

Sustainable Fashion Marketing: Trends, Practices, and Challenges — A Systematic Literature Review

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This study explores the main research themes in sustainable fashion marketing, analysing the trends, challenges, and practices identified in recent scientific literature. Growing environmental and social awareness has driven the fashion sector towards more eco-friendly business models, demanding new marketing approaches that reconcile profitability with “green” responsibility.

The literature review reveals that the key areas of research focus on the transition to a circular economy, the impact of sustainable communication strategies, and the segmentation of consumer profiles. The attitude-behaviour gap — which reflects the discrepancy between sustainable purchase intentions and actual behaviour — emerges as one of the main challenges, often influenced by factors such as price, convenience, and perceived brand authenticity. The role of social media and digital influencers is particularly relevant in constructing a brand's sustainable image, contributing to the strengthening of consumer trust and loyalty.

The research also highlights the risk of greenwashing when sustainability-oriented marketing actions are not implemented genuinely and transparently. To mitigate this risk, brands should align their visual communication practices with their ethical values. This can be achieved through visual storytelling that reflects their sustainability commitments, encourages consumer engagement in conscious initiatives, and fosters relationships grounded in proximity, trust, and credibility.

It is concluded that sustainable fashion marketing constitutes a dynamic and multidisciplinary field in which innovation and ethics play a central role. Future studies may deepen the understanding of the impact of sustainable strategies on purchasing decisions and the effectiveness of circular business models, contributing to a more responsible fashion sector aligned with the expectations of contemporary consumers.

Keywords: sustainable fashion marketing, conscious consumption, sustainable communication, circular economy, greenwashing

Marketing de Moda Sustentável: Tendências, Práticas e Desafios — Uma Revisão Sistemática da Literatura

O presente estudo explora os principais temas de investigação em marketing de moda sustentável, analisando tendências, desafios e práticas identificadas na literatura científica recente. A crescente consciencialização ambiental e social tem impulsionado a transição do setor da moda para modelos de negócio mais ecológicos, exigindo novas abordagens de marketing que conciliem rentabilidade e responsabilidade “verde”.

A revisão da literatura revela que as principais áreas de investigação se centram na transição para a economia circular, no impacto das estratégias de comunicação sustentável e na segmentação dos perfis de consumidores. O attitude-behavior gap, que reflete a discrepância entre a intenção e o comportamento de compra sustentável, surge como um dos principais desafios, sendo frequentemente influenciado por fatores como preço, conveniência e percepção de autenticidade das marcas. O papel das redes sociais e dos influenciadores digitais assume particular relevância na construção da imagem sustentável das marcas, contribuindo para o fortalecimento da confiança e lealdade dos consumidores.

A investigação também destaca o risco de greenwashing, caso as ações de marketing orientadas para a sustentabilidade não sejam implementadas de maneira

genuína e transparente. Para minimizar esse risco, é fundamental que as marcas combinem práticas de comunicação visual coerentes com os seus valores éticos, através, por exemplo, de narrativas visuais capazes de refletir os compromissos sustentáveis da marca, promovendo o envolvimento dos consumidores em iniciativas conscientes e fortalecendo uma relação de proximidade, confiança e credibilidade.

Conclui-se que o marketing de moda sustentável constitui um campo dinâmico e multidisciplinar, no qual a inovação e a ética desempenham um papel central. Estudos futuros poderão aprofundar o impacto das estratégias sustentáveis na decisão de compra e a eficácia dos modelos de negócio circulares, contribuindo para um setor da moda mais responsável e alinhado com as exigências do consumidor contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: *marketing de moda sustentável, consumo consciente, comunicação sustentável, economia circular, greenwashing*

Introduction

Fashion is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that, throughout history, has reflected both individual and collective identity. More than a mere aesthetic expression, it is deeply connected to the spirit of each era, simultaneously influenced by — and affecting — social, economic, technological, and cultural factors. This interdisciplinary nature allows it to engage with diverse fields of knowledge, making fashion a dynamic arena for experimentation and innovation. In this context, marketing plays a fundamental role by transforming collections into desirable products, often driven more by creative and emotional appeal than by functional needs. Fast fashion exemplifies this logic well, quickly capturing everyday trends and converting them into affordable pieces, thereby fuelling a constant cycle of consumption and renewal. Thus, building strong brands and communicating a distinctive identity have become central strategies in the sector, consolidating fashion as a universe where consumption, style, and aspiration intertwine.

