

# The Influence of Social Media Influencers on Sustainable Apparel Purchase Intentions Among Indian Consumers- An Integrated Application of Source Credibility Theory and The Theory of Planned Behaviour in The Context of Emerging Market Dynamics

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*Abstract- As the harmful effects of fast fashion on the environment have led to a rise in people's interest in sustainable clothing consumption in India, social media influencers (SMIs) stand out as the most important channel for influencing the attitudes and behaviors of young consumers. This paper makes an attempt to examine how influencers change sustainable apparel purchase intentions through the dimensions of Source Credibility Theory (trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness). Employing source credibility and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), research shows that social media influencers greatly affect sustainable apparel purchase intentions of Indian consumers. Among the issues raised by the mass media one of them is about the continuous depletion of environmental resources because of fast fashion. As a result, consumption of environmentally friendly clothing has become a major topic of discussion in India. Consumer perceptions and behaviours are most often influenced by social media influencers (SMIs) who, by the way, constitute a very important channel. This paper delves into the impact of influencers on buying intentions for sustainable clothes for Source Credibility Theory (trustworthiness expertise attractiveness) and finds that through the use of source credibility and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) social media influencers have a strong influence on purchasing intentions for sustainable clothes among Indian consumers. Qualitative data from secondary sources reveal that the attributes of source credibility (i. e. trust knowledge, and attractiveness) of the influencer promote favourable attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control towards environmentally friendly products, which in turn drive purchasing. The effectiveness of such measures, Mainly through subjective norms, is further increased by environmental consciousness. By integrating Source Credibility Theory with TPB, the paper both makes a theoretical contribution*

*and brings practical recommendations to marketing strategists, policy makers, and sustainable fashion firms.*

*Keywords- Social Media Influencers, Sustainable Apparel, India, Purchase Intention, Source Credibility Theory, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Environmental Awareness, Influencer Authenticity*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The clothing industry is one of the major contributors to both economic and employment growth in India. But, it is a major contributor to environmental issues, like water wastage and pollution, mainly due to the resource-intensive nature of production processes (Nam et al 2012; Yadav & Pathak, 2017).

Environmental concerns and climate change have been growing continuously, leading to increasing consumer awareness of sustainable consumption. As a result, today's highest demand for environmentally and ethically conscious apparel manufacturing and selling organizations comes from generation Z and millennial consumers (Dhir et al 2022; Mahapatra, 2025).

At the same time, the quickly developed social media network has changed the way consumers obtain information and make their purchase decisions. Social media influencers (SMIs) have become in fact the new opinion leaders whose words and actions largely impact consumer attitudes, preferences, and behavioral intentions by posting online content and making recommendations (Lou & Yuan, 2019;

Schouten et al. 2020). Also, studies show that factors linked to influencers, such as their credibility, authenticity, expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, are main aspects affecting consumers' product assessment and desires to make a purchase (Ohanian, 1990; Ki & Kim, 2019; Saima & Khan, 2021).

For sustainable fashion, certain influencers who promote eco-friendly lifestyles as well as sustainable clothing brands offer companies great opportunities for marketing sustainability messages and attracting environmentally friendly consumers (Vladimirova et al. 2024; Chandra & Ghosh, 2025).

But, the effectiveness of influencer marketing also depends on how consumers perceive the credibility of an influencer: Source Credibility Theory (SCT) holds that the impact of the message depends on the perceptions of the three components—expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Hovland et al. 1953; Ohanian, 1990). Besides, research finds that a credible influencer is more capable of gaining consumer trust, creating positive attitudes, and eventually leading to purchase intentions (Wang et al. 2021; Khan & Asim, 2025).

Yet, the recent evidence suggests that credibility alone does not necessarily cause purchase behaviour. In particular in the sustainable fashion. Consumers question and judge environmental claims and also the authenticity and sincerity of influencer content can be very valuable to them (Gaurav, 2025; Ashsidik et al. 2025).

Derived from the behavioural issues, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) still guarantees the prediction of sustainable consumption behaviour at a very high level of reliability. Different components of generally, behavioural intentions are derived from one's attitude, social norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991).

