AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTENDED-BEHAVIOUR GAP TOWARDS ETHICAL FASHION IN SOUTH AFRICAN MILLENNIALS

By

TENDAI SIMANGO

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SUPERVISOR: DR LORNA TRUTER

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DECLARATION

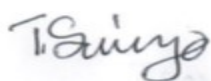Name: Tendai Simango

Student number: 50128620

Degree: Master of Consumer Science

Exploring the attitude behavior gap towards ethical fashion: an examination of the millennials in South Africa

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

FEBRUARY 2024

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SIGNATURE   DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Gorden and our two lovely children Ropafadzo and Immanuel.

Your unwavering belief in my abilities and constant love have been my source of strength and inspiration. I greatly appreciate your continued support and encouragement throughout my academic journey.

I aspire that this study will offer valuable insights into the detrimental impacts endured by individuals and communities due to the fashion industry. Additionally, I aim for this research to contribute meaningfully towards mitigating the social, environmental, and economic damages stemming from fashion production and consumption all over the world, especially in South Africa.

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ABSTRACT

The overconsumption of goods and services caused by increasing population and economic growth is threatening environmental stability around the globe. The fashion industry with its unsustainable and unethical practices has been identified as one of the major drivers of overconsumption, which has led to the deterioration of the environment and exploitation of workers. Consequently, concern and the intentions to avoid unethical consumption of apparel are on the rise, thereby causing retailers/brands to start producing ethical apparel in an effort to gain a strong market share of this new trend. Ethical apparel encompasses the sustainability dimensions of clothing production, which seeks to reduce environmental impact by using biodegradable or organic fibres, while prioritising workers' welfare through the avoidance of sweatshops and ensuring fair working conditions (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2016; Lundblad & Davies, 2016). Although expressing an intention to purchase ethical fashion, consumers are not following through with those purchases, indicating the presence of an intention-behavior gap. As ethical purchasing intentions among South African millennial consumers are on the rise, there has been insufficient research conducted on the factors influencing their decision to buy ethical clothing. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore millennial consumers' intended behaviour regarding ethical fashion. The study utilised the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as the primary framework to forecast consumer intentions regarding purchases. To the traditional TPB variables (attitude, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control), perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental knowledge, environmental concern, and situational context were added to improve the models' predictive ability. A digital survey was circulated among South African millennials, resulting in a total of 302 responses that were collected and utilised for statistical analysis. The statistical analysis of the gathered data encompassed descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and structural equation modelling.

In summary, the overall findings indicate that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are significant predictors of purchase intention, as per the original framework. However, the additional variables yielded mixed results, with some variables such as perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) proving to be good predictors of purchase intention. Environmental concern, which compared its relationship with all three TPB model variables and PCE, turns out to only influence PCE and not the three original TPB model variables. Environmental knowledge has also indicated a positive and significant influence on attitude meaning it is a significant predictor of intention, while situational context did not have influence on consumer intended behaviour, implying that it is not a good predictor of behavioural intention. As the knowledge and research on ethical fashion, particularly in South Africa, remains scarce, the current study enriches knowledge on ethical fashion and draws new insights on millennial consumers' intended purchase behaviour towards ethical fashion, as this cohort exhibits strong purchasing power, as well as a care for ethical consumerism.

ABBREVIATIONS

Attitude – ATT

Intention – INT

Subjective norms – SN

Perceived behavioural control – PBC

Ethical fashion – EF

Ethical apparel – EA

Theory of Planned Behaviour – TPB

Perceived consumer effectiveness – PCE

Environmental knowledge – EK

Environmental concern – EC

Situational context – SC

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter provides a background and overview of the current research within the context of fashion and the development of the ethical fashion trend in the market. The chapter progresses with presenting the issue statement, the study's objectives, along with its research aims and boundaries. It concludes by providing an outline of the remaining sections of the dissertation.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Sustainability and sustainable development have emerged as prominent topics in the 21st century, especially among researchers, due to the rapid growth of the global population. This growth has placed significant pressure on the production of retail goods, resulting in heightened concerns about carbon emissions and environmental impact (WWF, 2020; WRI, 2020). However, the sustainability prerogative has caused nations to reassess their thinking and actions on issues related to the environment and its protection (Witek, 2019). According to Zande (2021), sustainability has been described as a set of development plans aimed to fulfil the social, economic, and environmental issues facing the current generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. Zhang et al. (2021) summarise sustainability as the relationship consumers and communities have with each other and their environment. At its core, sustainability is an approach that unifies ecological (planet), social (people), and economic (profit) aspects together for long-lasting prosperity and is often referred to as the triple bottom line (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 2018). In light of this principle, nations have begun to express concerns about the impact of globalisation and economic growth on the environment. Issues of climate change and environmental pollution have become the greatest threat and challenge to humankind (World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), 2019). Van den Bergh (2022) affirms that various challenges such as recurrent storms, unprecedented heatwaves, and global protests for equal rights and personal freedom indicate that the world is experiencing the consequences of human-induced strain on the planet and its inhabitants. The major cause is the overconsumption of goods, products, and services, which challenges aspects of sustainability (Borusiak et al., 2020).

For many years, the fashion industry has ranked among the least environmentally sustainable sectors globally (Henninger, 2016; Gazzola et al., 2020). The industry is characterised by the marketing of mass-produced, trendy apparel (dubbed fast fashion) that is of low quality, cheap, and often disposed of quickly (Lam, 2017). The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries worldwide (Lui et al., 2021. Fashion production sometimes occurs within socially questionable conditions, characterised by poor working conditions, lack of labour rights protection, and exploitation of workers in clothing manufacturing factories Chironda, 2023). The fashion industry is also rife with gender inequality, and environmental degradation (Cotton SA, 2019). Even

after tragedies such as the Rana Plaza Collapse in Bangladesh, which exposed the ills of the fashion industry, there is still much to be done as fashion supply chains remain complex with labour chains that still exploit workers in unsafe working conditions, causing serious environmental damage and abuse of human labour (Anupindi, 2023). Consequently, consumers are realising the adverse environmental and social impacts of the fashion industry, which has prompted a new trend in ethical consumerism (Bocti, 2021). This trend has in turn yielded a growth in the number of consumers becoming cognizant of fashion products that are not harmful to workers and the environment (Weiner, 2017). Certainly, there has been a noticeable shift as more fashion companies integrate sustainability and ethical considerations into their apparel lines. This response is driven by a growing awareness among consumers regarding the importance of environmentally and ethically produced goods (Hasbullah et al., 2019; Granskog et al., 2020).

Although not all retailers are on board in terms of offering ethical fashion products, there are a significant number of brands dedicated to creating ethically-produced fashion items, among them H &M and Adidas (Williams, 2022). Even so, consumers often portray an intention behaviour gap, implying that they are failing to translate their interest in ethical consumption into actual buying behaviour (Park and Lin, 2020; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018; Jacobs et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2016). This is demonstrated by the fact that sales of ethical fashion remain low, while the sale of fast fashion is still promoted and consumed, especially in South Africa's emerging economy (May, 2019; The Moss Group, 2014). Studies by Sobuj et al. (2021) and Reimers et al. (2017) also examined related topics such as attitudes towards environmentally-responsible clothing, purchase intention of eco-friendly products, as well as determinants of purchase intention, and still found contradictory results. Although there have been studies in developed countries examining consumer intention regarding ethical fashion consumption, actual behaviour in the fashion industry, and factors that positively influence behaviour (Sahiti and Dickmann, 2020; Djurfeldt and Milunovic, 2021), there still remains a gap in such studies in an emerging country such as South Africa, making this research all the more important. Mollel-Matodzi et al. (2022) acknowledge the lack of studies of the South African textile and apparel sector and that the country is still in the initial phases of tackling sustainability issues (Fashion Outreach, 2017: Smal, 2016; Whyte, 2016).

The lack of research in this area, as well as the discrepancy between intentions and actions, inspired this study, which adopts a recognised model, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), to better understand consumers' intended behaviours towards ethical fashion. This model is considered to have a higher level of accuracy in terms of predicting intentions and behaviours and is further supported by empirical evidence (Ajzen, 1991). Additionally, to increase the predictive ability of the model in the current investigation, four other constructs were added to the original model variables of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control –

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namely the consumers' environmental knowledge, environmental concern, consumers' perception of their own efficacy as consumers, and the situational context. This dissertation intends to contribute to a more accurate characterisation of South African consumers, as well as their purchase intentions towards ethical fashion.

The overarching objective of the study, namely to understand Millennial consumers' intentions regarding purchasing of ethical fashion, is put to practice through the exercise of answering the following questions:

Do attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control accurately predict intention to purchase ethical fashion?

Do concerns and emotional attachment, threats of fast fashion, and awareness of negative effects of fast fashion accurately predict intention to purchase ethical fashion?

Do consumers' confidence in their ability to resolve environmental and social problems caused by fast fashion accurately predict their intended behaviour of ethical fashion?

Lastly, do real life situations such as the store atmosphere, the presence of other buyers or salesman in the shop, and the availability of merchandise, quality, and design help predict consumers intended behaviour of ethical fashion?

These aspects relate to the study's aims and objectives. The subsequent section addresses the problem statement, the purpose, as well as the said aims and objectives of the research and the research methodology in brief.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The global fashion industry faces intense scrutiny due to its adverse effects on the environment and its involvement in human rights abuses within its supply chain (McKinsey, 2022). Stakeholders and consumers are increasingly questioning the credibility of operations in the industry and acknowledging the need to take actions to limit the impacts of climate change (Granskog et al., 2020). In South Africa, consumers are also becoming aware of sustainable and ethical fashion choices and believe that the adoption of practices such as reuse and the purchase of ethical apparel could have a positive impact on the environment (Taljaard and Sonnenberg, 2019; Lundblad and Davies, 2016). As awareness of sustainable and ethical apparel consumption increases, the demand for environmentally and ethically produced apparel is also on the rise (Dhir et al., 2021;

Djurfeldt and Milunovic, 2021). Millennial consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the social impact of their clothes and have been identified as the drivers of sustainable consumption (Su et al., 2019; Bernardes et al., 2018). When purchasing apparel, millennial consumers now seen as being concerned about labour issues and the working conditions under which their clothing is made (Cerchia and Piccolo, 2019). These issues are well known and stigmatised by public opinion around the world, thus causing sustainability in the fashion industry to become a key consideration for industry players (Lambert, 2019). An Ethical Fashion Global Market Report (2024) affirms that although sustainability and ethical fashion market size has grown strongly in recent years, it is still expected to continue growing from $8.17 billion in 2023 to $8.83 billion in 2024 at a compound annual growth rate of 8.0%. Therefore, in response to this call, some of the world's most renowned fast fashion brands like H&M, Zara, Uniqlo, Stella McCartney, and Adidas (Choi et al., 2018; Williams, 2022; H&M Group, 2020; Amed et al., 2019) are reacting positively by integrating environmental and social themes into their products to address fashion sustainability issues. Although these brands have successfully embraced sustainability and begun to offer ethical lines, it is worrisome to note that the sales percentage of these offerings still remains low (Bray et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2021; May, 2019). Organisations within South Africa, such as Woolworth, SA Fashion Week, and Cotton On, have embraced sustainability in fashion, yet the demand for such fashion items remains low (Muposhi and Chuchu, 2022). This implies that Millennial consumers maintain a positive attitude, which significantly influences their intentions towards sustainability and green products, yet this has not reflected in their consumption behaviour (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). They continue to purchase products that are detrimental to the environment in spite of their desire to buy sustainable and ethical offerings. This difference between consumers' initial desired choices and the actual purchasing decision signifies the existence of what is termed the "intention behaviour gap" or "fashion paradox" in the fashion context (Cherradi and Tetik, 2020; Wehring, 2021; Djurfeldt and Milunovic, 2021; McNeill and Moore, 2015). The existence of disparities in the consumption behaviour of Millennials makes it difficult for marketers to fully understand their intentions (Bernardes et al., 2018). This discrepancy might suggest that customers' concern regarding the environment and manufacturers' efforts to market ethical clothing is not sufficient to translate consumers' intentions into the purchase of ethical apparel (Dhir et al., 2020). This speaks to an urgent need to investigate this discrepancy with the hope to identify ways to reduce it (Diddi et al., 2019). Notably, there is limited research on ethical purchasing intentions and behaviour in South Africa (Synodinos, 2014).

This study, therefore, investigated the determinants affecting the purchasing intentions of young consumers (Millennials) towards ethical fashion. The Theory of Planned Behaviour will be utilised to examine the predictive capacity of the initial TPB variables and then supplemented with other variables to thoroughly explore South African Millennial consumer's intended behaviour towards ethical apparel. The findings of the

study can enhance comprehension of disparities between consumers' expressed intentions towards ethical fashion products. In addition, the findings can be also be used to inform strategies to promote environmental practices and encourage consumers to actually purchase ethical fashion once the predictors are determined through extensive research.

1.3. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

As the study seeks to explore consumer purchase intention of ethical fashion in South Africa, the Theory of Planned Behaviour is applied as the foundation to predict consumer purchase intended behaviour of the Millennials in South Africa. TPB antecedents (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control) and the modified structure surrounding the model (perceived consumer effectiveness, environmental concern, environmental knowledge, situational context) were explored to determine their influence on ethical purchasing intention regarding ethical fashion. Grasping the distinctions among these underlying factors will empower marketers to devise approaches and resources for engaging with this younger demographic and adapt their business strategies and product offerings accordingly. This could also facilitate the transformation of consumer desires and preferences to encourage behavioral changes towards embracing ethical fashion consumption (Ottman, 1997). The findings of the study equally attempt to expand the still narrow scope of research on ethical fashion, particularly in the South African context, and that of other emerging countries that may be facing similar challenges related to fashion and sustainability.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Thus, the research aims to explore   Millennial consumers intentions regarding ethical fashion in South Africa. Firstly, the study will explore the predictive ability of the TPB and then modify the model to establish a standalone theoretical framework capable of accurately and comprehensively predicting the behaviour of South African consumers' intention of ethical apparel consumption. In pursuit of this goal, the subsequent objectives were devised:

OBJECTIVE 1: To determine the ability of TPB constructs (attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) to predict Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical apparel in South Africa.

OBJECTIVE 2: To determine whether integrating perceived consumer effectiveness as a direct construct into behavioural intention would have any influence towards the intention to purchase ethical apparel among Millennial consumers in South Africa.

OBJECTIVE 3a: To determine if the relationship between environmental concern and all the other direct constructs of behavioural intention (ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE) will enhance the predictive ability for the intention to purchase ethical apparel among South African Millennial consumers.

OBJECTIVE 3b: To determine whether the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude will enhance the predictive ability for the intention to purchase ethical apparel among Millennial consumers.

OBJECTIVE 4: To determine the extent to which situational context affects consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion.

The subsequent hypotheses for each of the intended constructs are presented in Chapter 2, and the chapter concludes with the proposed model that will be tested using structural equation modelling.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study follows a deductive study approach, which aims to validate or invalidate existing or context adapted theories. This type of approach relies on the development of hypotheses based on pre-existing theory, which has already designed an accurate and reliable strategy to test them (Wilson, 2010). For this project, the TPB was adapted through the contribution of several authors. The chosen approach helps to understand the connections among the psychographic variables related to the Theory of Planned Behavior through statistical analysis.

To conduct this analysis, a quantitative study was followed, involving the dissemination of an internet-based questionnaire to a sample population chosen through non-probability convenience sampling. In total, 302 responses were obtained from South African millennial consumers through Survey Monkey and used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, using SPSS software Version 28, was used to assess and understand the demographic profile of the respondents and their characteristics as South Africans who intend to purchase ethical fashion. Additionally, the study aims to offer a descriptive overview of the performance of each psychographic variable.

The first step in assessing results was to analyse the measurement model and determine the reliability of constructs, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Next, the research hypothesis was tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Lastly, the model's explanatory power was also assessed through the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the goodness of fit index.

1.6 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The research is structured into the following five chapters:

CHAPTER 1   provides an overview of the current state of the fashion industry in the world and, more specifically, in South Africa. The chapter outlines the adverse effects of the fashion industry on both society and the environment. It also highlights the aspects of ethical fashion which form the focal point of this study. The research aims and objectives, as well as the contribution of the study are presented, along with a brief overview of the methodology that was followed for the study.

CHAPTER 2   explores the pertinent literature related to sustainable and ethical apparel consumption and the intended behaviour within South Africa. It provides the definition of fast fashion and the history of how the fashion industry came to have such negative impacts on the environment and society. Ethical fashion will also be discussed as an alternative to fast fashion. The chapter also highlights Millennial consumers as the most sustainable generation, the first digital natives with a greater influence on purchasing ethical fashion items. In addition, the TPB is discussed as the dominant theory along with the psychographic variables used for the study within the theoretical framework section. The hypotheses for each TPB variation are derived and made ready for testing against the research objectives. The chapter concludes with a proposed conceptual model of the antecedents that may influence ethical purchase intention of Millennials in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3   The chapter provides a detailed account of the research methodology employed to gather the requisite data essential for advancing the study's aim and objectives. This encompasses delineating the research approach, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, reliability and validity analysis, and the process of data analysis, encompassing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Furthermore, ethical considerations to guide the research project in achieving its aims and objectives are elucidated.