Driven by various factors, consumer behaviour is also undergoing significant changes in this market landscape. On the one hand, the economic crisis reduces purchasing volumes and leads to more selective buying. On the other hand, the environmental and social challenges affecting the planet and different markets provoke a reassessment of consumption criteria. In response to these transformations, many brands have incorporated values such as environmental sustainability, respect for human rights, well-being, and social inclusion into their offerings. Concepts such as “ethical fashion”, “sustainable fashion”, “recycling”, and “material reuse” are gaining prominence, associated with eco-friendly manufacturing processes and the use of organic materials. From *haute couture* to ready-to-wear brands, the fashion discourse evolves to add value, aligning with new demands. The balance between competitive advantages, consumer preferences, profitability,

and — above all — sustainability has become an essential pillar for marketing approaches within the sector.

Amid changes in the fashion ecosystem, an increasingly evident contrast is observed between the rapid, disposable offerings of large retailers and the ethical, conscientious proposals of smaller brands. Within this context, the present study aims to analyse the importance of sustainable marketing in fashion. The research is based on a literature review of articles published in the last five years, indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases, to identify the main scientific trends, sector challenges, and some of the prominent practices.

Starting Point: An Overview of Sustainable Fashion

Recurring practices in the production of certain fashion brands — such as labour exploitation, social discrimination in developing countries, disregard for working conditions, and negative environmental impacts — have generated growing awareness around sustainability. This concept is based on three fundamental principles: the interdependence between human beings and the environment; a balanced relationship between economic development, social progress, and environmental protection; and the need for a global vision guided by shared values (Organização das Nações Unidas, 2015). Over time, the sustainability movement has matured, demonstrating its relevance and being increasingly applied in different forms, such as organic, ecological, and fair trade commercial practices. In the fashion sector, this awareness has driven a paradigm shift since the early 21st century, promoting more ethical and responsible alternatives in the way products are made and consumed.

Sustainable fashion can be defined as the production of clothing that incorporates fair trade principles, ensuring decent working conditions without labour exploitation. Furthermore, it does not harm the environment, using biodegradable and organic materials designed for a longer lifespan. This concept also encompasses ethical manufacturing processes with low or no environmental impact, and the use of products with eco-labels or recycled fabrics. Thus, sustainable fashion is not limited to the finished product but also involves the entire production chain, promoting values of respect for people, nature, and conscious consumption, consolidating itself as a necessary path for the development of the textile sector (Betzler et al., 2022; Kovacs, 2021a, 2021b; Nicolau et al., 2025).

The fashion industry begins 2025 in a volatile and uncertain scenario, marked by signs of cyclical slowdown already anticipated in the previous year. According to the report *The State of Fashion 2025* (McKinsey & Company, 2025), the sector faces multiple challenges, notably the impacts of climate change, the restructuring of global trade, the worsening geographical disparities between East and West, and significant shifts in consumer behaviour.

Rising inflation has made consumers more price-sensitive, prompting brands to rethink their market strategies, broaden price ranges, and reposition themselves to attract value-focused buyers. This context favours the growth of resale and affordable price segments. At the same time, brands that do not wish to compete in these niches must justify their higher prices through enhancing the shopping experience, using artificial intelligence to optimise the customer journey, and strengthening social and sustainability practices (McKinsey & Company, 2025). However, despite the increasing relevance of these initiatives, many consumers remain hesitant to pay more for sustainable products. In the United States and the United Kingdom, the report mentioned above revealed that 61% of consumers prioritise price over sustainability when purchasing fashion.

Faced with this scenario, brands must educate and inspire consumers by demonstrating the positive impacts of sustainable practices. A key strategy is to invest in long-term partnerships with suppliers, something still neglected by 75% of brands, which do not include suppliers in their sustainability initiatives. These collaborations strengthen value chains and enhance companies' credibility with an increasingly demanding audience (McKinsey & Company, 2025).

