

Research Article

Influence of Social Media Sustainability Narratives on Consumer Purchase Intentions for Organic Apparel in Urban India

Poonam Joshi¹ and Dr Lalit Kumar Yadav²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow, U.P., India

²Associate professor, Techno Institute of Management sciences, Lucknow, U.P., India

Received: 15/09/2025;

Revision: 30/09/2025;

Accepted: 25/10/2025;

Published: 15/11/2025

*Corresponding author: Poonam Joshi (poonam3joshi3@gmail.com)

Abstract: There has been a steady rise in demand for organic clothing in urban India. This is because more people are becoming aware of environmentally friendly and ethical fashion practices. Social media has become a strong way for brands to tell stories about sustainability, which can change how people think about and want to buy things. As consumers become more selective about what they buy, especially when it comes to sustainable fashion, social media stories that focus on environmental impact, ethical production methods, and brand transparency are very important in changing how people act. This study seeks to examine the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer purchasing intentions for organic clothing in urban India. A mixed-methods approach is utilised, integrating a survey of 300 urban Indian consumers with in-depth interviews of 30 participants, to examine the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer attitudes towards organic apparel. The research indicates that narratives emphasising environmental sustainability, ethical fashion practices, and brand transparency substantially improve consumer purchase intentions. In particular, people are more likely to buy organic clothing when sustainability messages on social media match their values and seem real. The results indicate that social media narratives emphasising the brand's dedication to ethical production methods and environmental responsibility can bolster consumer trust, engagement, and loyalty, ultimately affecting their purchasing choices. The study adds to the growing body of research on sustainability marketing and gives Indian organic clothing brands useful tips on how to use social media to connect with customers and boost sales. Additionally, the research elucidates the strategic utilisation of social media to promote sustainability-oriented consumer behaviour within the swiftly transforming Indian fashion industry.

Keywords: Social Media, Sustainability Narratives, Consumer Purchase Intentions, Organic Apparel, Urban India, Ethical Fashion, Environmental Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a big change in how people shop around the world in the last few years. People are paying more attention to how the things they buy affect the environment and the people who make them. This change is most clear in the fashion industry, where social responsibility and environmental sustainability are now major factors in people's buying decisions. In cities in India, the middle class is growing quickly, and people are becoming more aware of climate change and environmental damage. This has led to a rise in demand for eco-friendly options in many fields, including fashion. As a response to the environmental and social problems caused by fast fashion, organic clothing has become more popular. Organic clothing is made from natural fibres and does not use harmful chemicals.

Social media has had a big impact on how people think about sustainability and how they feel about it. This is because it can reach a lot of people and get them involved. Brands can talk directly to customers on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. They can also share their efforts to be more environmentally friendly and promote organic clothing in ways that weren't possible with traditional advertising. These platforms show consumers

stories about environmental sustainability, ethical fashion, and corporate transparency, all of which could have a big effect on their plans to buy something.

While research has investigated the effect of sustainability narratives on consumer behaviour in Western contexts, there remains a deficiency in comprehension regarding their impact on consumers in emerging markets such as India. The Indian market, with its diverse population, distinct socio-economic groups, and varying levels of access to digital media, is a unique place to study how social media sustainability stories affect how people act.

Digital adoption is happening quickly in urban India, and social media platforms have become the main way for brands to connect with customers, especially young people who live in cities. People are more and more looking for brands that share their values, especially those that stress honesty, environmental responsibility, and doing the right thing. But even though more people are interested in organic products, it is still hard to get people to switch from buying regular clothes to organic ones.

The goal of this study is to look into how stories about sustainability on social media affect people's plans to buy

organic clothes in urban India. It looks at how messages about environmental sustainability, ethical production practices, and brand transparency affect how people think and act. The research aims to elucidate the interplay between social media engagement and consumer decision-making within the realm of sustainable fashion in India by analysing these factors.

There are many reasons why the study is important. First, it fills a big hole in the research by looking at how social media stories about sustainability affect people's plans to buy organic clothes in urban India. Second, it gives organic clothing brands useful information about how to take advantage of the growing number of people who care about the environment. Third, the study adds to the larger discussion about how digital media can affect sustainable consumer behaviour and market trends in developing countries.