CHAPTER 4   presents the results derived from quantitative data analysis. Before conducting the analysis, the collected data underwent a thorough examination to ensure its suitability for further processing, including both descriptive and inferential analyses. The descriptive analysis encompassed an overview of respondents' socio-demographic details, establishing the characteristics of the sample as South African consumers intending to purchase ethical

fashion. Additionally, the performance of each psychographic variable was scrutinised descriptively.

CHAPTER 5   outlines the inferential data analysis performed to assess the measurement scales and various aspects of the measurement and structural models, with the goal of testing the hypotheses. The results of the measurement scales used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the predictor variables were discussed. To determine the relationship between each TPB model variation, SEM was performed and the hypotheses were also tested. Finally, the model assessing the predictive capability of the TPB regarding ethical fashion was examined and showcased.

CHAPTER 6   discusses the key findings of the research project and draws conclusions based on the research outcomes. It also examines the practical implications of the study. Additionally, limitations of the research are acknowledged, and recommendations for further research are provided.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The initial chapter introduces the background and inspiration behind the study, then proceeds to outline the problem statement, the study's purpose, and the established aims and objectives aimed at investigating the ethical fashion consumption intentions of South African Millennials. The chapter began by acknowledging that the overconsumption of goods and services has become a major problem, causing sustainability to become a mainstream topic across the world. The fast fashion industry, among other industries, has revolutionised the fashion industry at the expense of the environment and human rights (Shedlock and Feldstein, 2023). Although the fashion industry in South Africa appears to be in the early stages of addressing sustainability (Smal, 2016; Whyte, 2016), the country is among those with alarming consumption of goods and services including fashion (Moodly, 2020). It is worrisome to note that despite the fashion industry and consumers indicating sustainability as a priority when making purchase decisions, fast fashion still continues to grow (Shedlock and Feldstein, 2023). Therefore, to ensure long-term success in a market increasingly orientated towards sustainability, businesses must understand consumer behaviour towards ethical fashion to remain competitive. Enhanced comprehension of sustainability and ethical concerns within the South African fashion landscape could offer strategic benefits for businesses, marketers, and regulatory bodies. This understanding would enable the development of tailored strategies aimed at fostering positive consumer decisions towards ethical fashion purchases in South Africa. In an attempt to achieve this, the present study will investigate the predictive capacity of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and adapt the model structures surrounding TPB to accurately and comprehensively forecast South African consumers' intentions to purchase ethical fashion.

The next chapter will present literature in relation to fast fashion and ethical fashion from an international and national perspective. Lastly, the TPB and its associated variables, including extensions, will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 IMPORTANCE OF CLOTHING

Clothing is an essential human need that has existed since before the fashion industry became relevant and/or noticeable. Clothes play an essential role in our lives to protect our bodies from heat, cold, or to use as adornments (Moon and Bordi, 2019; Barnard, 2014). Nearly everyone on the planet wears clothing every day (Moolla, 2020). Although the forms, silhouettes, and shapes of clothing are constantly changing, their function is unchanging (Anyanwu and Chiana, 2022). Clothes serves as a "second skin" and help to communicate who we are (Belk, 1988; McNeill and Moore, 2015). Clothing serves as a means to guide us to understand society and aspects of it (Gardetti and Muthu, 2020), as garments act as tools to manipulate how one may like to be viewed by onlookers (McNeill, 2018). It is a way to transmit non-verbal communication signals, such as possible cues about people's statue, values, and lifestyles (Sarvanan and Nithyaprakash, 2015). One's sense of beauty, colour, and overall interests can be conveyed by clothes (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001). Clothing is also a form of art that may convey feelings and one's personality traits (Stolovy, 2021). Possession of clothes can signify an endeavour to attain achievements, joy and serve as a reminder of memories and past encounters (Belk, 1988). In some cultures, it is even a way to indicate one's position in society (Dehosse, 2020). Feeling good about ourselves and being confident are closely connected to the clothes we choose to wear. Sometimes, we might even seek approval or respect from others by wearing certain brands or labels. These are some of the needs that the fashion industry has manipulated in recent decades to sell us more clothes than we need, while scaling up production (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2022). Although consumer buying behaviour is not only influenced by these essential internal needs, it is crucial to recognise that the external situational context, such as globalisation, has also catalysed the growth in the fashion industry, affecting consumer choices (Lawan and Zanna, 2013). It is undeniable that many aspects of our lives are influenced by clothes, as they have both economic and social value, as well as serving the modest need for covering oneself, which is the reason why people continuously purchase them (Sudha and Sheena, 2017). Due to the crucial role fashion plays in human lives, it is unquestionable that the apparel industry is a significant force, therefore, scrutinising this mega industry is essential (Dehosse, 2020).

2.2 TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF FASHION

The United Nations (UN) (2021) describes fashion as clothing, leather, and footwear made from textiles and other related goods. Although the term "fashion" denotes trends in consumer behaviour, in the context of studying clothing consumption, it can be interchangeable with "clothes" (Lindeén, 2017). Even though the fashion industry covers the production of shoes, handbags, and other accessories, clothing constitutes the larger proportion of the fashion industry (Hinzmann and Stark-Nässlin, 2020). Therefore, the current study

focuses on fashion and uses the word fashion and apparel interchangeably to refer to clothes. Prior to proceeding, it is crucial to outline a brief historical background of the fashion industry. This historical context sheds light on the evolution of the fashion system and elucidates how the industry gradually acquired its significant environmental and societal repercussions.

2.3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY

2.3.1 Before the 1800s

The old production and consumption system of fashion has changed dramatically over the past 150 years. In earlier times, clothing was an expensive commodity (Laver et al., 2004). Making clothes was time consuming since the sewing machine had not yet been invented, and, therefore, all clothing was handmade. This implies that the change in fashion was slow (Sanvt, 2022). Everything from the process of making textiles to completing the final piece of clothing was labour intensive and expensive (Epstein, 1945). Natural fibres such as cotton, wool, linen, muslin, and silk were the primary materials used to make textiles. This caused people to own a small collection of clothes, which they wore and mended for years. This was the situation until the industrial revolution that mechanised production in the 1780s, allowing for quicker and cheaper production of textiles, especially cotton (Brooks, 2015). The industrial revolution spawned the availability of affordable textiles, which decreased the cost of clothing production. Localised dressmaking businesses, which included teams of workroom employees, were responsible for making clothes for the middle class, while lower income women (in general) made their own clothes at home for their families (Dehosse, 2020). This aspect of sweaters or people working from home earning very low wages provided a glimpse of what would eventually become the basis of modern clothing production, which has become precarious in today's society (Idacavage, 2018).

2.3.2 The 1850s-1900s

The first sewing machine was patented in 1846 by Elias Howe and had a significant impact on the clothing industry, making it easier and faster for garments to be stitched, and resulting in a decrease in the price of clothing (Christopher, 2003). At this time, the fashion cycle picked up with department stores introducing ready-to-wear clothing, which is produced in large quantities and comes in various sizes rather than being custom-made, thus allowing individuals from all income levels to afford fashionable clothing (Idacavage, 2018; English, 2007). The styles and designs were at that time copied mainly from Paris, which can be regarded as the heart of the fashion industry, and duplicated in-house at a lower cost for middle class consumers. Although new styles began to emerge, seasons did not change frequently while the colours and trimmings were changing regularly (Dehosse, 2020). Mass production began to take off as the volume of clothing purchases dramatically increased (Monet, 2018). The fashion industry continued to grow steadily, however, at the time of the great depression, the industry was severely strained and forced to find alternative, cheaper ways to

manufacture clothing (Wilson, 2019). Cheaper materials were invented to replace expensive fabrics. Of these materials, nylon was the first synthetic fabric to be used in the clothing industry, replacing silk as it was considered cheaper and more durable (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013. Nylon, along with other plastic-based synthetic fibres such as polyester which now dominate the fashion industry, have adverse environmental and social impacts, which were not known during their time of inception (Dehosse, 2020). At the onset of the Second World War, the scarcity of materials continued making it difficult for tailors and fashion houses to stay in business. Priority was given to the production of uniforms for men and women serving in the military (Poulliard, 2013). Garment producers were only allowed to design garments that did not consume much fabric and responded by eliminating pleats, frills, ruffles, and restricting lengths (Steele, 2005). Clothing was very functional and durable, and people had to repair their existing clothing instead of buying new garments until the end of the war in the middle of the twentieth century (Chawla, 2016). When it became apparent that women used flour sacks to sew clothing for their families, these sacks were made of patterned fabrics (Chloe, 2019). It was also during the Second World War that women started wearing trousers, as they became the workforce instead of the men who were drafted (Mason and Suri, 2011).

2.3.3 1950s-1970s

At the end of World War 2, the shortages ceased and rations were lifted (Steele, 2005). A demand for luxury and extravagance emerged after the stark utilitarian clothing worn during the war. People gradually moved from wearing clothes for practical features like durability towards style (Sanvt, 2022). The new fashion brands and designer names surfaced to satisfy the increasing demand. Garments were manufactured rapidly and in greater volumes than previously, leading to cost reductions. With the gradual improvement of the global economy, there was a surge in the creation of new enterprises and the expansion of existing ones (Baten, 2016). Consequently, individuals across various income brackets had more extensive access to fashionable attire than ever before (Laver et al., 2004). People had larger disposable incomes to purchase more fashion items (Dehosse, 2020). Even though natural fibres were accessible, the use of synthetic, plastic-based materials such as nylon continued even after the war. One reason for this was that they were cheap to manufacture and offered convenience to consumers as they could dry more quickly and did not need to be ironed (Dehosse, 2020; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Textile Exchange (2018) affirms that the use of synthetic fibres continued to grow with the market share growing from under 20% to around 63% over the last 20 years. These factors sparked consumerism, which is presently destroying not only the environment (as will be elaborated on further in the sections to follow), but also causing social and economic problems (Greentumble, 2016). However, fashion seasons still had a longer duration with trends changing seasonally (Barrera, 2022).

2.3.4 1980s until present date

In the 1980s, fashion trends began to move more rapidly with consumers, especially the young, rejecting sartorial traditions of older generations and embracing new trends that are cheaply made. Moreover, in response to the rising demand for inexpensive clothing, extensive textile mills emerged in developing nations. This facilitated companies in developed regions to realise substantial cost savings by relocating clothing manufacturing to countries with lower labour and fabric expenses (Idavacage, 2018). Fashion companies increasingly turned to outsourcing their manufacturing operations to the cheapest garment factories in overseas countries such as China, Bangladesh, and other Asian countries (Dehosse, 2020). Advances in technology and cheap labour have made it possible to decrease the lead time between the initial design of a product and its final purchase by customers. The continuous supply of clothes has resulted in new trends being introduced to stores weekly, leading to the overconsumption of apparel (Cachon and Swinney, 2011). Below is a detailed illustration of the timeline of the history of fast fashion adapted from Sanvt (2022). The fast fashion trend is explained in the next section.

THE HISTORY OF FAST FASHION

MID 1800s
The Industrial Revolution changed the fashion industry with the invention of the sewing machine. People started wearing clothes for style, not necessity.

1960S
The abundance of cheap, mass-produced, low quality clothing took over. Shopping for new clothes became a hobby and a means of achieving status.

NOW
Despite consumers wanting to make more sustainable choices, fast fashion is still booming. with clothes being produced more and quicker than ever before.

PRE 1800s
All fashion was slow. People had to source their own materials and make their own clothes.

1911
Following the emergence of sweatshops, the first significant garment factory disaster took place. 146 garment workers, mainly female, died in a fire.

1990s
The term 'fast fashion' was coined by the New York Times, after Zara implemented an accelerated production model from the design stage to clothing stores.

Figure 2.1: History of fast fashion

2.4 FASHION INDUSTRY AND FAST FASHION

Notably, the history of clothing pre-dates the history of the fashion industry (i.e. popular styles of clothing currently in demand), which continues to grow with the increasing population (Maiti, 2022). The fashion sector

was established to design, promote, produce, and distribute clothing, footwear, and accessories. It is the continued growth of the fashion industry that gave rise to fast fashion in the 1980s. Although fast fashion emerged in the 1980s, the term fast fashion was officially coined in the 1990s by the New York Times to describe Zara's process, which required 15 days for a garment to transition from the design phase to being available for purchase in stores (Sanvt, 2022). The term fast fashion was then defined as a business model that focuses on producing and selling cheap, stylish clothing within a short period of time to make profit (Linden, 2016). Fast fashion represents a highly lucrative business approach centered on inexpensive manufacturing techniques, rapid consumption, and brief garment lifespan (Niinimäki et al., 2020) also known for imitating luxury fashion trends and encouraging disposability in order to make room for newer fashion items (Fletcher, 2008). For this business model to thrive, a globalised supply chain must be in place to quickly respond to changes in fashion trends and styles, which they get from the catwalk and turn into garments quickly enough to ensure availability in stores, therefore, meeting consumer demand (Zhang et al., 2021). Sanvt (2022) describes convenience, accessibility, and affordability of new trends as the key focus of fast fashion.

According to the United Kingdom House of Commons (2019), the low production costs of fast fashion items and shorter lead times may suggest that this type of fashion is of low quality. Although the quality of fast fashion cannot be quantified because of it is highly individual nature, many consumers may not be able to determine good quality over bad (Yuille, 2015). According to Jani and Jatmika (2023), Fast fashion is associated with disposable consumption patterns and low-quality, disposable clothing items. Yin (2022) argues that fast fashion items are generally not designed to last and are often referred to as throwaway fashion. The price of the clothing is cheap, and the turnaround of fashion trends encourages consumers to buy more than they need at more regular intervals, regardless of whether the items can still be worn (Bernardes et al., 2018). The prosperity of fast fashion relies to some extent, ongoing consumption and impulsive purchases of fashion items, thus instilling a sense of urgency when purchasing, namely immediate gratification (Niinimäki et al., 2020). The shopping behaviour and lifestyle of consumers has been altered significantly by the fast fashion concept. Shopping has been transformed into a form of entertainment, making it easier for consumers to purchase new garments to keep pace with the rapid evolution of fashion trends and discard clothing considered outdate (Anyanwu and Chiana, 2022).

Greenpeace International (2017) reports that approximately 95% of clothing that is disposed of is reusable or hasn't met its end-of-life cycle yet. The shift of clothing production facilities to countries in the Global South, where labour is considerably cheaper, has created a situation where clothing is not only affordable but cheap to ordinary people who would otherwise not be able to afford items shown on runways in Paris (Brooke, 2015; Dehosse, 2020). In a fast fashion business model, fashion retailers are flexible, ever ready to react to the

changes in the market to stay relevant and, therefore, in business. They maintain short lead times kept to a minimum so they can easily introduce new styles or even cease the production of styles that are not performing well on the market (Sull and Turconi, 2008). To the same degree, customers also expect to find new styles each time they visit the store, even if it means twice in a week (Dehosse, 2020). This has led to the continuous supply of new, trendy clothes to retail stores weekly, thus causing a disruption to the four traditional seasons that used to exist before the industrial revolution (Cachon and Swinney, 2011). Traditionally, the fashion system released new trends perhaps twice a year, but with the advent of fast fashion, seasons now change up to 52 times per year (Barrera, 2022). The surge of fast fashion and the large quantities of items produced in this sector, with a low utilisation rate and high disposal rate, indicates that the industry itself is a danger to the natural environment and people (Niinimäki et al. 2020). While the fashion industry is profitable and growing, it has induced a new culture of mass consumption with a throwaway culture and widespread implications for society and the environment.

2.5 IMPACTS OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY REGARDING ETHICAL CONSUMPTION

At a time when it is undeniable that the textiles and apparel industry has disastrous impacts on the natural environment and society, it is crucial to comprehend these effects and the repercussions of the industry and its operations. Even experts agree that the apparel industry is responsible for negative environmental and socio-economic issues across the globe (UN News, 2019). The following section briefly discusses the fashion supply chain, which begins with raw material production (fibre and textiles), production of fashion items, and distribution to retailers until the consumption phase. These functions are today filled by entirely distinct firms and retailers procuring from various independently-owned factories dispersed throughout the world (Hines, 2006). Social and environmental concerns emerge throughout this unique supply chain of the fashion industry and may not be easy to track due to the fact that various stages of production are conducted in different countries. This makes the chain longer and more complex. Moreover, the decrease in contact between various stakeholders suggests that monitoring compliance with codes of conduct becomes difficult (Centobelli et al., 2022). It is, therefore, difficult to enforce exact regulations of the industry, however, to encourage ethical consumption, it is imperative to attempt such measurements in order to hold the industry accountable across various stages of production, consumption, and disposal.

2.5.1 Raw material production

The production of materials, whether natural or synthetic fabrics, has become burdensome to the environment. The first material to be discussed is a natural fibre, cotton, followed by a man-made fibre, polyester.