This framework thus proposes an exploration of the evolution of sustainable fashion marketing, analysing its contributions through advances in practices, examples, and studies that highlight fundamental lines of thought for the consolidation of sustainability in the sector.

Methodology

The primary objective of this research is to determine the state of the art in the literature on sustainable fashion marketing — that is, to identify the main lines of research and academic contributions to this topic. As a secondary objective, this article aims to identify current sustainable marketing practices as reflected in the literature. Accordingly, the research question guiding this study is: “what are the main research themes in sustainable fashion marketing?”. To answer this question, the PRISMA methodology was employed (Figure 1).

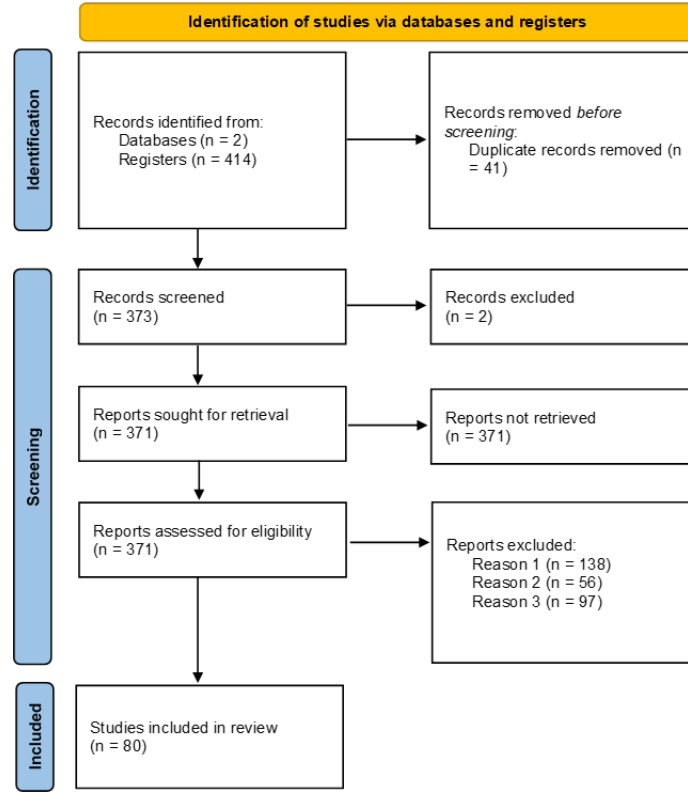


Figure 1: *PRISMA flow diagram*

Note. Developed by the authors, based on the model by Page et al. (2021).

Inclusion Criteria

For this systematic review, based on the PRISMA methodology, the inclusion criteria were: a publication date within the last five years (i.e., articles published between 2020 and 2025), the presence of the keywords “sustainab*”, “fashion”, “marketing”, and “green”, and publication in journals indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. A total of 120 articles were retrieved from Web of Science, and 294 from Scopus.

Exclusion Criteria

The 414 articles were first screened using EndNote software for automatic identification of duplicates, resulting in the removal of 41 records. This left 373 records for analysis, from which two additional duplicates were removed manually. Of the 371 records analysed, 138 were excluded because they were not published in journals whose scope aligned with themes such as “marketing”,

“consumer”, “sustainability”, “fashion”, or “management” (Exclusion reason 1). A further 56 articles were excluded following abstract screening (Exclusion reason 2), as they did not contribute meaningfully to answering the research question. Finally, a more in-depth review excluded 97 articles whose object of study, methodology and/or findings were not compatible with the aims of this systematic review (Exclusion reason 3). Thus, 80 articles were included in the final review, from which the results and insights presented in the following chapter are drawn.