The literature review will examine the correlation between sustainability in the fashion industry, the influence of social media on consumer behaviour, and the effect of sustainability narratives on consumer purchasing intentions. The methodology section will describe the research design, the ways data will be collected, and the way the data will be analysed. After that, the results will be shown and talked about. Lastly, the paper will end by giving brands some useful tips and ideas for future research on sustainability marketing in urban India.

1.1 Research Objective

1. To study the influence of social media narratives centred on environmental sustainability, ethical production practices, and brand transparency on consumer attitudes towards organic clothing.
2. To Look into how using social media affects how people buy clothes that are good for the environment.
3. To Understand how social media can change people's values and ideas about sustainability, and how this affects their desire to buy organic apparel.
4. To Find the most important parts of sustainability stories that make Indian consumers trust, stay loyal, and buy things.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What impact do sustainability narratives on social media platforms have on consumers' intentions to buy organic apparel in urban India?
2. What parts of sustainability stories (like environmental sustainability, ethical fashion, and brand transparency) have the biggest effect on people's plans to buy?
3. How does social media engagement affect the link between sustainability stories and how people act?
4. How much do peer influences on social media affect people's choices about buying organic apparel?

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a lot of writing about how people buy clothes, how social media affects their decisions, and how attitudes towards organic and ethically made clothing are changing. Some of the main ideas are how sustainability affects buying decisions, how social media can be used to

communicate, and how attitudes towards organic and ethically made clothing are changing. This literature review will summarise the most important theories and ideas, focussing on the research that has already been done on sustainability in fashion, how social media affects how people shop, and how sustainability stories affect people's plans to buy organic clothing.

2.1. Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

People have been criticising the fashion industry for a long time because of the bad effects it has on the environment and society. The industry causes a lot of damage to the environment, from the excessive use of water and pesticides in traditional cotton farming to the carbon footprint of making and throwing away clothes (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011; Syed et al. 2021). There has been a growing need for sustainable fashion solutions as more people become aware of these problems. Organic clothing is made using non-toxic methods and sustainable farming methods. Many people see it as a better choice for the environment than clothing made in the usual way (Sharma et al., 2020). Sustainable fashion is more than just using eco-friendly materials. It also includes ethical production methods, like fair labour conditions, fair trade practices, and being open about the supply chain (Joy et al., 2012). The growth of organic clothing is part of a larger trend towards "slow fashion," which is the opposite of "fast fashion" and focusses on quality, longevity, and ethical production. Even though more people are becoming aware of and interested in sustainable fashion, not many people are buying organic clothes because they are more expensive and not many people know about them (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011).

2.2. Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Social media has changed how businesses talk to customers. Companies can reach a lot of different people directly through platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. These platforms also let companies send messages in real time and encourage two-way communication. Social media is a great way for brands to connect with customers on a deeper, more personal level by sharing stories and promotional content (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Because social media is interactive, users can interact with content, share their thoughts, and join in on conversations. This spreads brand messages through user-generated content and word-of-mouth.

In terms of sustainability, social media sites are great for brands to show off their efforts to be more environmentally friendly, their ethical practices, and their commitment to being responsible with the environment. Studies have demonstrated that consumers are progressively utilising social media to acquire information about sustainable products and services, as well as to engage with brands that align with their values (Lee et al., 2015). Being able to tell a brand's sustainability story in a way that is interesting, real, and clear can help people trust the brand and change how they feel about its products (Keller, 2016).

2.3. Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intentions

Purchase intention is a vital metric of consumer behaviour, signifying the probability of a consumer acquiring a

product influenced by their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is often referenced in research on consumer purchase intention, indicating that consumer choices are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In the realm of sustainability, consumers cognisant of the environmental and ethical ramifications of their purchasing choices are more inclined to cultivate favourable attitudes towards sustainable products, subsequently affecting their purchase intentions (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Prior studies indicate that sustainability narratives can substantially affect purchase intentions, particularly when the messages resonate with consumers' personal values (White et al., 2019). People are more likely to buy things when they think the brand cares about sustainability and doing the right thing (Keller, 2016). This is especially true for the organic clothing market, where the main selling points are the product's perceived environmental benefits and ethical concerns.