In particular, TPB has been extensively used and was a perfect fit for understanding sustainable clothing consumption (e.g. Nam et al. 2012) as well as environmentally friendly purchasing behaviour (e.g. Yadav & Pathak, 2017) in Past consumer behaviour studies. Gaining more insights in the recent times,

social media present and social media influencers have the power to affect all these different components of TPB by changing consumer attitudes, setting social norms and making consumers feel that they have the ability to perform the behaviour (Singh & Aggarwal, 2023; Tiwari, et al. 2023; Handranata & Kalila, 2025).

While the academics are continuously bringing out more engagement with the stakeholder's emergence in influencer marketing and the sustainable consumption concept, there is still no integration of Source Credibility Theory and TPB as one system, In particular in Indian context (Chekima et al. 2025; Mahapatra, 2025). Also, very few empirical studies have been done on the role of an influencer's credibility in determining the sustainable apparel purchase intention based on the TPB dimensions.

As an influencer economy is huge in India with a growing demand for sustainable products, fashion in particular, it is quite proper to see how the influencer's credibility can change the consumers' purchasing decisions for sustainable apparel and for that reason, the present study was designed to do exactly that. This study intends to capture the influence of influencer credibility on sustainable apparel purchase intention among Indian consumers by integrating Source Credibility Theory and TPB in one conceptual system.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Influencer Credibility and Consumer Purchase Intention

Numerous researchers have identified the need of influencer credibility as an essential driving force on consumer behaviour. Ismagilova et al. (2021), in their study on luxury products, concluded that influencer credibility has significant influence on consumer trust, attitude and purchase intention with the strongest influence by trustworthiness and expertise.

Saima and Khan (2021) also reiterated that trust, expertise and attractiveness have positive influence on brand-engagement and purchase intention. And, a few studies prioritise the importance of authenticity and relatability in the purchasing intention. DJafarova & Bowes (2021) studied that consumers find

influencer marketing with higher perceived authenticity, relatability and familiarity than traditional celebrities leading to greater purchase intention. In the same way, Ki et al.

(2022) stated higher purchase intention among consumer when influencer is perceived to be authentic and congruency of values between influencer and followers. This can be taken from the work of Casal, Flavin & Ibez-Snchez (2023).

Some newer research studies have also supported these results consistently. Based on Khan and Asim (2025) trustworthiness in expertise and attractiveness were the main factors in increasing consumer trust by quite a bit and also led to a positive impact on purchase intentions. Coming from the same side, Handranata and Kalila (2025) also revealed that perceived credibility and influencer's expertise act as positive drivers for consumers' affection towards the association of the influencer and the brand and, if anything, purchase intention. On one hand, Chandra and Ghosh (2025) acknowledge that sustainability-oriented influencers have a positive effect on consumer awareness, trust and purchase intention of ecological friendly products.

Yet, the relationship between credibility and purchase intention may be complicated. Dr. Mrinal Gaurav (2025) discovered that influencer credibility does not always increase purchase intention of Indian consumers. As the research, irrelevant content, false image, unmatch context and lack of trust may impact purchase intention more than influencer credibility.

Also, Ashsidik Wibowo, and Sadat (2025) revealed that influencer credibility had no effect on sustainable fashion purchase intentions, but it also influenced social media engagement positively. This way encouraged sustainable consumption behaviour.

#### Theory of Planned Behaviour and Sustainable Consumption

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has also been widely used to predict sustainable consumption and purchasing behaviors that are environmentally friendly. Following the theory of planned behaviour, The sustained importance of TPB in sustainable consumption settings has been established

consistently by past studies. Jain, Rakesh, and Chaturvedi (2022) argued the importance of SNs by demonstrating the effect of relevant variables, i. e. environmental concern and social influence, on sustainable purchase intention. Also, Sharma and Verma (2022) got the same results of positive effect of environmental concern/awareness on attitudes to buying eco-friendly apparels and so on buying intention. Support is also shown by Testa, Sarti, and Frey, (2023), who found that environmental responsibility and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) have positive effects on intentions to buy sustainable fashion. Arora and Agarwal, (2023) identified that social influence, environmental concern and product authenticity are Really affecting sustainable fashion purchase intentions of Indian consumers.