Outcomes and Insights

Fashion and Sustainability: The Evolution of a Concept and a New Marketing Approach

Fashion — often associated with appearance and timelessness — is both shaped by and influential across various spheres of contemporary life. Today, driven by environmental and social concerns, society is increasingly challenging fast fashion, though without entirely replacing it. According to Ertekin et al. (2020), institutional actors play an active role in transforming the market, fostering a new culture that incorporates sustainability without completely rejecting existing systems. Sustainable fashion — designed to mitigate the problems of accelerated production — encompasses environmental, ethical and social considerations, intending to promote ecological preservation, economic development and human well-being (Jeong & Ko, 2021; Ko & Fashion Marketing Research Lab, 2015).

Fast fashion, which is labour-intensive, is frequently associated with precarious working conditions and high production demands (Atik et al., 2022; Gupta & Hodges, 2012, as cited in Hesse & Rundau, 2023). Sustainable marketing must adopt a broad perspective, integrating environmental, social and economic dimensions into the analysis of business practices within the fashion sector.

According to Daukantienė (2022), the new fashion offering requires sustainable practices in business models, the adoption of eco-friendly fibres and technologies, and a transition towards a circular economy. Sustainable marketing has emerged as a central strategy, bolstering consumer trust and influencing loyalty (Jeong & Ko, 2021; Jung et al., 2020; Puspita & Chae, 2021). As Bae and Yan (2023) and Belz and Peattie (2009, as cited in Hesse & Rundau, 2023) note, this approach combines economic and technological perspectives with social and environmental values, encompassing fair trade, labour conditions and waste management.

Fast fashion presents a paradox: despite its rapid, disposable production model, it has adopted sustainable marketing strategies in response to growing consumer awareness (Liu et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2021; Vehmas et al., 2018; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018, as cited in Hesse & Rundau, 2023). Various authors — Liu et al. (2021), Sun et al. (2021), Vehmas et al. (2018), and Wiederhold and Martinez (2018, as cited in Hesse & Rundau, 2023) — note that these strategies are often employed to soften ethical concerns and foster customer

loyalty. However, consumer responses range from scepticism to acceptance, with greater engagement typically seen in interactive initiatives such as recycling schemes, while traditional purchase drivers — like price and style — continue to dominate decision-making. There is also the risk of perceived greenwashing when these strategies are not genuinely embedded within the business model. On this point, Olson (2022) observes that consumers may develop a kind of moral licensing — feeling entitled to consume more from “sustainable” brands due to their purportedly lower environmental impact. This can produce a rebound effect, mitigating guilt associated with “green” consumption while increasing overall purchasing, thus undermining sustainability goals. Nonetheless, the tension appears inevitable: a conflict persists between consumers’ insatiable appetite for novelty in fashion and the urgent need for sustainable consumption (Atik & Ertekin, 2023). The authors provide a conceptual analysis of the psychological and social drivers of this desire, as well as the role of the fashion industry — namely fast fashion — in fuelling this demand. Atik and Ertekin (2023) highlight the adverse consequences of excessive consumption, including environmental degradation, labour exploitation and textile waste. They propose social marketing interventions at three levels: micro (consumers), meso (fashion businesses and associations) and macro (public policy), recommending actions to redirect the desire for novelty towards more sustainable practices such as collaborative consumption, reuse and customisation of clothing.

The Sustainable Fashion Consumer: Background and Consumption Profiles

To adapt effective strategies to the new fashion paradigm, Kaner and Baruh (2022) identify five core criteria used by consumers when assessing sustainability: the use of eco-friendly materials and sustainable methods, reduction of environmental impact, assurance of animal welfare, respect for workers’ rights, and product durability. Huang et al. (2024) simplify this categorisation into four key factors based on online consumer reviews: material ecology, garment aesthetics, functionality, and price reasonableness.

Intending to optimise consumer segmentation, several studies have proposed typologies that classify distinct consumer profiles (Kaner & Baruh, 2022; Karpova et al., 2024a, 2024b). According to Kaner and Baruh (2022), effective communication with each segment requires brands to tailor their strategies to consumers’ motivations and informational needs, thereby strengthening trust and fostering a sense of pride in sustainable choices, as also argued by Guedes et al. (2020). Moreover, D. Lim et al. (2021) and Kolacz and Bhaduri (2024) highlight the importance of aligning marketing messages with the environmental values of the target audience to promote a more favourable attitude towards the brand.