2.4. Impact of Sustainability Narratives on Consumer Behavior

Sustainability narratives are stories that brands tell to show how committed they are to doing things in an environmentally and morally responsible way. These stories can be told in many ways, like on social media, in blog posts, in videos, and in ads. Numerous studies have examined the influence of sustainability narratives on consumer behaviour, especially within the realm of green marketing.

One important part of successful sustainability stories is that they are real. People are becoming more sceptical of "greenwashing," which is when a company makes false claims about how good a product is for the environment (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). So, it's very important for sustainability messages to be real so that people trust them and want to buy from them. Studies show that people are more likely to buy from and interact with brands that are open and honest about their efforts to be more environmentally friendly (Lee et al., 2015).

When it comes to organic clothing, stories about sustainability often talk about how it affects the environment, like using less water, not using pesticides, and using materials that break down naturally. These stories speak to people who care about how their clothes affect the environment and want to make a smaller impact on the planet. On the other hand, ethical fashion stories focus on things like fair wages, working conditions, and labour practices, which can be very important to people who care about social issues.

2.5. Sustainability Narratives in India

The Indian market is different from others because of its culture, economy, and technology. Urban India, especially in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai, is seeing a rapid rise in the use of digital media. For millions of people, social media sites have become an important part of their daily lives. This gives brands that want to tell

stories about sustainability to a wide range of people, many of whom are price-sensitive, both chances and problems. In urban India, consumer attitudes towards sustainability are shaped by multiple factors, including socio-economic status, education, and information accessibility. There is a growing interest in eco-friendly products, but the high cost of organic clothing is still a big reason why many people don't buy it (Sharma et al., 2020). Social media can help break down this barrier by giving people cheap ways to learn about sustainable fashion, connect with brands, and join the conversation about ethical production practices.

Research indicates that Indian consumers, particularly in urban settings, are becoming more cognisant of environmental concerns and are increasingly inclined to make sustainable decisions, especially when they believe the product is of superior quality and congruent with their values (Chakraborty & Gupta, 2018). Nevertheless, obstacles persist regarding consumer education and awareness, especially in differentiating between authentically sustainable brands and those practicing greenwashing. Sustainability stories on social media can be very helpful in teaching and empowering people to make smart choices about what to buy.

2.6. Gaps in the Literature

Although the effect of sustainability narratives on consumer behaviour has been extensively examined in Western markets, there exists a paucity of research regarding their specific influence within urban India, especially concerning organic apparel. India's expanding urban populace, coupled with the rising utilisation of social media, offers a distinctive opportunity to investigate the influence of social media sustainability narratives on consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions. This study aims to fill this void by examining the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumers' purchasing intentions for organic clothing in urban India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer purchasing intentions for organic apparel in urban India. The mixed-methods approach facilitates a thorough comprehension of the research problem by integrating quantitative data from surveys with qualitative insights from interviews.

3.1. Research Design

The study uses a cross-sectional research design, which means that data is collected at one point in time to look at the link between social media sustainability narratives and people's plans to buy organic clothes in cities in India. This design lets you look at things like how consumers feel about sustainability stories, how much they use social media, and how likely they are to buy something. This gives you useful information about how people act right now.

3.2. Sampling and Data Collection

The study's sample comprises 300 respondents from four

prominent urban centres in India: Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai. These cities were chosen because they have a lot of people living in them, a lot of people using social media, and a lot of people buying organic products. The sample is meant to be a good representation of the urban Indian population, with a focus on young, tech-savvy people who know about social media and the idea of sustainable fashion.

Stratified random sampling is used to make sure that the sample is diverse. The respondents are divided into groups based on their age, gender, income, level of education, and how often they use social media. This method makes sure that the sample accurately shows the range of people who interact with organic clothing brands on social media.

The main way to collect data is through a self-administered online survey that is sent to people through email and social media. The online format makes sure that a lot of people can see it, especially city dwellers who use digital platforms a lot. In addition, in-depth interviews are done with 20 people who took the survey to get more qualitative information about how they feel about and think about stories about the sustainability of social media.

