015). This method could be applied by marketers to positively influences consumer purchase intention towards the preferred directions (MORRISON, 1979).

To understand the predictors of behaviour, there are two theories which are widely used: Theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behaviour. These two theories are going to be described in detail in the next section.

### **Theory of Reasoned Action & Theory of Planned Behaviour**

As a first attempt, FISHBEIN & AJZEN (1975) claimed that intention is assumed to be a direct factor affecting behaviour, and there are two elements (attitude and subjective norms) which collectively shape and influence intentions. Attitude is the tendency to react, and it is an internal state and combination of beliefs and emotions that provides a positive or negative view for a person about the other people, objects, groups and etc. In addition, subjective norms are reflection of social pressure that is perceived by the individual. They named this theory as Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as it is shown in Figure 5.



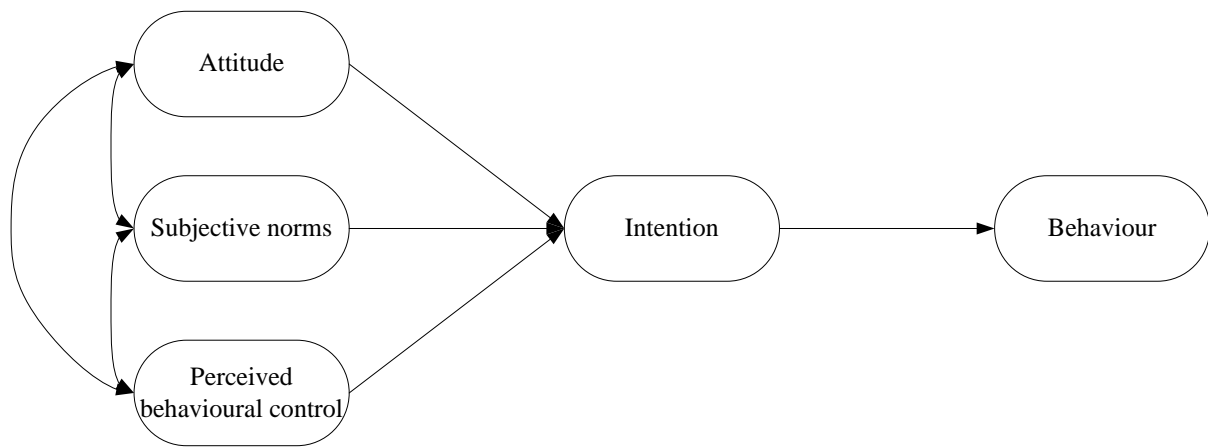
**Figure 5. Theory of Reasoned Action**

Source: Author's own construction based on FISHBEIN & AJZEN (1975)

The TRA can be used for those subjects when the person has an overall control on his/her behaviour. In other words, the success of this theory depends on the degree of control over behaviour. Meaning, when this degree decreases, the person is not able to perform the behaviour despite his/her positive intention, and consequently the application of this model is not useful and recommended (MADDEN, et al.,1992).

AJZEN (1991) completed the TRA by adding perceived behavioural control to the former model and called the new one as the Theory of Planned Behaviour, i.e. TPB. In this new theory, by adding this new element, he tried to show how a person perceives external and internal pressures, and accordingly acts to perform a specific behaviour. According to this theory, everyone pursues a specific intention for whatever he/she does. Therefore, each of our behaviour has originated from a specific intention.

The TPB is now extensively used by the social psychologists to understand the different behaviours and predict them. Basically, TPB indicates that behaviours can be identified directly by behavioural intentions and, in some cases, directly by the perceived behavioural control (KAN & FABRIGAR, 2017).



**Figure 6. Theory of Planned Behaviour**

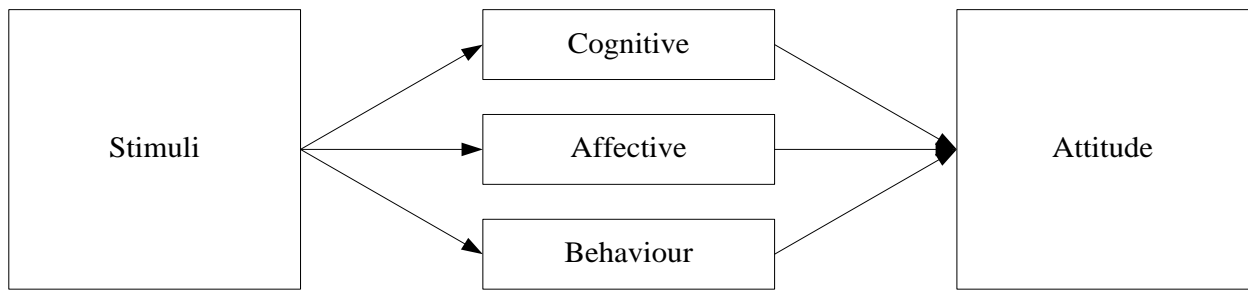
Source: Author's own construction based on KAN & FABRIGAR (2017)

As Figure 5 and 6 illustrate, the theory of planned behaviour can explain and describe better the unconscious behaviour of individuals in comparison with theory of reasoned action which is proposed first by FISHBEIN & AJZEN in 1975 (VALLERAND et al., 1992). Therefore, in this research, TPB has been used in order to understand consumer intention, and its constructs will be explained in the next parts.

### **Attitude**

Consumer attitude and behaviour are closely related to each other (FISHBEIN & AJZEN, 1974). Moreover, there is a link between a positive attitude towards a product/company and the purchasing behaviour (SOLOMON, 2004). It is of utmost significance for the researchers as well as for managers to get a deeper understanding of the idea of attitude and the complete phenomena of attitude development, especially who are involved in changing the consumer's way of assessing products so that the choice of consumers can be shifted towards specific behaviour (ARGYRIOU & MELEWAR, 2011).

The term "attitude" can be defined as any individual's way of evaluating any concepts. Generally, attitude is of two types: attitude towards objects and the other is the attitude towards a behaviour. The attitude towards a behaviour indicates an individual's positive or negative approach to behaviour that is followed. The term "behavioural belief" indicates a person's internal belief towards the outcome of following anything, which highly impacts the individual's attitude towards his behaviour (AL-DEBEI et al., 2015). The attitude towards an object can be described as the relationship between assessment and the product (AJZEN & FISHBEIN, 2000). It can be said that the positive attitude of a person towards any product is useful, while his negative approach towards any product is not good, no matter if they have tried that product or not (COOPER, 2015).



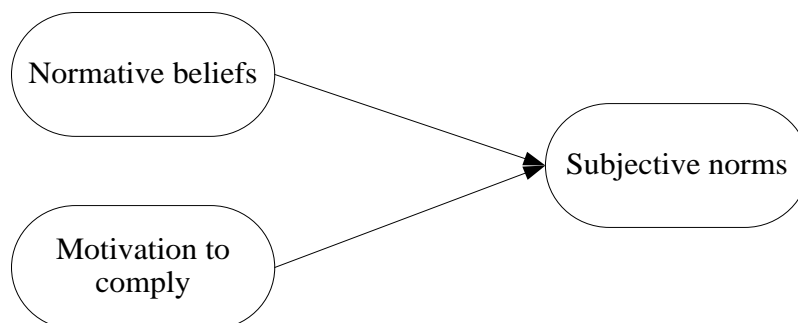
**Figure 7. Attitude Construction**

Source: Author’s own construction based on HAWKINS et al. (2010)

Reflected in Figure 7, three major constituents are involved in the development of an attitude. These are affective, cognitive and behaviour. The first constituent is linked with the emotional response of a person towards any product or service. The cognitive part is linked with consumers' beliefs regarding any company, product or service that can be evaluated. Lastly, the behaviour part is described as a person's tendency to respond to any object or a process in a specific way. These three constituents of attitude formation have a consistent involvement in changing the attitude or the attitude that can change others (HAWKINS et al., 2010).

**Subjective Norms**

The subjective norm is the concept or idea that a specific behaviour would be approved by most people or not (HAM et al., 2015) and they are quite useful for predicting individuals’ behaviours (KIM et al., 2015). As it is shown in Figure 8., the “normative beliefs” of an individual and his/her “motivation to comply” greatly impact the subjective norms. The term "normative beliefs" can be described as the probability of approval or rejection of any particular behaviour by important others, while "motivation to comply" indicates the possibility of other's approval (PETERS & TEMPLIN, 2010).



**Figure 8. Subjective Norms Constructs**

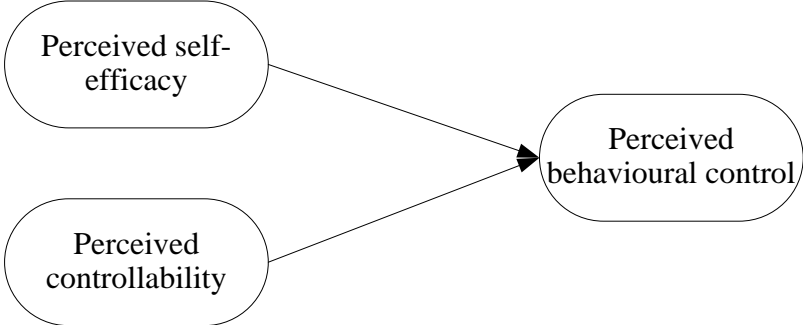
Source: Author’s own construction based on PETERS & TEMPLIN (2010)

By the help of subjective norms, the important opinions of others can be estimated, and these norms will highly influence those who are concerned about others' opinions in comparison to those who are not much concerned about their approval or rejection by others (LATIMER & MARTIN GINIS, 2008). Certain other groups of people impart the social pressure on a person's behaviour; for instance, the most influencing aspect is family, while others include the friends, mentors, and co-workers (ISMAIL & LIM, 2018; NOR & PEARSON, 2008).

Basically, subjective norms used to be observed as a weak factor for determining one's intention, consequently, these norms have not been found significant in increasing consumers' purchasing behaviour and intention alone (NGUYEN, 2020).

**Perceived Behavioural Control**

An individual's planned behaviour and intention are greatly influenced by the perceived behavioural control (PBC) which is used to predict behavioural achievement. This aspect indicates people's belief about difficulty or ease in performing a particular behaviour depending on the theory of planned behaviour (AJZEN, 1991). Examples of this aspect are skills, money, time, and other's cooperation (KANG et al., 2006). Described in Figure 9, there are two factors involved in PBC that are closely related to each other, the first one is “perceived self-efficacy”, and another one is “perceived controllability” (BARLETT, 2019; AJZEN, 2002).



**Figure 9. Perceived Behavioural Control Construct**

Source: Author’s own construction based on BARLETT (2019)

The term, self-efficacy, impacts the change of motivation that ultimately creates a difference in people's feelings, thoughts, and actions. Consequently, the term "perceived self-efficacy" can be described as people's beliefs regarding their capacity to generate specified performance levels, which impact their lives. People who have higher perceived self-efficacy levels are confident about their capabilities during difficult times and take the problems as challenges instead of considering them threats. On the other hand, people whose perceived self-efficacy levels are lower usually get anxieties and insecurities during a difficult time (SCHWARZER & WARNER, 2012).



Perceived controllability can be described as the degree by which a person can control his/her targeted behaviour (SMITH & BIDDLE, 2008). This indicates the person's basic need of competence that reflects his/her believe on his/her capabilities to develop a desire and avoid the undesired product or situation (KIM et al., 2018). Studies have also revealed a strong bonding between the control beliefs and the emotional consequences, ultimately involving the major impact of control beliefs over emotional handling (CHO, 2017). Table 3 provides a better understanding of these concepts.

**Table 3. Perceived Behavioural Control Construct with Examples**

<b>Global Construct</b>	<b>Sub facet</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Perceived behavioural control</b>	Perceived self-efficacy	I believe I have the ability to participate in physical activities for 20 minutes at a time in the next two weeks. (Strongly agree – Strongly disagree)
	Perceived controllability	Overall, how much control do you have over doing vigorous physical activities for 20 minutes per day in the next two weeks. (High control – Low control)

Source: Author's own construction based on SMITH & BIDDLE (2008)

### **3.5. Sustainability**

The concept of sustainability was introduced in the 1960s. A little bit after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, entrepreneurship has been spreading faster, and consequently leading to a negative impact on ecological equilibrium. Therefore, the bond between environment and business development was developed for the first time, which ultimately gave significance to the concept of sustainability (ŞAHIN & ÇANKAYA, 2020).

In September 2015, united nation member states pledged to implement the global sustainable development agenda 2030 in their national macro-policies from 1 January 2016 (BEXELL & JÖNSSON, 2017). This agenda clearly states that we can be the first generation to end poverty, just as we may be the last generation to have a chance to save the earth (SPIJKERS, 2018).

There is a major impact of sustainability on policies and operations of societies and organisations (DYLLICK & MUFF, 2015). The idea of sustainability can be explained by four different

sustainability perspectives (SALAS-ZAPATA & ORTIZ-MUÑOZ 2019). According to the United Nations Brundtland Commission (UNBC), sustainability can be defined as satisfying the demands of the present era in such a way that the upcoming generations would meet their desires with the same quality (WCED, 1987).

**Table 4. Uses and Meanings of the Concept of Sustainability**

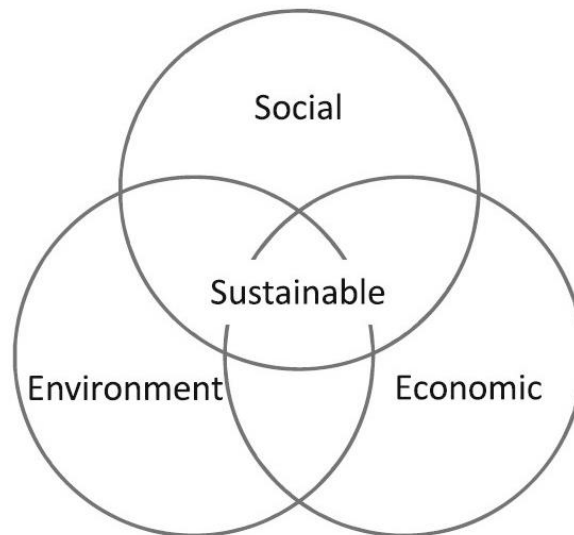
	Uses		Meanings
<b>Sustainability is a term employed to refer</b>	A set of criteria	Consisting of	Social-ecological criteria to guide human actions or their products
	A vision or goal	Which is	The convergence of environmental, social, and economic purposes, expectations, aims or goals of the system
	An object	Which is	An empirical entity that can be thought and intervened. Behaviour of certain systems like resilience, balance, adaptive capacity, and ability
	An approach	Which is	The study of social, economic, and ecological dimensions or variables of a human activities, product, or system

Source: SALAS-ZAPATA & ORTIZ-MUÑOZ (2019) (pp. 3)

According to the SALAS-ZAPATA & ORTIZ-MUÑOZ (2019) categorisation presented in Table 4, current research belongs to the 4<sup>th</sup> category as it includes the evaluation of consumer purchase intention that involves understanding a particular behaviour.

Unfortunately, there has been strong criticism observed for businesses regarding different social and ecological issues at the moment (ZAHRAEE et al., 2018). Multiple issues have got attention worldwide. These issues include the excessive production of waste, environment pollution, compromised quality of products, safety and security, employees' rights, increased utilisation of resources and the social responsibilities (ŞAHIN & ÇANKAYA, 2020). Presently, these problems are getting better regarding sustainability due to their multiple actions for sustainable manufacturing and social justice and other major issues faced in the different communities (VAFAEI et al., 2019). Another point to be highlighted is that sustainability is not only the right of current generations, but the future generations are also prone to be treated equally in all the social, environmental, and economic spheres. (PADILLA, 2002).

As it is shown in Figure 10., there are three major sustainability pillars: society, economy, and environment (PURVIS et al., 2019). The similar principles have been used generally like people, profit and planet.



**Figure 10. Scope of Sustainability**

Source: PURVIS et al., 2019 (pp. 682)

### 3.5.1. Environmental Pillar of Sustainability

The sustainability of our environment has become endangered with the continuously growing population and entrepreneurial developments. Reports have revealed that on one side, the natural resources have been excessively utilised and wasted. On the other side, these resources have been polluted with agricultural, industrial, and human wastes that ultimately make the environment unfavourable for future generations to survive in. Hence, environmental sustainability has been considered a major issue for humans these days (ARORA, 2018).

The term "environmental sustainability" can be described as the state of equilibrium, and interrelationship in which the basic necessities of a human being are fulfilled without impacting the environmental capacity to restore what have been used (MORELLI, 2011).

By environmental sustainability, different companies can analyse the effect of their activities on the ecosystem. In response to the various environmental challenges and the search for advanced opportunities, it has led to the development of such organisational strategies and procedures that are beneficial for the environment and in the overall welfare of humanity (REZAEI et al., 2019).

Studies have mentioned that the environmental sustainability can be introduced basically from the firm level where introducing new technologies will positively impact that. Illustrated in Table 5, environmental sustainability can be further categorised into two domains. First one is the environmental efficiency, and the other is environmental goods (CALZA & FOKKER, 2019).

**Table 5. Environmental Sustainability's Dimensions**

<b>Environmental efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy efficiency</li> <li>• Input efficiency</li> <li>• Emissions and waste reduction</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental goods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-friendly materials</li> <li>• Product energy efficiency</li> <li>• Recyclability &amp; circularity</li> </ul>

Source: CALZA & FOKKER, 2019 (pp. 12)

Environmental efficiency can be defined as the degree to which minimum possible resources are utilised to develop useful products without yielding detrimental input into the environment. The input resources utilised in any good production may positively or negatively impact the environment (GRAHAM, 2004).

Environmental goods can be described as those environmentally friendly products that do not harm the environment significantly at any stage of their utilisation such as during manufacturing, processing or even as waste products. Other products that perform the same function during production, processing or waste generation might be more harmful to the ecosystem, while their sale might contribute to preserving the ecosystem (BUCHER et al., 2014).

With the spreading awareness regarding environmental sustainability, the environmental regulations have imposed strict regulations for the industries to follow the environmentally friendly dimensions. It is now essential for the organisations to perform according to the national and international regulations of environmental protections (EL-HAGGAR, 2007).

**3.5.2. Economic Pillar of sustainability**

The most widely recognised pillar of sustainability is economic sustainability since it is linked with organisations' basic purpose. This dimension includes the influence of different organisational activities on an economic system that emphasises the organisation's financial stability to support their future peers. The economic sustainability is not about "profit generation at any cost", rather it focuses on the procedures that ensure prolonged economic progress so that it does not harm the environment or society (FORBES et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, developing

and using purely economic tools in decisions making especially at the managerial levels, regardless of environmental factors, can lead to a catastrophic program (OMARLI, 2017).

Economic sustainability is directly related to a social pillar of sustainability as the stable financial state is necessary to approach social sustainability (LEBACQ et al., 2013). Moreover, it incorporates financial costs and profits (POPOVIC et al., 2013) and its performance can be assessed by the financial activities between the organisation and stakeholders, while non-financial performance can be measured throughout its impact on stakeholders (FORBES et al., 2020).

Be seen from Table 6, there are two aspects to economic sustainability; one is "firm-centric" that serves a firm as a distinct unit and tries to estimate the financial and non-financial performance at the firm's level (NEELY, 2002). Another aspect is related to the external stakeholder's economic interests, for instance, a widespread improvement in the financial state and a livelihood (SHETH et al., 2011).

**Table 6. Economic Sustainability's Dimensions**

<b>Firm-centric</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profitability</li> <li>• Growth</li> </ul>
<b>External stakeholder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living Standards</li> <li>• Profitability</li> </ul>

Source: Author’s own construction based on NEELY (2002)

Identifying and involving different type of stakeholders, can be a big part of ensuring the success of any activities in an organization. To attract the support and cooperation of stakeholders in an activity, it is not enough just to identify them, but also to understand why they are interested in a particular activity (BENN et al., 2016). As presented in Table 7, there are both internal and external stakeholders in any kind of organizations. Internal stakeholders of any organisation involve owners, workers and the representative of organisation, i.e. managers. External stakeholders are the customers, suppliers, shareholders, society, and the government (GURZAWSKA et al., 2017).

**Table 7. Internal and External Stakeholders**

Internal stakeholders	External stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Owners</li> <li>• Representative of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shareholders</li> <li>• Suppliers</li> <li>• Customers</li> <li>• Society</li> <li>• Governments</li> </ul>

Source: GURZAWSKA et al., 2017 (pp. 9)

In fact, all organisations must be always answerable to their shareholders, stakeholders, and other investors; therefore, they should follow the sustainable management strategies. An organisation that follows the sustainability strategies has been found progressing than its competitors in the market (ŞAHIN & ÇANKAYA, 2020).

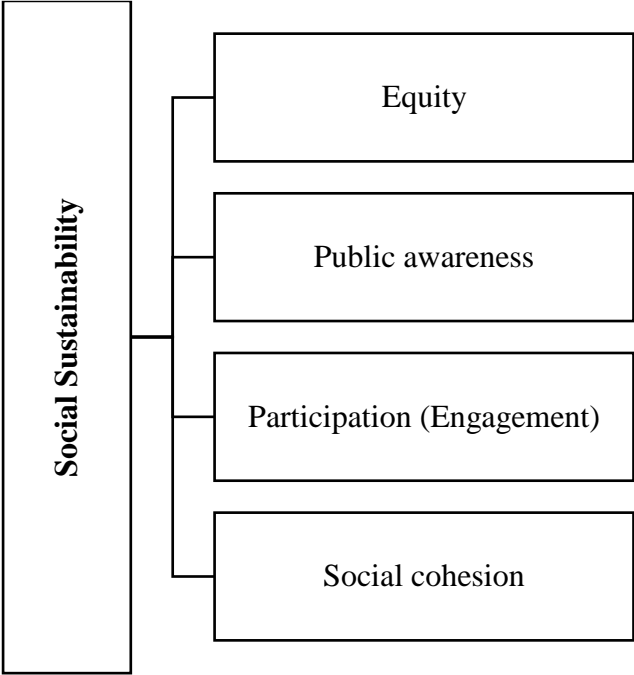
**3.5.3. Social Pillar of sustainability**

Inequality has long existed due to the difference between human beings in talents, abilities, and even intrinsic characteristics at birth such as race and colour and it has intensified in today's complex and modern societies due to unequal opportunities and situations. Throughout history, different factors such as political, economic, and even gender differences have fostered discrimination between human beings. These inequalities are no longer tolerable more than ever, and societies are trying to move toward the belief in the equality of mankind. As in the field of contemporary human rights, the idea of equality is one of the most important ideas and in fact one of the fundamental principles (KIRBY, 2017).