Karpova et al. (2024b) developed a typology based on an analysis of consumer comments on a *The New York Times* article, identifying two key constructs for classifying sustainable fashion consumers: the importance attributed to personal

appearance and the willingness or financial capacity to invest in clothing. The intersection of these dimensions enabled the authors to propose a detailed categorisation of consumer profiles within the sustainable fashion sector (Table 1).

Typology – Kaner & Baruh (2022)	Romantic idealists	Self-focused consumers	Confused consumers	Pessimists
	Idealistic consumers with a strong motivation to adopt sustainable practices.	Motivated by personal benefit, with limited interest in environmental or social issues.	Interested in sustainability but feel overwhelmed or lack sufficient information.	Sceptical about the impact of individual actions on sustainability.
Typology – Karpova et al. (2024)	Affluent with class	Stylish budget-conscious	Functional minimalists	Austere anti-fashion consumers
	High-income individuals who see sustainable fashion as an extension of a sophisticated lifestyle.	Consumers seeking sustainable pieces in second-hand or vintage shops, blending environmental awareness with thrift.	Individuals who prefer a pared-down wardrobe focused on essential, high-quality, and durable garments, aligned with principles of sustainability and functionality.	Consumers who reject mainstream fashion trends choosing instead simple, utilitarian clothes that are frequently produced ethically and sustainably.

Table 1: *Typologies of sustainable fashion consumers*

Note. Author’s own elaboration based on Kaner and Baruh (2022) and Karpova et al. (2024a, 2024b).

Fuchs et al. (2024) identified four general consumer segments — undecided, sustainable, price-sensitive, and function-oriented — which differ in their preferred attributes, willingness to pay, and sociodemographic, behavioural, and psychographic characteristics. The authors concluded that although concern for environmental and social sustainability is growing, this trend is not uniform across all consumer groups.

Cultural factors play a key role in consumer behaviour and can, in some cases, challenge previously established assumptions. In their study of Indian sustainable fashion consumers, Kautish and Khare (2022) highlight the role of social influence — exerted by peers and digital influencers — in shaping a form of cosmopolitanism that encourages eco-conscious communities and supports sustainable consumption practices. This perspective is supported by Oncioiu and Ifrim (2022) and Mayasari et al. (2025), who emphasise the importance of the sociocultural context in fostering more responsible consumption habits. Mohr et al. (2022) argue that understanding the multiple variables affecting purchasing decisions is

essential for fashion brands seeking to market eco-friendly products effectively — a view also endorsed by Bakis and Kitapci (2023) and Betzler et al. (2022). Interestingly, perceived price and quality had no significant impact. Davis and Dabas (2021), in a study of Hispanic consumers in the United States, found that social norms did not directly influence the purchase of organic clothing. However, they did affect personal norms and knowledge, which in turn impacted purchasing decisions — conclusions echoed by Kim et al. (2020). Perceived health benefits also play a significant role in these decisions.

In Malaysia, Ramany et al. (2022) concluded that fashion companies should adopt green marketing strategies to increase revenues and align with sustainable development goals. Han et al. (2024) further reinforce that consumers' knowledge of sustainability influences their intention to purchase, a point also argued by Abreu et al. (2022), Ritch (2022), Aprianingsih et al. (2023), and Gil et al. (2024). However, this relationship is not linear, as other factors such as brand trust and perceived authenticity of sustainability initiatives are also key determinants. Consumers already committed to environmental values are more likely to purchase sustainable products, regardless of their technical knowledge. These authors (Abreu et al., 2022; Aprianingsih et al., 2023; Gil et al., 2024; Ritch, 2022) advocate for stronger educational marketing to raise consumer awareness, provided the information is perceived as genuine and not as greenwashing, which is an increasingly present risk.

Hesse and Rundau (2023) argue that fast fashion consumers are more inclined to engage with sustainable marketing initiatives when these allow for active participation. According to their research, brands in this sector use sustainable marketing to generate positive emotions and mitigate ethical concerns, thereby promoting consumer loyalty and retention. However, ethical considerations are often secondary, overshadowed by factors such as price, style, and quality. Even so, sustainable marketing initiatives can enhance consumer loyalty by offering a sense of well-being and justification for continued consumption. If such strategies are not genuinely integrated into the business model, however, they risk being perceived as greenwashing (Roozen et al., 2025).