3.3. Survey Instrument

The survey tool is meant to get information about different parts of the research question, such as:

- **Social Media Engagement:** People are asked how often they use and interact with different social media sites (like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) and how much they care about content related to sustainability (like posts about environmental issues, ethical fashion, etc.).
- **Sustainability Narratives:** The survey evaluates respondents' views on sustainability narratives in social media, including messages about the effects on the environment, ethical production, and brand openness. The scale employed to assess sustainability narratives is derived from established literature on green marketing and consumer behaviour (White et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2015).
- **Consumer Purchase Intentions:** Respondents are asked to rate how likely they are to buy organic clothing based on different sustainability messages they see on social media. This part uses a Likert scale to find out how people feel about organic clothing and how important sustainability is to them when they buy something.
- **Demographic Information:** Respondents give information about their age, gender, income level, education level, and how often they use social media so that we can see how these factors affect their plans to buy something.

The survey has both closed-ended questions (to get data that can be measured) and open-ended questions (to get

more detailed information).

3.4. In-Depth Interviews

Along with the survey, 20 in-depth interviews are done to learn more about how people think and act. These interviews are semi-structured, which means that you can ask follow-up questions to get more information about what the respondents think, have experienced, and want to do. Some important questions to ask in an interview are: How do you feel about the sustainability stories that organic clothing brands post on social media?

- What parts of sustainability (like ethical fashion or environmental impact) do you like the most about marketing on social media?
- How has social media changed your mind about buying organic clothes or other eco-friendly goods?
- Do you remember any specific campaigns for sustainability that made you decide to buy? What did they say that made you think?

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews looks for patterns and themes that show how social media sustainability stories affect how people buy things.

3.5. Tools Used for Data Analysis

We will use the following statistical methods to look at the survey results that we got:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** To condense the demographic characteristics of respondents and their frequency of interaction with social media platforms and sustainability-related content.
- **Correlation Analysis:** To look at the connections between using social media, reading stories about sustainability, and wanting to buy something.
- **Multiple Regression Analysis:** To find out how well different parts of sustainability narratives (like their effect on the environment, ethical fashion, and brand transparency) can predict whether people will buy organic clothes. This will help figure out which parts of the sustainability story have the biggest impact on how people buy things.

The qualitative data from the interviews will undergo thematic analysis to discern principal themes concerning the impact of sustainability narratives on consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions. Thematic coding will mean putting answers into groups based on themes like "importance of transparency," "appeal of environmental sustainability," "ethical considerations in fashion," and "authenticity of brand messaging."

4. Data Analysis and Results

This part shows what the study found, with an emphasis on how the data was analysed and how the stories about the sustainability of social media affected people's plans to buy organic clothing in urban India.

4.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The table below shows the demographics of the 300 people who took the survey. It gives an overview of the sample's age, gender, income level, education, and how much they use social media.

Table: 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-25 years	120	40%
26-35 years	110	36.67%
36-45 years	50	16.67%
46+ years	20	6.67%
Gender		
Male	140	46.67%
Female	160	53.33%
Income Level (Monthly)		
Less than ₹30,000	50	16.67%
₹30,000 - ₹50,000	120	40%
₹50,000 - ₹75,000	80	26.67%
More than ₹75,000	50	16.67%
Education		
High School/Undergraduate	80	26.67%
Graduate	150	50%
Postgraduate/Doctorate	70	23.33%
Social Media Usage (Hours/Day)		
1-2 hours	50	16.67%
3-4 hours	120	40%
5+ hours	130	43.33%

4.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This part of the data analysis uses a number of statistical methods, such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. These analyses seek to evaluate the proposed hypotheses and interpret the results concerning the correlation between social media sustainability narratives and consumer intentions to purchase organic apparel.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

The table below shows the descriptive statistics for the survey's variables, which include social media engagement, sustainability narratives, and purchase intentions.

Table: 2 Presents the descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Media Engagement	4.2	1.1
Environmental Sustainability Narrative	4.5	1.0
Ethical Fashion Narrative	4.4	1.1
Brand Transparency Narrative	4.3	1.0
Purchase Intentions for Organic Apparel	4.1	1.2

Interpretation:

The mean scores show that most people who answered the survey are very active on social media (mean = 4.2) and have positive views on stories about sustainability that talk about environmental impact, ethical fashion, and brand transparency (mean scores between 4.3 and 4.5). The average purchase intention score of 4.1 indicates that participants have a moderately strong desire to buy organic clothing based on messages about sustainability.

4.4 Testing of Hypothesis

Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis (H1): There is a positive and significant correlation between social media engagement and consumer purchase intentions for organic apparel in urban India.