2.5.2 Cotton

The ecological footprint resulting from the fashion industry stem from the production of raw materials like cotton, wool, and leather, as well as from crude oil extraction and chemical manufacturing for synthetic fibers (Jenkin and Hattingh, 2022). The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) conducted a life cycle analysis of global apparel which indicated that 12% of the climate impact is generated during the fiber production stage (UNEP, 2020). As the study focus on clothing, we begin by looking at cotton as the most commonly used natural fibre in clothing. It is estimated that only one percent of clothing is recycled, meaning that textiles need to be produced constantly to meet clothing production demands (Ellen McArthur Foundation, 2017). The production process of cotton requires a lot of water and fertilizers (Joy and Peña, 2017). According to Bailey et al. (2022), cotton farming annually consumes 93 billion cubic meters of water, a significant amount that exacerbates global water scarcity concerns. In addition, cotton is vulnerable to insect attacks, thus posing many problems to the environment as it requires large quantities of pesticides and herbicides during its development (Aleixo, 2020). It is estimated that around 10% of the world's synthetic pesticides are employed in cotton cultivation. Although these pesticides are effective in killing insects and diseases on cotton plants, over time these insects become resistant to pesticides, thus requiring stronger and more toxic pesticides to be applied regularly, causing serious effects to the environment and human lives (Chironda, 2023; Andreadakis and Wiredu, 2023). The use of pesticides and herbicides is not only a danger to the pests, but destroys indigenous plants, small animals, and nutrients in the soil. As a result, farmers have to continue relying on synthetic fertilizers to stimulate growth in cotton plants and lots of water to nourish drought sensitive cotton plants. Heavy use of pesticides and fertilizers produces toxic chemicals, which contaminate the run-off and pollutes water systems, further poisoning indigenous plants and animal species (National Wildlife Federation, 2006).

Once harvested, cotton fibres are spun into yarn and further processed into fabrics through weaving, knitting or non-woven techniques. The spinning of fibres and making of fabrics uses large amounts of energy and chemicals. Depending on the process being used, chemicals and lubricants can be added to strengthen the yarn to reduce friction. Pre-treatment of the fabric can also be done by washing, desizing, scouring or bleaching with detergents in preparation for the fabric to accept dyes and other functional chemicals (Jenkin and Hattingh, 2022). Furthermore, to improve the quality of the fabric, another treatment can be done to enhance the technical or aesthetic properties of the finished fabric before it's produced into a finished product such as clothing (Dehosse, 2020). The chemicals used to print and dye fabrics are usually toxic and end up being dumped in coastal areas, thus causing water pollution that threatens the ecosystem and people (Blabel, 2020). Samchetshabam et al. (2017) state that the dyeing process is regarded as the second highest source of freshwater pollution and can be applied at the yarn, fabric, or clothing stages of the production process. As

the world is already y facing a water crisis, it is likely to worsen as the apparel industry continues to mass produce garments (Scott, 2020). This is true of South Africa, which is currently suffering from low rainfall and drought conditions (Moolla, 2020). Cape Town already faced a Day Zero, and Gqeberha's (formerly known as Port Elizabeth) Day Zero is looming (Sgqolana, 2020; Ouweneel et al., 2020). Niinimäki et al. (2020) argue that although clean water is available, the worry is that wastewater from the production processes of apparel reaches the local groundwater, thus damaging the entire water network. It is assumed that the clothing industry contributes upto 20% of global industrial water pollution, indicating a hugely negative impact of the fashion industry on the environment (McFall-Johnsen, 2019).

2.5.3 Polyester

Polyester is another type of fibre used to produce fashion items since the beginning of the twentieth century and has accelerated the fast fashion concept (Gazzola et al., 2020). Unlike cotton, polyester production utilises significantly less water and no pesticides as it isn't grown naturally (Joy and Peña, 2017). Polyester, a synthetic fiber, is manufactured from chemical components rather than natural sources like plants or animals (Steele, 2005). It is produced through a chemical process involving coal, petroleum, air, and water. This process results in the creation of plastic, which is then spun into long fibers and woven into fabrics, requiring substantial energy (Palacios-Mateo et al., 2021). However, when coal and petroleum are burned, they produce greenhouse gases which are emitted into the atmosphere (Dehosse, 2020). Currently, polyester constitutes more than 65% of the fibers utilised in apparel production, thus ranking as the most prevalent fiber in this sector. (Preferred Fibre Material Market Report, 2017). These figures show a noticeable growth in the use of polyester that is linked to increased demand from the fast fashion industry (State of Fashion, 2017). Claudio (2007) echoed that the demand for polyester has almost doubled over the years due to the rise of production in the fashion industry. Although clothing made of 100% polyester is considered easy to reconvert into reusable materials, the majority of clothes are made from mixed fibres such as cotton and polyester, which are difficult to recycle due to the fact that these two components cannot be separated at low cost (Broda et al., 2019). They contribute to the already overflowing undifferentiated landfills worldwide (Aleixo, 2022). When disposed of in landfills, these synthetic fibres release microfibres that are not biodegradable, as they remain intact for longer periods of time making the land unusable and contaminating rivers and seas (Cobbing and Vicaire, 2017). Reliance on synthetic fibre-based textiles has led to significant environmental concerns, as the production of these materials generates large amounts of carbon dioxide emissions (Lewis et al., 2017). The traces of toxic chemicals from discarded clothing are mainly found in low-income countries, particularly those in Africa (Manieson and Ferrero-Regis, 2023). For example, Ghana has been turned into a toxic landfill where the journey of unwanted clothing from Western communities ends. Each week, the country is said to receive 20 million items of clothing from Western countries, of which 40% leaves the market as waste (Gupta

and Saini, 2020; Bartlett, 2023). While some of the waste is burnt in the open air, which produces a vast amount of CO2, a larger amount of unusable clothing is carried onto the beach by the waves and then buried under the sand thus choking aquatic life and creating enormous environmental impact (Priya, 2022). Similarly, Chile's Atacama Desert is also overwhelmed by sheer textiles waste imported as second-hand clothes from the US, Europe, and Asia (Ocasio, 2023). A study by the Plastic Soup Foundation (2022) revealed that out of the 59 000 tonnes of clothes brought in to Chile per year, 40 000 tonnes end up in the adjacent Atacama Desert in the same year. This is due to the fact that clothing is not considered biodegradable, and is therefore not allowed to be landfilled, which means it is merely discarded of by being dumped in the desert. These items are often so low in quality that importers get no real benefit from selling them (Andreadakis and Owusu-Wiredu, 2023). Moreover, the materials these items are made from are not biodegradable and contain chemical products, making the quantity unmanageable and causing an ecological disaster (Lea, 2023).

2.5.4 Garment design and production

Once the fabrics have been produced, designers, manufactures, and contractors take up the process to manufacture textiles into finished clothing items (Cline, 2012). The design process is usually separated from the manufacturing process with fast fashion retailers' designers mainly based in the developed countries of the Global North where they are usually educated and well paid (HUOVIALA, 2015). The job of fast fashion designers is to monitor celebrities, especially their social media platforms, and to spot the latest trends. This is where they copy outfits celebrities have worn from, having them manufactured and ready for sale within a week (Zerbo, 2017). Most designers nowadays use computer-aided design techniques instead of the traditional design methods of sketches on paper and draping fabric on mannequins. This allows them to make changes to the proposed design silhouette and fabrics relatively quickly, and be able to share with colleagues and make changes appropriately in an extremely short space of time (Encyclopedia Britanica, 2023). When the design is approved, manufacturers or garment workers take on the cutting, assembling, and even dyeing of the finished items, which can be done manually or even automated (Jenkin and Hattingh, 2022). Unlike the designers in the Global North, garment workers are mainly located in Global South countries such as China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Indonesia, and India and are typically underpaid and unskilled (World Trade Statistical Review, 2018). Garment workers are generally the people who work long hours to produce clothes in mass quantities and in return, they are poorly paid, resulting in a life that is lived below basic standards of living (Dehosse, 2020). The majority of these workers are women, and they sometimes suffer abuse from their employers (United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion (UNASF), 2020). The conditions in which they work are not optimal and can even be regarded as dangerous (Greenpeace International, 2017). To further reduce labour costs, the fashion industry is accused of using child labour and sweatshops in the manufacturing process (Karthik and Gopalakris, 2014). Although labour and environmental scandals linked to fast fashion

brands is not new to the public, disasters at clothing factories continue to be recorded. However, the gravity of the disaster and media coverage of the collapse of Rana Plaza, a clothing factory in Daka in Bangladesh, which claimed the lives of more than 1137 garment workers and injured more than 2000 in 2013, brought increased attention to the working conditions involved in the manufacturing of clothing (Cerchia and Piccolo, 2019). Although the dreadful event led to the advancement of labour laws to protect and enhance the working conditions of garment workers, these laws are not always implemented for fear of losing business to other countries where production costs are lower (Taplin, 2014). This is evident by the fact that many cases of factory accidents (factory fires and building collapses) are still recorded (Goodwin, 2021).

In the case of South Africa, aside from receiving low wages, factory workers also risk losing their jobs because of apparel being brought from China and Bangladesh at a cheaper rate, therefore, allowing companies to increase their profits through outsourcing manufacturing. In South Africa alone, around 90% of clothing in the local market is sourced, manufactured, and imported from China and Bangladesh. This results in clothes becoming cheap, thereby reducing the capacity of local manufacturers who usually end up shutting down their factories (Taljaard et al., 2018). Despite the damaging impact of the apparel industry on the environment and society, it is expected that the increasing population and economic growth will further the consumption of apparel (Moolla, 2020). Hassan et al. (2022), predict that by 2050, the global sale of clothing may exceed 160 million tonnes, which is more than three times the amount of clothing sold presently. This implies that if little or no action is taken, the current consumption patterns will do further damage to the planet at unprecedented levels. This calls for an urgent need to alter consumer habits and encourage sustainable and ethical consumption of apparel (Borusiak et al., 2020; Roberts, 2022).

2.5.5 Distribution and retailing

The negative associations with fashion consumption mentioned above do not end with the manufacture of the clothes, but continue on into the next phase. When finished products are ready, they are packed and distributed locally or exported to the retailer for sale to the consumer at an international level (Jenkins and Hattingh, 2022). The fast fashion business needs to maintain a consistent supply of new merchandise for sale in stores or online for it to be successful. This means businesses will have to ship inventory quickly enough to reach the store in order to meet insatiable consumer demand for the latest trends (Dehosse, 2020). In this case, it has been found that premium air freight is common in the fashion industry (Sarda and Lee, 2015). At this phase, significant carbon emission is almost unavoidable as many brands prefer to ship by air instead of cargo shipping, which is considerably cheaper and produces less carbon emissions but takes longer to reach the intended destination. Furthermore, the effect of carbon emitted by planes is two to three times higher than ground emissions because airplanes release CO_2 at high altitudes into the atmosphere where they do

much more harm (Lee, 2023). The garments then need to be distributed to stores where the consumer can purchase such items. Once inventory reaches the store, various marketing strategies are put in place to encourage consumers to buy new trendy styles at specific retail stores at very affordable prices (Sheridan et al., 2006). The option to buy clothes online has also encouraged consumers to buy new clothes by just clicking through social media feeds whenever they see something they want, thus fuelling the turnover of fast fashion (Zhang et al., 2021). This approach has led to the overconsumption of fashion items at alarmingly detrimental levels (Dehosse, 2020).

2.5.6 Consumption of clothing

The use phase of clothing carries the most significant environmental footprint in its lifecycle, primarily because of the water, energy, and chemicals (particularly detergents) utilised for washing, drying, and ironing after the consumer has purchased the item (Beton et al., 2014). It is further estimated that about 500,000 tonnes of microfibres are dumped into the sea, of which microfibre waste from the washing of clothes is equivalent to 50 billion plastic bottles (McFall-Johnsen, 2019). Despite the fact that the washing of clothes has a destructive impact on the environment, consumers continue to purchase clothes at five times the rate they did 20 years ago, yet their usage period is much shorter than before. The fast-paced consumption habits prevalent in contemporary society have led to a rise in discarded clothing and textiles of which, less than half of the used garments can be collected for potential reuse, recycling, or continued wear (Šajn, 2019).

A study by the State of Fashion (2018) found that more than half of the fast fashion items bought are discarded within the same year. Rizkalla (2019) asserts that about 85% of clothes, 21 billion tonnes per year, clothing that is discarded ultimately becomes waste. Textile waste, including clothes, takes tens to hundreds of years to decompose (Beall, 2020). Additionally, a lot of second-hand clothing is being sent from the United States of America (USA) and Europe to Africa in the name of recycling, but these are not always of good quality, resulting in the items just polluting the environment and ending up in landfills or being incinerated (Greenpeace International, 2017). These measures are taken to combat space limitation and facilitate room for new fashion (Brooks 2015), while actually consisting of an ineffective structure (Taljaard and Sonnenberg, 2019). Thus, clothing pollution occurs throughout the entire product lifecycle, spanning from the cultivation and manufacturing of natural and/or synthetic fibers, to garment production, packaging, transportation, distribution, consumption, and eventual disposal phases (United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion (UNASF), 2020).

Below is a process map of the fashion supply chain adopted from Hines (2006), as seen in Figure 2.2, to illustrate the vertical fragmentation of the industry. This fragmentation has resulted in a disconnection

between producers and consumers, making it difficult for consumers to fully comprehend and relate to the social and environmental issues (Dickson, 2000).
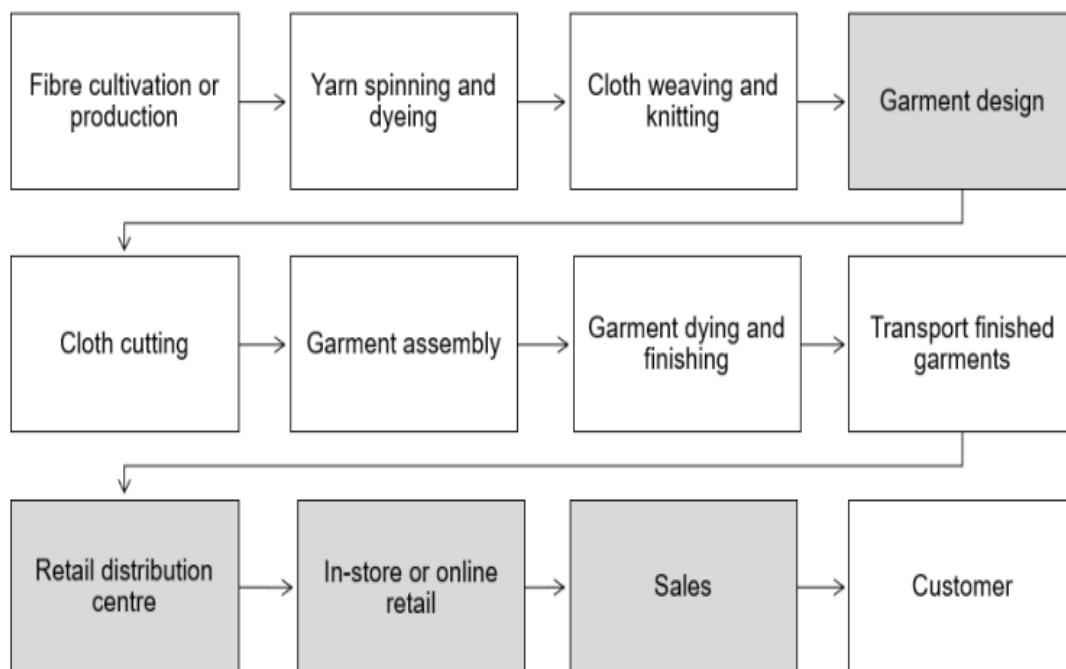
Figure 2.2: Fashion supply chain

2.6 CONSIDERATION OF ETHICAL FASHION CONSUMPTION

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, a drastic change in the current consumption pattern of fashion is necessary to curb the societal and environmental implications of the fast fashion industry (Dehosse, 2020). This comes at a time when consumers are noticing the dark side of fast fashion and demanding fast fashion companies to operate with greater ethics and sustainability (Ki et al., 2021). The growing consumer concern over sustainability issues is pushing fashion houses and retailers to take advantage of the new consumer market and offer sustainable fashion as an alternative to fast fashion (Wren, 2022). Muposhi et al. (2021) affirm that sustainable apparel could be the answer to the ongoing problems of environmental degradation and accompanying social issues. Similarly, the Ellen McArthur Foundation, (2017) emphasised that ethical fashion consumption represents a potential avenue for consumers to mitigate the environmental and social repercussions of their clothing purchases. While there seems not to be a single industry wide definition of sustainable apparel, words such as eco-friendly, ethical, green, organic, and slow are often used interchangeably, thus causing confusion among potential consumers (Henninger et al., 2016; Baier, et al. 2020). According to Fletcher (2008), Sustainable, eco-fashion, green fashion, and organic fashion primarily concentrate on the environmental consequences of clothing production, whereas ethical fashion extends its scope to include social factors as well. Shen et al. (2013) define sustainable apparel as apparel made from

recycled materials or natural fibers which have been grown organically. Such products are known to have low environmental impact and can be used for longer periods of time (Djurfeldt and Milunovic, 2021). Sustainable fashion is created using environmentally friendly manufacturing processes, aiming to minimize harm during both consumption and disposal stages (Wei and Jung, 2017). Additionally, sustainable fashion is manufactured with reduced water usage and can be reused, composted, or recycled (Choi and Cai, 2018).