By shedding a greenwashed image, fashion companies and brands can cultivate a reputation for genuinely certifying their products as sustainable (E. Lee et al., 2020a). One way of achieving this genuinely ecological reputation is by investing in the green management of the supply chain, thereby, as suggested by Kim et al. (2024), increasing fashion consumers' own environmental awareness. Indeed, as Guo (2022) notes, ecological literacy across the supply chain — both upstream and downstream — is crucial for implementing proper green management throughout the chain and, consequently, for achieving technical sustainability that may positively influence consumption.

In the Microcontext of Luxury

A niche of consumption addressed by some of the articles in this literature review concerns luxury fashion products. Indeed, recent studies on sustainable fashion and luxury consumption highlight the influence of purchase intention, sustainability perception, and communication on consumer behaviour. Farzin et al. (2023) demonstrate that the intention to purchase eco-friendly fashion directly affects the willingness to pay a premium price.

In the context of sustainable luxury, Dinh et al. (2024) analyse the behaviour of Vietnamese consumers and conclude that attitude towards sustainability is the most determining factor in the intention to purchase luxury products. The perception of the importance of ecological and social awareness and knowledge on the subject is an essential aspect. At the same time, the desire for exclusivity does not prove to be a decisive factor, since consumers assume luxury products should remain exclusive (a notion also supported by Arora & Manchanda, 2022; Aydin, 2024). However, sustainable fashion is often misunderstood, leading to misconceptions about its high prices (Aggarwal et al., 2024; Ritch, 2022). H. Lee et al. (2023) show that perceived authenticity influences purchase intention, while X. Lim et al. (2023) reveal that luxury advertisements with ecological messages generate greater impact due to consumer trust in the luxury sector.

On the other hand, Amatulli et al. (2020) investigate consumer reactions to the unsustainability of luxury and mass-market products. The results indicate that the perception of environmental or social unsustainability in luxury products generates greater feelings of guilt among consumers than in the case of mass-market products, given the higher expectations associated with sustainable luxury. This guilt, in turn, drives the spread of negative word-of-mouth, especially among consumers with a more individualistic orientation. The study thus contributes to understanding the emotions involved in luxury consumption and the impact of unsustainability perceptions on brand reputation.

Communication in Sustainable Fashion Marketing

Recent research emphasises the influence of communication and visual perception on the adoption of sustainable consumption. Kolacz and Bhaduri (2024) indicate that the presentation of messages on sustainable packaging impacts consumer attitudes, while E. Lee et al. (2020b) demonstrate that associating sustainable products with green logos reinforces cognitive coherence and consumer preference. Chun et al. (2021) underline the importance of clear and standardised communication to strengthen consumer trust. Conversely, Huh and Kim (2024) analyse the impact of perceived status on sustainable consumption, identifying it as a moderator of the purchase relationship, unlike brand and authenticity, which showed no significant influence.

The impact of social media and the authenticity of sustainable communication have been widely debated in academic literature. Murtarelli et al. (2023) and Mao et al. (2025) emphasise their role in the dialogical strategy of fashion brands.

In the same context, Caratù et al. (2023) investigate sustainable marketing on social media, analysing its effect on millennial and Generation Z consumers, with emphasis on the influence of neuromarketing. The works of Antunes et al. (2024) and Busalim et al. (2022) address the relationship between psychological and behavioural characteristics and their impact on purchase decision processes. Regarding communication transparency, Cruz et al. (2024) explore the discourse adopted by small sustainable fashion brands on Instagram, identifying weaknesses that may compromise their credibility. Within the same platform, Testa et al. (2020) analyse factors driving the popularity of sustainable fashion among digital consumers, seeking to understand mechanisms of commitment and engagement with this trend. Cairns et al. (2021) and Bocti et al. (2021) discuss the attitude-behaviour gap and identify barriers to sustainable consumption, such as high prices and unattractive aesthetics. Bocti et al. (2021) suggest financial incentives and greater visibility to overcome this dissonance between thinking and doing, while Kumar et al. (2022) affirm that young consumers no longer depend on social pressure to adopt ethical practices, demanding more effective communication approaches.