White, Habib, and Hardisty, (2024) expanded the TPB by examining that pro-environmental self-identity moderates the association between attitude and intention to engage in sustainable consumption behavior. A systematic review of 30 published studies reveals that attitude, subjective norm, environmental concern and influence of social media are the most robust predictors of intention to buy sustainably across various contexts (Haji et al. 2024).

This is echoed by findings of Mahapatra (2025) who used TPB extended in sustainable fashion, which identifies environmental concern, sustainability knowledge and social influence to be important in forming consumers' eco-friendly apparel purchase intention. The latest literature has begun looking more into how the use of social media influencers can impact consumer behaviour, Most of all through the lens of the TPB. Singh and Aggarwal (2023) discovered that online fashion influencers have an undeniable impact on the most important TPB components attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which all impact purchase intentions. Overall, online influencers proved to be very persuasive social influences. Same thing, Tiwari et al.

(2023) examine the influence of trust in fashion influencer and find it impacts attitudes positively and subjective norms and perceived behaviour control increase purchase intents. But most importantly they

also illustrate that attitudes be an most crucial mediating agent between influencer attributes & behavioural intention. Wang, Kusumawardhani and Jin (2021) also provided evidence that influencer credibility indirectly influences purchase intention via attitudes toward influencer and attitude toward the brand. Khan and Asim (2025) also showed that credible influencer could influence perceptions of TPB variables (attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm) and eventually influence behavioral intentions. Handranata and Kalila (2025) also supported the mediating effect of TPB variables on influencer credibility and purchase intention. All of this evidence indicates that influences in fact affect consumers in a mediated way by transporting them to a behavioural intention as defined by TPB.

#### Influencer Marketing and Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Studies have investigated the intersection of influencer marketing and sustainable fashion consumption behaviors These days. Dhir et al. (2022) concluded that social media information matters a lot in shaping the Generation Z consumers' environmental-consciousness and sustainable purchase intention. Like that Pop et al. (2022) also found that social media communication improves consumers' awareness as well as their readiness to participate in sustainable consumption behaviors.

Gupta et al. (2023) established that communicating green marketing campaigns via social media has a positive effect on consumers' perception toward sustainable products, demonstrating that influencers are a successful mean to convey sustainability-oriented messages. In addition, the same authors showed that influence characteristics like authenticity, transparency and expertise, are critical for behavioral engagement toward green consumption. Vladimirova and Henninger (2024) highlight that sustainability advocates' content assists with lowering information asymmetries by informing consumers about ethical apparel products. Same here Chekima et al.

(2025) confirmed that green influencer traits are key in green consumption behaviour via green trust and green environmental attitude Ahsiddik Wibowo and Sada (2025) response that green environmental

consciousness and green advocate A lot affect sustainable fashion purchase intentions of Generation Z consumers.

Vladimirova and Henninger (2024) described that the presence of sustainable-oriented influencers helps minimize information asymmetry by informing consumers of the features of ethical apparel products.

Same thing, Chekima et al. (2025) suggested that the green influencer attributes exert a powerful impact on green consumption behaviour mediated by trust and environmental attitude. Ashsidik, Wibowo, and Sadat (2025) also discovered that environmentally conscious attitude and influencer advocacy has positive effect on sustainable fashion purchase intention of Generation Z customers. In aggregate, the evidence shows that influencers can have a significant contribution to making sustainable apparel consumption possible through raising awareness of issues, improving purchase trust, influencing positive environmental attitudes and responsible purchasing.

#### Integration of Source Credibility Theory and Theory of Planned Behaviour

While both SCT and TPB have been well supported by empirical research, there have been few studies that have been designed to unite the two models.

For instance, the single empirical study available adds to the body of knowledge that dimensions of influencer credibility which include expertise trustworthiness attractiveness, and authenticity, affect consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control thereby leading to purchase intentions. Khan and Asim (2025), Chekima et al.

(2025) and Handranata and Kalila (2025) also advocate that SCT and TPB works in tandem to explain consumer's response to influencer marketing. Their reports suggest that credible influencers induced consumers purchase intention both directly and indirectly using the TPB constructs. Such an integrated approach seems very apt to sustainable fashion context, where consumers tend to consider the source credibility and their own values related to the environment.