Ethical fashion, on the other hand, focuses on minimising the environmental negatives and optimising the social aspects throughout the supply chain, post purchase, and lifecycle of a product. Minimising the negative impacts of the production of apparel involves considering environmentally friendly practices in terms of the selection of textiles, the production methods, treatment and dyeing processes, waste management, factory safety, provision of living wages, ensuring reasonable working hours, utilizing organic materials, and promoting overall sustainable and ethical responsibility and awareness (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). According to Simone Cipriani, the founder of Ethical Fashion Initiative (EFI), a programme which promotes issues such as the need to centre human and labour rights in the fashion system, ethical fashion falls under the umbrella of sustainability and is simply defined as responsible fashion that takes into account both people and the planet. He validates this by saying that human beings are stakeholders of this planet and hence, any threat to our inhabited environment is a direct threat to our own human rights and survival, and in this regard sustainability goals must encompass work towards offering people a decent life of dignified work (Samson, 2023). Dhir et al. (2021) affirm that environmental, social, and economic aspects are all important in the manufacturing of apparel items and not one of them should be compromised.

Be that as it may, a misunderstanding of the concept of sustainability in apparel seems to exist as various words are used conversely. This has created room for businesses to use unsupported environmental claims to market their products, thus giving false impressions about how their products are environmentally friendly (Teixeira, 2020). It may be the case that some businesses face the challenge of not being given crucial sustainability-related data by major suppliers of sustainable raw materials (Caniato et al., 2012). Regardless of whether major suppliers of raw materials disclose sustainability-related data or not, consumers exhibit a growing interest in understanding the origins of clothing and the raw materials used in their production. Their views on human rights and environmental conditions often shape their preferences for companies that adhere to socially and environmentally responsible manufacturing practices (Shen et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, awareness of the environmental and social repercussions of the fashion industry is on the rise, and deficiencies within the sector are being brought to light. As a result, ethical fashion enterprises must enhance and adjust their practices to align with ethical standards. This allows businesses to gain consumer trust. Moving forward, consumers can be enabled to make informed purchasing decisions when shopping for apparel, thus

accelerating the consumption of ethical fashion (Dehosse, 2020). The study will focus on ethical fashion, which encompasses care for the environment as well as prioritising the social aspect of clothing production and consumption. The present study was conducted in South Africa, where several companies such as Woolworths, H & M, Mr Price, Cotton On are actively incorporating sustainable and ethical fashion practices into their business models (Muposhi and Chuchu, 2022). However, some companies, such as Sun Goddess, Stoned Cherrie, and Diffusion, have faced challenges in fully embracing ethical fashion concepts and have subsequently ceased operations (Pooe and Mugobo, 2019). This suggests that while South Africa is witnessing a rise in ethical fashion initiatives, there are still challenges to overcome. Nonetheless, the fashion industry in South Africa is progressing positively, as supported by research from May (2019). Additionally, literature, including studies by Cimatti et al. (2017) underscores the growing concern among South African fashion retailers and designers regarding ethicality and sustainability within the industry.

2.7 MILLENNIALS AND ETHICAL FASHION CONSUMPTION

Millennials (Generation Y) are widely described as people who are born between approximately 1980 and 2000, meaning they are currently between 23 and 43 years old (Stein, 2013). Millennials were identified as the largest consumer group and more concerned with fashion trends, compared to other demographic groups (Yee et al., 2016). This consumer group is the prime target for this study because they are known to be fashion conscious (Muposhi and Chuchu, 2022). Millennials are regarded the trendsetters within the fashion industry and have a large amount of influence over older generations (Hinzmann and Stark-Nässlin, 2020). In addition, they are technologically savvy, have traits of independence, and possess a high level of purchasing power (Eastman and Liu, 2012). They are considered "the first digital natives", making them comfortable with all available technologies and able to multitask while using devices (Gazzola et al., 2020). Although the market size and market potential of Millennials is not precisely known, in South Africa alone, it is estimated that they contribute to more than 50% of retail sales (Duh and Struwig, 2015). According to Moodly (2020), Millennials in South Africa make up 66% of the population and have a greater influence on purchasing fast and slow fashion items. They are positioned as the leaders of apparel consumption (Matthee, 2022). Millennials are likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviours because they were born in an era where environmental consciousness and active calls for action are seen as crucial (Muposhi et al., 2015). While Millennials have been the core consumers of fast fashion, they are now highly conscious of the environmental impact of clothing consumption and are more motivated to participate in the movement towards sustainability (Lindén, 2017). Hassan et al. (2022) acknowledge that there has been a shift with consumers growing concerned about sustainable consumption and an increased readiness to purchase environmentally friendly items, such as second-hand clothes, while also reducing clothing purchases and recycling clothes. Agbanrin (2019) and Yamane and Kaneko (2021) concur that Millennials are the most sustainable generation to date, and they

continue to seek products that are sustainable, ethical and artisanal, repairable, and long lasting. In addition, Millennials have the greatest purchasing power and claim that they are willing to pay extra for brands that offer sustainable products (Bernardes et al., 2018; Tang and Lam, 2017). More importantly, this generation seeks value in clothes that align with their ideals and they expect value for their money (Moser, 2016). This illustrates why Millennials are anticipated to adopt environmentally conscious behaviors like purchasing sustainable fashion (Rolling and Sadachar, 2018; Muposhi and Chuchu, 2022).

2.8 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The perceived high social and environmental impact of the fashion industry among Millennials and their positive attitude towards ethical products often fail to translate into ethical fashion purchases, a phenomenon called intention-behavior gap; Wiederhold and Martinez, 2018; Cherradi and Tetik, 2020; Wehring, 2021). Resulting from this gap is the understanding that consumer perspectives on green behaviour is complex than it was originally thought to be (Mkhize and Ellis, 2018). Research has delivered no sure facts to explain the intention-behavior gap for eco- friendly fashion (Teixeira, 2020). Papaoikonomou et al. (2011) point out that consumer behaviour is unpredictable as it differs depending on the circumstances and what motivates consumers at the time when they make purchasing decisions.

To explore the inconsistencies between intentions and behaviour in ethical apparel consumption among the Millennials in South Africa, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is employed as the foundation for analysing ethical consumer behaviour (Amed et al., 2019; Rizkalla et al., 2022). The TPB is considered one of the preeminent approaches to explaining behaviour and intention (Jang et al., 2014). Synodinos (2014) affirms that the TPB model is also a reliable predictor of a relationship between intention and behaviour. Being one of the most researched and acknowledged models, the TPB might help shed light as to why consumers choose to perform certain actions over various alternatives (Ajzen, 1991; Armitage and Conner, 2001). Due to its closeness to ethical behaviour (Yadav and Pathak, 2017), TPB is chosen as the foundation and dominant theory for the present study.

2.9 THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (TPB)

The TPB is a social-psychological model that has successfully been applied in different streams of research, including that of consumer buying behavior in the context of the attitude-behavior gap (Brandão and Costa, 2021). The TPB provides a better framework for dealing with complex human behaviour in the context of sustainability (Ahmed et al., 2018), as the theory has the ability to explain a wide range of pro-environmental behaviours and intentions to purchase green and fashion products (Dangelico et al, 2022). The model proposes that intentions that guide behaviour are determined by a combination of three explanatory factors; the

attitudes towards behaviour, subjective norms; and perceived behavioural control. The critical factor in determining individuals' behaviour according to this model is intention (Lindén, 2017). Intention denotes the amount of effort an individual is willing to exert to perform certain behaviour. It is an individual's choice and dedication to execute an action and accomplish a purchasing objective (Mkhize, 2017). As a general rule, the stronger the intention to perform a behaviour, the more likely its performance should be (Ajzen, 1991; Papaoikonomou et al., 2011). Behavioural intention has been found to be the immediate predictor of actual behaviour in different fields of study, including ethical decision making (Rausch and Kopplin, 2021). Egmond and Bruel (2007) concur that intention is a strong predictor of behaviour within the sustainability context.

2.9.1 Attitude

Attitude refers to "the degree to which an individual holds a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the concerned behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991). According to Macovei (2014), attitude is the level of agreement or disagreement with the behaviour in question. Attitudes can be regarded as tendencies an individual exhibits concerning a particular item or occasion that stem from prior encounters and past experiences (Moon and Bordi, 2019). A person's attitude towards a specific behaviour indicates their beliefs about the consequences of performing the said behaviour and their evaluation of the outcome (Ajzen, 2011). An individual's evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages associated with carrying out an action influences their decision to engage (or not engage) in the behavior (Cheng et al., 2006). Attitude has been found to play a significant role in a person's intention to purchase sustainable products (Yadav and Pathak, 2017; Paul et al., 2016). A study by Rausch and Kopplin, (2020) established that attitude significantly impacts a person's intention to purchase sustainable clothing. Similarly, in the context of ethical fashion, Chen and Chung, (2016) found that an individual who believes their behaviour will result in a positive outcome and holds a favourable attitude is likely to purchase ethical clothes. This means there is a robust and positive relationship between consumers' attitude and behavioural intentions towards ethical fashion (Nam et al., 2017). Thus, drawing from the aforementioned discussion, the study posits the following hypothesis:

H1 – Attitude will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention towards ethical apparel.

2.9.2 Subjective norms

Subjective norm is defined as "perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991). This relates to an individual's perception of significant others (friends, family, and/or colleagues) in combination with the motivation to meet referents' expectations of behaviour (Kumar et al., 2021). In the context of ethical fashion, subjective norm is "the sum of normative belief evaluations about how ethical-fashion consumption is perceived among consumers' peers" (Lambert, 2019). For example, the prevailing

social pressure towards ethical conduct of fashion brands to address the societal impacts of their operations is extending to consumers, compelling them to align behaviour with sustainability (Lundblad and Davies, 2016). When consumers perceive significant approval from others of ethical fashion, they too are likely to be inclined to adopt these behaviours to gain social approval (Paul et al., 2016; Lui et al., 2021; Rausch and Kopplin, 2021). Although some studies have found a positive relationship between subjective norms and intention to purchase ethical fashion (Nguyen et al., 2019; Yadav and Pathak, 2017; Khare, 2019), others have not found any correlation between the two (Kang et al., 2013; Moon and Bordi (2019) argue that the influence of subjective norms on an individual depends on the degree of their interaction with significant others, which means the higher the interaction with referents, the higher the likelihood of performing the behaviour and vice versa (Kumar et al., 2021). The findings show that social influence is a key driver to sustainable purchase intention (Sreen et al., 2018). Considering the above factors, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2 – Subjective norms will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical apparel.

2.9.3 Perceived behavioural control

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) is an important variable that considers actions that are partly within volitional control (Paul et al., 2016). The PBC relates to an individual's perception of the availability or scarcity of resources and opportunities that support or impede behavior, along with their control power, which is the perceived capability to influence these factors (Ajzen, 1999). According to Yadav and Pathak (2017), PBC reflects an individual's ease or difficulty in performing certain behaviors. PBC highlights the barriers or constraints which may hinder a consumer's buying intention (Moser, 2016). The intended behaviour can only occur when an individual is in possession of money, time, skills, knowledge, and the ability to perform the act (Ahmed et al., 2018). Consumers with the ability to control the above said factors are likely to have a positive behavioural intention (Paul et al., 2016). As long as individuals have sufficient actual control over a behaviour, the intended behaviour can be achieved (Issock et al., 2020). An individual with the ability to control resources and the opportunity to act is likely to have a positive behavioural intention that results in the purchase of ethical fashion (Kumar et al., 2021). Hence, we can posit that PBC directly influences intention and behavior, whereby higher PBC leads to more favourable behavioral intentions and, consequently, behavior performance, and vice versa (Ajzen, 1991; Leone et al., 1999). Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3 – Perceived behavioural control will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

Figure 2.3 below depicts the TPB model adopted from Ajzen (1991).
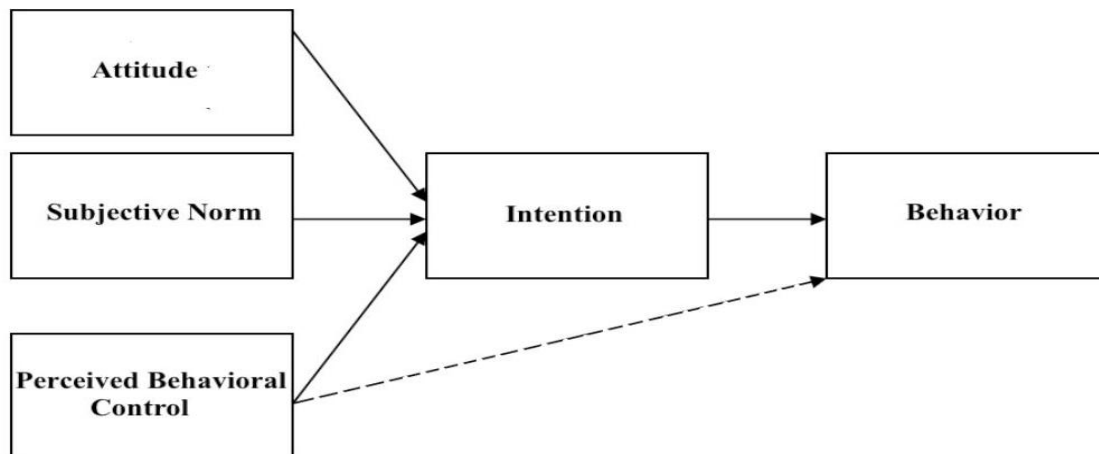
Figure 2.3: Theory of planned behaviour (TPB)

2. 10 LIMITATIONS OF THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (TPB)

To a large extent, the TPB assumes that the intention to purchase green products is equally predicted by the three components of the theory (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control) (Varah et al., 2020). However, Rodriques et al. (2023) argue that the TPB constructs do not often have the same importance in predicting intention which subsequently leads to behaviour. The authors add that the weight of the constructs differs significantly depending on the type of behaviour and context in question. For example, a study by Han and Stoel (2017), validates a strong association between the three behavioural antecedents and intention to buy, but underscores attitude as one of the most significant constructs, followed by subjective norms, and lastly behavioural control. In another study by Kang et al. (2013), as well as one by Brandão and Costa (2021), attitudes and subjective norms positively predicted purchase intentions for environmentally sustainable textiles and apparel among young customers, whereas perceived behavioral control did not have a significant effect. While the above two studies ascertain that PBC did not exert a significant influence on the intention, a study conducted by Bong Ko and Jin (2017), discovered that PBC has a notable impact on consumers' intention to purchase green apparel products. Furthermore, Zhang et al., (2019) also found attitude and perceived behavioural control positively influenced the purchase intention for hedonic green products, such as organic clothing, while subjective norms only affected the purchase intention of utilitarian green products, such as energy efficient household appliances.

The discussion above highlights inconsistent conclusions presented by the TPB in various studies, thus suggesting that these constructs alone may not be adequate in predicting behaviour. Therefore, adding other constructs may increase the predictability of ethical consumption behaviour of young consumers in South Africa. Ajzen (1991), as well as Rise et al., (2010), supports the view that adding new constructs to the TPB

model could capture a considerable portion of the variation in the intention or behaviour of consumers. Therefore, to overcome these shortcomings, the present study alters the path of the existing TPB by adding new constructs to strengthen the predictive power of the model. This may improve the understanding of the existing inconsistencies between intentions and behaviours of young consumers towards ethical fashion in South Africa.

2.11 DERIVATION OF THE EXTENDED TPB

In order to understand differences in attitudes, intentions, and actual behaviour of consumers, studies have found the need to develop holistic conceptual models of sustainably minded consumers that specifically concentrate on explaining the gaps identified above (Zhang et al., 2019; Yadav and Pathak, 2016). Researchers have proposed several determinants of behaviour that can be investigated in an attempt to understand the existing attitude-intention behaviour gap of consumers. A study by Diddi and Niehm (2017) points out that personal norms and values do have a significant influence on attitude towards the purchase intentions of green fashion brands that promote sustainable practices. Moreover, individual knowledge and concern over environmental and ethical issues were also found to have influences on consumer susceptibility to ethical fashion (Sahiti and Dickmann, 2020; Paul et al., 2016). Other possible determinants of behaviour include, among others, perceived consumer effectiveness (Dehosse, 2020), as well as trust and skepticism (Lui et al., 2020). Conversely, another study points out the importance of investigating situational factors that consumers face in everyday life that might have an influence on their actual purchase behaviours (Lambert, 2019; Witek, 2019), While there is extensive literature aimed at elucidating the behavior of ethically conscious consumers in the fashion realm, these have not provided comprehensive explanations of determinants of consumer purchase behaviour for ethical fashion, thus suggesting the need for further study in this area (Rausch and Kopplin, 2020). Accordingly, based on the existing literature, the current study extends the original TPB with perceived environmental knowledge adapted from Kumar et al. (2017);, environmental concern from Kim and Choi (2005) and Sidique et al. (2010); perceived consumer effectiveness from Jaiswal and Kant (2018); and situational context from Carrington et al. (2010) in an attempt to understand consumer behaviour and possibly gain a better explanation of the existing intention-behaviour gap in ethical fashion consumption. The adapted variables were to date found to have an influence on both the attitude and intention to purchase ethically produced items (Rizkalla et al., 2022). These aspects will be discussed in the section to follow.