Jacobson and Harrison (2022) analyse the role of digital influencers, identifying three main types: sustainable lifestyle influencers, sustainability influencers (with more limited partnerships), and savings influencers (with limited opportunities due to their niche focus). Kong et al. (2021) indicate that non-luxury brands benefit more from sustainable communication in contexts with high awareness of the subject.

Cayaban et al. (2023) analysed the influence of social media and sustainability advocacy on the purchase intention of Filipino fast fashion consumers, concluding that social media encourages purchase, whereas sustainability advocacy reduces this interest.

Finally, Puspita and Chae (2021) address the divergence between sustainable marketing strategies and consumer perception, suggesting solutions such as emotional marketing. Choi et al. (2024) argue that sustainable marketing already transcends corporate social responsibility, promoting economic, environmental and social growth. Nilmini Bhagya et al. (2025) highlight the importance of niche strategies, reinforcing the relevance of personalisation and segmentation in sustainable fashion.

Trends, Practices and Challenges in Sustainable Fashion Marketing

Contemporary trends in sustainable fashion marketing reflect the growing environmental and social awareness of consumers, as well as the need for brands to adapt to a more responsible business model aligned with ethical and ecological principles. From a macrostructural perspective, Mukendi et al. (2020) provide, early in this decade, a significant systematic literature review in management on sustainable fashion and identify primarily two approaches: pragmatic change,

which focuses on improving existing practices; and radical change, with a more disruptive vision of the system.

Within global trends of conscious consumption in the apparel sector, Mykhaylivna et al. (2022) propose a set of emerging practices that largely converge with the criteria established by Kaner and Baruh (2022). The growing demand for durable, high-quality clothing leads to the need to use sustainable materials such as organic cotton, linen, and recycled fabrics, aiming to minimise environmental impact. Simultaneously, the circular economy assumes increasing importance by fostering alternative business models such as rental, sharing, resale, and recycling of garments, which play a fundamental role in waste mitigation and sustainability promotion (Mishra et al., 2023; Neupane et al., 2021; Sueda & Seo, 2024). In this context, Wänström et al. (2025) analyse different rental approaches in the sector, highlighting both opportunities and challenges inherent to this form of consumption, especially regarding consumer acceptance, economic viability, and efficient resource management throughout product life cycles.

Another determining factor is the co-creation of sustainability by consumers, as pointed out by Palakshappa et al. (2024), emphasising the active role of brands in inducing behavioural changes. For Jiménez-Marín et al. (2022) and Reppmann et al. (2024), directly involving consumers in companies' sustainable practices constitutes the most effective strategy to promote genuine and lasting adherence to these values.

Hoque et al. (2023) complement this view by highlighting that factors such as customer pressure, top management, company competition, and government support have a significant positive impact on sustainable technology adoption. Surprisingly, the authors observed that regulatory pressure does not have a substantial influence on Bangladesh's apparel industry, contrasting with much of the existing literature. The results reveal that sustainable technology can simultaneously improve environmental outcomes, financial performance, and companies' competitive advantage.

Beyond these practices, there is growing demand for transparency and ethics in supply chains, imposing on brands the need to communicate their production processes and environmental impacts. In this regard, digital platforms play a fundamental role in disseminating information and encouraging more sustainable consumer behaviours.

Farzin et al. (2023) and Di Giulio et al. (2022) highlight this perspective by identifying factors such as environmental concerns, social influence, and altruism as determinants of sustainable fashion purchase intention. The study conducted by Farzin et al. (2023) presents essential strategic conclusions for marketing professionals in the sector, including: (a) the significant role of social influence on consumers' willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products; (b) the importance of digital communication and word-of-mouth as persuasive mechanisms; (c) the tendency of consumers more prone to buying sustainable fashion to share positive messages about these brands, which may reinforce their willingness to pay higher

prices. Additionally, the study indicates that exposure to content generated by other consumers reduces price sensitivity, becoming a strategically relevant factor for brands operating in this segment.