### III. RESEARCH GAP

Despite the growing literature on influencer marketing and sustainable consumption, several gaps remain. First, most studies examine Source Credibility Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour independently, while relatively few integrate both frameworks within a single model.

Second, empirical evidence from India remains limited despite the rapid growth of influencer marketing and sustainable consumption in the country. Third, research specifically focusing on sustainable apparel purchase intentions influenced by social media influencers is still scarce. Fourth, limited attention has been given to understanding how influencer credibility dimensions—expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and authenticity—interact with TPB constructs such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Finally, the unique socio-cultural and digital consumption characteristics of Indian consumers remain underexplored in sustainable fashion research. These gaps provide a strong justification for examining sustainable apparel purchase intentions through an integrated SCT–TPB framework within the Indian context.

### IV. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To study the concept of social credibility theory and theory of planned behaviour.
- To examine the influence of social media influencers on the sustainable apparel purchase intention.
- To identify key influencer attributes that drive sustainable apparel consumption.

### V. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and secondary data-based approaches, which prioritize depth over generalizability, are appropriate for exploratory research on the role of social media influencers on Indian consumers' inclinations to buy sustainable clothing. By revealing complex consumer perceptions, these methods are consistent with Source Credibility Theory and TPB.

They do this by utilizing theme analysis of current literature, influencer material, and interpretive insights. They steer clear of extensive polls in favour of rich narratives from digital artifacts and published sources.

### VI. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Source Credibility Theory- The Source Credibility Theory (SCT) explains why the credibility of a source of information affects how people are persuaded or respond (audience), how they'll accept a message, how people perceive the message or how they'll behave (Erdogan, 1999). The source credibility theory was a construct initially by Hovland Janis and Kelley (1953). They noted that people would tend to believe a message delivered by a source that is credible. SCT has been considered as one of the most popular approaches for the study of endorsement effectiveness in marketing, advertising and communication studies.

Core Dimensions: Based on the theory it includes three elements: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise explains how knowledgeable, competent, and experienced a communicator is perceived. Trustworthiness describes how honest and dependable a communicator is seen. Attractiveness refers to not only physical attractiveness but also just likeability, familiarity, and perceived similarity (Ohanian, 1990).

In the area of influencer marketing, SCT also covers that consumers are more likely to believe or respond positively to recommendations from trustworthy or reputed influencers. Scholars have found that influencer expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness are highly correlated positively with consumer attitudes, brand attitudes and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al. 2020; Saima & Khan, 2021).

Like that, those authentic and relevant influencer contents were treated as more credible. In the field of sustainable fashion, source credibility is In particular crucial, as consumers might require credible information about sustainability or ethical process. If a fashion influencer presents sustainability

knowledge and eco-concern, the audience tends to believe that this influencer is credible and form positive attitude toward sustainable apparel products (Wang et al. 2021; Chekima et al. 2025). As such, SCT could suggest a sound theoretical structure to explore the role of influencer attributes in sustainable apparel purchase intention.

5.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour- The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is one of the most popular models used for the prediction of behaviour. Building upon the existing Theory of Reasoned Action, Ajzen (1991) theorized that an individual's intention to perform or not perform a behaviour is the immediate precursor of behaviour, as it is a conscious motivational factor that influences behaviour.

The model was proposed to help clarify and predict behaviour which could not solely be under the control of an individual, by adding the factor of perceived behavioural control. As such in the TPB when individuals have a high intention to perform a specific behaviour, which is also a result of its influences, there is then a high propensity to perform that action (Ajzen, 1991).

Core Dimensions: As established by TPB, the behavioural intention is comprised of three core constructs: attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude toward the behaviour means the general feeling of favourableness or unfavourableness that people have toward the behavior.

For sustainable apparel consumption, this implies people's good or bad evaluation about the consumption of environment and society friendly apparel (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Mahapatra, 2025).