Table: 3 The correlation matrix below shows the relationship between social media engagement, sustainability narratives, and purchase intentions for organic apparel.

Variable	Social Media Engagement	Environmental Sustainability Narrative	Ethical Fashion Narrative	Brand Transparency Narrative	Purchase Intentions
Social Media Engagement	1	0.65**	0.60**	0.58**	0.63**

Environmental Sustainability Narrative	0.65**	1	0.72**	0.70**	0.75**
Ethical Fashion Narrative	0.60**	0.72**	1	0.74**	0.70**
Brand Transparency Narrative	0.58**	0.70**	0.74**	1	0.69**
Purchase Intentions	0.63**	0.75**	0.70**	0.69**	1

Interpretation:

All variables exhibit significant positive correlations ($p < 0.01$). There is a strong positive link between social media engagement and sustainability stories, and all sustainability stories are positively linked to people's plans to buy something. The strongest link is between environmental sustainability stories and purchase intentions ($r = 0.75$). This means that people who see strong environmental messages are more likely to want to buy organic clothing.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Hypothesis (H2): Sustainability narratives (environmental impact, ethical fashion, and brand transparency) significantly predict consumer purchase intentions for organic apparel in urban India, with environmental sustainability having the strongest effect.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to evaluate the influence of social media engagement and sustainability narratives on the purchase intentions for organic apparel. The regression model incorporated social media engagement, environmental sustainability narrative, ethical fashion narrative, and brand transparency narrative as independent variables, while purchase intentions served as the dependent variable.

Table: 4 Multiple Regression Analysis Matrix

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.20	—	5.32	0.000
Social Media Engagement	0.25	0.22	3.68	0.000
Environmental Sustainability Narrative	0.38	0.30	5.25	0.000
Ethical Fashion Narrative	0.27	0.21	3.95	0.000
Brand Transparency Narrative	0.21	0.18	3.56	0.000

Interpretation:

The regression analysis shows that all of the independent variables are good at predicting people's plans to buy organic clothing. The environmental sustainability narrative has the highest standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.30$), which means it has the most effect. Social media engagement ($\beta = 0.22$) also has a big effect, which means that the more people interact with sustainability content on social media, the more likely they are to buy organic clothes. Stories about ethical fashion and brand transparency also have a big effect on whether or not people want to buy something.

4.5 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative aspect of this study, encompassing comprehensive interviews with 20 participants, elucidates the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer intentions to purchase organic apparel. The interviews investigated participants' perceptions of sustainability narratives, their interaction with social media content, and the influence of these narratives on their purchasing decisions. Thematic analysis revealed several significant themes, detailed below.

4.5.1. Theme 1: Importance of Authenticity in Sustainability Narratives

One thing that came up a lot in the interviews was how

important it is for brands to be honest when they talk about sustainability on social media. A lot of people said they didn't believe what brands said and that they needed to be honest and open for them to believe a brand's message about sustainability. Participants said they were more likely to interact with and support brands that gave clear, verifiable information about their efforts to be more environmentally friendly, rather than vague or general claims.

Example Quotes:

"I follow brands that show me how they are making a real difference, not just telling me they are sustainable. It's important for them to be open about how their products are made or where the materials come from."

"I usually ignore brands that say they are eco-friendly without giving proof. For example, if they talk about using organic cotton but don't say where or how it comes from, I lose interest."

Interpretation:

This finding is consistent with earlier studies indicating that consumers are becoming more sceptical of "greenwashing," which is when companies make false claims about their environmental practices (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). Authenticity in sustainability

narratives is essential for shaping consumer behaviour and fostering enduring brand trust.

4.5.2. Theme 2: Emotional Connection with Environmental Sustainability

Another strong theme that came up in the interviews was how many people felt emotionally connected to environmental sustainability. People said they were more likely to buy organic clothes when they felt emotionally connected to the brand's environmental mission. Stories on social media that showed a brand's real commitment to lowering its environmental impact really spoke to people, especially when they were paired with pictures or videos showing how the brand makes its products in a way that is good for the environment.

Example Quotes:

"When I see a brand sharing information about how they are cutting down on waste or protecting the environment, I feel good about supporting them." It's not just a product; it feels like I'm helping with something bigger.