The presence of the term “sustainable” in the sector is also reflected in public discussions. For example, over the decade, Haines et al. (2023) observe a significant increase in comments and conversations relevant to sustainable fashion. In summary, in 2011, conversations around sustainable fashion were linked to “waste”, evolving to “sustainable” in 2020, evidencing a gradual transformation in the focus of social debate.

The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted this industry, as noted by Demyen (2024), Okur et al. (2023), and Meshram et al. (2021), accelerating sector digitalisation and forcing companies to adapt to online commerce rapidly. The same study suggests that e-commerce will continue to expand in fashion, driven by convenience and personalised shopping experiences.

This digitalisation is also reflected in the use of new artificial worlds, as Blazquez (2024) discusses. This author explores the concept of “digital sustainability” in the context of fashion, focusing on the metaverse’s potential as a communication channel to promote sustainable behaviours and disseminate messages about sustainability. The study analyses three pillars of digital sustainability: digital communication and media, consumer-oriented technologies, and digital products. The metaverse, with its immersive and social qualities, offers new opportunities for fashion brands to communicate their sustainable initiatives more effectively and engagingly. Indeed, creating creative and educational narratives can be an effective strategy to engage diverse audiences and promote more conscious fashion behaviours.

The work of Lee and Lee (2023) complements this analysis by emphasising the importance of consumer segmentation, not only based on environmental concerns but also on susceptibility to social influence. For the authors, strategies such as using celebrity testimonials, digital influencers, and promoting values associated with sustainable consumption are particularly effective in increasing the consumer base and encouraging more responsible purchasing behaviours.

Recent studies cited by Lee and Lee (2023) also point to authenticity as a critical factor in the perception and evaluation of fashion brands, including in the luxury segment. Authenticity has been shown to have a positive impact on building a favourable brand image while reinforcing consumers’ purchase intentions. Furthermore, consumers with positive attitudes towards a brand exhibit a greater propensity to purchase its products, demonstrating the importance of coherence between discourse and effective, sustainable marketing practice.

Thus, it is observed that for fashion brands across all segments — and especially those in the luxury sector — the adoption of genuine and transparent sustainable strategies significantly strengthens their reputation. The combination of sustainable marketing, transparency in actions and genuine communication emerges as an essential competitive advantage in today’s fashion landscape. This is

therefore a strategic approach that not only meets consumer expectations but also contributes to consolidating trust and loyalty relationships.

Conclusion

Guided by the research question — “what are the main research themes in sustainable fashion marketing?” — this study enabled the identification and analysis of the most relevant research lines in the field, highlighting sustainability as a central strategic axis for fashion brands. The literature review demonstrated that sustainable fashion marketing has evolved significantly, following the sector’s structural changes and responding to the demands of an increasingly conscious, informed, and discerning consumer.

Among the most recurring themes are the adoption of sustainable business models, with emphasis on the circular economy; the importance of communication and sustainable marketing; consumer profile segmentation; and the development of strategies aimed at reducing the attitude-behaviour gap, that is, the discrepancy between sustainable purchase intention and actual behaviour (Jung et al., 2020). The research also evidenced the central role of digital strategies and social media in building brand authenticity and consolidating consumer trust.

Although there is growing interest from both the market and academia, significant challenges persist, such as the prioritisation of price and convenience in purchasing decisions and the risk of greenwashing when sustainability is treated superficially. Thus, the literature reinforces the need for transparent communication, active consumer engagement in sustainable initiatives, and the adoption of authentic and innovative practices that ensure brand credibility and differentiation.

It is therefore concluded that sustainable fashion marketing is a dynamic, interdisciplinary, and expanding field of research involving dimensions such as innovation, ethics, consumer behaviour, and communication strategies. Future studies may deepen understanding of the impact of sustainable actions on purchasing choices, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of marketing strategies in promoting more conscious and responsible consumption. This path is fundamental to supporting the transformation of the fashion industry towards more ethical, transparent, and sustainable business models.

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Biographical Notes

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