Subjective norms can be defined as perceived expectations about the behaviour of committed referents like family friends peer groups and social media influencers affecting whether to engage in adopting a certain behaviour. Consumers undertake green purchase when they think that important referents support to take environmentally responsible consumption (Ajzen, 1991; Singh & Aggarwal, 2023). Perceived behavioural control (PBC) refers to the perception of resources opportunities knowledge,

and potential obstacles a consumer has to perform the behaviour. Consumers might have a positive attitude toward purchasing sustainable apparel but not do so because they perceive Price; store presence; and information as barriers. The more perceived control a consumer has over performing the behaviour the more likely an intention to perform that behaviour is linked to performance of that behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Nam et al. 2012).

TPB also states that actual behaviour is affected by not just behavioural intention but also by the actual control factors such as financial resources, product accessibility, and situational constraints (Ajzen, 1991). This implication is very suitable in sustainable fashion consumption practices where having positive attitude and high level of environmental concern may not lead to purchasing if, for example, consumers do not find affordable sustainable garments (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; White et al. 2024).

5.3 Influence of social media influencers on the sustainable apparel purchase intention- On top of that, the importance of social media influencers would accelerate consumers' sustainable apparel purchase intention as they possess the significant attractiveness of the trust reachability sincerity and illusion among social media environment. They can inform sustainable fashion knowledge, message a sustainable apparel and promote sustainable purchase behaviour with their personal accounts and regular contents (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al. 2020).

They need to retain consumer's positive impressions by various perceptions on complement powers, like expertise, likability and attractiveness to increase the credibility of sustainable apparel messages (Ohanian, 1990; Saima & Khan, 2021; Wang et al. 2021).

Research suggested that the social media influencers' impact in emerging market like India which has significant influence on consumers' consumption styles, purchasing decisions could be further strengthened through psychological and social motivations of credibility endorsement, social identification and normative pressure (Singh & Aggarwal, 2023; Chandra & Ghosh, 2025).

Influencers acted as reference groups whose opinions and behaviours could shape the subjective norms that can motivate consumers to participate in sustainable consumption (Ajzen, 1991; Tiwari et al. 2023). In the same way, the influencers who promote sustainability could increase eco-literacy, engender trust in their eco-brands, and influence favorable attitudes toward sustainable apparel purchase intentions (Vladimirova & Henninger, 2024; Chekima et al. 2025; Mahapatra, 2025).

5.3.1 Credibility and Trust Building- If an Influencer is perceived as being an expert, trustworthy, and attractive then the influencer would be seen as more advantageous in persuasion and message acceptance per SCT (Hovland et al. 1953; Ohanian, 1990).

When social media influencers are seen as knowledgeable, trustworthy and familiar their expressiveness towards sustainable apparel brands would be deemed as more credible and compel consumers to possess positive attitudes about ecological apparel (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wang et al. 2021).

Also, influencers typically demonstrate regular involvement with sponsored products in everyday life, which can make sustainability messages more sincere and interesting to followers, deepening the authentic transference of motives for green consumption and thereby fostering higher levels of consumers' confidence in sustainable brands and increasing positive affect toward green consumption (Audrezet et al.2019; Ki & Kim, 2019).

Insights into this relationship indicate that when influencers communicate sustainability values authentically, and are perceived as diligent practitioners of positive, environmentally responsible lifestyles, consumers generally identify the influencer's sincerity more readily, which alleviates the effects of greenwashing skepticism and positively impacts purchase interest toward sustainable apparel (Vladimirova & Henninger, 2024; Chekima et al. 2025; Chandra & Ghosh, 2025). Worth noting then the influencer role is critical for future research at this time as a substantial part of how sustainable fashion messages influence consumer perceptions and actions.

5.3.2 Attitude Formation via Content- Influencers create persuasive narratives about the benefits of sustainability, shaping consumer attitudes in line with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by highlighting the environmental and personal advantages of apparel made from recycled or organic materials (Ajzen, 1991; Mahapatra, 2025).

Through visual storytelling such as unboxing videos, styling tips, and sustainability impact information, influencers make abstract environmental concepts more tangible and relatable, encouraging favourable evaluations that predict purchase intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Vladimirova & Henninger, 2024).

Frequent exposure to such content further normalizes sustainable consumption choices, gradually transforming passive viewers into active and environmentally conscious buyers (Dhir et al., 2022; Singh & Aggarwal, 2023).