In today's world, an organisation's development depends on economic, environmental, and social agendas equally (VIVAS et al., 2014). The term "social sustainability" can be described as the identification and management of positive and negative effects of system, activities and businesses on human and their social life (YILMAZ BALAMAN, 2019). It can also be explained as a process or a state in a society that meets the primary necessities of human beings along with the standards of justice, social injustice, unity, diversity, homogeneity, social services and security, and sense of place for the existing generation as well as for the future generations (HAJI RASOULI & KUMARASURIYAR, 2016). The major aspects of social sustainability are human rights, product responsibilities, society, and labour practices. The sub-categories of social sustainability include employment, occupational health, the relation between labour and management, education, diversity, training, and equal opportunities (FULTON & LEE, 2013).

The social dimension has been neglected before 2000 (VALLANCE et al., 2011). But since the beginning of the 20th century, social sustainability has become the centre of attraction as it indicates the social and cultural system involved in seeking sustainable solutions. Like other pillars of sustainability, social sustainability also emphasises on future generations and spread awareness of the impact of human activities on the world. Ultimately, the social sustainability entails the significance of quality life for an individual or a group of people and includes the political agendas, for instance, human rights, corporative governance, human empowerment, and equal opportunities for everyone (VAVIK & KEITSCH, 2010).

As a matter of fact, it is quite challenging to determine a social pillar. The term "social" has unlimited meanings. Social pillar of sustainability is well-known for its four major concepts: equity, public awareness, participation (engagement), and social cohesion regarding sustainability shown in Figure 11 (MURPHY, 2012).



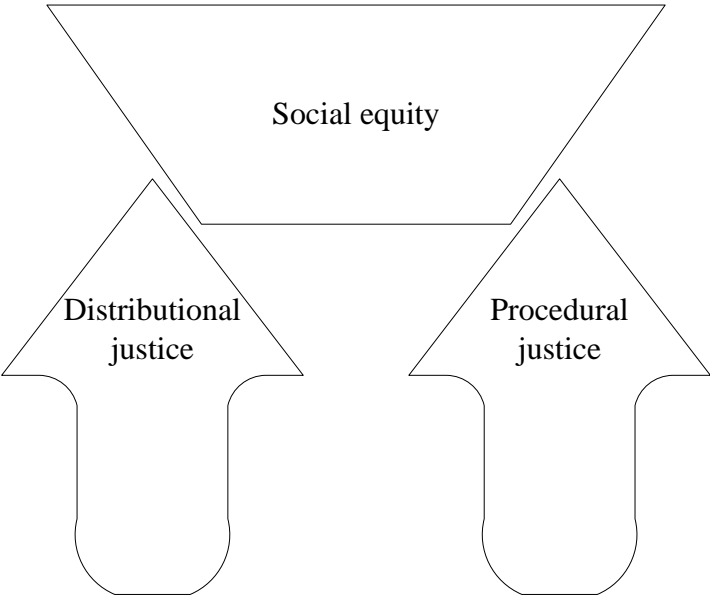
**Figure 11. Four Pre-Eminent Concepts of the Social Pillar**

Source: Author’s own construction based on MURPHY (2012)

**Equity**

The most applicable definition of equity suggests that every person, independent of his/her gender, caste, colour, occupation, and profession has equal liberties to live and enjoy all the freedoms of life. In more elaborated words, social equity ensures that every advancement, whether advantageous or disadvantageous is available evenly across every community of our society without any discrimination. (TRUDEAU, 2018).

The extent of social equity backs on two main facets naming procedural and distributional justice, indicated in Figure 12. Distributional justice guarantees every person of his/her share of employment, privileges, aids, and windfalls. Ensuring safety from environmental and financial damages are also equal for every person of the society, and this is dealt with distributional justice. Being the backbone facet of social sustainability, distributional justice confirms all the people’s comfort and well-being. On the other hand, procedural justice deals with a fair and transparent verdict making system in all kinds of community consultations and public meetings. It also keeps an eye on the institutional agreements and their affiliations with these other agents to secure translucency (LIAO et al., 2019).



**Figure 12. Social Equity Facets**

Source: Author’s own construction based on LIAO et al., (2019)

**Public Awareness**

The most significant chore embarked by sustainability is to develop attention among people about this concept and spread valid information regarding it in different community’s and industry’s platforms (GARBIÉ, 2015). In other words, distributing information in public and private sectors about sustainability is an essential belief of sustainable development discourse. The sustainable development discourse elaborates lifting the knowledge of people regarding sustainability problems and motivating them to formulate alternative and sustainable consumption patterns. The strategic work to obtain sustainability includes dissipating awareness through various exhibitions, “green” advertising campaigns, academic proposals regarding education for sustainable development (ESD) programs, and ecolabelling. These efforts bear fruit as they motivate citizens



and people to live without damaging the environment peacefully and to understand and accept the lawfulness of coercive environmental legislation (MURPHY, 2012).

The value of sustainability awareness can be known by employing proficiency and evidence. This value comprises different means specifying why, how, and to how much extend shareholders comprehend the intuition of sustainability and its magnitude. Although being a common term among industrialists, sustainability still is not adequately known among ordinary people, making it ambiguous and challenging for public to understand. (GARBIE, 2015).

### **Participation (Engagement)**

Participation (engagement) pertains to maximizing the number of public councils in the decision-making procedure. This strategy's usefulness can be defined by its being a boon for both: the inhabitants and the state. The inclusion of many groups in this process, allows ordinary people to consider government strategies to be more acceptable in this respect. As many people engage in this, there is much knowledge spread about social sustainability. (MURPHY, 2012).

The following three main points clarify the significance of participation for the social sustainability of societies:

1. Participation plays a role in transferring the public demands and desires to the administration to take, transmit and monitor its verdict accordingly.
2. Allows people to use their democratic rights in public policy.
3. It has greater acceptance as the 'demands of people are met,' and the society appreciates and follows the decision more wholeheartedly. This makes the policy delivery easy and yields promising results (COLANTONIO & DIXON, 2011).

### **Social Cohesion**

Consumer behaviour could be seen as a reflection of social cohesion (AXSEN. & KURANI, 2012). Moreover, communities need to be socially coherent to achieve social sustainability. (VIVAS et al., 2014). In fact, social cohesion has been appreciated as a theory but also bullied at the same time. (MEKOA & BUSARI, 2018). This term implies the magnitude of solidarity among the public groups (MANCA, 2014). Essentially, it throws light on the belief that every person is lawfully an equal shareholder of all the services and rights without any racism. It interprets that people have equal basic demands and accessibility rights. (FONSECA et al., 2018) and it also helps us identify any injustice being done in any sector and even spot any prejudice or imbalance (JENSON, 2010).

Basically, social cohesion comprises of two main societal goal dimensions:

1. The first dimension is the inequality dimension. It concentrates on facilitating and evoking similar opportunities for the people without any difference or discrepancy. It also comprises the belief in social exclusion.
2. The second dimension is the capital dimension. It focuses basically on the social associations and connections among several groups and institutions of the community. In fact, these connections are considered as social capitals.

The above-mentioned two dimensions are a bit independent from each other and should be contemplated accordingly (BERGER-SCHMITT, 2002).

**3.6. Fair Trade, Ethical and Social Labelling**

Fair trade is gaining more and more attention in the whole world day by day and it is one of the most controversial topics nowadays (GOFF, 2016). Moreover, there is a social movement around the world that wants people to buy only from those who follow the principles of fair trade (ANDERSON, 2009). When people choose those products that are produced and sold under the fair-trade conditions, they take steps to improve the state of society and consequently towards sustainable development (STRONG, 1997). Perhaps the best definition of fair trade is buying and selling products and services under certain conditions that equality and transparency could be observed in all stages of production until sale (MOORE, 2004).

World Fair Trade Organization (WTFO) is a socially organized community which has special market-oriented approach aimed at helping producers, especially producers in developing countries, to provide better fair-trading conditions and develop sustainability (KRASNOZHON et al., 2015). This organization has developed ten principles for fair-trade presented in Table 8. Members are required to implement and ensure that these principles are properly observed in their day-to-day operations (CICHOS, 2019).

**Table 8. World Fair Trade Organization Principles**

<b>1. Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers</b>	<b>2. Transparency and Accountability</b>	<b>3. Fair Trading Practices</b>	<b>4. Fair Payment</b>	<b>5. Ensuring no Child Labour and Forced Labour</b>
<b>6. Commitment to Non-Discrimination &amp; Gender Equity</b>	<b>7. Ensuring Good Working Conditions</b>	<b>8. Providing Capacity Building</b>	<b>9. Promoting Fair Trade</b>	<b>10. Respect for the Environment</b>

Source: Author’s own construction based on CICHOS (2019)

By implementing fair-trade principles in an organization, consumers can be assured that the products are produced in safe and appropriate conditions and the labours who made them are paid fairly for their work. Moreover, producers invest their income in their own community to improve their overall lifestyle in their region.

As a matter of fact, labels are considered as practical tools which provide useful information to buyers and help them in purchase decision making since they highlight specific information. Ethical and social concerns belong to those categories which are hardly accessible by consumers. Therefore, ethical and social (fair trade) labelling could deliver practical information in this respect (ANNUNZIATA et al., 2011).

One of the main purposes of ethical and social labelling is to drive business mechanisms to institutionalise social issues in their policies and strategies. Ethical and social certification such as labelling could be a proper approach for sustainable consumption and production (HARTLIEB & JONES, 2009). Unfortunately, ethical and social labelling has received less attention so far in comparison with eco-labelling. As a matter of fact. This type of labelling is quite complex and, at the same time, thought-provoking topic. Such labelling, for example, should specifically define what it covers. But several issues, such a “fairness”, “justice”, and “ensuring that people are treated fairly” must be considered in the definition (TROTH, 2015).

One of the critical questions which always pay a role in researchers minds in field of sustainability is the gap between the action and belief. As an instance, most people believe in sustainability issues, but in reality, they behave differently (SÖRQVIST & LANGEBORG, 2019). Fortunately, in two separated studies conducted in the United States and Sweden, in addition to strong beliefs, people have been shown to be pragmatic regarding ethical and social labelling and consequently social sustainability (GRANKVIST, 2013; HISCOX & SMYTH, 2011). In both studies, researchers proved that there is a quite strong correlation between ethical and social labelling with increased intention for buying sustainable products.

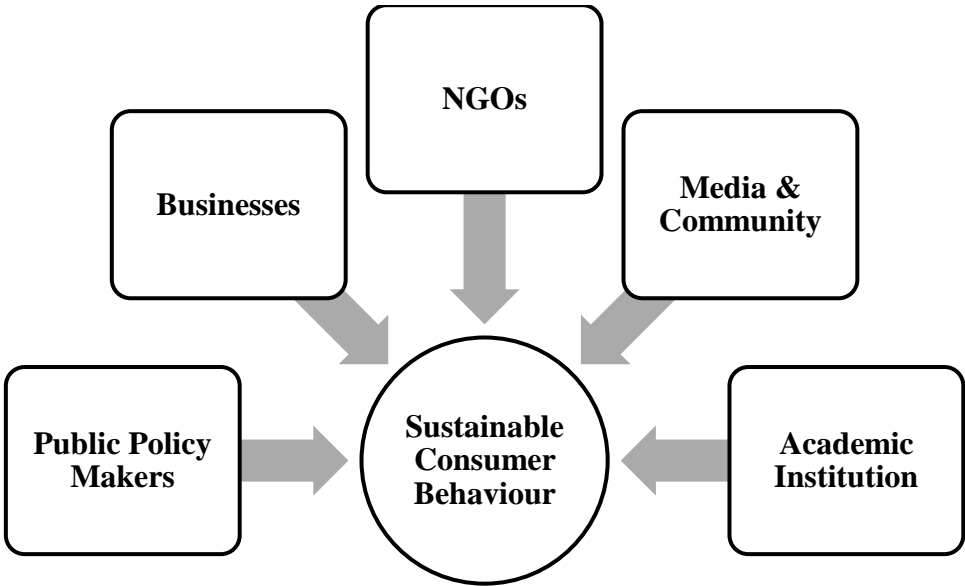
### **3.7. Sustainable Consumer Behaviour**

Consumption used to be considered as an economic phenomenon which is related to individual desires. But it is a social and environmental phenomenon as well. All three pillars of sustainability—economic, society, and environment are affected by consumer behaviour. Moreover, if societies and businesses are getting involved in sustainable development, consumer should participate in this action too (WHITE et al., 2019). Therefore, it is essential to examine the psychological factors which predict sustainable behaviour of consumers.

Sustainable consumer behaviour is a kind of behaviour that attempts to make a balance between satisfying human needs and protecting environment, while social equity rules and financial responsibilities are monitored carefully (DAVID LEE et al., 2016). In fact, consumer behaviour will determine the success or failure of products or services that are marketed based on their sustainable performance.

Although consumers have comprehensive information about ethical and social issues; but they rarely turn to them when they go shopping. In fact, most of the issues they are concerned about in field of sustainability are those which related to the environmental dimension (CALDERON-MONGE et al., 2020).

Sustainable consumer behaviour is shaped by public policy makers, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media and community, and academics and educational institutions as it is presented in Figure 13 (SAJJANIT, 2019). The role of each factor on sustainable consumer behaviour described below.



**Figure 13. Factors Affecting Sustainable Consumer Behaviour**

Source: SAJJANIT (2019) (pp.7)

**Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and Public Policy Makers**

It could be clearly seen that without involvement of public policy makers, it is quite hard to implement sustainable policies in neither consumption nor production levels (PROTHERO et al., 2011). Public policy makers should enact specific laws which force and encourage people at the same time to follow sustainable development goals (SAJJANIT, 2019) such as those presented in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As an instance, by providing special tax exemption

for sustainable fashion products, they can provide benefit for both producers and consumers (NIINIMÄKI et al., 2020).

### **Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and Businesses**

Individual scholars have described sustainability as producing any useful product by using non-harmful material under an ecologically safe process that does not lead to any harm for its manufacturers and societies and it should also be rewarding for their stakeholders (GLAVIČ & LUKMAN, 2007). Businesses based on their potential power and influence, can affect their consumers attitude and point of views. As an instance, by developing and promoting corporate social responsibility in their marketing campaigns and strategies, they may develop sustainable attitude and consequently behaviour in their consumer mindsets (KHALINA et al., 2017).

### **Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and NGOs**

NGOs can have a profound effect on both consumers and companies, especially on the field of sustainability. In order to influence consumer's view, NGOs can pursue the following approaches:

- ❖ Encouraging consumers to use their influences as the primary shareholders in organizations. Consumers can push the organizations to follow sustainable goals.
- ❖ Involving themselves in developing and designing novel products which could change the consumer consumption behaviour.
- ❖ Creating green and sustainable demand on consumer mind (KONG et al., 2002).

### **Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and Media**

The spread of different types of media has led to the introduction of new sustainable approaches. Currently, internet, social media, and TV channels have the biggest effect on society and especially sustainable consumer behaviour (JAGODIČ, 2016). On the hand, the use of social media has become part of the daily life, especially in the young generations at present. On the other hand, different social media platforms provide unique opportunities for marketers and other influencers to target different type of consumers at the same time in regards of sustainability. Therefore, social media could be considered as a powerful tool for spreading sustainability in different societies and especially among young generations (VAF AEI et al., 2016).

### **Sustainable Consumer Behaviour and Academic Institutions**

Academic institutions have been encouraged to include sustainable courses in their curriculums or even promote sustainability actively in their different programs since 1991. In fact, human behaviour is dramatically shaped by the learning environment. Therefore, these places could institutionalize sustainable issues into the human mindsets. Moreover, academic institutions are

well known as the first place where new ideas are generated. consequently, they can develop new concepts by considering sustainable goals (PENA-CEREZO et al., 2019).

### **3.8. Fashion Industry**

Fashion is an art that symbolizes every time interval, culture, region, and customs unique to that area. An overall view of dressing and clothing across the world and history suggests that “fashion” has changed in many forms, and every form is specific stabilization of that time, area, and culture. How elegant is the idea that the word fashion had been considered synonymous with the word ‘beautiful’ for many centuries (ŠTEFKO & STEFFEK, 2018)!

Technology might bring billions of changes in this world, but fashion has a very adaptive form in every period. In today’s ever-changing world, where the trends change literally in minutes, marketers and garments producers must face many challenges to adapt to every new fashion trend (NAGARAJ, 2020). The fashion industry is not merely an industry but also a precious business that creates the right clothes and connects every culture and time to innovation and uniqueness. (KO et al., 2013). In 2019, the fashion industry was a powerful global force worth over 1.3 trillion dollars, assigning more than 300 million people internationally (GAZZOLA et al., 2020).

The fashion industry consists of four processes:

#### ❖ Textile production

The textile production includes all stages of fibre, yarn, and fabric production. It starts from fibre production, then fibre-to-yarn, and last yarn-to-fabric conversion. In fact, textile production is the primary part of fashion industry.

#### ❖ Design and manufacturing

Fashion design and manufacturing can be defined as the art of design and producing garments by considering unique patterns. In fact, fashion designer must supervise the production parts such as costume and pattern design, cutting, sewing and production lines.

#### ❖ Retail and advertising

To compete in the fashion industry, proper marketing strategies from retailing to advertising are two major challenges. In reality, having a unique and eye-catching advertisement is quite crucial since people are targeted with thousands of advertisements.

#### ❖ Ancillary services

Ancillary services include all services which help and support both consumers before, during and after purchases, and producers before the production till post market survey (DREW & SINCLAIR, 2015).

### **3.9. Sustainability and Fashion Industry**

Sustainability has many definitions and can be clarified in different ways. In the fashion world, sustainability deals with financial fairness, environmental and societal protection, and cultural existence (DISSANAYAKE et al., 2017). As previously mentioned, sustainability has been given much attention and is now a keyword in the fashion industry recently (THOMAS, 2020). Fashion commerce across the world encounters many problems when it comes to sustainability and social justice (BREWER, 2019). Currently, the oil industry is on top of the list of polluters of the environment, where the fashion industry takes second place and is becoming more threatening as this industry is growing day by day (GALE, 2020). This industrial sector is one of the most financially modern industrial recreation, which has dragged attention towards environmentally and socially sustainable inventions. (VILLA TODESCHINI et al., 2020). In another words, days are gone when sustainability was not a major topic among the fashion producers. Nowadays, people in this industry put many efforts into bringing innovative designs that are ecologically less damaging and try to follow ethical and social policies. Eco-friendly products are being made, and this thinking among the fashion world is setting new trends that are more ecologically forward. (HENNINGER et al., 2016).

Sustainable fashion signifies the standard and stability of the product with the purpose that it can be utilized again (CERVELLON & WERNERFELT, 2012). Following are the three sustainable theories in the fashion industry:

- ❖ Ethical fashion: Ethical fashion is the art of producing and distributing clothing masterpieces among people, which are a blend of culture and enhance the benefits to the people while lowering the harms on the environment (KOH & NOH, 2009), that integrates reasonable trade regulations with coercion-free labour and fair-trade situations. It implicates the idea of using biodegradable products in the manufacturing process so that the workers and environment are not harmed in any way. (JOERGENS, 2006; YANG et al., 2017).

- ❖ Eco-fashion: Eco-fashion refers to apparel that can be used in the long run without impacting the environment since it is made from recycled products or materials that are eco-friendly (NIINIMÄKI, 2010).
- ❖ Organic fashion: Organic fashion signifies the use of organic materials to make clothes. In the manufacture of such clothing, little or no chemical is used. This results in decreasing the number of toxins and hence lessens the hazardous effect on the environment. (MALONEY et al., 2014).

Based on the above-mentioned theories' definitions, each of them covers specific part of sustainable fashion concept. In other words, these theories complement each other. According to Figure 14. They have nothing in common, but all together shape the sustainable fashion concept.



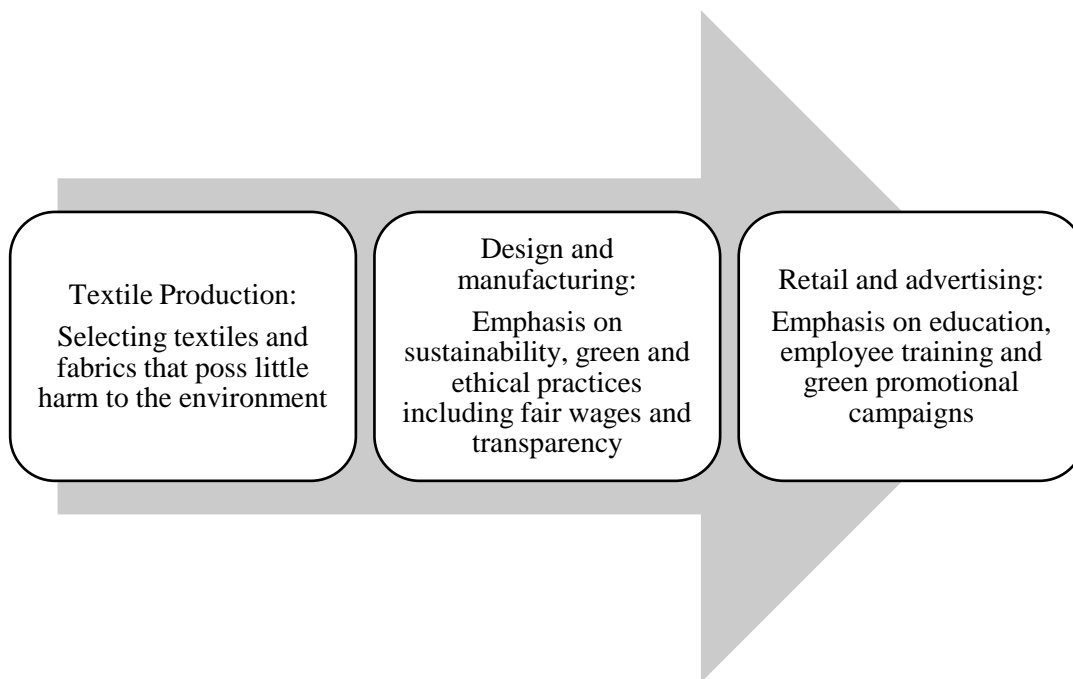
**Figure 14. Sustainable Fashion Theories**

Source: Author's own construction

As previously mentioned, there are two approaches in fashion production: fast and slow fashion (VINCENT, 2017). Fast fashion and sustainability are generally considered to be opposite terms. The fast-fashion concept has stemmed from textile disposal without even completing their lifetime (RATHINAMOORTHY, 2019). In contrast to the fast-fashion model, slow fashion has arisen and proven to be a plus point for sustainable development in the fashion industry. (JUNG & JIN, 2016). Slow fashion is not what its name indicates (not used to explain time). However, it is related to the idea that concerns its stakeholder's interests and takes into account of its impact on workers and the environment. (POOKULANGARA & SHEPHARD, 2013). As a simple explanation, the fast-moving fashion cycle is unsustainable, while the slow-moving fashion cycle does not compromise on the quality and impact of the product on the environment. (JUNG & JIN, 2016).