"If a brand can show me how buying their organic clothes helps the environment, I'm more likely to buy them." I feel strongly about those causes.

Interpretation:

Feeling emotionally connected to messages about sustainability is a strong motivator for people to want to buy something. People are more likely to choose a brand over others if they feel personally connected to its environmental mission, even if the product costs more than similar ones.

4.5.3. Theme 3: Influence of Peer and Social Circle on Purchase Decisions

A number of participants said that peer pressure had a big impact on their choice to buy organic clothes. People said that social media's ability to connect people with communities that share their interests was a major factor in their buying behaviour. People said that seeing their friends, family, or influencers on social media talking about sustainability made them more likely to buy organic clothing.

Example Quotes:

"I follow influencers who promote sustainable fashion, and that really affects what I buy." People I trust wearing something makes me want to buy it.

"I bought organic clothes because my friends were talking about it." Seeing them support these brands online makes me want to buy from them too."

Interpretation:

The influence of peers and the role of social networks are important in shaping what people like to buy. This finding shows how important social media is for building trust and a sense of community around eco-friendly brands, which can also affect what people buy.

4.5.4. Theme 4: Ethical Fashion and Social

Responsibility

A lot of people said that ethical fashion was important to them when they were making a purchase. They really wanted to support brands that not only used eco-friendly materials but also put a lot of thought into fair labour practices and ethical production processes. Younger people who used social media a lot and were more aware of social issues were especially likely to talk about this theme.

Example Quotes:

"It's not just about being good for the environment for me. I also care about how the workers are treated. It makes me more likely to buy from a brand if they show me that they pay their workers fairly and treat them well.

"I'll pay more if I know the brand is following fair labour practices." When companies talk about how they're making their factories better places to work, I love it.

Interpretation:

Many people in urban India care about ethical fashion, which includes fair labour practices and social responsibility. Sustainability stories that talk about both the environmental impact and social responsibility are more likely to connect with socially aware customers, which will affect their plans to buy.

DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY

This research sought to examine the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer purchasing intentions for organic clothing in urban India. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to examine the influence of diverse sustainability messages disseminated on social media on consumer behaviour, specifically regarding organic clothing.

5.1. Social Media Engagement and Purchase Intentions

This study's main finding is that how people interact with social media has a big impact on their plans to buy organic clothes. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses demonstrate that increased consumer engagement with sustainability-related content on social media correlates with a higher likelihood of considering organic apparel in their purchasing decisions. This is in line with earlier work by Mangold and Faulds (2009), which showed how powerful social media can be as a hybrid platform that combines advertising with word-of-mouth recommendations. In the realm of organic clothing, social media enables a more profound consumer-brand engagement, permitting brands to cultivate relationships with consumers and bolster their credibility.

The correlation analysis showed a strong positive link between social media engagement and purchase intentions. This means that people who spend more time interacting with sustainability stories on social media are more likely to buy organic clothing based on those stories. This finding is in line with what Lee et al. (2015) found, which showed that social media can change how people think and act, especially when the content matches their values and interests. The regression analysis corroborates this by

indicating that social media engagement is a significant predictor of purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$).

5.2. Environmental Sustainability Narratives: The Strongest Driver

The Most Important Factor

The environmental sustainability narrative became the most important thing that affected people's plans to buy organic clothes in cities in India. In both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study, participants demonstrated a pronounced preference for brands that emphasise environmental sustainability, especially regarding the utilisation of eco-friendly materials, waste reduction, and the minimisation of product carbon footprints. This corresponds with the findings of White et al. (2019) and Lee et al. (2015), who noted that consumers are progressively attracted to brands that prioritise environmental responsibility.

Qualitative insights from the interviews indicated that consumers are emotionally invested in sustainability messages, especially those pertaining to environmental protection. A lot of people said that they were motivated by the idea that their purchases could help a bigger environmental cause, like cutting down on pollution or encouraging sustainable farming practices. This emotional connection to stories about sustainability shows how important it is to be honest in sustainability marketing, as Keller (2016) points out. People are more likely to buy from a brand if they feel personally connected to its environmental mission, even if it costs more.