2.11.1 Perceived consumer effectiveness

Perceived consumer effectiveness pertains to an individual's belief in the efficacy of their personal efforts to positively impact the environment (Kim and Choi, 2005). Perceived consumer effectiveness is considered a significant predictor of ethical consumer behaviour compared to other psychological factors (Vermeir and

Verbeke, 2006). Depending on an individual perception of their effectiveness, perceived consumer effectiveness makes consumers better internally directed and makes them perceive actions to be fruitful in protecting the environment (Jaiswal and Kant, 2018). In the context of ethical fashion, perceived consumer effectiveness can be explained as the intensity of consumer perspectives that their actions could influence fashion companies to behave sustainably (Lui and Tiger, 2017). Studies that have examined the impact of perceived consumer effectiveness on the purchase intention of ethical fashion have found that individuals who consider themselves as having the capacity to make a difference through mindful consumption are more inclined to hold favorable attitudes towards ethical fashion items, resulting in an increased likelihood of them buying ethical fashion (Kang at al., 2013). Kumar et al. (2021) accords that consumers with high perceived consumer effectiveness portray favourable behaviour to purchase eco-friendly apparel. On the contrary, even if consumers are concerned about environmental and ethical problems and have the desire to engage in pro-environment behaviour, they may not purchase ethical fashion because they feel their efforts are too small to make a difference. Additionally, most consumers still opt for fast fashion purchases (Wielderhold and Martinez, 2018). Such a set of people believe big businesses, the government, and others can have a positive impact that can be felt on the environment, unlike small individual efforts. Though this may be true, case studies stress the importance of having an enabling sense for combating environmental challenges (Kumar et al., 2021). Thus, we hypothesis that:

H4 – Perceived consumer effectiveness will have a positive impact on Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

2.11.2 Environmental concern

As a result of increasing environmental knowledge, environmental concern across the globe continues to increase steadily, thus making environmental concern an essential construct in consumer decision making (Mkhize and Ellis, 2018). Environmental concern has been identified as a significant factor influencing green purchasing behavior. It encompasses individuals' awareness of environmental issues, their support for initiatives aimed at addressing them, and their willingness to contribute personally to the solution (Xiao et al., 2021). Environmental concern was found to motivate the intention to purchase eco-friendly fashion (Kumar et al., 2021). Some studies have indeed found a positive and direct relationship between the environmental concern and purchase intention for green products (Zhang et al., 2019; Park and Lin, 2018; Prakash and Pathak, 2017). Ajzen and Fishbein (2000) found that environmental concern affects behaviour indirectly through the three core constructs of TPB, namely the attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Furthermore, Chen and Tung (2014), along with Wang et al. (2016), reported that higher environmental concern has a direct positive influence on attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control towards purchase intention of eco-friendly products. Paul et al. (2016) also discussed the effect of

environmental concern on the three main variables of the TPB and accorded that environmental concern increases an individual's purchase intention to buy green products. In the context of fashion, unethical production of fashion and its impact on the environment has been exposed in recent years and consumers are seeking to change their consumption habits by purchasing from fashion brands with sustainability claims (Sahiti and Dickmann, 2020). Hence, we formulate the following four hypotheses:

H5a – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on attitude and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5b – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on subjective norms and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5c – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5d – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived consumer effectiveness and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

2.11.3 Environmental knowledge

Environmental knowledge contributes to the cognitive aspect of forming green attitudes (Kumar et al., 2017; Yadav and Pathak, 2016). Environmental knowledge pertains to the comprehension of facts, principles, and connections concerning the natural environment and its primary ecosystems. (Fryxell and Lo, 2003). Environmental knowledge is thus the level of information consumers have about the environment and the awareness of environmental issues (Zheng and Chi, 2015). An individual who is environmentally knowledgeable is one who is aware of environmental issues and is conscious of the consequences of human actions on the environment, enabling them to differentiate the attributes and environmental impact of sustainable products from conventional products, which consequently leads to positive favourable attitude formation towards sustainable products (Rausch and Kopplin, 2021). There exist two types of environmental knowledge, viz objective and subjective. Objective environmental knowledge refers to what consumers actually know about sustainable products, while subjective environmental knowledge refers to consumer perceived knowledge about sustainable products (Pagiaslis and Krontalis, 2014). This study will focus on both subjective and objective knowledge, considering that consumers rely on both when making purchase decisions (Cherradi and Tetik, 2020).

Sustainable decisions are made possible by environmental knowledge, and it is rare for a person to exercise sustainability consumption without complete understanding of environmental issues and their impact (Wehring, 2021). For a person to take responsible actions towards the protection of the environment, a higher

level of environmental knowledge is key (Zheng and Chi, 2015). According to Sahiti and Dickmann (2020), limited knowledge of environmental issues hinders the consumption of sustainable products, while complete understanding of problems has a close connection with sustainable behaviour. This means the better the knowledge, the higher the chances of purchasing ethical products. In the context of ethical fashion, consumers with greater environmental knowledge are more likely to engage in eco conscious clothing consumption (Rausch and Koppling, 2020).

Be this as it may, it is worth noting that prior studies indicate that increased information has a positive influence on the purchase intention (Joshi and Rahman, 2015; Hassan et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2017). Zheng and Chi (2015) state that taking responsible actions towards environmental protection requires a higher level of environmental knowledge. On the other hand, several studies (Chang 2011: Henninger and Singh, 2017; Park and Lin, 2018) have found a negative relationship between environmental knowledge and sustainable purchase intention. This suggests that the quantity and quality of information could play a significant role in regards to sustainable consumption intentions (Longo et al., 2017). The vast amount of information put out by companies regarding social concerns is presenting ambiguous environmental information that is confusing to consumers, therefore, causing them to become skeptical about environmental performance and benefits of sustainable products (Goh and Balaji, 2016). This also poses a risk of information overload, which might lead to skepticism as consumers may fail to process the richness of the available information (Weiner, 2017). Skepticism is delineated as the doubt on the credibility of environmental degradation (Longo et al., 2017). Although there is limited study regarding the relationship between environmental knowledge and information overload (skepticism), a few studies show mixed results of both positive and negative relationship between the two (Cherradi and Tetik, 2020). However, the study of Yadav and Patak (2016) found that environmental knowledge influence attitude which may also shape individuals' behaviour towards environmentally friendly apparel. Therefore, based on the above discussion, the present study formulates the following hypothesis:

H6 – Environmental knowledge will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' attitude and purchasing intention of ethical fashion.

2.11.4 Situational context

Intention is a reliable predictor of behavior, yet research suggests the presence of a disparity between intentions and actual behavior. (Rausch and Kopplin, 2021). A study by Lam, (2017) affirms that buying intentions alone do not necessarily form buying behaviour; instead, situational factors and contextual influences may play a significant role in shaping consumer decision-making. In this study, the situational context was incorporated into the TPB model to better predict ethical behavior (Dehosse, 2020). This should expose complexities of consumers' decision-making processes (Untarini, 2020) if any are relevant. In the case

of consumer behaviour, situational factors are characterised as environmental elements of individuals at a particular time and place (Loersch and Payne, 2011). Situational factors have the potential to block, frustrate, or conflict an individual's intentions from translating into behaviour (Gravel et al., 2013). An intention-behaviour gap can occur when consumers are faced with an environment that is outside their span of control (Han et al., 2010). According to Baecke and Van Den Poel (2010), environmental stimuli that can affect consumer behaviour can be situational; meaning that the stimuli are temporary situations such as lack of trust, limited choice of merchandise, availability, and financial constraints. The other stimuli are objects, relating to product characteristics, brand, and retail features. In the same manner, Polianskaia (2018) brings to attention that contextual factors in particular product-related attributes (style, design, and quality) and store-related attributes (store design, merchandise selection, customer service, and ethical practice) can have a significant influence on individuals, when they intend to purchase ethical products, thus providing further explanation for why intention may fail to actualise into desired behaviour.

Situational factors can be evaluated through the objective or psychological aspect, of which objective aspect refers to physical stimuli in the environment and psychological aspect refers to subjective meanings and interpretations of situations (Simpson and Radford, 2014). What researchers fail to realise is that some situational factors that impact consumer behaviour are subconscious to the consumers, meaning they are unaware of them, for example the effect of lighting cues in a store environment (Furnham and Milner, 2013).The lack of consideration for such components indicates that unconscious attributes may have greater effect on consumer decision, compared to conscious attributes (Andreu et al., 2010), hence it is crucial to identify situational factors that originate in the environment before interpretation (Baecke and Van den Poel, 2010). For instance, the subconscious influence of factors such as the presence of other shoppers in the store and potential savings on lighting effects can influence consumers to buy or not buy ethical fashion items (Lee, 2014).

The concepts above show that the behaviour of ethically-minded consumers is complex. This is because consumers' intention meets with real life situations, which may negatively affect their intended behaviour depending on how they perceive the situation (Polianskaia, 2018). Therefore, based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H7 – Situational context/factors will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

This section presented the Theory of Planned Behavior as the primary framework for the study. The key components of TPB, including attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms, were introduced

and discussed. Furthermore, the framework is extended by four more variables surrounding the TPB to enhance its predictive ability. These include perceived consumer effectiveness, situational context, as well as environmental knowledge and environmental concern.

2.12 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS AND MODEL VARIATION

Based on the reviewed studies, this section, therefore, presents the research objectives together with supporting hypotheses of the study and further highlights the proposed model structure surrounding the TPB that will statistically be analysed to answer the research objectives and hypotheses set for the study.

2.12.1 Research objective 1:

To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical apparel, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1 – Attitude will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

H2 – Subjective norms will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

H3 – Perceived behavioural control will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

2.12.2 Research objective 2:

To determine whether integrating perceived consumer effectiveness as a direct construct to behavioural intention would have any influence on the intention to purchase ethical apparel among millennial consumers in South Africa., the following hypothesis was formulated:

H4 – Perceived consumer effectiveness will have a positive and significant impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

2.12.3 Research objective 3a:

To determine if the relationship between environmental concern and all other direct constructs of behavioural intention (ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE) will enhance the predictive ability for South African millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical apparel, the following four hypotheses were formulated:

H5a – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on attitude and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5b – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on subjective norms and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5c – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5d – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived consumer effectiveness and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

2.12.4 Research objective 3b:

To determine whether the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude will enhance the predictive ability for millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H6 – Environmental knowledge will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' attitude and purchase intention of ethical fashion.

2.12.5 Research objective4:

To determine the extent to which situational context influences South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H7 – Situational context will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

The extended TPB, along with the stated hypotheses of the study, is presented in Figure 2.4 below.
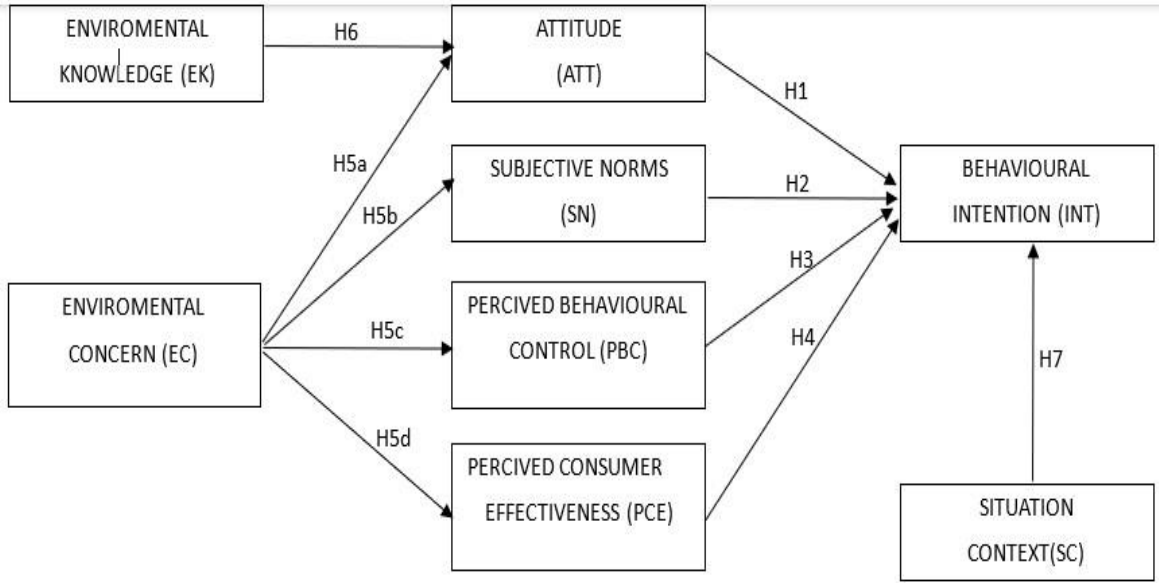
Figure 2.4: Summary of the model variations reflecting hypothesised path

2.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive review of literature regarding ethical fashion consumption, examining the existing gap between intention and behavior from both international and local perspectives. Furthermore, a brief history of the fashion industry was discussed to contextualise the current fashion system and underscore the industry's profound impact on the environment and society. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) will lead the study to investigate how its three variables influence South African Millennial consumers intention to purchase ethical apparel. These variables include: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. To enhance the forecasting capability of the model, and achieve comprehensive results on Millennials' intended behaviour towards purchasing ethical apparel, the study integrates four other variables, namely: environmental knowledge, environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, and situational context. The research objectives and hypotheses were delineated, with an introduction and conclusion regarding the model structures surrounding the TPB. The subsequent chapter will delve into the methodology employed by the project to fulfil its aims and objectives.

CHAPTER 3:

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Following the theoretical discussion of this dissertation, this section explains and justifies the quantitative method used to perform the data analysis. This section delineates the research approach, research design, research strategy, sampling approach, data collection, and methods chosen for the study. Furthermore, the data analysis process through structural modelling equation is briefly explained to set the tone for the next chapter of results and discussion. The research methodology is, therefore, referred to as a strategy of how an enquiry should proceed from the underlying assumption to research design, data collection, and analysis (Myers, 2009). It is a methodical approach to delineate and elucidate how the research study will progress (Goundar, 2012). The research methodology guarantees the attainment of valid and reliable outcomes, directly addressing the research aims and objectives of a project (Jansen and Warren, 2020). In essence, the research methodology involves determining which data to gather, from whom to gather it, and what instruments will be utilised, such as measurement items, sources, and measurement scales. It also involves determining how to collect the data (which data collection methods to employ) and how to analyse it by selecting suitable data analysis methods (Williams, 2022). This chapter is dedicated to addressing these aforementioned aspects.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Researchers may choose between an inductive or deductive approach when designing a study, with each approach aligning differently with specific research objectives. Inductive approach starts with an observation and constructing a theory to explain it, while a deductive approach begins with a general theory or hypothesis followed by data collection and analysis to see if the theory is supported or not (Cresswell, 2014; Saunders and Lewis, 2012). Induction includes the discovery of patterns, while deduction involves testing hypotheses and theories (Johnson and Onwuegbuzi, 2004). Therefore, the current study adopts a deductive approach, which begins by formulating hypotheses grounded in established theories and or literature (as stated in Chapter 2). One benefit of employing a deductive approach is its capability to elucidate relationships between variables or concepts while simultaneously quantitatively measuring those concepts, thus allowing for the potential generalization of research findings to some extent (Wilson, 2010).

The study also utilised a positivist approach, hence it is more suitable to adopt a deductive approach where theory or hypothesis is based on prevailing literature, which forms the whole construct of data collection (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012). This methodology is utilised in this study, as its rationale is typically associated with quantitative research. In a positivist approach, ideas and concepts are simplified into variables,

enabling the testing of their relationships independently from the researcher and their instruments. This means the reality of relationships between a theory and research is objectively observed (Neuman, 2014). The current study, which utilises the TPB and formulates hypotheses based on existing literature, aligns with the positivist perspective by acknowledging that predictors in the context of ethical apparel do influence behavioral intention (Chen and Tung, 2014).

Table 3.1 below gives an indication of relationship variables both independent and dependent variables that will be measured/examined to achieve a deeper comprehension of the research subject. Dependent variables (DV) are variables that change in response to alterations in independent variables (IV), while independent variables can be manipulated or altered to gauge their effect on a situation involving a dependent variable (Saunders et al., 2016) it is crucial to note that in this study, both the independent and dependent variables are multidimensional constructs. These constructs are vital for comprehending the factors that might influence the intended behavior of South African Millennial consumers towards ethical fashion and for testing the hypotheses outlined below.