Figure 15. exhibits a slow fashion procedure model. This scheme created based on the fashion industry's four elements model designed by DREW & SINCLAIR (2015) excluding the "ancillary services" and proposed framework by CHOI (2014).





**Figure 15. The Slow Fashion Process**

Source: Author’s own construction based on CHOI (2014); DREW & SINCLAIR (2015)

In fact, there are some advantages and challenges towards both systems which are summarized in Table 9.

**Table 9. Fast Fashion vs Slow Fashion**

	<b>Fast fashion</b>	<b>Slow fashion</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	<p>Fast fashion quickly responds to rapidly changing fashion trends and consumer tastes.</p> <p>Fast fashion carries high-end designs to the masses at affordable price ranges.</p> <p>Fast fashion is very profitable in the global market.</p>	<p>Slow fashion reduces the consumption of resources and the amount of waste.</p> <p>Slow fashion improves the quality of life of workers.</p> <p>Since workers can spend more time on each piece of clothing, slow fashion enhances product quality.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Expedited manufacturing speed to meet fashion trends is likely to neglect working conditions.</p> <p>The low quality and low pricing of the products results in increasing fashion waste.</p>	<p>Small quantity production at low speed cannot compete with large scale firms which are based on the economy of scale strategy.</p> <p>Generally, products are more expensive than commodities.</p>

Source: JUNG & JIN (2016) (pp. 4)

### 3.9.1. Sustainability and Consumer Behaviour in Fashion Industry

Growing consumers attention and knowledge regarding sustainable products have led to the new era of higher-quality products that are a blessing for people and the environment

(DISSANAYAKE et al., 2017). In fact, there is a direct relationship between the consumer interests and product choices. Many people buy fashion products out of wish and desire rather than a basic need (STRÄHLE, 2017). In fashion, the buyers are mostly interested in creating a self-image through the product and express themselves through fashion. This identity expression is so important to them that it fades away the other aspects of the fashion industry, i.e., products being functional and sustainable and not merely eye-catching (MCNEILL & MOORE, 2015).

Sustainability, however, has made a room in the driving forces behind a purchase (GAZZOLA et al., 2020) and buyers tend to be more aware that products should not damage the environment, and even societies which is evident by the deep interest shown by consumers in sustainable products (TODESCHINI et al., 2017). Sustainable purchase behaviours are interpreted as buyers being more conscious of preferring sustainable products over other products that may potentially damage the environment and societies (SHEN et al., 2013). Although there has been an increased interest-driven in sustainable products and an increase in the socially responsible behaviour by customers, the share of these products is still less than 3% of the total market till 2015. (JOSHI & RAHMAN, 2015).

Combining environmental protection laws with marketing techniques is a unique idea that has been with us since the 1970s (PEATTIE, 2001). On one side, it is on the consumers to show interest into the sustainable products to lift the trend of them to make factories pay more attention to producing sustainable goods. (LAI, 2019). On the other side, green clients enhance social benefits rather than giving weight to the sustainable products' personal benefits. (ZOU & CHAN, 2019). To achieve sustainability, we must increase and adopt sustainable behaviour. sustainable behaviour means using products that have harm neither to the environment nor societies, and they are beneficial in the same time. Moreover, this kind of behaviour improves social impact in order to raise awareness. (DOPAÇO et al., 2018). Nowadays, much attention is being given to sustainable consumption in marketing and introducing various sustainable products to catch people's interests out there and make them realize that it is crucial to saving the environment and societies from harm rather than only thinking about getting personal benefits. (PILIGRIMIENĒ et al., 2020).

The upcoming generations are paying much more attention to sustainable clothing that is harmless for the environment, and also showing improved social sustainability knowledge among the public. (THOMAS, 2020). This change of mindset has created a new contest among fashion enthusiasts who compete to create good quality and sustainable commodities for their clients.

On the one hand, the debate is not only about producing sustainable products. But also, it is vital to tell the consumers about the companies' pros and cons, making such environment-friendly products in order to draw their interest towards green products. (GRAZZINI et al., 2020). On the other hand, buyers believe that they also play a role in social sustainability by prioritizing sustainable clothing. This method is boosting the need for such products in the market. Hence, there is much more awareness regarding sustainability among the public (OKUR & SARICAM, 2019).

Sustainable fashion has now become a vital part of the fashion industry. It clarifies the suspicions of several customers regarding social sustainability and environmental protection (SARICAM & OKUR, 2019). Aside from admiring the increased acknowledgement of sustainable fashion, it is equally fundamental to know customers' feelings and insights regarding sustainable fashion commerce (DELIEVA & EOM, 2019). Consumers play a crucial role in uplifting sustainable development as they can question and even mandate the corporations to highlight issues like child labour, human rights violation, mismanagement, etc. They also have the liberty to ask for merchandise that is reliable and eco-friendly (LAVORATA, 2014). There has been a raised concern among people to get alternatives to fast fashion. This trend is due to the heightened perception of environmental protection and social sustainability. Consumer inclinations have influenced the fashion world to switch to slow fashion and change the old fashion trends (TODESCHINI et al., 2017).

### **Similar Research**

Some of the findings in scope of consumer behaviour and sustainability in fashion industry are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10. Sustainability and Consumer Behaviour Former Studies**

<b>Research Topic</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Finding</b>
Ethical consumer behaviour in Germany: The attitude-behaviour gap in the green apparel industry	WIEDERHOLD & MARTINEZ	2018	Price, availability, knowledge, transparency, image, inertia, and consumption habits are barriers for sustainable purchase
Sustainable Fashion Supply Chain: Lessons from H&M	SHEN	2014	Developing a sustainable supply chain is an important strategy for fashion companies
The consumption side of sustainable fashion supply chain: Understanding fashion consumer eco-fashion consumption decision	CHAN & WONG	2012	Stores which pose some sustainable stimuli can motivate the consumer to have a green purchase. However, their motivation can be weakened by the price
Understanding fashion consumers' attitude and behavioural intention toward sustainable fashion products: Focus on sustainable knowledge sources and knowledge types	KONG et al.	2016	Fashion consumers have a positive effect on corporate marketing information. Therefore, fashion brands must identify and incorporate effective sources and types of sustainable knowledge into their marketing strategies to expand their business scope.
The impact of knowledge on consumer behaviour towards sustainable apparel consumption	OKUR & SARICAM	2019	Motivation for environmental responsibility is strongly correlated with the consumers' attitude toward green brand
Ethical fashion consumer behaviour in Korea - Factors influencing ethical fashion consumption-	KOH & NOH	2009	There were significant differences between ethical fashion consumers and non-ethical fashion consumers in attitudes toward ethical consumption behaviour and social responsibility was the most predictable variable in guiding behavioural intention.
Consumer's awareness on sustainable fashion	RATHINAMOO RTHY	2019	The sustainable knowledge level observed could be high but the purchase behaviour of the customer not improved significantly as expected due to the external influencing factors.
Understanding consumer behaviour in the sustainable clothing market: model development and verification	KOSZEWSKA	2016	consumers' attitudes towards garment shopping have a significant and positive influence on their willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products, especially in case of having social labelling.
Investigating consumer behaviour for environmental, sustainable and social apparel	BYRD & SU	2020	Consumers express positive sentiments towards apparel sustainability; However, garment producers should educate consumers about their sustainable practices due to the consumer lack of knowledge.

Source: Author's own construction based on previous studies

### 3.9.2. Sustainability and Social Media in Fashion Industry

Social media are the websites or specific platforms that bring internet users that have a common interest together in order to share their opinions and different points of view. Currently it is quite crucial for marketers to develop different social media platforms, run special online campaigns to communicate with their consumers (even potential ones) and deliver their messages (VAF AEI & FEKETE-FARKAS, 2017).

Reports and statistics show an increase on the internet and social media users. In 2021 January, there are more than 4.66 billion internet users and around 4.2 billion users registered in different social media platforms (STATISTA, 2021).

**Table 11. Digital Population in Millions**

Year	Region	Active Internet Users	Active Social Media Users
2021 (Jan)	Global	4,660	4,200
2021 (Jan)	Hungary	8.01	7.09
2020	Global	3,970	3,600
2020	Hungary	7.64	6.00

source: STATISTA (2021)

According to Table 11, compared to the previous year (2020), number of active social media users globally and specifically in Hungary increased by 16.6% and 18.1 percent, respectively. Hence, getting engaged in different social media platforms by both marketers and consumers seems crucial.

Currently sustainability counted as a part of social sciences, since this term has been used commonly in these fields (BALLESTAR et al., 2020). In fashion industry, social media can influence people when they are looking for information related to a product. Consequently, garment producers can positively influence societies via social media in order to promote sustainability or even share their related activities in this field. (KIM & KO, 2012).

As a matter of fact, social networks have transformed marketing, and the presence of fashion producers in social media is increasing day by day. Moreover, the number of social media posts which address sustainable fashion have been gaining more attention by people (KUSÁ & URMÍNOVÁ, 2020). According to AHMAD et al. (2015) study, even there is a direct relationship between social media and the fashion industry and consequently, companies can benefit from the

usage of social media. Therefore, fashion producers should involve themselves in different sustainable marketing campaigns on different social media platforms.

### **3.9.3. Social Sustainability in Fashion Industry:**

However, manpower are the main resources of the fashion industry, their rights are not well respected. In other words, this industry is the spotlight of social problems, consequently it has to put much attention to the social sustainability issues nowadays (BYRD & SU, 2020). As an instance, although work-related accidents result in the death of workers could happen in all industries, the deadly “Rana Plaza” accident became a turning point in the realization of the rights of workers in the fashion industry. On April 23, 2013, in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, 1138 people lost their lives, and more than 2,000 people were injured. It is worth mentioning that half of the victims were women whose children were kept in the same building during the day (SIDDIQI, 2015).

Moreover, despite many efforts to eradicate the child labour issue worldwide by activists, many children around the world are working in different industries and of course great portion of these children are employed unofficially in the fashion industry (SMESTAD, 2009; LEE et al., 2017). In fact, the fashion industry deals with the unwelcomed influence of child labour, sweatshops, and impoverished situations. By offering equitable trade and the appropriate manufacturing processes, this industry can deal with these issues (KÖKSAL et al., 2017; PARK & KIM, 2016). Furthermore, some garments producers have been gained the attention towards their unhealthy working conditions such as working in cotton farms or at very low wages and poverty. Unfortunately, fashion industry is notorious for paying low wages to its employees (RUDELL, 2006).

On the one hand, social interests are ever-growing in the fashion world (GOWOREK, 2011). On the other hand, there are such situations which bring several indictments of poor working conditions, meagre incomes, and low environmental accomplishment (THORISDOTTIR & JOHANNSDOTTIR, 2020). Therefore, such a situation makes it necessary for companies to involve all stakeholders including their consumers to curb such accusations and pessimistic consequences (BUBICZ et al., 2020).

The fashion industry is obscure and sophisticated and gives rise to many social issues, as there is an indirect relation between social sustainability and consumers. This issue demands a robust scheme for the betterment of social sustainability and consequently the integration of social sustainability into strategy seems crucial (EGELS-ZANDÉN, 2016). In fact, consumers are mostly sensitive to the ethical and social issues, but it is far more challenging for them to communicate

and notify about their thought and situation that they have faced (TOUSSAINT et al., 2021). As previously mentioned, social sustainability has four dimensions; equity, awareness of sustainability, participation (engagement), and social cohesion. Their relationship with consumer behaviour is going to be interpreted below.

### **Equity**

Interestingly, people are more familiar with equity problems than environmental issues in the fashion industry (BYRD & SU, 2020). But it is considered less than the other parameters in field of sustainable development in the reality (SUMMERS & SMITH, 2014).

We can state that absence of equity is an actual outcome of the underdevelopment of sustainability. The biased distribution among individuals, establishes many dilemmas and harms normal social functioning even in the developed countries (CORRAL-VERDUGO et al., 2010). Unfortunately, inequity could make the manpower in fashion industry feel bad which should be avoided (SIEH, 1987). Moreover, it seems social equity related to the fashion industry is better known by men in comparison with women (ZHANG, et al., 2021)

Or even, it is on the fashion industries to govern the product allowance across the world and ensure that there are enough products in the targeted markets. This globalization results in further economic windfalls and lower costs. However, it can cause more social and environmental sustainable problems especially in those countries and areas where there is still malfunctioning in the manufacturing units and workplaces (THORISDOTTIR & JOHANNSDOTTIR, 2020)

### **Public Awareness**

Although people are now conscious of the environmental and social impacts of their behaviour, the fashion industry has not adapted its strategies and policies completely according to the sustainable development plans yet. And still negatively affects the customers' sustainable future (THORISDOTTIR & JOHANNSDOTTIR, 2020). Moreover, people cannot discern the disadvantages of unsustainable dresses clearly (BHADURI & HA-BROOKSHIRE, 2011). For instance, one may know about the connection between his/her behaviour and environmental-social damages, but he/she may not know how big these damages are. Or even many people are also receptive to the unfavourable impact a particular change can bring but cannot stop this behaviour. (THØGERSEN & ÖLANDER, 2000). Therefore, it is mandatory to enlighten the importance of social and environmental impacts of fashion industry in order to raise the public awareness (SARKER, 2016).

### **Participation (Engagement)**

Garments and fashion products are some of the most demanded merchandises among people and there is a strong desire to the fashion industry due to increased customer's curiosity about these products. Thus, fashion companies try to involve their customers opinions into their businesses (RUPIK, 2015).

For encouraging sustainable consumption, it is significant to immerse consumers in active and mutual exchange (PILIGRIMIENĖ et al., 2020). In fact, consumers now function as presumer. Presumer indicates a person who is a consumer and takes an interest in producing and hence does both. This term came out in "The Third Wave" study by TOFFLER (1980). These presumers have their influence on many recreations such as production, distribution, and developmental processes (KO et al., 2013).

It is tough to explain what participation is as it involves many processes. HART (2008) gave a description in field of sustainability worth mentioning that involvement of an individual is the extent to which one can express his/her ideas considering the social environment and the consequence of those thoughts have on the community.

Moreover, social participation could be described as personalization, integration, and appropriateness. It tells to provide every single person with equal respect and importance. Also creating equal chances for people to express their priorities and simultaneously supporting any program's ethical and cultural demands (VAVIK & KEITSCH, 2010).

From a more profound perspective, the basic assumption is that people who make decisions, incline towards sustainable reform. (MURPHY, 2012). In other words, those who take part in the decision-making process are much appreciated, and it makes the participation a vital part of the decision-making discourse and social sustainability (GECZI, 2007). As an instance, study performed by KAIHATU (2020) shows that those people who feel more engaged in any activities of the fashion producers, have higher tendency for buying specific garments in comparison with those who are put aside.

### **Social Cohesion**

Social cohesion is a strong feeling of unity and solidarity between individuals where they respect each other's decisions and appreciate differences. (FONSECA et al., 2018). This aspect has the least alliance with environmental impacts. (MURPHY, 2012). However, social cohesion plays the role of a backbone in social sustainability, and it is the sum of the behaviours acquired by individuals of a particular group. (BALLET et al., 2020; JAYASHANKAR & RAJU, 2020).



Garment producers should not only care about their workers and their internal stakeholders. They should also look at other aspects that may harm the local communities surrounding them which could be negatively affected by their activities. These producers should consider all the methods that enable social inclusion with time advancement (JOHNSTON, 2009). One effective way can be the association of consumers with the producers. This relationship may prove valuable as it can elevate the customer's social cohesion and attention (DONATO et al., 2020).

#### **3.9.4. Ethical and Social Certifications (Labelling) for Fashion Products**

Labelling has a positive effect on encouraging people to buy specific products (KOSZEWSKA, 2011). One of the most common actions in the fashion industry is labelling which tagged to the most of apparel products. As an instance, washing prescriptions and general product information could be seen on each garment. Although ethical and social labelling does not seem to have a long story, a closer look reveals that more than a hundred years ago, this type of labelling was first established in the United States. The founder of this fundamental transformation were labour unions and consumer organizations in order to avoid sweatshop conditions (KUIK, 2005).

Currently, fashion producers are trying to get various types of sustainable certifications (for example “green”, “ethical”, or “animal cruelty free” ones) as much as possible since these ones could provide useful information for consumers. (CERCHIA & PICCOLO, 2019). In addition, these certifications and labelling helps companies to build trust since they bring transparency towards companies’ sustainable production lines and strategies (BYRD & SU. 2020). As an instance, a study performed by BYRD & SU (2020) shows that ethical and social labelling attracts the buyer’s attention but still they concern about the validity of them unfortunately. Although, they are aware of the general meaning of these labels, they are unaware of the details and for some reasons there is some uncertainty towards these labelling.

In conclusion, having ethical and social labelling seems necessary but not enough. Companies should provide detailed information about what these certifications are meant, and which scopes they cover.

#### **3.9.5. Consumer Purchase Intention in Sustainable Fashion Industry:**

Consumer behaviour now plays a crucial role if a company expects to attain success in the modern era (AZEVEDO et al., 2008), and intention is needed to assess the consumers behaviour. Having a more profound knowledge of what increase a purchase intention, can show, and tell marketers why a person behaves in a specific way (MORWITZ, 2007). Virtually, managers can instruct customer to go towards sustainable clothing, from his/her intention which leads him/her to behave

in a particular way. (KOSZEWSKA, 2016). Basically, if a person gets familiar with social and environmental issues, he/she is more likely to prioritize sustainable fashion to reduce environmental and social harm. (SHEN et al., 2012).

Living in modern society results in facing a lot of problems such as inequality, social dissolution, etc. In such circumstances, sustainable fashion producers cater to the garment requirement of people and should try to implement sustainable mindset in their consumers. It is way too much to handle. (SHEN et al., 2012). According to the TPB, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control predict intention in garment shopping behaviour (DIDDI & NIEHM, 2017). Following are the roles of these behaviours in the fashion industry.

### **Attitude in Sustainable Fashion Industry**

checking the attitude of consumers seems crucial in order to contemplate and uplift their desire for sustainable fashion products. Moreover, it is necessary to assess if they would opt to spend bonuses for eco-friendly items and other sustainable clothing. Therefore, consumers attitudes towards sustainable fashion products have a positive influence on their purchase possibilities (KOSZEWSKA, 2016). In other words, to understand the general trends of purchasing sustainable products, considering the consumers' attitude and thoughts about social and environmental issues plays a fundamental role. Afterwards, we can determine whether a particular consumer will go for sustainable fashion or not (MCNEILL & MOORE, 2015)!

Generally, consumers have a positive attitude toward sustainable fashion, but there is a gap between attitude-behaviour which is quite ambiguous (VEHMAS et al., 2018). Basically, a person's perception and knowledge could impact his/her attitude. Moreover, attitude foretells the consumer's general behaviour. Therefore, consumer behaviour could be understood based on his/her attitude (ARMSTRONG et al., 2009)

### **Subjective Norms in Sustainable Fashion Industry**

The question "is the behaviour approved or rejected by a referent?" is answered by looking into the subjective norms. (HAN et al., 2010). In other words, subjective norms affect the consumer's fashion consumption since social pressure could lead to a particular behaviour. (KANG et al., 2013). A study conducted in the United States by DIDDI & NIEHM (2017) carried out practical information about the role of moral and subjective norms towards purchase intention for fashion products. Findings show that subjective norms play a crucial role for predicting behaviour especially in case of corporate social responsibility perception.

### **Perceived Behavioural Control in Sustainable Fashion Industry**

The shopping behaviour of consumers is directly affected by perceived behavioural control (TU & HU, 2018). And consequently, there is a significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and purchase intention for fashion products (NEGM, 2019). Moreover, in field of green purchase behaviour, perceived behavioural control has a positive relationship with buying sustainable garments (ZHANG et al., 2019).

## 4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the previous chapter, the theoretical foundations and background of the research were stated. While the purpose of this chapter is to clarify the research methodology opted for the current study. It is of prime importance to choose a suitable procedure and method to carry out a research. All the objectives and aims of a study directly link to the research methodology. In fact, selecting an appropriate research methodology includes looking for a strategy that best suits the topic of interest. It lessens the researcher's difficulties and enables him/her to justify the issues and queries with more confidence and accuracy (VOGT, 2008).

This chapter first tries to explain the method and type of research following by research population, method which has been used for sampling and data collection elaborated. Furthermore, variables are described in detail. Different techniques used for analysing data is the next topic which follows by checking validity and reliability of the questionnaire

### 4.1. Method and Type of the Research

Research is a rigid, legal, and unique scheme adopted to respond to several concerns and look for fresh and modern evidence to describe a solution or relationship. (WALTZ & BAUSELL, 1981). Since this research investigates the human behaviour, it should be categorised as a social research. In fact, social research is practically a method acquired by social scientists to understand and look into people's dilemmas and give appropriate acknowledgements to the problems (DOUGLAS, 1976).

Research has two types based on its nature:

- ❖ Basic Research - For formulating new theories and explanations about a specific topic or phenomenon that is globally authorized and could be accepted worldwide.
- ❖ Applied Research - For determining modern techniques or methods to predict specific hypothesis or objectives (GULBRANDSEN & KYVIK, 2010).

In addition, Research can be undertaken for three different purposes.

- ❖ Exploratory Research
- ❖ Descriptive research
- ❖ Hypotheses testing (SEKARAN, 2003).

Since this study is undertaken to better comprehend the role of social sustainability and consumer purchase intention and their characteristics, it is categorised as an explanatory research.