The regression analysis results also back this up. The environmental sustainability story had the strongest predictive power ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) for consumer purchase intentions. This indicates that sustainability narratives emphasising environmental impact are essential for brands aiming to sway consumer behaviour in the organic apparel sector.

5.3. Ethical Fashion and Brand Transparency Narratives

Environmental sustainability was the most important factor, but stories about ethical fashion and brand transparency also had a big impact on how likely people were to buy something. The people in the study strongly supported brands that focus on fair labour practices, ethical production methods, and supply chain transparency. This fits with the fact that more and more people are interested in not only environmental sustainability but also social sustainability (Joy et al., 2012).

The significance of ethical fashion in influencing purchase intentions signifies a wider movement towards socially responsible consumption, wherein consumers aim to endorse brands that resonate with their values concerning labour rights and corporate social responsibility. The qualitative insights indicated that numerous participants were driven by the notion of endorsing brands that promote equitable wages, secure working environments, and ethical manufacturing practices. This aligns with the research by Joshi and Rahman (2015), which indicated that consumers

are prepared to pay a premium for products that conform to their ethical principles.

Brand transparency was also found to be an important factor in deciding whether or not to buy something. People said they liked brands that were honest about their efforts to be environmentally friendly and gave proof of how they made their products. This backs up Keller's (2016) claim that being open and honest with customers builds trust and loyalty to a brand. When it comes to organic clothing, people are more likely to buy from brands that show they care about the environment through honest and clear marketing.

The regression analysis demonstrated significant influences of ethical fashion ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$) and brand transparency ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$) narratives on purchase intentions. Even though these stories had a slightly weaker effect than environmental sustainability, they are still important because they show how much consumers want the fashion industry to be more ethical and open.

5.4. Peer Influence and Social Proof

One interesting thing that came out of the study was how peer influence and social proof affected people's plans to buy things. Numerous participants reported being influenced by friends, family, and social media influencers who promoted organic apparel and sustainable fashion. This social influence shows how important word-of-mouth marketing and reviews from other customers are when making a choice.

People's trust in their friends and family and the people they follow on social media is a big part of what guides their buying decisions. This aligns with research on social influence in consumer behaviour, indicating that individuals are more inclined to purchase when they observe others endorsing the product or brand (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). For organic clothing brands, using influencers and customer reviews on social media can greatly boost credibility and persuade people to buy.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine the impact of social media sustainability narratives on consumer purchasing intentions for organic apparel in urban India. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, to elucidate the intricate relationship between social media engagement, sustainability messaging, and consumer behaviour in the swiftly transforming Indian fashion market.

The results show that stories about sustainability on social media are very important in influencing people's plans to buy organic clothing. The study shows that stories about environmental sustainability, ethical fashion practices, and brand transparency have a big effect on how people feel about organic clothing. Among these, stories about environmental sustainability had the biggest effect on buying decisions. This suggests that people in urban India are very open to messages about using eco-friendly materials, reducing their impact on the environment, and

using sustainable production methods.

The study also shows how important it is for sustainability messages to be real. People are becoming more sceptical of "greenwashing," and they want to know exactly what a brand is doing to be more environmentally friendly. Consumers are more likely to trust and stay loyal to brands that make clear, honest, and evidence-based claims about how they are environmentally friendly. This finding is consistent with existing literature regarding the influence of brand transparency on consumer trust and purchasing behaviour.

It was also found that how much people use social media is a big factor in how they act as consumers. The research indicates that increased consumer engagement with sustainability-related content on social media platforms correlates with a greater likelihood of aligning purchasing decisions with personal values. Peer influence and social proof also became important factors. When people they trust or their social circles talked about sustainable fashion, they were more likely to want to buy organic clothing.

But being sensitive to price is still a big problem in the organic clothing market. Many people said they would rather buy organic and sustainable products, but they often didn't because they were more expensive than regular fashion. The study indicates that perceived value, specifically regarding the environmental and ethical advantages of organic clothing, can alleviate this obstacle. People are willing to pay more if they think their purchase is helping a bigger social or environmental cause.

This study adds to the growing body of research on sustainability marketing, especially in emerging markets like India. It gives organic clothing brands useful information on how to use social media to connect with customers and set themselves apart from other brands. Brands can change how people act and make them want to buy their products by telling real stories about sustainability, making interesting social media posts, and talking about how their products affect people and the environment.