5.3.3 Subjective Norms and Social Proof- In addition, persuasion can come from making awareness of important information easier and more efficient to access (Hogg et al. 2017).

Influencers effectively express compelling narrative for how sustainability is advantageous from both an environmental and individual perspective and shape consumer attitude toward apparel made from recycled or organic materials per the setup of TPB (Ajzen, 1991; Mahapatra, 2025).

On top of that, the power of visual images such as unboxing, styling tips, and information about sustainability impacts ensures that seemingly remote information become easier to related to and boost positive appraisal which will lead to behavioral intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Vladimirova & Henninger, 2024).

Continuously bombardment of sustainability-related information by influencer from everyday access to their' post over times will encourage repeated behavior and normalize sustainable consumption convenient choices from low regard participant into active consumers who highly motivated to sustainability (Dhir et al. 2022; Singh & Aggarwal, 2023).

5.3.4 Perceived Behavioural Control- By addressing perceived barriers through discounts, styling advice, product reviews and brand comparisons, influencers can increase perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991; Tiwari et al. 2023).

By offering advice as to how to incorporate sustainable attire into daily wardrobes, it can empower consumers to feel confident to make the switch, overcoming the ease of fast-fashion consumption (Nam et al. 2012; Mahapatra, 2025). This sense of empowerment enables actual trialling and repeat purchasing of a product, this way narrowing the intention-behaviour gap (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; White et al. 2024).

5.3.5 Empirical Evidence from India- In developing markets the presence of social media influencer seems to be more effective in positively influencing Generation Z consumers' purchase intention towards sustainable apparel on Instagram. When social media influencers are working for products which are popular among consumers and high avid follower engagement, then there was a significant positive impact on purchase intention (Dhir et al. 2022; Ashsidik et al. 2025).

Combining SCT and TPB influencer credibility or source attractiveness parameters affect attitude and trustworthiness which in turn influence behavioural intention from theory of planned behaviour parameters affect behaviour intentions (Khan & Asim, 2025; Chekima et al. 2025).

Still, the strength of the relationship varies according to contextual factors like affordability or closer social or cultural relationship like location accessibility disposable income on Indian market (Yadav & Pathak, 2017; Gaurav, 2025).

this influence can have long term effect as the consumer getting exposed in a series of humble interactions with influential message to support more sustainable and green buying habits (White et al. 2024; Chandra & Ghosh, 2025).

5.4 Key influencer attributes that drive sustainable apparel consumption- The characteristics of influencers on social media are playing an

increasingly important role in sustainable apparel consumption because consumers turn to the influencers as the guide of purchasing because they not only inspire fashion choices but also help consumers make ethically and environmentally sustainable choices (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al. 2020).

Existing research showing that expertise, trustworthiness and authenticity, attractiveness and other characteristics of superstars and sources of influence have an impact on consumer perception, attitude and intention toward sustainable fashion products (Ohanian, 1990; Saima & Khan, 2021; Vladimirova et al. 2024).

When influencers on social media espouse an eco-friendly ethos and promote sustainable life styles and consumption practices, they can be effective means of establishing consumer awareness, trust, and intention to purchase sustainable apparel (Chekima et al. 2025; Chandra & Ghosh, 2025).

5.4.1 perceived credibility- Also, perceived credibility, which is comprised of expertise and trustworthiness, is one of the most influential characteristics of social media influencers.

When the source of a persuasive message appears to be credible, consumer confidence on sustainability claims will be increased, in particular on vegan, organic, and eco-friendly elements in connection with the influencer knowledge about the ethical supply chain, fair labor conditions, sustainable textiles, and green certificates. And, trustworthiness allows the hybrid of green washing doubts caused by consumers' ambient skepticism by transparent revealing the brand collaboration and continual promotion of sustainability values. Even per previous researches, credible influencers are essential for powerfully presenting sustainable apparel, and a lot affecting purchase intention (Hovland et al. 1953; Ohanian, 1990; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wang et al. 2021).

5.4.2 perceived authenticity Is linked to the perception of influencer as being genuine, authentic and value based. True, real influencers use sustainability on a consistent basis, rather than just jumping on the latest marketing bandwagon.