Quantitative and Qualitative methods are the two most known and easily implied methods of social research (SARANTAKOS, 2013).

- Qualitative research is an in-depth examination of the event or community by making new significant distinctions resulting from getting closer to the phenomenon in order to understand better. Such a research assists us in modifying our study. It also makes us comprehend, there is always a qualitative aspect to the quantitative work ( ASPERS & CORTE, 2019).
- Quantitative research is a systematic experimental research of phenomena that can be observed through statistical, mathematical, or computational methods and analysis. Data is usually collected by questionnaires and other methods, or even by manipulating pre-existing statistical data. Basically, this research method is sophisticated and based on numerals that decipher a specific happening (BABBIE, 2010).

Table 12 explains the main differences between qualitative versus quantitative research methods.

**Table 12. Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>Quantitative Research</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To understand & interpret social interactions.	To test hypotheses, look at cause & effect, & make predictions.
<b>Group Studied</b>	Smaller & not randomly selected.	Larger & randomly selected.
<b>Variables</b>	Study of the whole, not variables.	Specific variables studied
<b>Form of Data Collected</b>	Qualitative data such as open- ended responses, interviews, participant observations, field notes, & reflections.	Quantitative data based on precise measurements using structured & validated data-collection instruments.
<b>Type of Data Analysis</b>	Identify patterns, features, themes.	Identify statistical relationships.
<b>Most Common Research Objectives</b>	Explore, discover, & construct.	Describe, explain, & predict.
<b>Final Report</b>	Narrative report with contextual description & direct quotations from research participants.	Statistical report with correlations, comparisons of means, & statistical significance of findings.

Source: APUKE, 2017 (pp. 42)

In summary, this study is:

- Applied Research based on its type.
- Exploratory research according to its purpose.
- Quantitative method due to techniques used.

#### 4.2. Research Population and Sampling

In research terminology, when it comes to exploration, the word "population" usually symbolizes the common characteristic that a researcher is looking for in different societies, organizations, and objects (GAO & LOW, 2014). The population of this study consists of all Hungarian students. In fact, students are known as the main consumers not far away and are also in a higher position than the average level of society (PENA-CEREZO et al., 2019); these are the main reasons for choosing students and the study population.

Basically, it is a very rare situation in which a researcher has to study all the target population. And usually, a small part of the target population is being studied. This part is known as a sample (HU, 2014). The process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling. For having reliable results, care must be taken in choosing proper sampling method, in order to have a proper sample which is representative of the population.

In general, sampling methods can be divided into “probability” and “non-probability” groups. In a probability sampling, the selection is random, to ensure that the selection is based on chance and there is an equal possibility of selecting each of the population entity. But in non-probability sampling, selection is based on availability or other criteria and there is no equal possibility for each population unit to be chosen (BERNDT, 2020). Table 13 compares these two different methods.

**Table 13. Critical Questions for Choosing the Appropriate Sampling Method**

Question	Probability Sampling	Non-Probability Sampling
<b>Basic for selection?</b>	Random selection	Non-random selection
<b>Likelihood for sampling bias?</b>	Low	High
<b>Objective or Subjective Method?</b>	Objective	Subjective
<b>Opportunity for selection?</b>	Fixed and known	Not specified and unknown
<b>Type of inference?</b>	Statistical	Analytical.
<b>Type of research?</b>	Confirmatory	Exploratory, descriptive

Source: BERNDT, 2020 (pp. 2)

According to the criteria provided in Table 13, non-probability method for sampling is recommended since this is an exploratory research with subjective method. In this study, “Convenience Sampling” has been used. Convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) is a type of nonprobability sampling. Convenience sampling tries to reach those people, who are effortlessly attainable, accessible at a provided time frame, and even live near. Moreover, those who voluntarily participate also become a part of the research project in this type of sampling (ETIKAN, 2016).

### **4.3. Data Collection Method**

Data can be collected or obtained from primary or secondary sources. Primary data obtained first-hand by the researcher via different tools for the specific study. In particular, there are four sources of primary data; individuals, focus groups, unobtrusive methods, and panels of respondents. The information collected from already existing sources is known as secondary data. These sources are numerous and include publications, books, journals, census information, databases, statistical abstracts, etc. It should be noted that the internet is also a primary source of information if the interviews or even questionnaire are quitted administered over it (SEKARAN, 2003).

In fact, it is predominantly important to form questions in a questionnaire that highlight every aspect of the topic of interest. That is why structured questionnaires that include quantitative information are given prime importance in survey research. Such structured questionnaires prove to be an efficient way of gathering people's experiences and ideas regarding the topic, and they must consist of a series of questions related to the research topic (CHEUNG, 2014).

#### **4.3.1. Questionnaire Design and Development**

Questionnaires are tools in order to get a specific message from a particular community or group surveyed. The questionnaire configuration requires a professional's supervision and careful deliberation to omit worthless and extraneous data. Adequate time and attention while planning and formulating the questionnaire is a must. (ROOPA & RANI, 2012).

Since there is no specific questionnaire which evaluates the role of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention, the questionnaire was developed by author based on different questionnaires retrieved from several scientific articles for this research.

The final draft of the questionnaire consists of three sections and has 46 questions all together which starts with demographic questions such as gender, age, qualification degree etc. Basically, there are two reasons for collecting demographic information in any studies:

- ❖ Describing the sample
- ❖ Answering those main questions which are somehow connected to the demographic information (HUGHES et al., 2016).

After demographic questions, participants were asked to indicate how important seven factors including price, style, quality, brand, environmental & social friendly aspect, others' opinion, and social media impact are when they purchase fashion products. The main reason for these questions is to understand their attitude towards the common issues.

Then the main part comes where it consists of 28 questions which evaluates the role of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention for fashion products. The questions are closed questions based on the Likert scale, which includes five options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The scoring method is from 1 for “Strongly Disagree” to 5 for “Strongly Agree”, respectively.

### **Measurement Items**

Preparing a quality questionnaire plays a major role in social science studies. Since no research has been done on this subject until the time of writing, no designed questionnaire had been found. Set out in Table 14, the scales of the constructs were adopted from existing literature but modified to fit the context of this research.



**Table 14. Constructs and Items Used in the Questionnaire**

	Construct	Items for each construct	Sources	
Social Sustainability	Equity	EQ1	Fair compensation for garments producers is important to me when I buy garments	Adapted from JUNG& JIN, 2016
		EQ2	I am concerned about fair trade when I buy garment	
		EQ3	I am concerned about the working conditions of producers when I buy garment	
	Public awareness	PA1	It is important to me that the garments I buy are produced in safe working conditions & in a way that is not harmful to the environment.	Adapted from SHEN et al., 2013; FASHION REVOLUTION CIC (2018)
		PA2	Fashion brands should be required by law to provide information about the social impacts of their business	
		PA3	I am interested in learning about what fashion brands do to improve the lives of people in the societies where they manufacture their products	
		PA4	I am interested in apparel products made by a company that follows standards of international labour, such as reasonable work hours, no child labour, the right to unionize, a fair living wage	
	Participation (Engagement)	PE1	I like to know more about the ways my consumption habits may contribute to social sustainability in fashion industry	Adapted from PILGRIMIENÉ et al., (2020)
		PE2	I feel better person if I can contribute to the social sustainability	
		PE3	I like to discuss the issues about social sustainability rights with others, sharing ideas and recommendations	
	Social Cohesion	SC1	I feel more interested in recycling my used garments if I can support charity & other organizations by this	Adapted from WANG (2012); PREUIT (2016); SARICAM et al. (2017)
		SC2	I usually go shopping by considering human rights in my mind	
SC3		I should tell my family & friends about sustainable fashion products		
SC4		Purchasing the locally made garments, it is like investing in local community		
Consumer Purchase Intention	Attitude	AT1	The consumers are responsible to make the change towards a sustainable & ethical production & consumption	Adapted from KJELLEVAND & KJELLEVAND (2018); CEYLAN (2019)
		AT2	I believe my actions and choices makes an impact on fashion industry	
		AT3	I have an ethical obligation to purchase eco-friendly garments	
	Subjective norms	SN1	Most people who are important to me think I should purchase sustainable fashion garments	Adapted from PREUIT, 2016
		SN2	The people in my life whose opinions I value would approve of my purchase of sustainable fashion products	
		SN3	Most people who are important to me are concerned about whether fashion products are sustainable or not	
		SN4	It is necessary to share my knowledge about social sustainability on social media	
	Perceived behavioural control	PB1	My behaviour can have a positive effect on purchasing sustainable fashion products	Adapted from MANCHIRAJU (2014); ZHANG et al. (2019)
		PB2	I have opportunities and time for searching and purchasing green garments	
		PB3	I am free to choose sustainable garments when purchasing	
		PB4	*Since one person cannot have any effect upon sustainable issues, it does not make any difference what I do	
	Green purchase intention	GP1	I want to make a special effort to buy those garments that are made from ecological materials	Adapted from ABBASI et al. (2013); LU et al. (2013)
GP2		When I have a choice between two equal garments, I purchase the one less harmful to other people and the environment		
GP3		I intend to purchase green garments because of its social and environmental concern.		

Source: Author's own construction based on previous studies

### **Distribution of Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were distributed among the Hungarian students via Internet. Probably the most important and obvious advantages of using online questionnaires are saving time, money, and having access to more people since there is no geographical boundaries (WRIGHT, 2005). Moreover, there is a possibility to warn the participants when the questionnaire is not completed or answered incorrectly.

In addition, one of the most important errors occurs a researcher wants to enter the data of paper questionnaires to the software. The more questions and answers there are, the higher the error. Data in online questionnaires are entered into the database simultaneously by the user, and consequently the possibility of data entry error is almost zero. These are the main reason that the online questionnaire had been used during the study

### **4.4. Data Analysis**

Both descriptive and inferential analytical methods were used to analyse the collected primary data. SmartPLS v. 3.3.3. was used to do partial least square analysing based on structural equation modelling to test the formulated hypotheses and answer the research questions. Moreover, SPSS21 has been used for descriptive analyses.

#### **4.4.1. Data Preparation**

For preparing statistical reports, one of the main issues which researcher should deal with is summarization, because the purpose of preparing reports is to provide compressed information from all data. One of the most common used software for data summarization is SPSS which developed by IBM. In fact, SPSS is the name of a statistical software that is used for statistical analysis, especially in social sciences studies (ARKKELIN, 2014). In general, it is an analytical software which receives data in various formats such as questionnaires and can show the output in the form of a table or chart to be easily analysed and reviewed. In the present study, the following analyses were performed with the help of this software (SPSS v. 21):

- ❖ Assessing Questionnaire Reliability
- ❖ Socio-Demographics Analyses
- ❖ Calculating Statistical Summaries such as Tables and Graphs
- ❖ Making Cumulative Relative Frequency Tables
- ❖ Mann–Whitney U Test for Assessing Gender Differences

#### 4.4.2. Partial Least Square Based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM)

Currently, Structural Equation Model (SEM) is one of the main analyses in social sciences especially in field of marketing. In fact, this method is a very robust multivariate analysis of the multivariate regression family that let the researchers to test a set of regression equations simultaneously, mainly, when there are hidden variables in order to figure out the relationships between them (SARSTEDT et al., 2014). In fact, SEM enables researchers to examine and evaluate latent variables measured by their indices (MOHAMAD et al., 2019).

In SEM, simple concepts such as variance and covariance are used as criteria for measuring the degree of dependence between latent variables. Its main application is in multivariate studies, which cannot be done in a two-variable manner each time considering an independent variable with a dependent variable (such as behavioural and social sciences, since the nature of such studies is multivariate, and they cannot be solved in a two-variable way). Consequently, it lets the researcher to test a set of regression equations simultaneously (HENSELER et al, 2014).

Basically, there are two common approaches to evaluate a relationship in SEM models:

1. Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM)
2. Variance-Based SEM (VB-SEM) (HAIR JR. J. F. et al., 2017).

Each approach has its own usage at it is presented in Table 15.

**Table 15. Structural Equation Model Approaches & Usages**

Structural Equation Model	
Approach	Usage
Covariance-Based SEM	Confirming established theory
Variance-Based SEM	Predictive approach for new model or theory

Source: Author's own construction based on HAIR JR. J. F. et al., 2017

Partial Least Squares (PLS) is the most prevailing kind of VB-SEM (MOHAMAD et al., 2019). It is a non-parametric method that is a developed from the principal component regression. This method is suitable substitute for structural equation modelling since it is less sensitive to sample size and does not require data to be normal. It is used when the number of compounds is less than the number of variables. (PETER et al., 2018). Moreover, PLS SEM is mainly used for testing new models and approaches. Consequently, Partial Least Squares based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM) could be a proper method to analyse the proposed research framework.

In PLS, there are two models, outer and inner. Outer model shows the relationships between items (questions) and their constructs (latent variables). But inner model shows the relationship between the latent variables (SARSTEDT et al., 2017).

The outer model in PLS SEM is divided into two categories:

1. Reflective measurement model
2. Formative measurement model

In reflective model, each item represents a measure of its latent variable. Moreover, in this model the direction is from the latent variable to its items. In contrast, in the formative model, items define their construct, and the direction is from the items to their latent variable (FREEZE & RASCHKE, 2007).

Table 16 provides some similar studies that researcher(s) used the same method (PLS SEM) for statistical analyses.

**Table 16. Previous Literature Relevant to Purchase Intention Using PLS-SEM Method**

Research Topic	Author(s)	Year
Predicting Consumer Purchase Intention on Fashion Products in Online Retailer: Integration of Self Determination Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior	WIDYARINI & GUNAWAN	2017
Investigating Causes and Consequences of Purchase Intention of Luxury Fashion	SALEM & CHAICHI	2018
Consumer attitude and purchase intention towards organic textile products	ABRAR et al.	2018
How Social Capital Impacts the Purchase Intention of Sustainable Fashion Products	KIM & KANG	2020
Millennial Consumers' Purchase Intention for Eco-Fashion Apparel: A Study from Southern China	ZHU	2021

Source: Author's own construction

Therefore, since this study has 8 latent variables, data collected are not normal, has an exploratory purpose, PLS SEM model has been used for developing research framework. Moreover, as presented in Table 16, recent similar studies relevant to the purchase intention also used the same method.

While Amos and LISREL are the most prevailing software, used to implement the CB-SEM method, SmartPLS and WarpPLS are the most common ones for VB-SEM approach (JAYA et al., 2019). Hence, SmartPLS v. 3.3.3 had been used to analyse the data during the study.

#### 4.4.3. Sample Size

For producing valid and relevant results, designing a proper research model is a must. To achieve such results, it is necessary to estimate the size of a sample scientifically. Therefore, estimating the sample size at the stage of concept development in any research needs attention since it indicates the minimum number of observations to perform statistical analyses (BOLARINWA, 2020).

For calculating the sample size, “priori sample size model” has been used in this study. This method calculates the minimum sample size based on specified alpha error (MOSHAGEN & ERDFELDER, 2016). Parameters and their values for the sample size calculation are given below.

- Anticipated effect size: 0.3
- Desired statistical power level: 0.95
- Number of latent variables: 8
- Number of observed variables: 28
- Probability level (p-value): 0.05

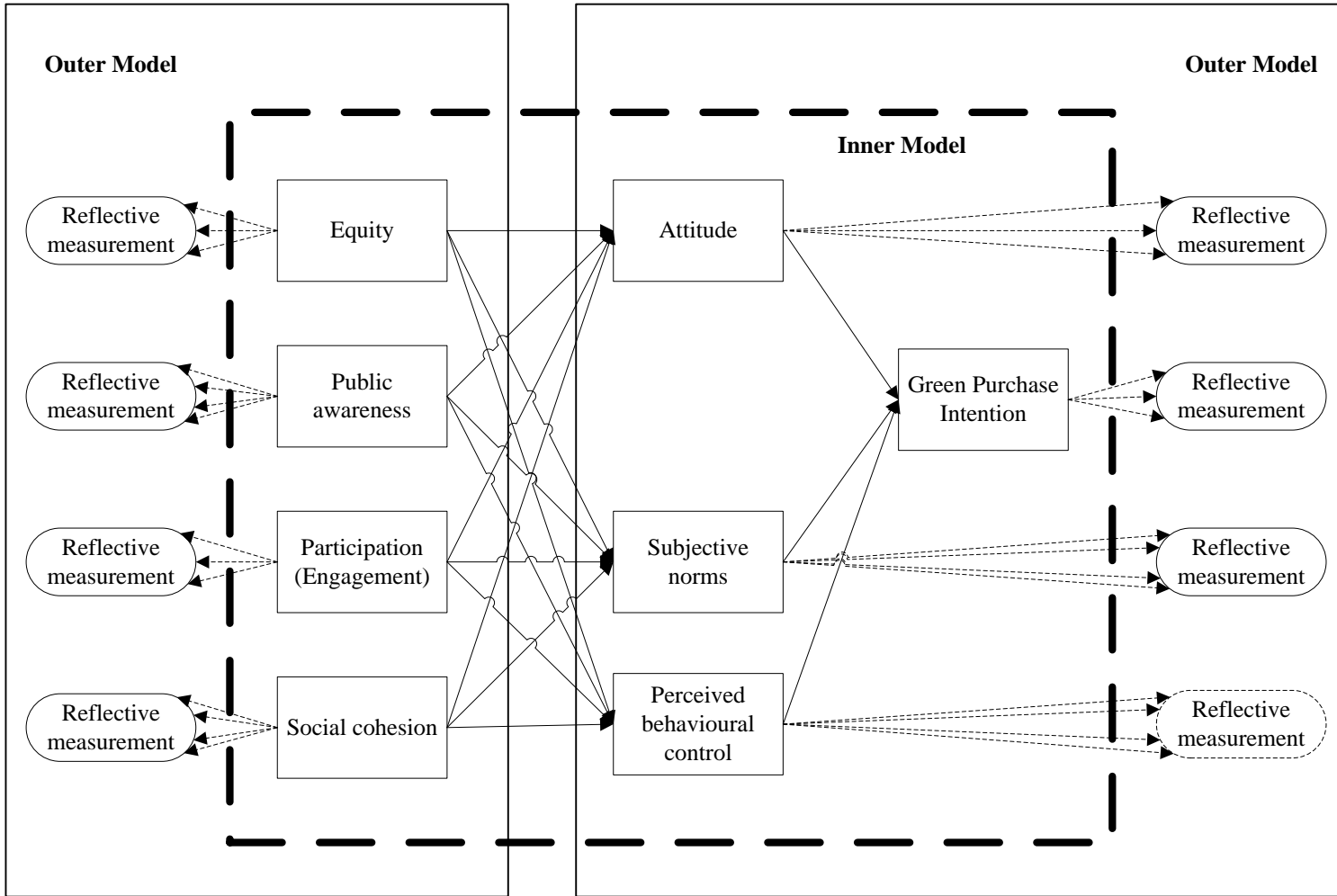
The sample size calculated by using “Free Statistics Calculators” V. 4.0 and results are presented below.

- ✓ Minimum sample size to detect effect: 256
- ✓ Minimum sample size for model structure: 138
- ✓ Recommended minimum sample size: 256

Therefore, at least 256 samples are needed for this study. Since more data could give more credibility to any study, during the study time frame (January 23<sup>rd</sup> till February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021), 571 samples (responses to the designed questionnaire) were collected.

#### 4.4.4. Research Framework

A proper research framework provides and identifies all study variables and also shows how they are connected to each other. Research framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 16.



**Figure 16. The Inner and Outer Model of the Research Framework**

Source: Author's Own Construction

## **4.5. Pilot Study**

Before distribution of any questionnaires, two important characteristics must be checked, which are reliability and validity. The reliability shows how much the measuring instrument (questionnaire) provides the same results if the condition does not change. The validity of the questionnaire means whether a designed questionnaire can measure and test the intended objectives or not? (LOUANGRATH, 2018)

Pilot study refers to the pre-test or small-scale of a study, in order to examine the practicality and feasibility of the designed method. Moreover, the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument are going to be evaluated. In fact, the main goal of the pilot study is to identify the unforeseen issues, like ambiguous questionnaire items (VIECHTBAUER et al., 2015).

The pilot study in this research includes 60 samples and data was collected between 23rd and 28th of January 2021.

### **4.5.1. Validity of the Questionnaire**

Content validity is a method for assessing questionnaire used in the study that whether it is able to measure what a researcher is looking for or not. One of the common techniques for the content validity evaluation is the questionnaire review by a group of experts. In general, in this method, the questionnaire is presented to a number of experts, and they are going to check the accuracy of it (TAHERDOOST, 2016).

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire's questions were extracted from various scientific studies and then modified according to the field of this research. Afterwards, first draft was given to two Hungarian students for the translation. Translation also checked by two native speakers as well.

In the next round, the first draft which included 40 questions was given to Prof. Fekete-Farkas and Mrs. Hegyesné Görgényi to check it in detail and consequently some comments were given by them. The final draft after several revision consists of 46 questions.

### **4.5.2. Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The most common measure of internal consistency or in other words, reliability is Cronbach's alpha. It can be considered as a correlation coefficient between those questions that are used to measure a specific parameter (SEKARAN, 2003). Cronbach's alpha ranges in value between 0 and 1. Table 17 describes how much internal consistency a set of items as a group could be acceptable.

**Table 17. Cronbach's Alpha Range**

Alpha Cronbach	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.5$	Unacceptable

Source: HAIR JR et al. (2015) (pp. 255)

Since there are 8 latent variables in this study, for each latent variable, Cronbach's alpha should be calculated separately in order to check the internal consistency. SPSS 21 had been used for the calculation.

**Table 18. Internal Consistency of Each Item Based on Cronbach's Alpha**

	Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N. of Items
Equity	0.880	0.881	3
Public awareness	0.790	0.795	4
Participation (Engagement)	0.759	0.764	3
Social cohesion	0.751	0.751	4
Attitude	0.776	0.781	3
Subjective norms	0.807	0.809	4
Perceived behavioural control	0.668	0.679	4
Green purchase intention	0.828	0.837	3

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Presented in Table 18, the results of the analyses show that all latent variables questions have loadings above 0.70 except perceived behavioural control. However, the value of 0.668 is still acceptable, Cronbach's alpha calculated after deleting each item in order to see which one has the least consistency with the other items. The result of the analysis is given in Table 19.