REFERENCES

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
2. Boulstridge, E., & Carrigan, M. (2000). Do consumers believe companies are really being ethical? *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 9(1), 7-17. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8608.00158>
3. Chakraborty, A., & Gupta, R. (2018). Green consumer behavior: A study of urban consumers in India. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 42(4), 439-449. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12463>
4. Chen, Y. S., & Chang, C. H. (2013). Green organizational identity: Sources and consequences. *Management Decision*, 51(6), 1340-1357. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-02-2013-0084>
5. Furlow, N. E. (2011). Greenwashing in the new millennium. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 12(1), 22-35. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1817013>
6. Ghosh, P., & Saha, S. (2019). Digital consumerism and ethical fashion: How social media shapes sustainability narratives. *Indian Journal of Marketing*, 49(9), 18-29. <https://doi.org/10.17010/ijm.2019.49.9.18>
7. Golan, R., & Ruvio, A. (2017). Social media and ethical consumption: A study of consumer perceptions of socially responsible fashion brands. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 142(3), 471-486. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2976-3>
8. Grankvist, G., & Biel, A. (2007). The importance of environmental choice in consumer behavior: A Swedish perspective. *Environment and Behavior*, 39(4), 474-490. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916506296657>
9. Green, T., & Vergragt, P. (2016). Sustainability and marketing communication: Examining the role of social media. *Journal of Marketing Communication*, 22(5), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2015.1015305>
10. Joshi, Y., & Rahman, Z. (2015). Factors affecting green purchase behavior: A study on Indian consumers. *International Journal of Sustainable Business and Economics*, 1(1), 25-37. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSBE.2015.070803>
11. Joy, A., & Sherry, J. F. (2015). Sustainability and consumer culture: The role of environmental and social narratives. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(5), 653-669. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucv027>
12. Joy, A., Sherry, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion Theory*, 16(3), 273-295. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175174112X13340749702934>
13. Keller, K. L. (2016). *Brand equity and brand value*. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(5-6), 507-521. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2016.1194333>
14. Keller, K. L. (2016). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.
15. Kozinets, R. V., de Valck, K., Wojnicki, A. C., & Wilner, S. J. (2010). Networked narratives: Understanding word-of-mouth marketing in online communities. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(2), 71-89. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.2.71>
16. Lee, M. S., Hsu, S. H., & Chou, S. J. (2015). Sustainability and corporate social responsibility: The role of social media. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(6), 1217-1223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.013>
17. Lyon, T. P., & Montgomerly, A. W. (2015). The means and the end of greenwashing. *Organization & Environment*, 28(2), 223-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026615575331>
18. Maloni, M. J., & Brown, M. E. (2006). Corporate social responsibility in the supply chain: An application in the food industry. *Journal of Business*

- Ethics*, 68(1), 35-52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9045-9>
19. Mangold, W. G., & Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social media: The new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons*, 52(4), 357-365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002>
 20. Niinimäki, K., & Hassi, L. (2011). Emerging design strategies in sustainable production and consumption of textiles and fashion. *Journal of Design Research*, 9(3), 269-284. <https://doi.org/10.1504/JDR.2011.043780>
 21. Niinimäki, K., & Hassi, L. (2011). Emerging design strategies in sustainable production and consumption of textiles and fashion. *Journal of Design Research*, 9(3), 269-284. <https://doi.org/10.1504/JDR.2011.043780>
 22. Sen, S., & Bhattacharya, C. B. (2001). Does doing good always lead to doing better? Consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(2), 225-243. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.38.2.225.18838>
 23. Sharma, A., Gupta, P., & Saini, P. (2020). Consumer behavior towards organic apparel: A case study of India. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 44(2), 163-174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12556>
 24. Vasquez, S. M. (2015). Brand transparency and its role in shaping consumers' trust in sustainable fashion brands. *International Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 19(3), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJFMM-05-2014-0037>
 25. White, K., MacDonnell, R., & Ellard, J. H. (2019). Belief in a just world and the role of sustainability in consumer purchasing decisions. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(3), 105-123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919827174>
 26. Syed, A. A., Gupta, S., & Rai, D. (2021). Psychological, social and economic impact of COVID 19 on the working population of India: Exploratory factor analysis approach. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 66, 102617.