Customers believe in the sustainability messages of the firm and hold more favorable attitudes towards the sustainable clothing brands when they believe that true influencers' reasons are genuine ethical and/or ecological related. In sustainability context though authentic influencer's influence is more effective to combat customers' skepticism due to potentially exaggerated promoting environmental claims and to evoke emotional connection between the consumer-influencer and the consumer-brand relationship (Audrezet et al. 2018; Ki & Kim, 2019).

**5.4.3 Expertise in sustainability and fashion** Also influences customer behavior A lot. Customer knowledge and perceived behavioural control are increased when influencers are providing information (e. g. related to labels, fast vs. sustainable fashion and advice to consume responsibly).

This role as information provider is also important in particular in developing countries like India as access and knowledge of sustainable fashion are still unbalanced. It is found that influencers who are perceived as experts can directly increase the purchase intention by reducing risks and other barriers of buying sustainable fashion (Ohanian, 1990; Yadav & Pathak, 2017).

**5.4.4 Relatability and similarity** Expertise of the influencer also exerts considerable impact on the consumer decision process. Influencers who share informational content like informing consumers about labels, comparison of fast fashion and sustainable apparel and providing guidance for responsible consumption would improve consumers' perceptions of knowledge and behavioural control.

This informational role appears Mostly important in developing countries like India where sustainable apparel awareness and accessibility still remain varied. From the extent of consumer's perceived risk and perceived complexity of selecting sustainable fashion, as well as purchase intention toward sustainable development, researchers find that the perceived expertise of the influencer is effective in controlling perceived risk and perceived complexity related to sustainable fashion (Ohanian, 1990; Nam et al. 2012).

**5.4.5 Attractiveness and aspirational appeal** Could influence how much consumers purchase sustainable clothing, in particular for websites that are visually appealing such as YouTube and Instagram. Attractive spokespeople can show that sustainable clothing can be trendy and desirable, leading to higher involvement and aesthetic appeal. Though, attraction has also been shown to be most effective when combined with a high level of relatability and sincere presentation, since other studies have argued that beauty reduces perceptions of honesty and increases appearance demands. When carefully calibrated, attractiveness increases positive associations with eco-friendly clothing without sacrificing ethical justifications (Ohanian, 1990; Schouten et al. 2020).

**5.4.6 Value congruence between the influencer** Another significant factor affecting consumers' uptake of sustainable fashion is brand.

An authoritative relationship people see between a brand and a personal value leads to a more perceived consistency and greater credibility of agreement, and that connection will boost customers' willingness to stand for environmentally-concerned companies, while supporting ethical norms. Value match-up is beneficial to fit and range of acceptance, trust and persistent adoption to sustain clothing purchase, based on research evidence (Erdogan, 1999; Audrezet et al. 2018).

Overall, consumer attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are determined by influencer characteristics known as credibility, authenticity, knowledge, relatability, attractiveness, value congruence and this drives consumption of sustainable fashion. These characteristics are mainly relevant for India, where many purchase decisions related to sustainable garments are made on the grounds of social influence, trust and cultural implication.

## CONCLUSION

In short, it is inferred that social media influencers are the main driving force to the increase of purchase intentions of green apparel in India, a developing market where the entire production of such goods (green manufacturing) has been achieved from the

combination of the dimensions of Source Credibility Theory, i. e. trustworthiness expertise and attractiveness, with the TPB, i. e. Attitudes Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioural Control.

The use of genuine emotions to convey messages, promotion of social proofs by influencers, have a significant role in gradually changing the "Green washing" disbelief and that inaccessibility trust issues which generally characterize the Indian market, besides raising awareness about the environment/fashion, influencing the social pressure, and creating familiarity went a long way towards the normalisation of environmentally friendly fashion in a country that is among those with the highest environmental footprint due to the ever-expanding global fast fashion industry.

The qualitative insights obtained in this research overcame the theoretical gaps in developing nations, and helped design social media campaigns with micro level influencers, motivated marketers to mainstream-related communicative campaigns and assisted policymakers with the necessity of increasing self-imposed pressure in promoting eco-awareness.

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