Table 3.1 Dependent and independent variable related to each hypothesised path

HYPOTHESIS	VARIABLES
H1-Attitude will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion. H2- Subjective norms will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion. H3- Perceived behavioural control will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion. H4- Perceived consumer effectiveness will have a positive and significant impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.	IV- ATT + SN + PBC +PCE DV- INT
H5a- Environmental concern will have a positive impact on attitude and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. H5b- Environmental concern will have a positive impact on subjective norm and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. H5c- Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. H5d- Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived consumer effectiveness and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.	IV- EC DV- ATT + SN +PBC+ PCE

H6- Environmental knowledge will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' attitude and purchasing intention of ethical fashion.	IV-EK DV-ATT
H7- Situational context/factors will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.	IV- SC DV- INT

3.3 QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Following the discussion above, the current study found it suitable to utilise a quantitative method as a viable method for testing hypotheses and analysing the associations between the independent and dependent variables. With quantitative research methodologies, data is collected in the form of numbers and the aim is to provide the exact measures of an effect and confirm theories (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Kotler and Armstrong, 2008). Researchers employing a quantitative approach typically aim to derive explanations and predictions applicable to other individuals and contexts. The objective is to establish, validate, or confirm relationships between measured variables and to formulate generalisations that enhance theory (Lambert, 2019). Quantitative research commences with a problem statement and entails crafting hypotheses before initiating the research process. According to Creswell, (2003), strategies of enquiry such as surveys can be employed in quantitative research and gather data using predetermined instruments that produce statistical data. The outcomes of quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory, and confirmatory. In regards to the above, the following section introduces the research design of quantitative study which outlines strategies of enquiry.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design serves as a framework that outlines the process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Cresswell et al., 2007). Grey (2014) suggests that a research design establishes the steps necessary to gather and analyse data, as well as how these steps will address the research question. In other words, research design is regarded as the foundation for data gathering and data analysis and can be categorised into exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). While exploratory research is carried out when not enough is known about a phenomenon to gain insights into a research problem that is not clearly defined (Saunders et al., 2007), descriptive research aims to obtain a precise picture or description of occurrences, individuals, or circumstances as they occur naturally (Saunders et al., 2016). However, descriptive studies are limited in their ability to explain the underlying reasons behind an event, making them more appropriate for investigating new or less explored research areas (Punch, 2005).

Therefore, the current study follows the explanatory research approach, which builds on a combination of descriptive and exploratory research, and proceeds to pinpoint the actual causes behind the occurrence of a phenomenon. Explanatory research is also known as casual research, as it focuses on studying a situation or

an existing problem, in this case the intention-behaviour gap among South African Millennials (Borusiak et al., 2018). An explanatory design allows the researcher to comprehend the correlation between causes (independent variables) and effects (dependent variable) of a phenomenon, and to forecast an effect with causal variables. This study investigates the direct factors (attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, perceived consumer effectiveness) and indirect factors (environmental knowledge, environmental concern) as causes of not having ethical apparel purchase intentions (dependent variable), portraying them as the effects. The objective is to ascertain whether the connections between these variables can influence South African Millennials' intention towards ethical apparel consumption, which subsequently leads to behaviour. It will identify the effects of the selected independent variables on the intention to purchase ethical apparel's dependent variable. To examine these relationships between variables, a correlation study framework was deemed the most appropriate to utilise, as its primary objective is to examine the connections between variables and offer estimates for their variance (Polit and Beck, 2010). Moreover, the correlation design was chosen due to its capacity to investigate intricate relationships among variables. This approach enables the identification of the interdependence and significance of variables in relation to each other, rather than focusing on causality (Mann, 2003; Polit and Beck, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Regarding the time horizon, this study adopted a cross-sectional design, which entails examining a specific issue within a brief timeframe to obtain immediate insights into reality (Dehosse, 2020). In this scenario, variables are identified simultaneously, and their relationships are assessed accordingly. (Babbie and Mouton, 2007). A cross sectional approach is relatively inexpensive and quick to implement since it is a once-off investigation of a phenomenon and is deemed sufficient to meet the objectives of this study (Setia. 2016).

3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY

A sampling strategy refers to the method or plan used to select a subset of individuals or items from a larger population for the purpose of conducting research or obtaining information (Oloffson et al., 2014). This approach starts by clearly defining the specific group of interest, choosing a source from which the sample will be drawn, selecting a method for sampling, and deciding on the size of the sample (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.5.1 Target population and sample

Target population, also known as the theoretical population, is the total population that the researcher hopes to study as they contain varying characteristics and attributes (Matthee, 2022). A sample is, therefore, a smaller group of individuals taken from a larger population for measurement of some kind (Zikmund and Babin, 2016). Sampling enables making predictions or drawing conclusions about the entire population or making generalisations based on existing theories (Taherdoost, 2016). The target population for this research comprises all individuals within the Millennial age group, specifically between 23 to 44 years old, residing in

South Africa (Delothole, 2021). Millennial consumers have shown a deeper concern for the environment and social issues, and are more likely to have a strong interest in ethical apparel compared to previous generations (Moser, 2016; Naderi and Van Steenburg, 2018). Due to this reason, they have higher chances of aligning these values with their consumption patterns (Valentine and Powers, 2013). What also makes them suitable for this study is that they have the greatest purchasing power of South African cohorts and are willing to pay extra for brands that offer sustainability initiatives (Bernardes et al., 2018). As precise statistics regarding the market size and potential of Millennials are not readily available, it is estimated that Millennials account for over 50% of retail sales in South Africa. This significant contribution underscores their importance as the primary focus of this study (Muposhi and Chuchu, 2022).

3.5.2 Sampling size

Maree (2016) was used as a guide to calculate the sample size, along with a sample size calculator. It is generally acceptable to collect 10 responses per variable being investigated and seeing as though there are 30 variables in question (excluding the demographic section), a total of 300 (albeit 290) responses was deemed adequate for this study.

3.5.3 Sampling methodology

In research, there are two main types of sampling techniques: non-probability sampling and probability sampling. Non-probability sampling involves not everyone having an equal chance of being selected, whereas in probability sampling, everyone has an equal chance of being selected for participation in a study. Non-probability sampling is appropriate when the population shares similar characteristics and respondents are easily accessible, whereas probability sampling is employed when the population is diverse and challenging to locate. There are four main categories of non-probability sampling methods: convenience sampling, judgmental sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Showkat and Parveen, 2017; Malhotra, 2010).

The current study employed non-probability sampling to recruit South African Millennial fashion consumers (Saunders et al., 2012). Non-probability sampling is utilised in the study due to its cost-effectiveness and efficiency compared to probability sampling methods, where every individual in a population has an equal chance of selection (Tansey, 2007). A purposive sampling method was employed to select South African Millennials between the ages 23 to 43 years old and willing to complete the survey in full. Purposive sampling is a technique where the researcher intentionally selects specific cases or respondents believed to be most suitable for answering the research questions and achieving the study's objectives (Creswell et al., 2014; Taherdoost, 2016). With this approach, the researcher relies on their own judgment to select respondents who can offer valuable insights that may not be attainable through alternative options (Taherdoost, 2016).

Although non-probability sampling might lack generalisation of results, to overcome this major deficiency (Showkat and Parveen, 2017), the study employed snowball sampling, where each participant was requested to identify at least one or more individuals in the same age group to share the survey with. In cases where an individual was not able to directly share the link with interested parties, they were encouraged to furnish the researcher with their contact details so they could be requested to take part in the survey. The snowball sampling approach was selected to increase the sample size, particularly due to the challenge of finding Millennial respondents for the questionnaire. Furthermore, snowball approach facilitated the identification of Millennials who are willing to spend extra money on brands that promote sustainability and ethical practices (Bernardes et al., 2018). This enabled the study to achieve a larger sample size and ensure external validity. Moreover, since data collection was conducted only once, the external validity of the study was somewhat reduced (Cherradi and Tetik, 2020).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Data collection involves various methods for obtaining information related to specific variables of the study, with the objective of utilizing them in the data analysis stage to address the research objectives, test hypotheses, and assess outcomes (Taherdoost, 2016; Maree, 2016). The data collection phase should be allocated plenty of time in order to gain appropriate results, since insufficient and inaccurate data may reduce the accuracy of the research findings (Kabir, 2016). The following section outlines the data collection instrument employed in this study and elaborates the process of instrument development and distribution to efficiently collect data for the research.

3.6.1 Data collection instrument

For this study, a self-administered questionnaire served as the survey instrument for data collection. This approach enables the researcher to address the research objectives, test hypotheses, and assess study outcomes (Maree, 2016). The questionnaire for the study was not piloted, but was shared with the supervisor and comments and suggestions were made accordingly in order to strengthen the hypotheses and question design. This type of survey is conducted on the internet. Online surveys are generally cheap and quick to administer, the absence of the researcher eliminates interviewer variability and provides convenience for respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.6.2 Distribution of questionnaire

A unique web link was created to enable respondents to access the survey via their computer, tablet, or smartphone. An invitation with a link to the electronic questionnaire was posted on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram and over email, thus reaching a large

audience within the same age category across South Africa. On these social media platforms, the questionnaire was directed to groups that specifically discuss subjects concerned with lifestyle and fashion consumption, along with other relevant groups that were identified at the time of collecting data. Respondents were encouraged to share the link with their social networks. Potential respondents were asked if they know about ethical apparel and if they purchase such clothing. These two questions were asked not to screen respondents, as it was not the purpose of the project to screen them, but rather to test their intended-behaviour towards ethical apparel. Therefore, a negative answer to these questions still warranted the respondents the opportunity to progress with the questionnaire in order to measure the intention that South African Millennial consumers participating in the study hold towards ethical apparel. Each question had to be answered before proceeding to the next one to prevent incomplete responses, and all questions were mandatory for the survey to be considered complete.

3.6.3. Operationalisation of the constructs

Operationalisation lets the researcher define and clarify specific indicators of the theory to measurable items, thus allowing them to develop appropriate questions for the study (Saunders et al., 2009). The questionnaire for this study had a total of 42 questions.

The cover page of the questionnaire included information respondents may have wanted to be aware of prior to completion of the survey. It began by outlining the title of the research project, followed by a brief introduction explaining the purpose of the study and the value of their responses to the study. The researcher and supervisor's contact information was provided. The questionnaire used in the study can be found in Appendix 1. The sampling criteria, i.e. an adult South African Millennial consumer, were also specified.

Question 1 to 8 comprised of inquiries aimed at collecting demographic details from respondents, including age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education, occupation, and monthly income. This was done to enhance comprehension of the consumer profile and to exclude individuals ineligible for the project. The gathered information will be analysed descriptively.

Question 9 -12 aim to ascertain respondents awareness of ethical fashion, if they purchase it and the most important attributes they consider when buying ethical fashion as well as their sources of information about environmental and ethical issues and trends.

Question 13-17 focused on understanding respondents' feelings and opinions about ethical apparel. Prior to answering the questions, ethical apparel was clearly defined to ensure respondents had a better

understanding of the research context. Questions were then asked to analyse their attitude using 5-point semantic differential scales where 1 represents the lowest/negative response and 5 represents the highest/positive response. Figure 3.1 below provides a clear definition of ethical apparel.

> *Ethical fashion refers to clothing and apparel designed and produced with the goal of minimising harm to people, animals, and the environment. This includes considering the rights and welfare of workers involved in the production process, as well as the environmental impact of manufacturing and sourcing materials. Ethical fashion aims to promote sustainability and responsible consumption practices throughout the entire lifecycle of clothing, from production to disposal.*

Figure 3.1: Definition of ethical fashion

Question 18-42 was aimed at understanding respondents' behavioural intention towards ethical fashion and included analysis of the psychographic variables of the TPB framework; namely subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC); and additional variables, perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), Environmental Concern (EC), Environmental Knowledge (EK), and Situational context (SC). All the responses were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, indicating "Strongly Disagree," to 5, indicating "Strongly Agree."

Questions 13-42 of the questionnaire for this research was constructed using measurements borrowed from pertinent prior studies. The design of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) questions was influenced by Beck and Ajzen's (1991) original TPB variables, including ATT, SN, and PBC. The three scales associated with TPB were adapted from Kim and Karpova (2010), wherein attitude toward ethical fashion was assessed using a five-item semantic differentiation scale, and subjective norms and perceived behavioral control were gauged using three-item scales (Lui et al., 2021). Intention to purchase ethical fashion was evaluated using a four-item scale from Nguyen et al. (2018). As studies regarding ethical fashion remain sparse, particularly in South Africa, TPB and its extended constructs were slightly adapted to suit the purpose of the research. Three indicators developed by Jaiswal and Kant (2018), as well as Kim and Choi (2005), were included for perceived consumer effectiveness. Environmental concern was assessed by five measurement items, of which four were developed from Kim and Choi (2005) and one adapted from Sidique et al. (2010). Environmental knowledge included three indicators, of which two were developed by Kumar et al., (2017), and the third one was developed by the researcher. Lastly, situational context was measured by four items adapted from Carrington et al., (2010). Table 3.2 below provides a detailed description of scale items originally from ethical fashion consumerism research studies, and the modified statements which are included within the questionnaire. Modified statements with underlined bold word **(not)** indicate the statement is negatively worded: PCE 1, EC 1,2,3, EK 2 and SC 4. Mixing positive and negative questions reduces potential bias by preventing patterned responses

and encourages careful consideration, resulting in more reliable and accurate data (Barnette, 2000). The table also illustrates how all 30 variable indicators are linked to the research objectives and hypotheses established for this study.

Table 3.2 Reflection of TPB statements and the scale items included in the questionnaire

VARIABLE	INDICATORS (Section 3 of Questionnaire)	SOURCE
Attitudes toward ethical fashion		
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: 1) To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical apparel, the following hypotheses were formulated.		
Research hypotheses **H1 -** Attitude will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion		
ATT 1 (Q13)	**Source/original statement** I consider that buying ethical fashion goods is positive. **Rephrased** I consider buying ethical apparel is *Extremely negative (1)/Extremely positive(5)*	Kim and Karpova (2010)
ATT 2 (Q14)	**Source/original statement** I consider that buying ethical fashion goods is beneficial. **Rephrased** I consider that buying ethical apparel is *Extremely unbeneficial(1)/Extremely beneficial(5)*	
ATT 3 (Q15)	**Source/original statement** I consider that buying ethical fashion goods is useful. **Rephrased** I consider that buying ethical apparel is *Extremely useless (1)/Extremely useful (7)*	
ATT 4 (Q16)	**Source/original statement** I consider that buying ethical fashion goods is worthwhile. **Rephrased** I consider that buying ethical apparel is *Extremely unworthwhile (1)/Extremely worthwhile (5)*	
ATT 5 (Q17)	**Source/original statement** I consider that buying ethical fashion goods is wise. **Rephrased** I consider that buying ethical apparel is wise	

	Extremely unwise (1)/Extremely wise (5)		

CONSTRUCT	INDICATORS (Section 4 of Questionnaire)	SOURCE	
Subjective norms towards ethical apparel (SN)			
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: 1) To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical apparel, the following hypotheses were formulated.			
H2 - Subjective norms will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.			
SN 1 **(Q25)**	**Source/original statement** I believe close friends and family would think it is a good idea for me to buy ethical fashion goods. **Rephrased** I believe close friends and family would think it is a good idea for me to buy ethical apparel (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Kim and Karpova (2010)	
SN 2 **(Q26)**	**Source/original statement** I feel important people in my life want me to buy ethical fashion goods. **Rephrased** I feel important people in my life want me to buy ethical apparel. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)		
SN 3 **(27)**	**Source/original statement** The people who I listen to could influence me to buy ethical fashion goods. **Rephrased** The people who I listen to could influence me or expect me to buy ethical apparel. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)		

Perceived behaviour control towards ethical apparel (PBC)	
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical apparel, the following hypotheses were formulated.	
H3 - Perceived behavioural control will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.	