**Table 19. Cronbach's Alpha Analysis for "Perceived Behavioural Control"**

Item	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PB1	10.50	5.780	0.488	0.244	0.575
PB2	10.80	5.756	0.609	0.680	0.498
PB3	10.65	5.960	0.553	0.686	0.535
PB4	9.95	7.235	0.205	0.130	0.761

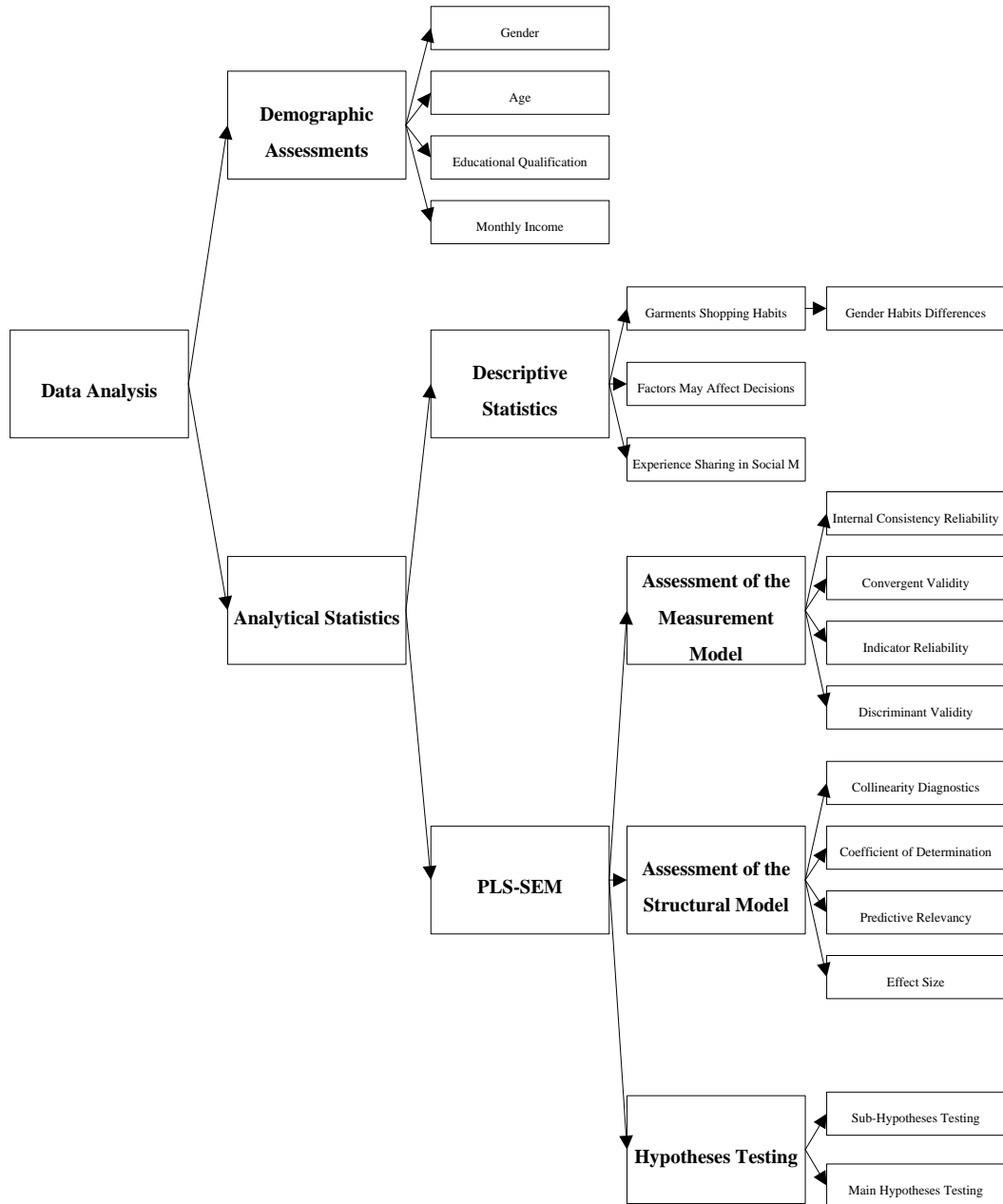
Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results



Result reveals that in case of removing PB4 from the perceived behavioural control items, the internal consistency will increase to 0.761. Therefore, PB4 is the only item with the highest impact to the reliability of the questionnaire. Consequently, the decision had been made that this item should be revoked from the study.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In fact, data analysis is one of the main bases of any study and research. In this section, those specific analyses are going to be described, which have been performed to answer the research problem and decide whether to support or reject the hypotheses. Statistical data analysis flowchart is shown in Figure 17. This flowchart provides those steps which should be taken to provide valid results for this study.



**Figure 17. Statistical Data Analysis Flowchart**

Source: Author's own construction

### 5.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section describes and provides descriptive statistics of various socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. To obtain socio-demographic information, respondents were asked to specify their gender, age, level of education, and monthly income at the beginning of the questionnaire. These features will be briefly described below.

**Table 20. Gender of the Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	226	39.60%
Female	345	60.40%
Total	571	100%

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

As previously mentioned, 571 respondent's data collected during the research time frame by distributing the questionnaire. According to Table 20, majority of the respondents were women. Out of the 571 respondents, 345 were females, which is around 60 % and the male participants accounted for 40% of the total respondents.

**Table 21. Age Group of the Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-21	250	43.8%
22-25	176	30.8%
26-29	75	13.1%
30-33	33	5.8%
34 and above	37	6.5%
Total	571	100%

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

The age distribution of survey respondents is given in the Table 21. The highest frequency is related to students between 18 to 21 years old.

**Table 22. Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

Level	Frequency	Percentage
BSc student	445	77.90%
MSc student	94	16.50%
PhD student	32	5.60%
Total	571	100%

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

The information given in Table 22 is related to how the respondents are distributed according to the level of education. The highest percentage of respondents are studying their bachelor’s degree.

**Table 23. Monthly Income (net) of Respondents**

Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 50,000 HUF	238	40.80%
50,001 – 100,000 HUF	92	16.10%
100,001 – 150,000 HUF	49	8.60%
150,001 – 200,000 HUF	49	8.60%
200,001 and above	148	25.90%
Total	571	100%

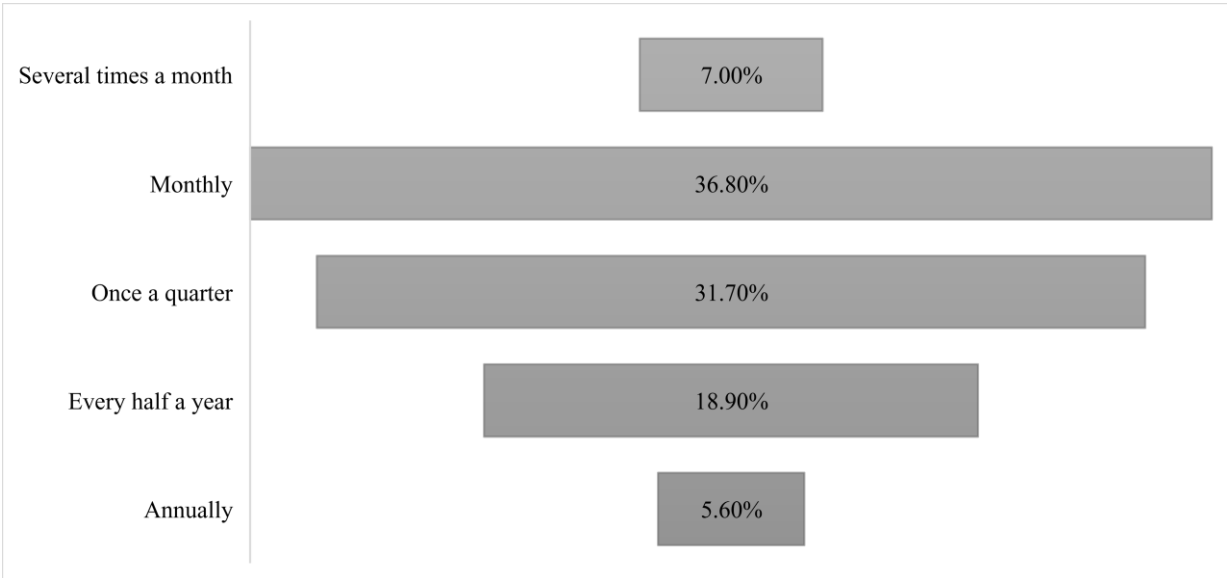
Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Note: 1 EUR = 355 HUF

Monthly income of the respondents is distributed into five categories as it is shown in Table 23. The results show that around 41% of the total respondents earn less than 50,000 HUF per month. According to Hungarian Central Statistical office (KSH) (2021), the minimum gross wage is 167,400 HUF which net is around 111,320 HUF.

**5.2. Assessment of Respondents’ Habits Towards Garments Shopping**

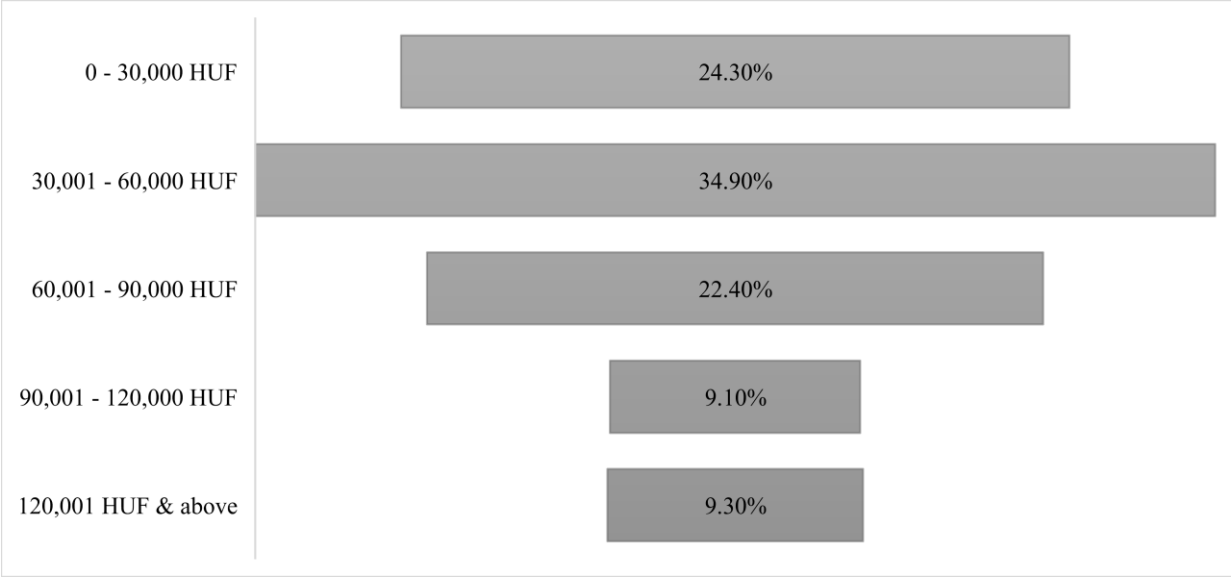
To analyse respondents shopping frequency, they have been asked how often they purchase outfits. Most of the respondents, usually buy on a monthly (~ 37%) or every three months basis (~ 32%). Figure 18 summarises the related results.



**Figure 18. Outfits Buying Frequency**

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

According to the obtained results, the respondents mostly spend between 30,001 to 60,000 HUF on garments annually. Figure 19 shows the annual expenditure on clothing distribution by respondents.

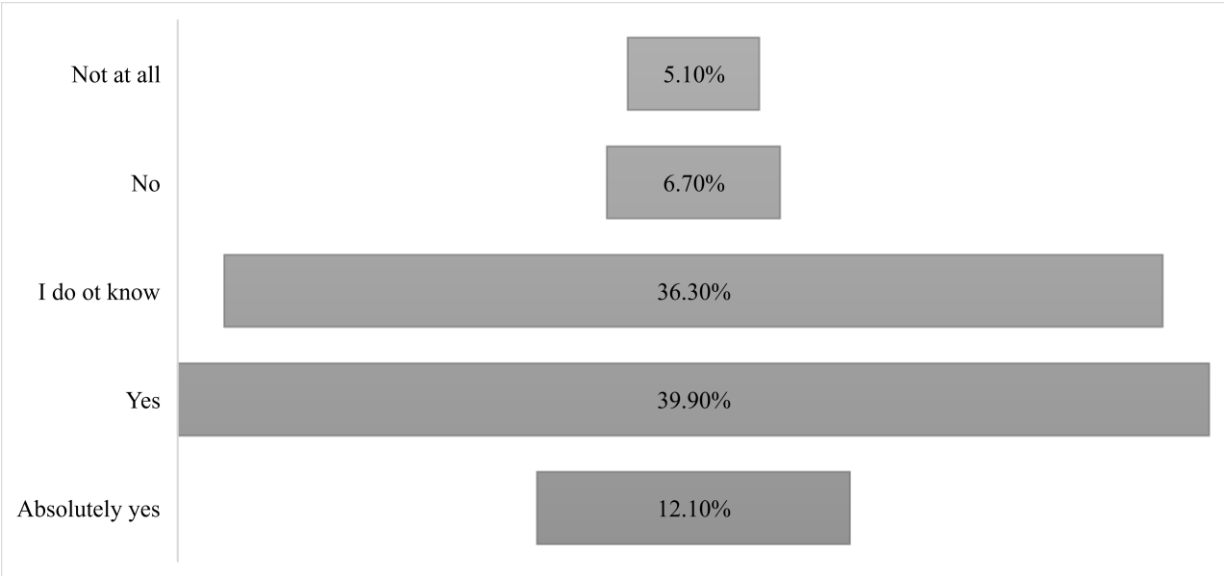


Note: 1 EUR = 355 HUF

**Figure 19. Spending on Garments Shopping Annually**

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Interestingly, many respondents are interested in buying sustainable garments. Almost 52% of them (those who said “yes” or “absolutely yes”) are willing to buy green outfits in order to improve sustainable development in this industry. Figure 20 summarises the results.



**Figure 20. Interested in Green Garments**

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

**Assessment of the Gender Habits Differences Towards Garments Shopping Using Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test (Mann Whitney Test)**

The Mann-Whitney U test is used to compare the differences between genders (male and female) regarding their garments shopping habits. The null hypothesis for the Mann-Whitney test in this study is that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents towards their garments shopping habits.

**Table 24. Gender Habits Differences Towards Garments Buying Frequency**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney</b>	<b>Wilcoxon W</b>	<b>Z Statistics</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Male	226	336.04	75944				
Female	345	253.22	87362				
Results				27677	87362	-6.145	0.000

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Based on the results illustrated in Table 24, there is a difference between shopping frequency between female and male. By combining Figure 18 and Table 24, we can conclude that women are more often buy garments comparing men.

**Table 25. Gender Habits Differences Towards Spending on Garments Annually**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney</b>	<b>Wilcoxon W</b>	<b>Z Statistics</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Male	226	285.61	64547.50				
Female	345	286.26	98785.50				
Results				38896.50	64547.50	-0.48	0.962

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

The results given in the Table 25 prove that there is no evidence to support difference between the gender and their spending habits on clothing in this study since the Sig(2-tailed) (p-value) is higher than 0.05.

**Table 26. Gender Habits Differences Towards Green Garments Shopping**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>Mann-Whitney</b>	<b>Wilcoxon W</b>	<b>Z Statistics</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Male	226	239.89	54216				
Female	345	316.20	109090				
Results				28565	54216	-5.741	0.000

Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Tables 26 shows there is a statistically significant difference between male and female respondents in purchasing green garments. Women are more willing to purchase sustainable outfits.

### 5.3. Assessment of Factors Which May Affect Respondents' Purchase Decisions for Fashion Products

During this study, respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance of 7 items when they are buying any outfits. Price, style, quality, brand, environmental & social friendly, others' opinion, and social media impact are those items which have been asked. The first step is to evaluate the internal consistency of the abovementioned parameters.

**Table 27. Internal Consistency of Factors Affecting Respondents' Purchase Decisions for Fashion Products Based on Cronbach's Alpha**

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N. of Items
0.617	0.617	7

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

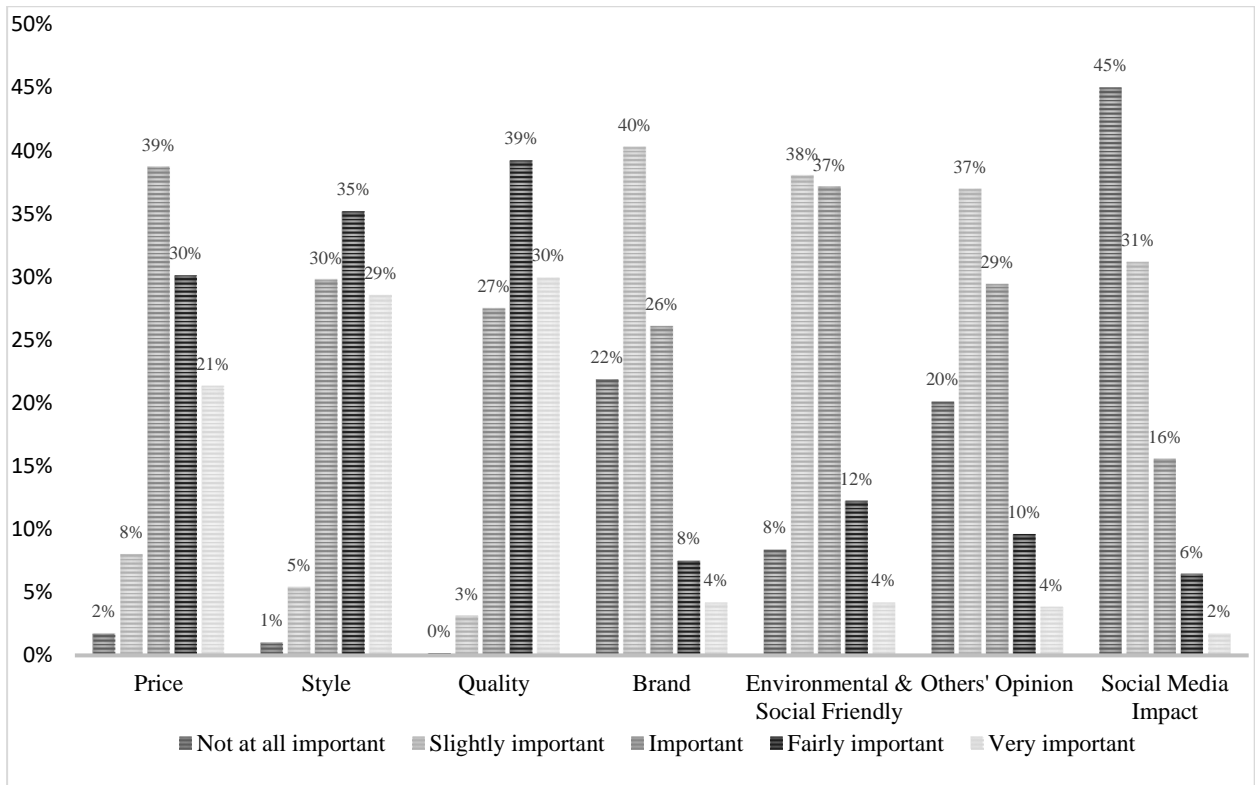
As Table 27 shows, internal consistency of these 7 items based on Cronbach's Alpha is 0.617, which is above 0.6 and slightly lower than (0.70) and consequently in the acceptable range; but this may cause data inaccuracy.

Next, a comprehensive overview of the factors may influence the respondents' purchase decisions for buying apparel products are provided in Figure 21 and Table 28. The scale ranges from extremely not important, to very important based on the 5-point Likert scale.

**Table 28. Frequency of Factors that May Affect Respondents' Purchase Decisions**

Factors	Not at all important	Slightly important	Important	Fairly important	Very important	Mean
Price	10	46	221	172	122	<u>3.61</u>
Style	6	31	170	201	163	<u>3.85</u>
Quality	1	18	157	224	171	<u>3.96</u>
Brand	125	230	149	43	24	<u>2.32</u>
Environmental & Social Friendly	48	217	212	70	24	<u>2.66</u>
Others' Opinion	115	211	168	55	22	<u>2.41</u>
Social Media Impact	257	178	89	37	10	<u>1.89</u>

Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results



**Figure 21. Distribution of Factors that May Affect Respondents' Purchase Decisions**

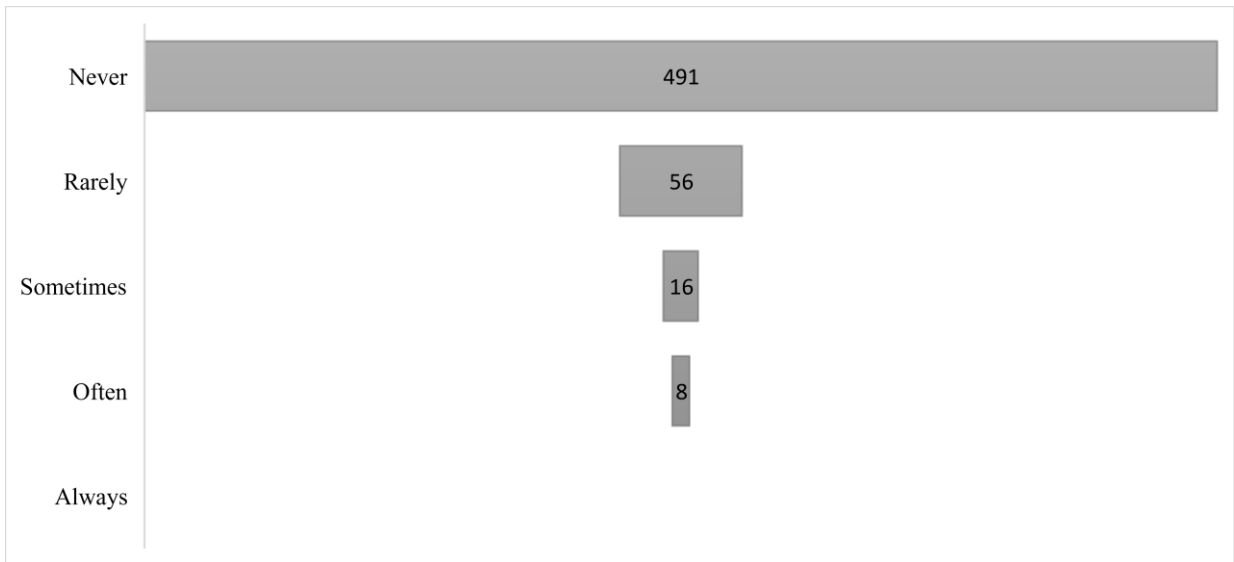
Source: Author's own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Among 7 factors, only price, style and quality have a higher average (mean) than three and rest got less than this value. Therefore, it leads to the conclusion that brand, environmental and social friendly concern, others' opinion, and social media impact belong to those factors that cannot affect the respondents purchase decision strongly.

#### **5.4. Assessment of Experience Sharing in Online Social Networks**

Respondents were asked how often they share their experiences or knowledge about outfits or fashion trends on social media. In fact, the tests delivered some interesting results which is presented in Figure 22.





**Figure 22. Experience Sharing in Online Social Networks Assessment**

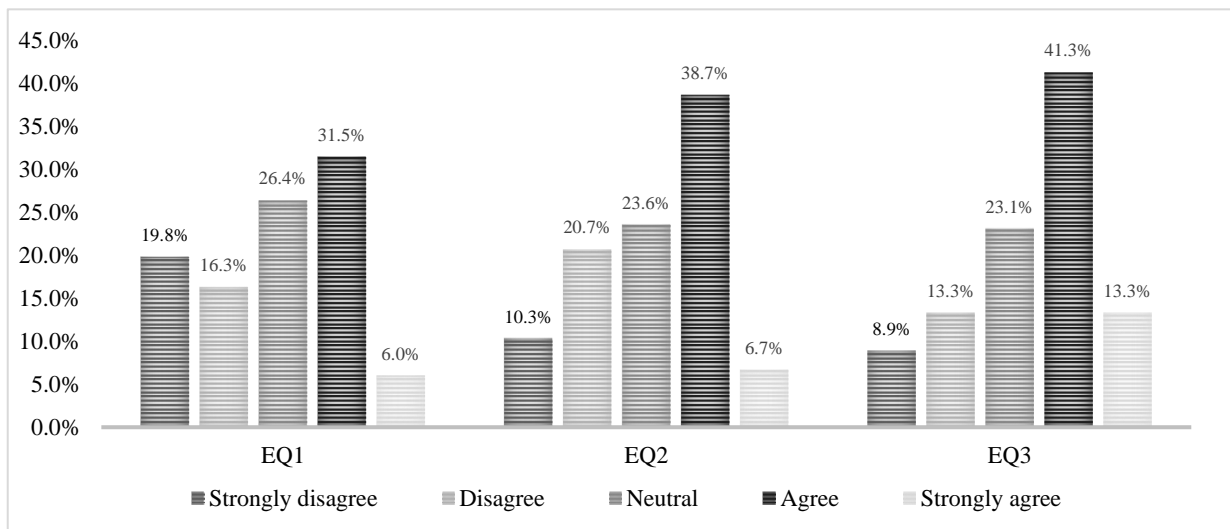
Source: Author’s own work based on SPSS 21 Results

Referring to Figure 22., more than 86% of the respondents never shared their experiences about fashion trends and any type of apparels in online social media.

### 5.5. Assessment of the Selected Constructs

#### Assessment of the Social Equity

The construct “Social Equity” consists of three items on the 5-point Likert scale. Literature on social equity shows that the customers know about equity but how much they care is not clear. Results are given in Figure 23.



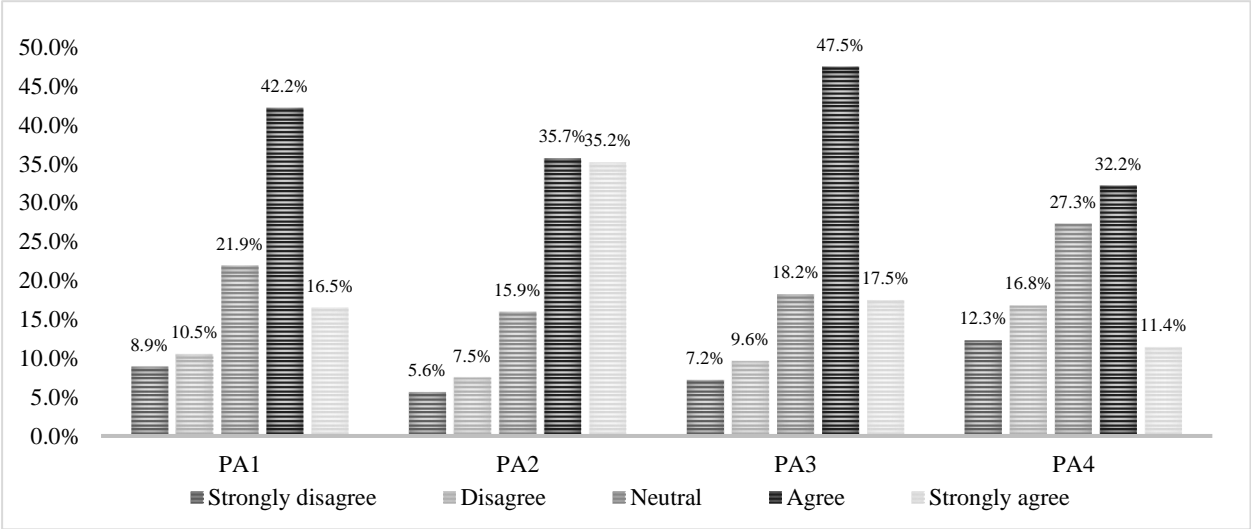
**Figure 23. Social Equity Assessment**

Source: Author’s own work

According to the obtained results, fair compensation (EQ1, 37.4%) is the least important in comparison with fair trade (EQ2, 45.4%) and proper working conditions EQ3, (54.6%) for the respondents (The calculation is based on the sum of the “agree” and “strongly agree” percentages).

**Assessment of the Public Awareness**

For assessing the public awareness among the respondents, four questions (items) were asked. Descriptive outcome shown in Figure 24. As previously mentioned, the fashion industry has not yet fully aligned its production plans and strategies according to the sustainability agenda and most of the producers are still far from the social and environmental sustainability goals.



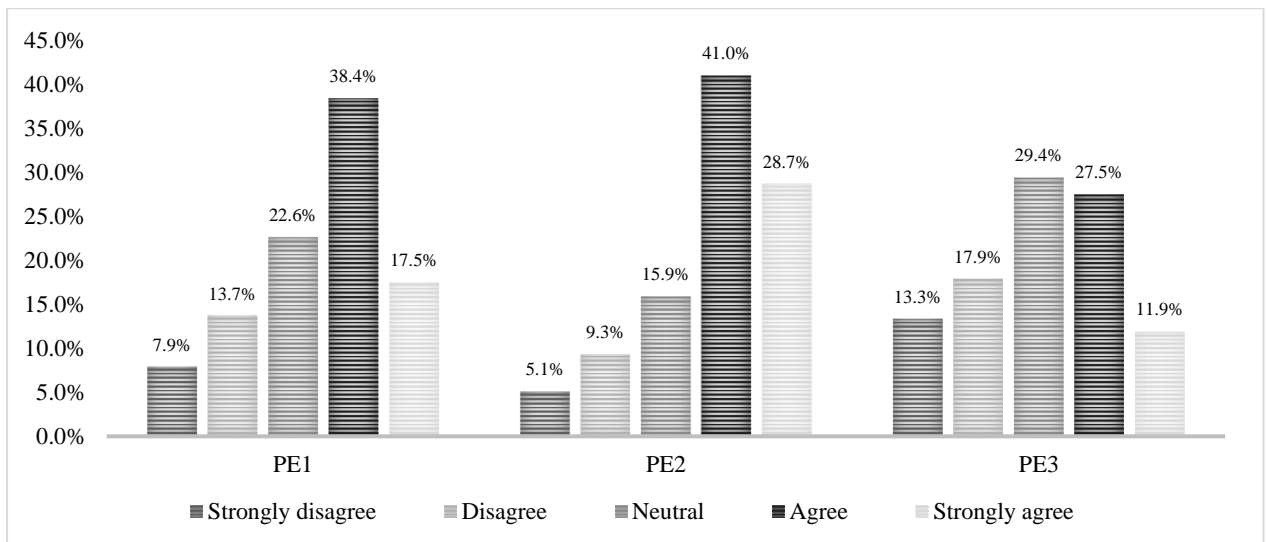
**Figure 24. Public Awareness Assessment**

Source: Author’s own work

Among all public awareness items, almost 71% of the respondents believe that fashion producers should be required by law to follow all social & ethical issues related to their business (PA2).

**Assessment of the Participation (Engagement)**

As already stated, customer participation could positively affect behavioural intentions and consequently improve the sales. Evaluation of the consumer participation has been carried out by three items. Figure 25 provides an overview of the respondents’ opinion towards three items.



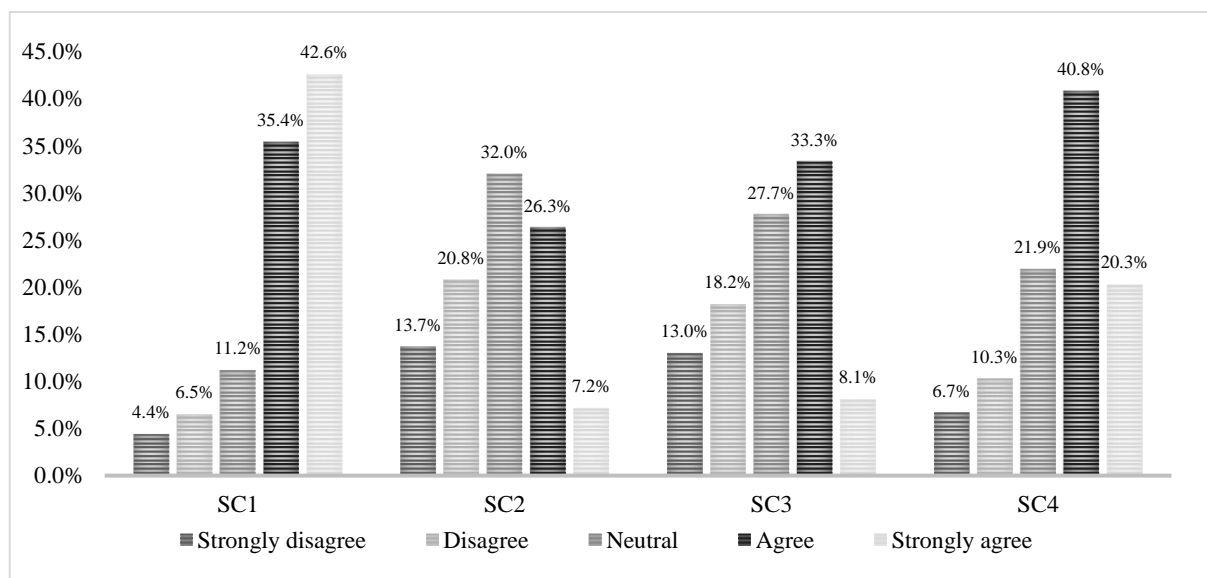
**Figure 25. Participation (Engagement) Assessment**

Source: Author's own work

As Figures 25 shows, around 70% of respondents believe that their contribution in social sustainability would result a better feeling in themselves (PE2).

### Assessment of the Social Cohesion

Social cohesion could be seen as manifestation of consumer behaviour. That is one of the main reasons that this factor has been examined in order to predict consumer behaviour throughout 4 items. Figure 26 gives information on social cohesion assessment based on the respondents' feedback.



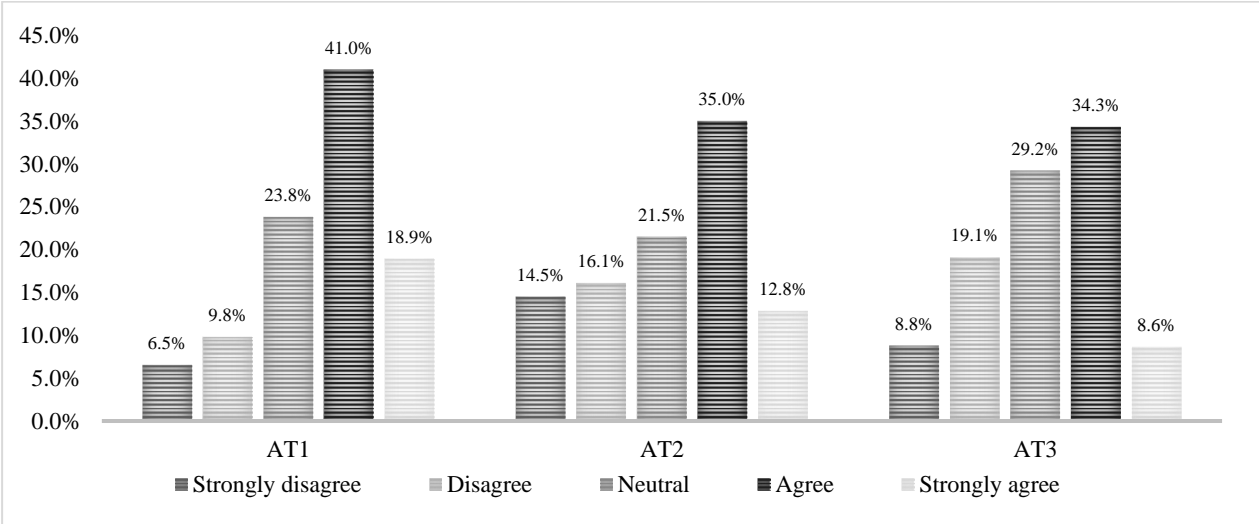
**Figure 26. Social Cohesion Assessment**

Source: Author's own work

It seems, in case of donating to charities (SC1), about 78% of the participants are willing to participate in any recycling programs. This could be good stimuli for business owners and marketers to develop more charities campaigns.

**Assessment of the Consumer Attitude:**

A recent review of the literature on this topic shows that purchasing sustainable products could be affected by consumer attitude. A tri-component model to measure consumer attitude towards fashion products has been used and results are provided in Figure 27.



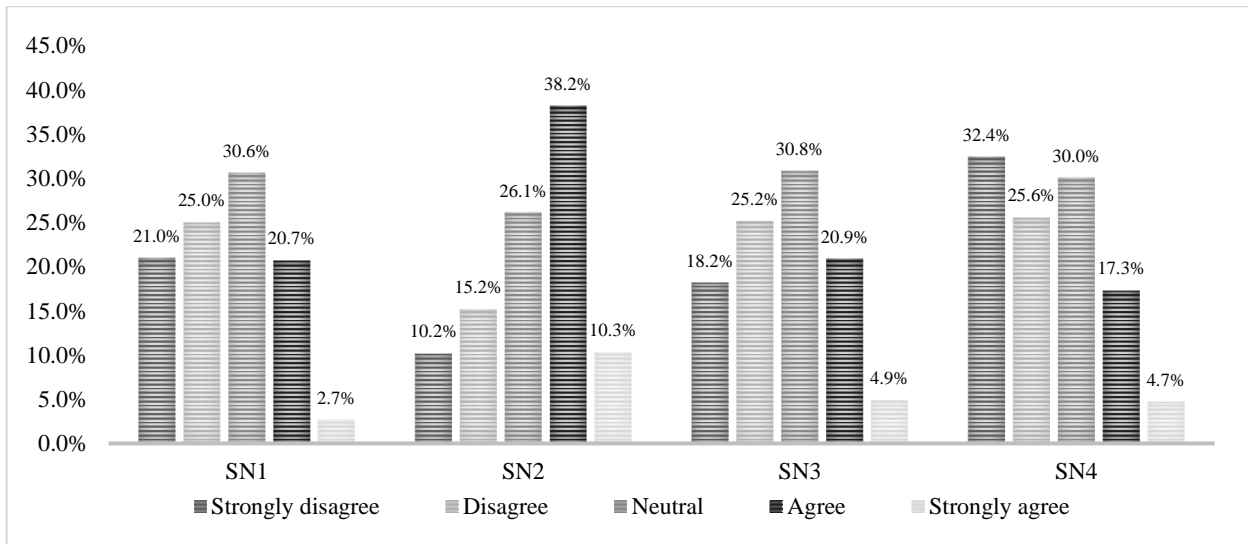
**Figure 27. Consumer Attitude Assessment**

Source: Author’s own work

In the light of the results, however 60% of the respondents believe that consumers are responsible to make the change towards sustainable production and consumption (AT1), less than 43% want to see some obligations to purchase eco-friendly products (AT3).

**Assessment of the Subjective Norms**

In fact, subjective norms could measure the social influences on specific behaviour. During this study, four questions have been applied to measure the effect of subjective norms on consumer behaviour. Figure 28 provides cumulative frequency of each four items.



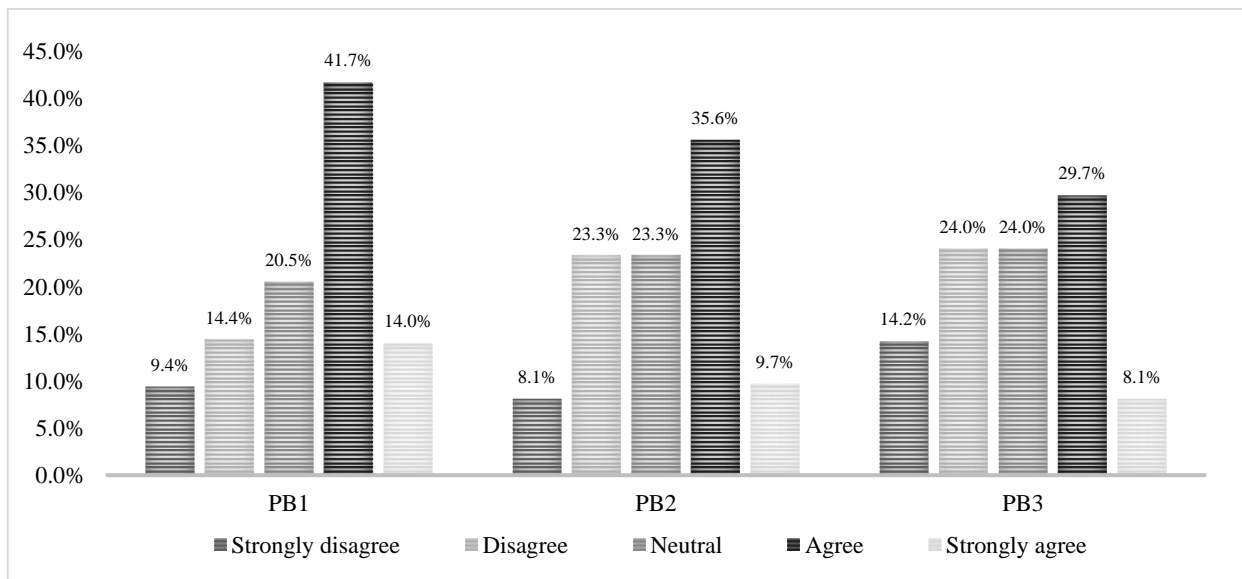
**Figure 28. Subjective Norms Assessment**

Source: Author's own work

In view of the results, most of the participants are not willing to share their experience and knowledge about social sustainability in social media (SN4). Moreover, they think their loved ones do not concern whether fashion products are sustainable and produced under sustainable environment or not (SN3).

#### **Assessment of the Perceived Behavioural Control**

Each person has its own perception towards the level of difficulty or ease for performing a certain behaviour. In order to get the measure of this construct, participants were inquired to answer three related questions. In the given Figure 29, responses are summarised.



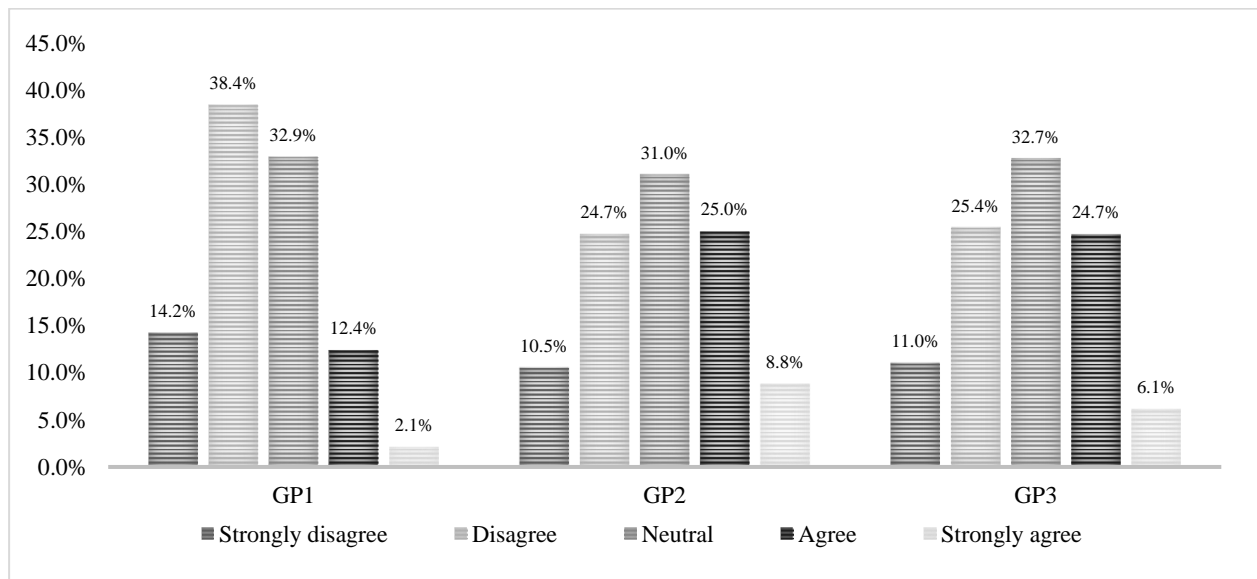
**Figure 29. Perceived Behavioural Control Assessment**

Source: Author's own work

In accordance with the results, more than 55% of the contributors in this study believe that their sustainable purchase behaviour positively affects society (PB1). But only 45% assume they have opportunity find the sustainable fashion products (PB2).

### Assessment of the Green Purchase Intention

Based on theory of planned behaviour (TPB), intention is affected by three factors which are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. For measuring respondents green purchase intention, three questions were given to them. Results are available in Figure 30.