PBC 1 (Q28)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I have the resources, knowledge and capacity to buy ethical fashion goods. **Rephrased** I have the resources, knowledge and capacity to buy ethical apparel. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Kim and Korpova (2010)
PBC 2 (Q29)	**Source/Author's Statement:** Buying ethical fashion goods is easy for me. **Rephrased** Buying ethical apparel is easy for me. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
PBC 3 (Q30)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I have complete control over buying ethical fashion goods. **Rephrased** I have complete control over buying ethical apparel. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	

SOURCE	INDICATORS (Section 4 of Questionnaire)	Source
Perceived consumer effectiveness towards ethical apparel		
<u>**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 2:**</u> To determine whether integrating perceived consumer effectiveness as direct construct to behavioural intention would have any influence towards the intention to purchase ethical apparel among millennial consumers in South Africa, the following hypothesis was formulated		
H4 - Perceived consumer effectiveness will have a positive and significant impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.		
PCE 1 (Q18)	**Source/original statement** Every individual behaviour in support of environment can have a positive effect on society. **Rephrased** I believe that my behaviour in support of environment can have a positive effect on society. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Kim and Choi (2005); Jaiswal and Kant (2018)
PCE2 (Q19)	**Source/original statement** My contribution is capable of solving environmental problems. **Rephrased** I feel my contribution (purchasing ethical apparel) does <u>**not**</u> solve any environmental or social problems. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	

PCE 3 (Q20)	**Source/original statement** I can protect the environment by purchasing eco-friendly apparels. **Rephrased** I believe I can protect the environment by purchasing ethical fashion. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	

Intention towards ethical apparel (IN)	
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 1: To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical apparel, the following hypotheses were formulated.	
Research hypothesis: **H1: H2; H3; H4**	
IN 1 (Q21)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I plan to buy sustainable clothing in the next month. **Rephrased** I plan to buy ethical apparels in future/in my next apparel purchase.	Nguyen et al. (2018)
IN 2 (Q22)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I am willing to consider switching to another clothing brand for sustainable reasons. **Rephrased** I am willing to switch to another clothing brand for sustainable and social reasons.	
IN 3 (Q23)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I am willing to pay more for clothing which is sustainable or helps protect the environment. **Rephrased** I am willing to pay more for clothing which is ethically produced or/and helps protect the environment.	
IN 4 (Q24)	**Source/Author's Statement:** I will consider buying sustainable clothes because they are less polluting. **Rephrased** I will consider buying ethical apparel because they are less polluting	

Environmental concern towards ethical apparel	
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3a: To determine if the relationship between environmental concern and all other direct constructs of behavioural intention (ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE) will enhance the predictive ability for South African millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical apparel, the following four hypotheses were formulated.	
Research Hypothesis:	

H5a - Environmental concern will have a positive impact on attitude and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. **H5b** - Environmental concern will have a positive impact on subjective norm and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. **H5c** - Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa. **H5d** - Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived consumer effectiveness and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.		
EC 1 **(Q31)**	**Source/Author's Statement:** I am extremely worried about the state of the world's environment and what it will mean for my future. **Rephrased** I am **not** worried about the state of South Africa's environment and what it will mean for my future. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Kim and Choi (2005)
EC 2 **(Q32)**	**Source/Author's Statement:** Mankind is severely abusing the environment. **Rephrased** I believe human beings are **not** abusing the environment. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
EC 3 **(Q33)**	**Source/Author's Statement:** When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences. **Rephrased** I believe that when mankind interferes with the natural state of the environment, it will most likely produce disastrous consequences. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
EC 4 **(Q34)**	**Source/Author's Statement:** The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset. *Rephrased* *I believe that the balance of the natural environment is very delicate and can be easily upset.* (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
EC5 **(Q35)**	**Source/Author's Statement:** Humans must live in harmony with nature in order to survive. **Rephrased** I believe that mankind does **not** need to live in harmony with the natural environment in order to survive. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Sidique et al. (2010)

Environmental knowledge towards ethical apparel (EK)
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 3b:

To determine whether the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude will enhance the predictive ability for millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated.		
H6 - Environmental knowledge will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' attitude and purchasing intention of ethical fashion.		
EK 1 (Q36)	**Source/Author's Statement:** Using environmentally sustainable products is a substantial way to reduce the wasteful use of natural resources. **Rephrased** I believe buying/using ethical apparel is a substantial way to reduce the wasteful use of natural resources. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Kumar et al. (2017)
EK 2 (Q37)	**Source/Author's Statement**: Using environmentally sustainable products is a great way to conserve natural resources. **Rephrased** I believe using ethical apparel is <u>**not**</u> a great way to conserve natural resources. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
EK 3 (Q38)	**Source/Author's Statement:** Knowing about environmental issues allows me to make better fashion choices.	Self-developed

Situational context towards ethical apparel (SC)		
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE 4: To determine the extent to which situational context influences South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour of ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated.		
H7 - Situational context/factors will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.		
SC 1 (Q39)	**Source/Author's Statement:** The specific sustainable garment was out of stock. **Rephrased** When shopping for clothes, I don't find ethical apparel in store, they are usually out of stock. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	Carrington et al. (2010)
SC 2 (Q40)	**Source/Author's Statement:** Fast fashion was on sale. **Rephrased** Whenever I go shopping for clothes, ethical fashion is never on sale. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
SC 3 (41)	**Source/Author's Statement**: Influence of the sales person.	

	Rephrased The presence of a sales person and information provided helps me decide to purchase ethical apparel. (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	
SC 4 (Q42)	Source/Author's Statement: I was excited to buy items from a collection launched by a fast fashion brand. Rephrased I am **not** excited in buying items from a collection launched by fast fashion . (1=strongly disagree/ 5=strongly agree)	

In this section, the operationalisation of the research instrument is detailed. Sematic differentiation scale was used to measure responses in question 13-17, as derived from Kim and Korpova (2010), while all variables responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale as derived from De Freitas (2018) and Weiner (2017). The subsequent section explores the measures utilised by the research to validate the quality of the collected data before analysis.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves reviewing, evaluating, transforming, and modelling data in a systematic manner to uncover valuable insights and draw conclusions (Creswell, 2014). It can be seen as the process of transforming raw data into meaningful information that can be utilised to understand a phenomenon (Neuman, 2014). In research, data analysis typically consists of three stages. Firstly, data preparation involves cleaning and organizing the data for analysis. Next, descriptive statistics are used to summarise and communicate numerical observations, aiding in the comprehension of large datasets (Nolan and Hinzenn, 2011). It's important to note that data processing should be conducted thoughtfully, as it transforms data into knowledge (Pink, 2019).

Descriptive data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28, while inferential statistics employed Partial Least Squares (PLS) structural equation modelling through Stata V16 software for statistical analysis. PLS offers flexibility regarding assumptions about data distribution and is well-suited for predictive models and constructs with fewer measures. Moreover, PLS allow for both reflective and formative modeling of latent constructs and is acknowledged as a dependable approach for estimating causal models (Hair et al., 2017).

3.7.1 Step 1: Data preparation

Data preparation involves assessing the quality of the questionnaire to ensure final consistency and to identify data that is out of range and logically inconsistent (Malhotra, 2010). The process involves checking if responses are legible and that the most important questions were answered. Furthermore, it assesses whether the respondents answered all the questions. Data preparation for the present study began by data cleaning, which involved the removal of respondents above the age of 40 years old, and non-South Africans, as the study targeted South African Millennials between 20 and 40 years of age. Identifying information was also removed as their responses were anonymous. The data cleaning process is crucial in that it removes extraneous data, enabling the researcher to identify meaningful insights (Pickel, 2019).

3.7.2 Step 2: Descriptive statistics

Once the data was cleaned, the analysis proceeded with descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics organise, summarise, and communicate a set of numerical observations, aiding in the comprehension of extensive datasets (Nolan and Heinzen, 2011). A variable can be characterised in two manners: central tendency and dispersion or spread of variation. The former is among the most pertinent methods to elucidate the distribution of data, encompassing mean, median, and mode. The mean, also known as the average, indicates the arithmetic average of all data points. The mean, also referred to as the average, represents the arithmetic average calculated from all the data points. The median, on the other hand, signifies the middle value when the data is arranged in ascending or descending order, while the mode indicates the value that occurs most frequently within the dataset (Bryman and Bell, 2011). An essential aspect in describing data dispersion around the mean, median, and mode is the standard deviation, which indicates the extent to which values deviate from the mean. Another approach to assessing the spread of variations involves considering the minimum and maximum values, delineating the range of interval variables (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In the current study, averages and percentages were employed to gain an overview of respondents' demographic profiles and ascertain the characteristics of the sample as South African Millennials with intentions to purchase ethical apparel. The performance of the psychographic measurement variables within the study was also delineated, analysed, and presented through the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of each variable, as derived from the questionnaire results.

3.7.3 Step 3: Scale evaluation

Ensuring that all indicators align with the same concept is essential. This is achieved by evaluating the internal reliability of the instrument. As outlined by Babbie and Mouton (1998), research data must satisfy the standards of reliability and validity before any analysis can commence. Reliability and validity gauge the reliability and accuracy of research methods (Morrison, 2020). Hence, to ascertain the comprehensive internal

consistency and validity of the research instrument, each of the 30 variable indicators was evaluated both individually and collectively. The following section discusses these concepts in detail.

3.7.4 Research reliability

Reliability aims to investigate how constant the findings of a study are, and it refers to the extent to which a data collection technique and its analysis consistently yield the same results over time technique and analysis achieve constant findings over time (Saunders et al., 2016). It indicates the consistency of the research method in producing reliable results. If a study can be replicated by another researcher under stable conditions and still yield similar findings to those of the original study, it can be considered reliable (Lui and Tiger, 2017). Reliability of a questionnaire or survey can be tested or measured using a Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which evaluates consistency among items in the questionnaire, ensuring they align with each other (Sanchez, 2013). A Cronbach's alpha value below 0.6 is considered inadequate, whereas values ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are deemed acceptable, and those surpassing 0.80 are considered strong (Saunders and Lewis, 2016: Zikmund et al., 2013). Nolan and Heinzen (2011), suggest that a Cronbach's alpha below 0.6 is deemed inadequate for research purposes. Dillon-Goldstein's rho coefficient (composite reliability) is regarded as a superior measure of internal consistency compared to Cronbach's alphas because it considers the extent to which constructs explain their grouped indicators (Sanchez, 2013). Hence, the current study measured both Cronbach's alpha and Dillon-Goldstein's rho to assess internal consistency. However, in research, reliability alone may not suffice; for a test to be reliable, it also requires validity (Moser, 2016).

3.7.5 Research validity

Validity pertains to the degree to which a measure accurately represents the concept it is intended to assess (Zikmund et al. 2013). There are two types of validity measures, namely content and construct validity. Content validity looks at how well an instrument accurately captures the intended topic, construct or behaviour it aims to assess, while construct validity is an evaluation of how well a test measurement or operational definition can evaluate a theory (Bryman and Bell, 2011). As such, it assesses whether the instrument utilised in the examination effectively captures the conceptual idea theorised in the study. Content validity further consists of convergent and discriminant validity, which assures the researcher that the researcher's instrument is truly measuring what it intends to measure (Kline, 2015.)

3.7.5.1 Convergent validity (AVE)

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which a measurement aligns positively with another measure assessing the same construct (Malhotra, 2010; Hair et al. 2014). It examines whether the indicators of a variable exhibit strong associations with their intended factors and do not exhibit strong associations with other

predictor variables (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). The measurement model's quality is assessed through examining convergent validity, which indicates the extent to which the indicators under the constructs are related. Convergent validity is evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the extent to which the construct accounts for variance in its observed variables (Ravand and Baghei, 2019). An AVE value of 0.50 or above indicates a significant correlation between the latent construct and its indicators, while a value below 0.50 suggests that there is more error present in the items than the average variance explained by the constructs. Thus, the study adheres to the guideline that an AVE value equal to or greater than 0.50 is acceptable (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The AVE results are detailed in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

3.7.5.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity serves as a tool to determine how distinct a particular construct is from other related constructs within a model (Ravand and Baghei, 2019). It focuses on the uniqueness of a construct, assessing whether the phenomenon it captures is distinct and not represented by other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2014). The Fornell and Larcker criterion is frequently employed to confirm discriminant validity. Initially, it assesses the cross-loadings of the constructs, which should exhibit high values with themselves and low values with other constructs (Vinzi et al., 2010). Discriminant validity can also be evaluated by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) values with the correlations between latent variables. These square root values of AVE coefficients are depicted in the correlation matrix along the diagonal. For discriminant validity to be supported, the square root of its AVE should exceed the highest correlation it has with any other construct (Haier et al. 2014). This means that the correlation between a predictor variable should be less than the square root of the AVE. Additionally, the mean shared variance (MSV) value should be lower than the AVE (MSV < AVE) (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2015).

Once the reliability and validity of the research instrument meet satisfactory levels, the structural model is assessed to determine the relationships between exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent) variables. This evaluation of the structural model entails evaluating model fit indices and standard path coefficients to determine if the hypothesised relationships are validated. This ensures that the constructed structural model is strong and precise (Putri and Akbari, 2021). Table 3.3 provides a summary of this process, followed by a discussion of ethical implications of the research project.

Table 3.3 Data analysis steps and purposes

STEPS	ANALYSIS	PURPOSES
1	Data cleaning	- Assess missing data - Removal of respondent's ID
2	Descriptive analysis	- Determine the demographic profile of sample population - Determine the sample population's characteristics of millennial who intend to purchase ethical fashion in South Africa - Descriptive Statistics: Likert scale Results
3	Measurement scale analysis	- Assess the reliability (internal consistency) of the research instrument - Assess construct validity (convergent and discriminant) for each of the three TPB model variations
4	SEM	- Assess the structural model in order to test whether the hypothesised paths are supported or rejected. - To determine and compare the overall variance explained (R^2 of IN) and GOF values of each TPB model variation

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical issues are a critical aspect of any research project that a researcher must consider, especially when gathering data in a survey (Saunders et al., 2016). Ethics can be identified as the standards of behaviour that guide research from the beginning and throughout a project until its publication and beyond (Neuman, 2014). According to Creswell et al. (2014), the key principles in research ethics require the researcher to safeguard participants, building trust, and upholding research integrity, while also preventing misconduct and maintaining ethical standards that reflect positively on their organisation or institution, even in the face of emerging challenges. Bryman and Bell. (2011) point out that the most crucial ethical considerations are anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality towards the research participants. Therefore, several considerations are considered to maintain the ethical integrity of this study.

To start with, when creating the structure and guidelines of the study, citing and acknowledging sources have been crucial in illuminating prior research and recognising the contributions of other scholars. Acknowledging the work and ideas of others also helps dismiss any suspicions of plagiarism that may arise (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). To ensure the integrity of the process, this study obtained ethical approval from the university's relevant college's ethical committee before the survey was disseminated. Prior to data collection, potential respondents were given a consent form to review along with a cover letter outlining the study's

objectives. The consent form clearly stated that participation was completely voluntary, that respondents could choose to withdraw from the study at any point during the study, and this would have no adverse consequences. This enabled the respondents to make an informed decision before consenting to take part in the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The researcher ensured respondents' confidentiality and anonymity by not sharing or using respondents' names and making sure their responses were only used for academic purposes. A copy of the ethical clearance letter issued by the University of South Africa's Ethical Committee is available in the Appendix B section. The guidelines provided by the committee were adhered to throughout the entirety of the research project.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a concise overview of the research methodology employed in conducting this study. The rationale behind the chosen data collection instrument was explained, and both the advantages and drawbacks of the selected research methodology were addressed. Issues of validity and reliability and how the two could be improved were further discussed. Lastly, the ethical principles taken into consideration throughout the research project to ensure no harm was done were outlined. The following chapter examines, discusses, and presents results that were obtained.

CHAPTER 4:

4.1 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

This chapter delves into the findings and analysis derived from the questionnaire's demographic data. A comprehensive descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic information provided by respondents was conducted, aiming to gain insight into the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to assess the performance of each identified psychographic variable.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic attributes of the respondents were analysed across eight categories, including gender, age, ethnicity, education level, employment status, marital status, monthly income, and residence location within South Africa. Out of the 332 responses collected, 30 were omitted from the analysis due to respondents exceeding 43 years of age. Therefore, 302 responses were considered suitable for statistical analysis for the present study. The results uncovered a greater number of South African Millennials fell in the age category of 20-28 years, were Black Africans (77%), women (67%), well educated (74.6%), employed with a reasonable monthly income, and were living in the Gauteng province. Significantly, among these younger respondents, the majority were unmarried, indicating that they were likely to be responsible for their own clothing purchasing decisions and were familiar with or had an understanding of ethical fashion. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the demographic distribution.

Table 4.1 Descriptive sample statistics (N302)

Demographics variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Age	20-28 years	166	55.1
	29-35 years	89	29.6
	36-43 years	46	15.3
Gender	Female	200	67
	Male	94	31.4
	Prefer not to say	5	1.7
Ethnic affiliation	Black	230	77
	White	36	12
	Coloured	18	6.2
	Indian	8	2.7
	Multiple ethnicities	7	2.3

Education level	Grade 12 + degree/Diploma	223	74.6
	Matric/Grade 12	51	17.1
	Lower than Matric/Grade 12	25	8.4
Monthly Income	Less than R10 000	151	51.4
	R10 000-R15 000	41	14
	R15 000-R 25 000	39	13.3
	R25 000-R35 000	32	11
	R35 000-R45 000	12	4.1
	More than R45 000	19	6.5
Marital status	Single	190	63.3
	Married/living with a partner	100	33.3
	Divorced/separated	8	2.7
	Widow/er	2	0.7
Area of residency	Gauteng province	116	39.5
	Western Cape	65	22.1
	Limpopo	70	23.8
	Kwazulu Natal	29	9.9
	Eastern Cape	11	3.7
	Free State	1	0.34
	North West	2	0.64

Out of 302 respondents, the majority were women who accounted for 67% (n=200), followed by men at 31.4% (n=94), and a few who preferred not to say 1.7% (n=5). The reason that female responses dominate in the sample is supported by Gabriel, (2007), who suggested that women tend to be more readily available for market research compared to men. Curtin et al., (2000) also found a trend in research which reveals that women are more inclined to take part in surveys compared to men. In regards to age, 55.1% fell within the age bracket of 20 and 28 years, followed by 29.6% aged 29 to 35 years, and 15.3% belonged to the older section of this cohort at 36 to 43 years. Black Africans were dominant at 77%, followed by whites at 12%, 6.0 % were coloured, 2.7 % were Indians and 2.3% identified with multiple ethnicities. The findings for this study are in accord with a study conducted by Anva and Venter (2014) which found that African consumers of the Black race are predominant within Generation Y in South Africa, and that they exhibit positive green buying intentions, thus making it a noteworthy target market for the fashion industry, and in particular, ethical

fashion. In terms of education, a larger number of respondents (74.6%) had a degree or diploma, while 17.1% had reached Grade 12. Of the total of 302 respondents, merely 8.4% had not reached grade 12 (stated otherwise, had not finished high school). The results on education are meaningful as they are supported by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2018), which reported that the percentage of Millennials who had not finished school had dropped from 4.3% in 2000 to less than 0.9% in 2018. Meanwhile, the percentage of Millennials with tertiary qualifications had increased from 10.9% in 2002 to 14.9% in 2018. Results of this study seem to further coincide with that of Paula and Rana (2012) which revealed that green consumption behavior is linked with well-educated Millennial consumers. Having a higher level of education, such as a degree, may cause this generation to have a higher social standing within a community, hence making it easier to influence peers and society towards consumption of ethical fashion (Bevan-Dye, 2019).