**Figure 30. Green Purchase Intention Assessment**

Source: Author's own work

### 5.6. Item Statistics

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a specific method which let the researchers to measure and evaluate the relationship between several latent variables in a model. For statistical analysis of the model and items in this study, PLS-SEM has been used. In fact, there are several reasons for using the PLS method. The most important reason is the superiority of this method for small samples. Moreover, it does not require normal distribution of data (SHACKMAN, 2013; HAIR JR et al., 2014). Analyses were performed by using SmartPLS V.3.3.3.

### 5.7. Assessment of the Measurement Model

The measurement model is known as an outer model in research framework and tries to assess the relationships between the obtained data and the latent variables. In order to assess measurement model, four assessments should be carried out (HAIR JR et al., 2014), including:

- ❖ Internal consistency reliability

- ✓ Composite reliability (CR)
- ✓ Cronbach's Alpha
- ❖ Convergent validity
  - ✓ Average variance extracted (AVE)
- ❖ Indicator reliability
  - ✓ Outer loading
- ❖ Discriminant validity
  - ✓ Fornell-Larcker criterion
  - ✓ Cross loading

### 5.7.1. Internal Consistency Reliability and Convergent Validity

One of the prerequisites and very important elements in PLS-SEM is to check the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and quality of the measurement tool (questionnaire in this study). Table 29 provides the results for 4 different analyses to check internal consistency reliability and convergent validity

**Table 29. Results of the Measurement Model Assessment**

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Equity	0.830	0.836	0.898	0.745
Public awareness	0.823	0.825	0.883	0.654
Participation (Engagement)	0.760	0.764	0.863	0.677
Social cohesion	0.702	0.717	0.815	0.526
Attitude	0.808	0.818	0.886	0.722
Subjective norms	0.821	0.825	0.882	0.652
Perceived behavioural control	0.732	0.732	0.850	0.655
Green purchase intention	0.817	0.818	0.891	0.732

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

Cronbach's alpha is one of the analyses for measuring internal consistency reliability and considered as a correlation coefficient between those questions that are used to measure specific construct or variable. In fact, this index is also related to the number of items in the questionnaire. Other methods for measuring internal consistency reliability are composite reliability (CR) and Rho (The Rho index is more reliable than Cronbach's alpha). In most literature, the minimum value

for these three analyses considered 0.7. Based on results given in Table 29, the questionnaire has got its internal consistency reliability

In general, the concept of construct validity addresses the question of whether questions designed for a hidden construct or latent variable is related to that one or not. Discriminant validity, along with convergent validity are two main types of construct validity (KRABBE, 2017).

In convergent validity, it must be shown that the indicators that are designed to measure specific construct, are in fact related to each other as well (CHIN & YAO, 2014). Three conditions for checking convergent validity should be checked:

- ❖ Composite reliability (CR) value must be greater than 0.7
- ❖ A minimum value of 0.5 should be considered for the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index
- ❖ CR should be higher than (AVE) (HAIR JR et al., 2014).

According to the Table 29, the questionnaire has got its convergent validity as well.

#### **5.7.2. Indicator Reliability**

Outer loadings data has been used in order to check the indicator reliability. This method describes the correlation between latent variables and their items (measures). Table 30 projects the results of Confirmatory Composite Analysis (CCA) which is used in SmartPLS software for calculating outer loadings.

The cut-off value taken for outer loading is 0.7, Meaning any item or measure which got less than this value should be removed. But there is an exception. The item with loadings in the range of 0.40 to 0.70 could be kept if after deleting the item, composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) changed significantly and gets a lower value (HAIR et al., 2014).



**Table 30. Outer Loadings Obtained from the Confirmatory Composite Analysis**

Items	Equity	Public Awareness	Participation (Engagement)	Social Cohesion	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioural Control	Green Purchase Intention
EQ1	0.848							
EQ2	0.881							
EQ3	0.861							
PA1		0.820						
PA2		0.785						
PA3		0.847						
PA4		0.781						
PE1			0.838					
PE2			0.854					
PE3			0.774					
<b>SC1</b>				<b>0.624</b>				
SC2				0.746				
SC3				0.782				
SC4				0.739				
AT1					0.854			
AT2					0.826			
AT3					0.868			
SN1						0.845		
SN2						0.783		
SN3						0.853		
SN4						0.744		
PB1							0.713	
PB2							0.861	
PB3							0.846	
GP1								0.857
GP2								0.873
GP3								0.836

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

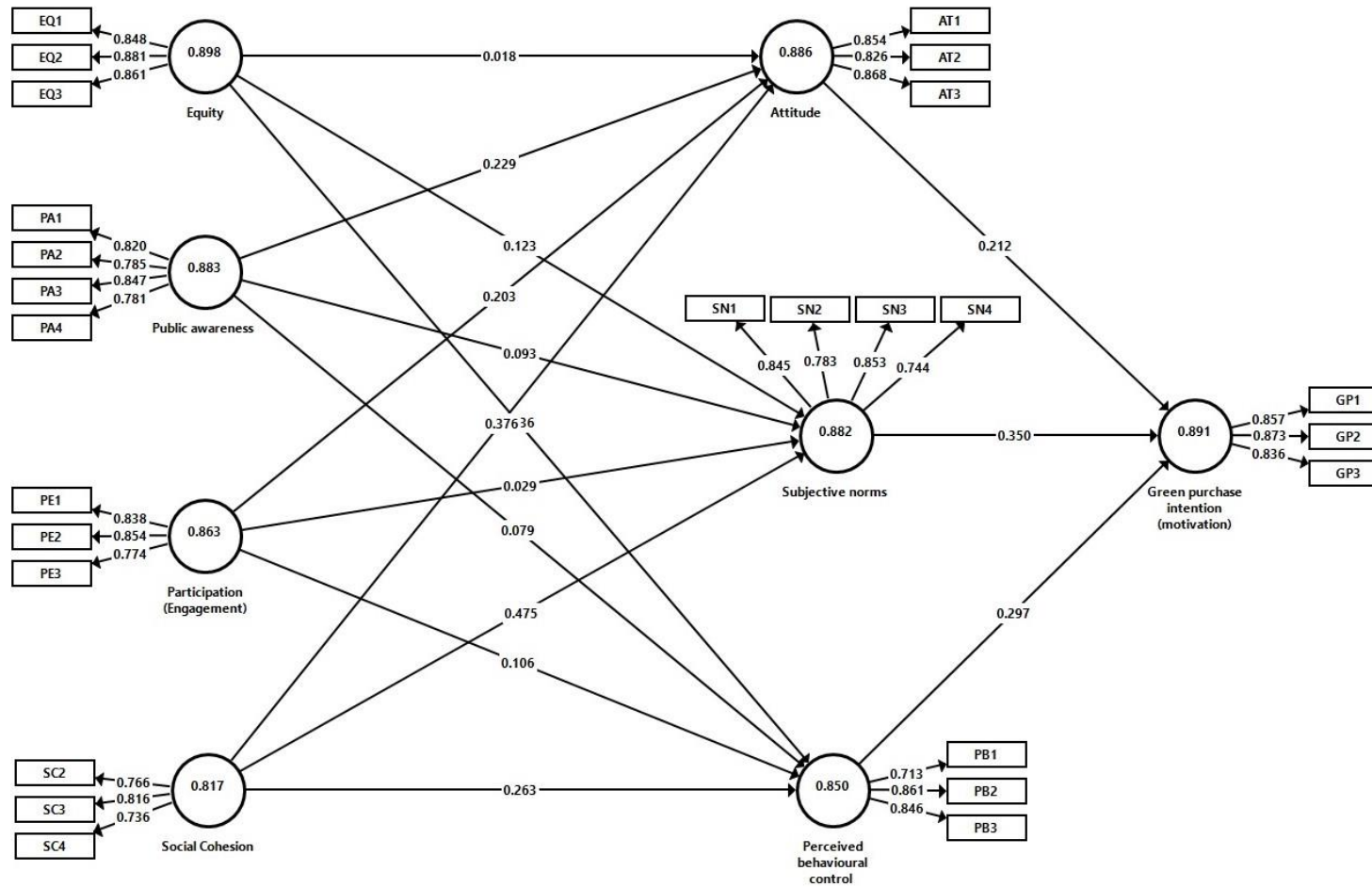
In this research, only SC1 got a value between 0.4 and 0.7. After removing this item, composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for social cohesion construct got higher values for both analyses which presented in Table 31. Therefore, the SC1 item has been removed from this study.

**Table 31. Results of the Composite Reliability and AVE after Removing SC1**

Constructs	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Equity	0.886	0.722
Public awareness	0.883	0.654
Participation (Engagement)	0.863	0.677
Social cohesion	<b><u>0.817</u></b>	<b><u>0.599</u></b>
Attitude	0.886	0.722
Subjective norms	0.882	0.652
Perceived behavioural control	0.850	0.655
Green purchase intention	0.891	0.732

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

Consequently, the modified model including the new results for outer loadings, path coefficients and R square values presented in Figure 31.



**Figure 31. Model with Outer Loadings, Path Coefficients and R Square Values**

Source: Author's own work using SmartPLS

### 5.7.3. Discriminant Validity

In fact, discriminant validity is a proof of the unity of a measuring instrument. Meaning, there is no or very low correlation between an indicator of specific construct with the other constructs. The reason is, in a questionnaire could be several questions to assess different constructs, so it is necessary to determine that these questions belong to their own construct and are different from each other and there is no overlap (HAIR JR et al., 2014).

The Fornell - Larcker Criterion is one of the most popular methods for assessing discriminant validity (HAMID et al., 2017). According to Fornell - Larcker Criterion test, each of the latent variables on itself, should get a higher value comparing the other correlations with other latent constructs. In simple words, the main diameter must contain higher values in comparison with the rest. The result of the discriminant validity test is given in Table 32.

Since the AVE square root of each construct is higher than the other correlation values among the rest of the latent variables, obtained result shows the discriminant validity of the questionnaire as well.

**Table 32. Discriminant Validity**

	EQ	PA	PE	SC	AT	SN	PB	GP
<b>Equity (EQ)</b>	<b>0.863</b>							
<b>Public awareness (PA)</b>	0.726	<b>0.809</b>						
<b>Participation (Engagement) (PE)</b>	0.567	0.703	<b>0.823</b>					
<b>Social Cohesion (SC)</b>	0.595	0.703	0.698	<b>0.774</b>				
<b>Attitude (AT)</b>	0.523	0.649	0.636	0.689	<b>0.850</b>			
<b>Subjective norms (SN)</b>	0.489	0.537	0.496	0.634	0.617	<b>0.807</b>		
<b>Perceived behavioural control (PB)</b>	0.509	0.509	0.479	0.533	0.600	0.522	<b>0.810</b>	
<b>Green purchase intention (GP)</b>	0.531	0.593	0.558	0.608	0.606	0.636	0.607	<b>0.856</b>

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

## 5.8. Assessment of the Structural Model

In order to assess the structural model, four steps should be taken:

- ❖ Evaluating collinearity among the latent variables through Variation Inflation Values (VIF)
- ❖ Checking coefficient of determination ( $R^2$  Value)
- ❖ Assessing predictive relevance ( $Q^2$  Value)
- ❖ Looking over effect size ( $F^2$  Value) (HAIR et al., 2014).

### 5.8.1. Collinearity Diagnostics

The existence of a phenomenon called multicollinearity is one of the main issues that can challenge the PLS-SEM model. This issue occurs when independent variables have a correlation between each other's (KRAHA et al., 2012).

In fact, one of the most widely used methods for detecting the multicollinearity is the use of Variation Inflation Values (VIF) analysis. VIF value is always greater than or equal to 1. The optimal condition happens when VIF is below 2.5. But less than 5 is still acceptable. Basically, low correlation among variables leads small VIF value (DE JONGH et al., 2015). Variation Inflation Values (VIF) were computed using SmartPLS V.3.3.3 and provided in Table 33.

**Table 33. Inner VIF Values for Each Reflective Measurement**

	Attitude	Subjective norms	Perceived behavioural control	Green purchase intention
<b>Equity</b>	2.185	2.185	2.185	
<b>Public Awareness</b>	3.144	3.144	3.144	
<b>Participation (Engagement)</b>	2.367	2.367	2.367	
<b>Social Cohesion</b>	2.409	2.409	2.409	
<b>Attitude</b>				1.949
<b>Subjective norms</b>				1.716
<b>Perceived behavioural control</b>				1.659

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

Referring to Table 33, all the inner VIF values are below the threshold value which is 5. Moreover, except “Public Awareness”, even all got lower the optimal value which is 2.5. Therefore, the presence of multicollinearity from the inner model rejected.

### 5.8.2. Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

One of the most challenging issues for assessing structural (inner) models is the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). This index shows what percentage of changes in the dependent variable could be explained by the independent variable. Moreover, it measures the model prediction accuracy. In other words, it predicts the approximate results of the desired parameter in the future based on a calculated mathematical model that is made by the current data. The results of coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) analysis given in Table 34.

It must be stressed that the  $R^2$  value is presented only for the endogenous variables of the model. Moreover,  $R^2$  values of 0.15, 0.33 and 0.67 indicate low, medium, and high accuracy of the model prediction (CHIN & MARCOULIDES, 1998). In case of social science (such as consumer behaviour in marketing),  $R^2$  is usually less than 50% since human behaviour is not as predictable as other processes.

**Table 34. R Square Values**

Constructs	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Attitude	0.546	0.543
Subjective norms	0.426	0.422
Perceived behavioural control	0.351	0.346
Green purchase intention	0.531	0.528

Source: Author’s own work based on SmartPLS results

Based on the calculated data, all  $R^2$  values are higher than 0.33. Therefore, it can be inferred that all endogenous variables have medium prediction effect.

### 5.8.3. Assessment of the Model Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ Values)

Basically,  $Q^2$  value tells the predictive relevance of the model. In case of getting  $Q^2$  value above zero, it means that the designed model has predictive relevance and it is well constructed (HAIR JR et al., 2014).

In fact, SmartPLS software calculates two different  $Q^2$  values; Construct Cross-validated Redundancy (CCR) and Construct Cross-validated Communality (CCC) values. CCR index measures the quality of each structural equation between variables, while CCC index measures the

quality of the measurement model for each block (TENENHAUS et al., 2005). For assessing the inner model, CCR index is only needed (HAIR JR et al., 2014).

**Table 35. Q Square Values (Construct Cross-validated Redundancy (CCR))**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>SSO</b>	<b>SSE</b>	<b>Q<sup>2</sup> = 1 - (SSE/SSO)</b>
Equity	1713	1713	-
Public awareness	2284	2284	-
Participation (Engagement)	1713	1713	-
Social cohesion	1713	1713	-
Attitude	1713	1059.5	0.382
Subjective norms	2284	1663.5	0.272
Perceived behavioural control	1713	1341.7	0.217
Green purchase intention	1713	1062.2	0.380

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

The values given in Table 35 show that the model has valid predictive relevance scores. Among all the constructs, Attitude has got the highest predictive relevance, following by green purchase intention with the values of 0.382 and 0.380.

#### 5.8.4. Effect Size (F<sup>2</sup> Values)

The Cohen's F<sup>2</sup> index determines the strength of the relationship between the model's latent variables in case of any connections. The values 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, respectively, indicate the size of the small, medium, and large impact of one variable on another one. This criterion only applies to those models that have endogenous variables that are affected by at least two or more exogenous ones (COHEN, 1988). The F<sup>2</sup> values for the research model are given in Table 36.

**Table 36. Effect Size (F Square Values)**

	<b>EQ</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>PE</b>	<b>SC</b>	<b>AT</b>	<b>SN</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>GP</b>
<b>Equity (EQ)</b>					<u>0.000</u>	<u>0.012</u>	0.039	
<b>Public awareness (PA)</b>					0.037	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.003</u>	
<b>Participation (Engagement) (PE)</b>					0.038	<u>0.001</u>	<u>0.007</u>	
<b>Social Cohesion (SC)</b>					0.129	<b>0.163</b>	0.044	
<b>Attitude (AT)</b>								0.049
<b>Subjective norms (SN)</b>								<b>0.152</b>
<b>Perceived behavioural control (PB)</b>								0.113

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

According to Table 36, six variables imply no or little effect on the dependent variable:

- × Equity -> Attitude
- × Equity -> Subjective norms
- × Public awareness -> Subjective norms
- × Public awareness -> Perceived behavioural control
- × Participation (Engagement) -> Subjective norms
- × Participation (Engagement) -> Perceived behavioural control

Moreover, there are 7 variables with small effect on their dependent variables:

- ✓ Equity -> Perceived behavioural control
- ✓ Public awareness -> Attitude
- ✓ Participation (Engagement) -> Attitude
- ✓ Social cohesion -> Attitude
- ✓ Social cohesion -> Perceived behavioural control
- ✓ Attitude -> Green purchase intention
- ✓ Perceived behavioural control -> Green purchase intention



And finally, social cohesion on subjective norms and subjective norms on green purchase intention have medium effect.

## 5.9. Hypotheses Testing (Significance of Path Coefficients)

To investigate all hypotheses, including, the main and sub hypotheses, the path coefficient analyses have been done. It should be taken into consideration that, if the t-statistic value is more than 1.96, at the 5% confidence level, the hypothesis could be accepted (SEKARAN, 2003).

### 5.9.1. Sub-Hypotheses Testing

This study includes 15 sub-hypotheses. Sub-hypotheses results based on the bootstrapping methods are given in Table 37.

**Table 37. Path Coefficients Results for the Sub-Hypotheses**

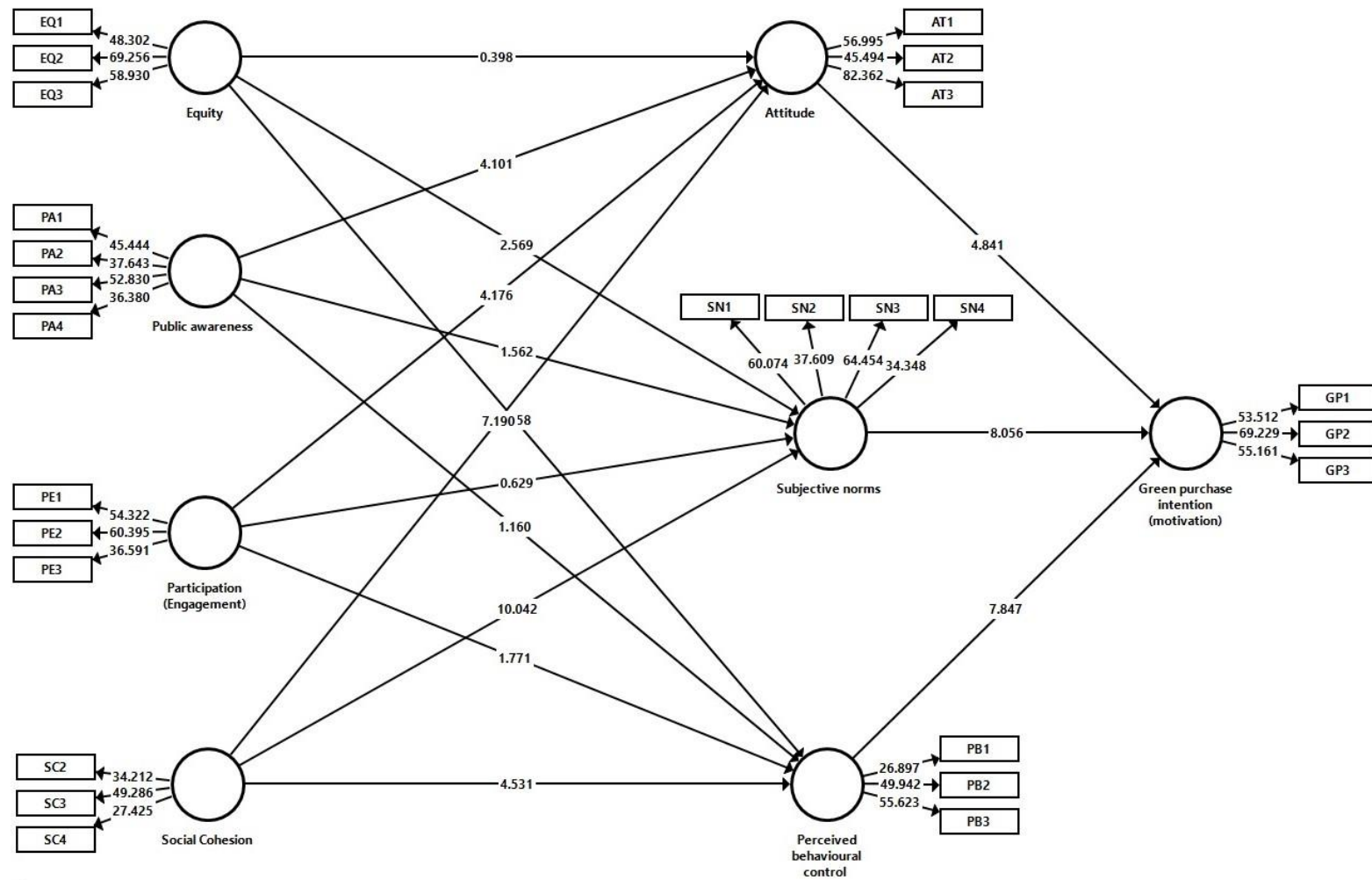
H#	Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
H5	EQ -> AT	0.018	0.016	0.046	0.398	<b>0.691</b>
H6	EQ -> SN	0.123	0.125	0.048	2.569	0.010
H7	EQ -> PB	0.236	0.233	0.061	3.858	0.000
H8	PA -> AT	0.229	0.232	0.056	4.101	0.000
H9	PA -> SN	0.093	0.089	0.059	1.562	<b>0.119</b>
H10	PA -> PB	0.079	0.086	0.068	1.160	<b>0.247</b>
H11	PE -> AT	0.203	0.205	0.049	4.176	0.000
H12	PE -> SN	0.029	0.032	0.046	0.629	<b>0.530</b>
H13	PE -> PB	0.106	0.104	0.060	1.771	<b>0.077</b>
H14	SC -> AT	0.376	0.375	0.052	7.190	0.000
H15	SC -> SN	0.475	0.475	0.047	10.042	0.000
H16	SC -> PB	0.263	0.261	0.058	4.531	0.000
H17	AT -> GP	0.212	0.212	0.044	4.841	0.000
H18	SN -> GP	0.350	0.349	0.043	8.056	0.000
H19	PB -> GP	0.297	0.297	0.038	7.847	0.000

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

Referring to Table 37, the influence of social equity on consumer attitude ( $\beta = 0.018$ ,  $T = 0.398$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), consumer public awareness on subjective norms and perceived behavioural control ( $\beta = 0.093$  &  $0.79$ ,  $T = 1.562$  &  $1.160$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and consumer participation (engagement) on subjective norms and perceived behavioural control ( $\beta = 0.029$  &  $0.106$ ,  $T = 0.629$  &  $1.771$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) are not significant. Hence, the hypotheses H5, H9, H10, H12 and H13 are rejected and the

rest of them are supported. It is worth mentioning that there is a possibility for H9 to get supported by increasing the number of respondents since “T Statistics” is quite close to 1.96.

The structural model with the bootstrapping results and T statistics is given in Figure 32. Moreover, summary of the sub-hypotheses test results is given in Table 38.



**Figure 32. Bootstrapping Results for the Sub-Hypotheses Testing with 500 iterations**

Source: Author`s Own Work using SmartPLS

**Table 38. Summary of the Sub-Hypotheses Test results**

<b>Hypotheses</b>		<b>Results</b>
H5	Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their sustainable attitude for purchasing sustainable garments	Not Supported
H6	Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H7	Social equity perception of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H8	Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their green attitude for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H9	Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments	Not Supported
H10	Public awareness of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments	Not Supported
H11	Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their green attitude for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H12	Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments	Not Supported
H13	Participation (engagement) of consumers has a positive impact on their perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments	Not Supported
H14	Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer sustainable attitude for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H15	Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer subjective norms for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H16	Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer perceived behavioural control for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H17	Green attitude of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H18	Green subjective norms of consumers positively influence their intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H19	Green perceived behavioural control of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>

Source: Author's own construction

### 5.9.2. Main Hypotheses Testing (Mediation Analysis)

One of the main challenges in variance-based statistics is to specify multiple “mediation effect”. In fact, mediation effect tries to follow and explain the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable by considering third (mediator) variable (CEPEDA-CARRION et al., 2018). SmartPLS by having few specific features, let the researcher to analyse the indirect effect of each variable. The results of the specific indirect effects are given in Table 39.

**Table 39. Specific Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)**

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
EQ ->AT -> GP	0.004	0.004	0.010	0.385	<b>0.700</b>
EQ -> SN -> GP	0.043	0.044	0.018	2.437	0.015
EQ -> PB -> GP	0.070	0.069	0.020	3.497	0.001
PA ->AT -> GP	0.048	0.049	0.016	3.048	0.002
PA-> SN -> GP	0.032	0.031	0.021	1.511	<b>0.131</b>
PA -> PB -> GP	0.024	0.026	0.021	1.113	<b>0.266</b>
PE ->AT -> GP	0.043	0.043	0.014	3.132	0.002
PE -> SN -> GP	0.010	0.012	0.017	0.619	<b>0.536</b>
PE -> PB -> GP	0.031	0.031	0.019	1.681	<b>0.093</b>
SC ->AT -> GP	0.080	0.080	0.020	3.959	0.000
SC -> SN -> GP	0.166	0.166	0.026	6.338	0.000
SC -> PB -> GP	0.078	0.077	0.018	4.374	0.000

Source: Author’s own work based on SmartPLS results

In this study, three latent variables (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) play the role of moderator in the relationship between social sustainability and green purchase intention. In fact, out of twelve paths, 5 of them do not have indirect effect on green purchase intention, including:

- × Equity – Attitude – Green Purchase Intention
- × Public Awareness – Subjective Norms – Green Purchase Intention
- × Public Awareness – Perceived Behavioural Control – Green Purchase Intention
- × Participation – Subjective Norms – Green Purchase Intention
- × Participation (Engagement) – Perceived Behavioural Control – Green Purchase Intention

In order to assess the main hypotheses, “total indirect effects” of each social sustainability elements were evaluated. Results presented in Table 40.

**Table 40. Specific Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)**

Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
EQ -> GP	0.117	0.116	0.033	3.537	0.000
PA -> GP	0.104	0.107	0.039	2.709	0.007
PE -> GP	0.085	0.086	0.031	2.686	0.007
SC -> GP	0.324	0.323	0.035	9.346	0.000

Source: Author’s own work based on SmartPLS results

The mediation results as given in Table 40 support all the main hypotheses since all T statistics are greater than 1.96 and P- values are less than 0.050. Evaluation of the main hypotheses is shown in Table 41.

**Table 41. Summary of the Main Hypotheses Test results**

	Hypotheses	Results
H1	Social equity positively influences consumer intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H2	Public awareness of consumers positively influences their intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H3	Participation (engagement) of consumers positively influence their intention for purchasing sustainable garments	<b>Supported</b>
H4	Social cohesion has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention for sustainable garments.	<b>Supported</b>

Source: Author’s own construction

### 5.10. Overall Model Fit Assessment

In order to interpret the results of estimated model, determination of the model fit index is a must. In fact, we should know whether the estimated model is harmonised with the collected data or not. Model fit could be calculated based on a comparison of covariance matrix of the saturated versus estimated model (BENITEZ et al., 2020). Moreover, unweighted least squares (ULS) discrepancy (d\_ULS), and geodesic discrepancy (d\_G) are two parameters which assess the exact fit measurement in comparison with SRMR which shows the approximate one (BENITEZ-AMADO et al., 2017).

**Table 42. Model Fit**

Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.071	0.082
d-G	0.630	0.676
d-ULS	1.794	2.381

Source: Author's own work based on SmartPLS results

Table 42 provides the result of the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) model fit index. Basically, SRMR value less than 0.05 shows a good fit. However, value between 0.05 and 0.1 is still acceptable (SCHERMELLEH-ENGEL et al., 2003). Therefore, the estimated model verified.

### 5.11. Discussion of the Findings

This study examined how social sustainability influences the consumer purchase intention for buying sustainable garments. The mediating role of three variables, based on theory of planned behaviour (TPM), in the relationship between the independent constructs (equity, public awareness, participation (engagement), and social cohesion) and the dependent construct (green purchase intention) was also investigated. The developed model was evaluated based on the responses collected from Hungarian students. The model and measurement tool were both validated based on the different methods and analyses. At the end, hypotheses, including sub and main ones were tested accordingly.

Based on the obtained results, the relationship between social cohesion and green purchase intention, mediated by social attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control is the strongest one. Unfortunately, no study has been found which examine explicitly the effect of social cohesion on consumer purchase intention for fashion products. But JAYASHANKAR & RAJU (2020) examined the role of social cohesion in another sector. Based on their study, perception of social cohesion could improve any activities including consumer intention.

Moreover, it is quite discernible that social equity, public awareness, and participation (engagement) have positive effect on green purchase intention. But comparing social cohesion, they have less power.

In contrast to the findings of POP et al., (2020) study, from the obtained results related to the impact of social media on consumer purchase intention, participants did not believe that their decisions are affect significantly by social media contents. Moreover, they were/are not interested

to share their experiences and knowledge about social and ethical concerns related to the fashion products on social networks.

An interesting result from this research is related to the relationship between social equity and green purchase intention. In fact, in the current study, this relationship was significant which is contrast with the research performed by JUNG & JIN (2016).

Public awareness of the respondents in connection with social and environmental matters have a positive and significant effect on their purchase intention. This result is supported by another research conducted by SHEN et al. (2013) in the same field.

The study by PILIGRIMIENĖ et al. (2020) shows that the consumer participation (engagement) plays an important role in developing sustainable orientation in any industries or companies. Moreover, THORISDOTTIR & JOHANNSDOTTIR (2020) provide several studies in fashion industry which emphasise the importance of the consumer participation in order to increase their awareness. Current study result is in line with the finding of WHITE et al. (2019) stating that consumer engagement could motivate them to increase their purchase intention.



## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1. Conclusion

Analysing consumer behaviour is an important tool for understanding them and their needs. More importantly, knowing what factors could motivate them and increase their purchase intention has a special role in marketing research. This study has attempted to clarify the purchasing intention of the Hungarian students with regard to social sustainability for fashion products.

As it is discussed in the literature review, there are four factors, i.e., equity, public awareness, participation (engagement), and social cohesion which should be considered in order to assess social sustainability. Moreover, according to the theory of planned behaviour, intention is affected by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

To find out the effect of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention for fashion products, this study performed by distributing questionnaires among Hungarian students. Before hypotheses testing, pilot study had been done to check the validity and reliability of the measurement tool which caused to remove one item from the scale. The questionnaires collected from January 23 until February 23, 2021. Data for this study came from an online survey and as a total of 571 questionnaires were received randomly.

Female participants account for 60 % of the sample. Approximately 78% of the participants are pursuing their BSc, 16% studying for a master's, and 6% doing their doctorate university degree. Moreover, based on this study, women are more willing to purchase green garments and in general more often buy garments comparing men.

Among seven factors which may affect purchasing decisions, participants believe price, style and quality have the major impact on their decision making and brand, environmental and social friendly concern, others' opinion, and social media do not play a significant role in their choices.

What is quite surprising, however, is the absolute reluctance of the participants (that belong to the young generation) to share their experience and knowledge about ethical and social issues regarding fashion products on social networks. Furthermore, they do not pay enough attention to that information which is available on social media.

In fact, several analyses were conducted to examine the sample, but PLS SEM was used to support or reject the hypotheses. In other words, to test the significance of the relationship between the

exogenous and endogenous latent variables, PLS-SEM was conducted since it is more suitable for checking the theoretical framework.

It has been established in this study that participants are getting more motivated to purchase those fashion products which their manufacturers are following different social and ethical regulations and instructions.

Moreover, among social sustainability factors, social cohesion has the strongest impact on consumer purchase intention, following by equity, public awareness, and participation (engagement). Interestingly, social cohesion is the only factors which has a positive impact on all the theory of planned behaviour's elements (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control).

## **6.2. Recommendations and Managerial Implications**

According to the empirical evidence of this study, certain recommendations and managerial implications are given to the fashion producers, policy makers, and researchers:

1- Ethical and social labelling could be a good practice for fashion procedures to inform their target customers about their production programs and how they follow different standards and regulations.

2- Women seem to be more interested in green fashion products comparing men. Therefore, while some customised programs are needed to be intimated to address men to pay more attention to the green garments, fashion producers should focus more on women.

3- Although all social sustainability factors sound appealing to the consumers, “social cohesion” has the strongest effect on consumer purchase intention. For this reason, by strengthening of solidarity among people in society, policy makers can implement social sustainability easier in comparison with the other three factors.

4- Accordance with the result, social media has the least effect on consumer decision making process. In that event, fashion producers and policy makers should initiate specific programs in order to increase the positive impact of them on decision making process since social media is one of the main platforms that young generations (specifically students) use every day.

## **6.3. Research Limitations**

Researchers are always faced with limitations in their research, some of which show themselves even at the beginning. Basically, some unclear concepts lead to generating problems in

methodologies as there could be a difference between the understanding of researchers and study participants. As an instance, the absence of understanding about a customer's opinion regarding the ethical and social sustainability has been observed.

Moreover, a questionnaire was used in this study. As a result, some people may refuse to provide real or correct answers because of different reasons such as lack of time.

In addition, the outbreak of the SARS-Cov-19 disrupted the study as well. For instance, personal meeting with participants was not possible since this method could increase the number of the respondents and consequently lead to the better evaluation of the model or clarify those parts which were not clear for them.

The last but not the least, despite much effort, it was failed to find a study that directly addressed the same issue.

## 7. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

New scientific results either challenge old scientific results and provide new approaches or support the former findings in different aspects. These results could help to develop new strategies for companies in order to motivate people to purchase sustainable garments along with paying more attention to the social & ethical issues in fashion industry. In connection with the results of this study which had been presented, the novel scientific outcomes drawn from this research are as follows.

1. Designed model developed by author, supported by collected primary data, based on the PLS-SEM method shows that the perception of social sustainability (equity, public awareness, participation (engagement), and social cohesion) increases consumer intention to purchase sustainable garments.
2. One of the novel results brought forth by this study is the higher tendency of women to purchase green garments comparing men. Consequently, marketers and policy makers should assess different behaviours of people according to their gender.
3. Based on the obtained results, among the three factors in the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), subjective norms ( $\beta = 0.350$ ,  $T = 8.056$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) have the strongest effect, while the attitude ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $T = 4.841$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) the least in regards of green purchase intention for Hungarian students.
4. Another distinctive result observed from the study is that among seven factors which could affect garment purchasing decision, only price, style, and quality play important roles and the others (brand, environmental and social friendly concern, others' opinion, and social media impact) could not affect buyers' decision significantly.
5. An additional unique result of this study is the indirect effect of social cohesion on green purchase intention via subjective norms. This path shows the strongest effect on consumer intention ( $\beta = 0.324$ ,  $T = 9.346$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).
6. A further finding shows the low popularity of social networks for experience sharing, especially about fashion trends and clothing among the sample of this study. About 86% of the respondents never shared their experience on any social media platforms.

## 8. SUMMARY

The fashion industry is currently the second most polluting industry with a share of more than 1.5 \$ trillion in 2020, which has attracted attention from different aspects. While this industry is growing, it has been criticized by various groups such as social and environmental activists for its activities.

Nowadays, the social sustainability is more welcomed than before. Child labour, sweatshop (low wages), health and safety risks and etc have been unprecedentedly considered by different groups, including consumers about fashion producers' activities. Moreover, "responsible production and consumption" is the 12<sup>th</sup> of 17 goals that make up the 2030 sustainable development agenda that must be reached in less than 9 years.

One of the main activities to implement sustainable production and consumption is to involve consumers and motivate them to change their behaviour towards sustainability. Consequently, the role of social sustainability on consumer purchase intention for fashion products investigated throughout this study. Basically, there are four pre-eminent concepts that shape social sustainability: equity, public awareness, participation, and social cohesion. In addition, consumer intention could be affected by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Primary data for the research was collected from Hungarian students by using online questionnaire. A total of 571 responses were received during the study time frame between 23 January 2021 to 23 February 2021. In order to test the model and analyse the primary data, Partial Least Square based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS SEM) was used. The results show that social sustainability perception has a positive effect on consumer purchase intention and social cohesion has the strongest impact on their intention which mediated by attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

As a matter of, this research is one of the pioneering works in which tried to connect social sustainability and consumer intention which might be used as a reference for future studies by researchers. Moreover, the finding could be used by policy makers, NGOs, and fashion producers to initiate special programs to motivate their consumers.

## 9. APPENDICES

### APPENDIX (1) References

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## Appendix (2). Cover Letter for the Questionnaires



Kedves Kitöltő!

Vafaei Amir vagyok, a Magyar Agrár és Élettudományi Egyetem, Gazdaság- és Regionális Tudományi Doktori Iskola végzős doktorandusz hallgatója. Jelenleg „A fenntarthatóság szociális tényezőinek hatása a fogyasztói magatartásra a divatiparban” címmel végzek kutatást, melyben számítok a Te segítségedre is. Ezúton is köszönöm, hogy válaszzal segíted munkámat. A kérdőív kitöltése teljesen önkéntes és anonim, a megadott adatokat bizalmasan kezelem.

Tájékoztató:

A szociális fenntarthatóság egy olyan jelenség, illetve folyamat a társadalomban, melynek során megfelelően ki tudjuk elégíteni alapvető emberi szükségleteinket, anélkül, hogy mások érdekeit sértenénk, a közösség erkölcsi, etikai normáit megszegnénk. Ez azt is jelenti, hogy a jelenlegi generáció betartja a társadalmi igazságosság, egyenlőség, igazságosság, szolidaritás, összetartás, beilleszkedés, hovatartozás, kedvesség és szociális biztonságérzet alapelveit, és ezeknek a lehetőségét biztosítja a következő generációk számára is.

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### Appendix (3). Questionnaire:

1. Nemed:

- Férfi
- Nő

2. Életkorod:

- 18 – 21
- 22 – 25
- 26 – 29
- 30 – 33
- 34 felett

3. Képzési formád:

- BSc hallgató
- MSc hallgató
- PhD hallgató

4. Mi jellemzi leginkább jelenlegi életviteledet?

- Alapvetően szüleim támogatásából élek
- Önálló jövedelem van, amiből saját családot tartok el
- Önálló jövedelem van, amiből saját szükségleteimet finanszírozom

5. Nettó jövedelmed:

- 0 - 50.000 forint havonta
- 50.001 - 100.000 forint havonta
- 100.001 - 150.000 forint havonta
- 150.001 - 200.000 forint havonta
- Több, mint 200.001 forint havonta

6. Általában milyen gyakran szoktál új ruhadarabot vásárolni?

- Havonta többször
- Havonta
- Negyedévenként egyszer
- Félévente
- Évente

7. Évente körülbelül mennyit szánsz új ruházat vásárlására?

- 0 - 30000 forint
- 30001 - 60000 forint
- 60001 - 90000 forint
- 90001 - 120000 forint
- több, mint 120001 forint



8. Szívesen vásárolsz fenntartható (bio, green) címkével ellátott öltözéket?

- Egyáltalán nem
- Nem
- Nem tudom
- Igen
- Igen, nagyon is

9. Vásárlás előtt utána nézel, hogy etikus-e az a ruhadarab vagy kiegészítő, amit meg szeretnél venni?

- Egyáltalán nem
- Ritkán
- Valamikor
- Gyakran
- Mindig

10. Milyen gyakran vásárolsz használt ruhákat?

- Soha
- Ritkán
- Általában
- Gyakran
- Mindig

11. Mennyire fontosak számodra a következő szempontok, mikor ruházati cikket vásárolsz?

	Egyáltalán nem fontos	Nem túl fontos	Fontos	Nagyon fontos	Rendkívül fontos
I. Ár	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II. Stílus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
III. Minőség	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV. Márka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V. Környezetbarát és „emberbarát” *	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VI. Ismerősök, barátok véleménye	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VII. Közösségi média hatása (hozzászólások, értékelések)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Olyan termékek, amelyeknek a környezetre, illetve az emberi méltóságra gyakorolt negatív hatása minimális vagy nem érzékelhető.

12. Mennyire jellemző, hogy megosztod a ruhavásárlási tapasztalataidat a közösségi média felületeiden?

- Egyáltalán nem
- Ritkán
- Valamikor
- Gyakran
- Mindig

13. Milyen mértékben értesz egyet a következő állításokkal?

	Egyáltalán nem	Nem	Nem számít	Egyetértek	Teljes mértékben
I. A divattermékek gyártóinak méltányos bérezése fontos szempont számomra ruhavásárláskor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
II. Szem előtt tartom a méltányos kereskedelmet (fair trade) a ruhavásárlásaim során.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
III. Lényeges szempont számomra, hogy megfelelőek legyenek a divattermékek gyártóinak munkakörülményei.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV. Fontos, hogy a megvásárolt ruházati cikkeket (beleértve a cipőket és kiegészítőket is) biztonságos körülmények között és környezetbarát módon állítsák elő.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V. Törvényben kellene kötelezni a divatmárkákat arra, hogy tájékoztassák vásárlóikat a tevékenységük társadalmi hatásairól.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VI. Érdekel, milyen lépéseket tesznek a divatipari cégek a gyártást végző társadalmak életkörülményeinek javítására.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- VII. Olyan ruházati termékeket választok, melyek gyártói a nemzetközi szabványok betartásával foglalkoztatják dolgozóikat (megfelelő számú munkaóra, nincsenek gyermekmunkások, szakszervezetekhez való jog, méltányos bérezés).
- VIII. Szeretném tudni, hogyan hatnak fogyasztási szokásaim a divatipar szociális fenntarthatóságára.
- IX. Jobb embernek érzem magam, ha hozzájárulhatok a társadalmi fenntarthatósághoz.
- X. Szeretek másokkal beszélgetni, ötleteket és javaslatokat megosztani a szociális fenntarthatósági jogokról.
- XI. Szívesebben hasznosítom újra vagy adományozom különböző szervezeteknek a levetett ruháimat, cipőmet stb., ha ezzel jótékony célt szolgálhatok.
- XII. Általában úgy megyek vásárolni, hogy szem előtt tartom az emberi jogok fontosságát.
- XIII. Beszélgetnem kellene családommal és barátaimmal a fenntartható ruházati termékekről.

XIV. Ha helyben gyártott ruházati  
cikkeket vásárolok, azzal  
támogatom a lakókörnyezetemet.

XV. A vásárlók felelősek az etikus  
és fenntartható gyártás és  
fogyasztás elősegítéséért.

XVI. Úgy gondolom, hogy  
döntéseim és tetteim hatással  
vannak a divatiparra.

XVII. Erkölcsi kötelezettségem,  
hogy környezetbarát ruházatot,  
cipőt stb. vásároljak.

XVIII. A számomra fontos  
emberek szerint fenntartható  
divatcikkeket kellene vásárolnom.

XIX. Azok az emberek, akiknek a  
véleménye számít nekem,  
helyeselnék, hogy fenntartható  
divatcikkeket vásárolok.

XX. A hozzám közel álló emberek  
többségének számít az, hogy egy-  
egy ruházati cikk fenntartható  
termék -e vagy sem.

XXI. Szükségnek tartom a  
társadalmi fenntarthatósággal  
kapcsolatos tudásomat megosztani  
a közösségi médiában.

XXII. Már egyetlen ember is  
hatással lehet a fenntarthatóságra,  
így a fenntartható ruházati  
termékek választásával én is

pozitív változást okozhatok a társadalom életében.

XXIII. Lehetőségem van fenntartható ruházati termékeket választani, amikor vásárolni megyek.

XXIV. Van lehetőségem és időm környezetbarát ruhák keresésére és megvásárlására.

XXV. Mivel egyetlen ember önmagában semmilyen hatással nincs a fenntarthatóságra, nem számít mit teszek. \*

XVI. Kiemelt figyelmet fordítok arra a ruhák vásárlása során, hogy azok környezetbarát anyagokból készüljenek

XVII. Ha két egyforma ruhadarab közül választhatok, azt vásárolok meg, amely előállítása kevésbé káros az emberekre és a környezetre

XVIII. Természetes "zöld" ruházati termékeket szeretnék vásárolni, a társadalmi illetve környezetvédelmi aspektusai miatt.

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