The occupational status of the respondents varied from 27.2% being permanent, full-time employees; 11.6 % permanent, part-time employees; and 15.6 % contract workers. While a lesser percentage of 24.6% were unemployed, 21% were self-employed. Their earnings were spread with 51.4% earning less than R10 000 per month, 14% between R10 000 and R15 000, 13.3% between R15 000 and 25 000R, 11% between R25 000 and R35 000, and 4.01% earning between R35 000 and R45 000. Notably, 6.5 % had an income of over R45 000r per month. According to Stats SA (2022), the average monthly household income of a South African consumer is R24 813, implying that the respondents in this study fall within the upper to middle class consumer cohort. Singles consisted of 63.3%, while 33.3% were married or living with a partner. About 2.7% were divorced or separated and 7% fell in the category of widow/er. This question was included to determine whether these respondents only had themselves to consider while making ethical consumption choices and/or a partner. With 63.3% of respondents being unmarried or not living with a partner, it's apparent that they likely made consumption choices primarily for themselves. Furthermore, it was important to ask respondents the location where they were living and an option was given so they could type in the town or suburb in which they lived. In this regard, 39.5% resided within Gauteng province (Pretoria n=45; Johannesburg n=33; Hatfield n= 7; Randburg n=3; Benoni n=2; and Midrand n=2). Meanwhile, 22.1% resided in the Western Cape area (Cape Town n=40; Strand n=10; Stellenbosch n=4; and Sea Point n=9). The Eastern Cape area was represented by 3.7 % (n=11); East London (n=5); Gqeberha (formerly Port Elizabeth) (n=5). Other cities and suburbs were scattered along the border of South Africa, mainly in Limpopo (n= 70). The information is, however, indicative of the respondents living in larger metropolitan areas.

To support the demographic analysis of the data, questions 12 to 14 of the questionnaire assessed whether respondents knew about ethical fashion and if they purchased such items, as it was part of the aim of the research project to determine this. Furthermore, the questions uncovered the most important attributes that

respondents consider when purchasing clothes and the sources of information they consult in regards to ethical and environmental issues. Findings are presented with individual tables below.

4.3 KNOWLEDGE OF ETHICAL FASHION

Whether the respondents knew about ethical fashion was gauged using a three-point Likert scale, ranging from "Yes" (1), to "A Little" (2), to "No" (3). A total of 302 responses are captured in Table 4.2. Respondents who knew about ethical fashion accounted for 31.8%, while 22.2% did not know what ethical fashion was. A larger number, at 46%, showed that they knew only a little regarding ethical fashion. This information is slightly contradictory to global studies, such as the one by the Oeko-Tex Association (Europe and Japan) which ascertained that Millennial consumers do in fact know about ethical fashion consumption (Hahn-Petersen, 2018).

Table 4.2 Assessment of respondents' knowledge of ethical fashion

Knowing about ethical fashion	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	96	31.8
No	67	22.2
A little	139	46.0
Total	302	100

4.4 PURCHASING ETHICAL FASHION

The following question asked whether the respondents do, in fact, purchase ethical fashion, and was also measured with a three-point Likert scale, with a range of Yes (1); Sometimes (2); and No (3). A total of 302 responses were captured in Table 4.3. Respondents who purchased ethical fashion accounted for 20.3% of the data, while 28.6% had not purchased ethical fashion. A larger number at 51.2% sometimes purchased ethical fashion. The findings align with the State of Fashion Report (2017), indicating that nearly 65% of young consumers are actively seeking and purchasing sustainable fashion.

Table 4.3 Assessment of whether respondents purchase ethical fashion

PURCHASING ETHICAL FASHION	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	61	20.3
Sometimes	154	51.2
No	86	28.6
Total	302	100

4.5 IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES WHEN PURCHASING ETHICAL FASHION

The following question asked respondents what they considered to be important attributes when purchasing clothing and findings are presented in Table 4.4 with options that were available to choose from. Out of a total of 302 responses collected, results uncovered that 57.3% of the respondents rated quality as the most significant criterion, followed by price at 20.9%, and branding at 12.9%. Ethicality at 6 % was the least important attribute provided by the respondents when purchasing clothing. The remaining 3% of responses considered religion and promotions by retail stores when purchasing clothes. The results coincide with findings by Carrigan and Attallia (2001), as well as Niinimäki (2010), which revealed that quality was the most important attribute when purchasing clothes. The researchers argued that materials used in the production of ethical fashion are sometimes scratchy and may feel uncomfortable, which might be the reason consumers hesitate to purchase them. Therefore, to motivate and increase consumers' purchasing behaviour towards ethical fashion, designers should source materials that are considered comfortable.

Table 4.4 Assessment of respondents' most important attributes when purchasing apparel

IMPORTANT ATTIRBUTES WHEN PURCHASING APPAREL	Frequency	Percentage %
Quality	173	57.3
Price	63	20.9
Branding	39	12.9
Ethicality	18	6
Other	9	3
Total	302	100

4.6 ENVIRONMENTAL AND ETHICAL INFORMATION SOURCES

The following question asked the respondents what sources they attribute to gaining information about environmental and ethical information in the clothing industry, and results are presented in Table 4.5. Out of 302 responses collected, 45% of respondents got information on the issues from social media platforms like Instagram, X (formerly referred to as Twitter), and Facebook whereas, 33.3% sought information on the internet through websites and Google. Of the respondents, 10.3% learned about ethical issues from their families, friends, and colleagues, or through word of mouth, while 9.3% consulted newspapers and magazines. Very few respondents, merely 2%, mentioned religion, scientific articles, and retail store adverts as their sources of information. The findings align with existing literature, which suggests that Millennial consumers are true digital natives and acclimatised to technology (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). They primarily find fashion inspiration on social media platforms (Mohammed and Razé, 2023). A study by Eastman and Liu (2012)

concurs that this younger generation spends most of its time on social media platforms and the internet, which explains how information is sourced.

Table 4.5 Environmental and ethical information sources

ENVIRONENTAL AND ETHICAL INFORMATION SOURCES	Frequency	Percentage %
Social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	135	45
Internet e.g. Google and websites	100	33.3
Word of mouth from friends, family, and colleagues	31	10.3
Printed media e.g. newspaper and magazines	28	9.3
Other (Please specify)	6	2
Total	302	100

The first section provided an overview of the respondents' demographic characteristics, shedding light on their understanding of ethical fashion and the sources influencing their knowledge. In contrast, Section 2 delves into the analysis of psychographic variables identified in the research. These variables include behavioral intention (IN), attitude (ATT), Subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), environmental knowledge (EK), and environmental concern (EC) and situational context (SC). Descriptive statistics, including mean (M) and standard deviation (SD), were employed to examine these variables before moving on to inferential statistics to address the research objectives.

4.7 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MEASUREMENT VARIABLES

4.7 1 Attitude (ATT)

Attitude indicates the extent to which an individual holds a positive or negative evaluation of the behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991; Brandão and Costa, 2021). The attitude variable (ATT) comprised four indicators assessed on a 5-point semantic differential scale. Responses ranged from 1, indicating the lowest or negative response (negative, unbeneficial, not useful, unworthwhile, foolish), to 5, indicating the highest or positive response (positive, beneficial, useful, worthwhile, and wise), with 3 representing a mid-level of agreement (neither agree nor disagree) to the provided statements.

As depicted in Table 4.6, the average values for each attitudinal variable fell within the range of 3.67 to 3.87, indicating that, on average, respondents held a moderately positive attitude toward ethical fashion. The

standard deviation (SD) for these variables ranged from 0.94 to 1.02, suggesting some variability in the responses provided by Millennials concerning their intention to purchase ethical fashion. These figures indicate that respondents generally perceive ethical fashion as positive, beneficial, useful, worthwhile, and wise. These findings align with those of Preuit (2016), which emphasized the significance of attitude in predicting an individual's intention to purchase slow fashion products.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Attitude)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT "I consider that buying ethical fashion is…."	MEAN (M)	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)
ATT 1	1: Extremely negative 5: Extremely positive	3.67	0.94
ATT 2	1: Extremely beneficial 5: Extremely unbeneficial	3.85	1.03
ATT 3	1: Really not useful 5: Extremely useful	3.79	1.04
ATT 4	1: Extremely unworthwhile 5: Extremely worthwhile	3.85	1.02
ATT 5	1: Extremely foolish 5: Extremely wise	3.87	1.02

4.7.2 Perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE)

Perceived consumer effectiveness refers to an individual's confidence in their capability to attain desired outcomes (Dehosse, 2020; Hanss and Doran, 2020). This variable comprised three indicators assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. Results of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) revealed that out of 302 responses collected, 27.6% strongly agreed and 45% agreed that supporting the environment through their behavior may positively impact society, while 18.6% were neutral, and the other 9.0% disagreed with the statement. In regards to their contribution when purchasing ethical fashion, 11% strongly agreed and 20% agreed that their contribution did not solve any environmental problem, and 32% remained neutral. This means that almost a third of the respondents felt that they cannot make a difference with their purchases, almost a third were uncertain, while the last third regarded their choices as indeed making a difference. The statement "I believe I can protect the environment by purchasing ethical fashion" received 44.7% agreement, 17.3% strongly agreed, and 29% held a neutral position. Hence, it's noteworthy that while participants acknowledged the potential positive impact of supporting the environment through ethical fashion purchases, they also expressed doubts about the significance of their individual contributions to making a substantial difference.

These conflicting sentiments align with findings by Kovacs and Keresztes (2022), indicating that while consumers may voice concern about societal issues, they may also feel incapable of effectively addressing them.

The average score of this dimension (Mean 3.67 and 3.85) expressed that respondents were slightly agreeing that ethical fashion could significantly affect the environment, however, they believe that their personal choices could somehow make a difference. Once more, this corresponds with existing literature indicating that while individuals agree that ethical fashion makes a difference to the environment, they are not fully confident that their individual contributions are enough to make significant differences to the greater scheme of the environmental change (European Union, 2017). Nonetheless, studies indicate that individual differences can indeed promote the ethical agenda (Schwarts, 2016).

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Perceived consumer effectiveness)

Item code	Questionnaire statement	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
PCE 1	I believe that my behaviour in support of environment can have positive effect on society	3.82	1.09
PCE 2	I feel my contribution (purchasing ethical apparel) does not solve any environmental problems	2.93	1.17
PCE 3	I believe I can protect the environment by purchasing ethical apparel	3.69	0.95

4.7.3 Behavioural intention (INT)

Intention represents the level of effort an individual is prepared to invest in carrying out a particular behavior (Dobbelstem and Lochner, 2023). It reflects a person's resolve and dedication to performing an action and achieving a specific goal (Mkhize, 2017). Behavioral intention regarding the purchase of ethical fashion comprised three variable indicators assessed on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1, indicating "Strongly Disagree," to 5, representing the highest level of agreement, "Strongly Agree," with 3 indicating a neutral stance, "Neither disagree nor agree."

Table 4.8 below shows the mean values of intention at a significant neutral level of INT 1: M=3.65; INT 2: M=3.53; INT 3: M=3.47; and INT 4: M=3.75. To convert these numbers into meaningful interpretations, respondents were somewhat not agreeing or disagreeing to switching brands and paying more for ethical fashion. They were also uncertain about whether they would purchase ethical fashion in the future. Based on

these responses, it can be inferred that intention moderately influences behavior towards ethical fashion consumption. These results echoed those of Kawassaki (2021), who found that consumers with a strong intention towards behaviour are likely to perform the said behaviour, in this case the buying of ethical fashion.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Intention)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
INT 1	I plan to buy ethical apparel in future/in my next apparel purchase	3.65	0.81
INT 2	I am willing to consider switching to another clothing brand for sustainable and social reasons	3.53	0.85
INT 3	I am willing to pay more for clothing which is ethically produced and helps protect the environment	3.47	1.03
INT 4	I will consider buying ethical apparel because they are less polluting	3.75	0.86

4.7.4. Subjective norm (SN)

Subjective norm refers to an individual's perception of the influence exerted by significant others, such as friends, family, and colleagues, coupled with the motivation to fulfill their expectations regarding a particular behavior (Kumar et al., 2021). Subjective norm was assessed using three variable indicators rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1, indicating "Strongly Disagree," to 5, representing "Strongly Agree," with 4 denoting a neutral stance, "Neither disagree nor agree." The mean values for each subjective norm indicator ranged from 3.36 to 3.61 with standard deviations of between 0.92 to 300. Although SN is not necessarily high, it appears that respondents were neutral on the statement that important people in their life wanted them to buy ethical fashion. Notably the standard deviation for SN1 is quite high for the construct implying that there is considerable variability among respondents' perceptions or beliefs regarding this aspect. In other words, some respondents may have given significantly higher or lower ratings compared to others, resulting in the higher standard deviation. Be that as it may, the majority of respondents agreed that the people they listen to expect them to buy ethical fashion and that buying this type of clothes is a good idea because they are less polluting. This result coincides with findings by Luan et al. (2017) and Basha and Lal (2019), who reported that consumer behaviours are more likely to be influenced by those with whom they share strong social ties, such as close friends and family, compared to acquaintances and strangers with whom they have weaker social connections. Kumar et al. (2021) also found that an individual's interaction with

significant others could influence certain behaviour and that the higher the interaction, the higher the likelihood of performing behaviour, and vice versa.

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Subjective norm)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
SN 1	I believe close friends and family would think it is a good idea for me to buy ethical apparel	3.61	3.00
SN 2	I feel important people in my life want me to buy ethical apparel	3.36	0.88
SN 3	The people who I listen to could influence me or expect me to buy ethical apparel.	3.48	0.92

4.7.5 Perceived behavioural control (PBC)

Perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's perception of the availability or lack of resources and opportunities that either facilitate or hinder the performance of a behavior, as well as their perceived ability to exert control over these factors (Ajzen, 1991). PBC is assessed through three variables measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), with 3 indicating neutrality. The mean values for each PBC variable are detailed in Table 4.10 and range from 3.12 to 3.31. The lowest response was obtained for PBC 1= (M 3.12, STD 1.00), while the moderate responses were observed for PBC 3 and 4 = (M 3.31), demonstrating that buying ethical fashion may not be a simple task since it depends on several factors such as availability, price, and knowledge. This result concurs with that of Ahmed et al. (2018), who acknowledge that the intended behaviour can only occur when an individual has the necessary resources available, such as money, time, skills, knowledge, and the ability to carry out the behaviour.

Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variables (Perceived behavioural control)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
PBC 1	I have the resources, knowledge and capacity to buy ethical apparel	3.12	1.00
PBC 2	I have the knowledge to buy ethical fashion	3.31	1.03
PBC 3	I have the capacity to buy ethical fashion	3.31	0.90

4.7.6. Environmental concern (EC)

Environmental concern refers to an individual's level of concern and emotional attachment to environmental issues, threats, and environmental protection (Pinto et al., 2011; Dehosse, 2020). Environmental concern was assessed through five variable indicators measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"), and a neutral value of 3 ("Neither disagree nor agree").

The mean values for each of the environmental concern (EC) variable indicators fell between 2.22 and 3.82, suggesting a moderate level of response for this predictor variable. Table 4.11 demonstrates the mean values of EC 3 and EC 4, between 3.65 and 3.78, with standard deviation of 1.18 and 1.25; while EC 1, EC2, and EC5 were below average as they obtained mean values between 2.22 and 2.39 and standard deviation between 1.18 and 1.25. There are notable variations in responses to this variable considering that EC1, EC2, and EC 5 were negatively worded. Majority were somehow not certain that the balance of natural environment is very delicate and that humankind interference is producing disastrous consequences, the other respondents are worried about the state of the environment and that mankind need to live in harmony with nature for the environment to survive. The results align with Lundblad and Davies' (2016) findings, suggesting that consumers who prioritise environmental well-being generally prefer clothing items that are environmentally friendly.

Table 4.11 Descriptive statistic: Predictor variable (Environmental concern)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
EC 1	I am not worried about the state of South Africa's environment and what it will mean for my future	2.39	1.23
EC 2	I believe human beings are not abusing the environment	2.22	1.18
EC 3	I believe that when mankind interferes with the natural state of the environment, it will most likely produce disastrous consequences	3.82	1.07
EC 4	I believe that the balance of the natural environment is very delicate and can be easily upset	3.80	0.92
EC 5	I believe that mankind does not need to live in harmony with the natural environment in order to survive.	2.35	1.25

4.7.7. Environmental knowledge (EK)

Environmental knowledge is characterised by the degree of information that consumers possess about the environment and their awareness of environmental issues (Zheng & Chi, 2015). 2016). It is measured through three variable indicators on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for "Strongly Disagree" to 5 for "Strongly Agree," with a neutral value of 3 for "Neither disagree nor agree." Table 4.12 illustrates that the mean values for each indicator of environmental knowledge were (M=3.83, STD 0.86; M=3.83, STD 0.85; and M=3.69, STD 0.95), indicating an almost agreement response for this predictor variable. Drawing from these scores, more than half of the respondents agreed that knowing about environmental issues allowed them to make better fashion choices. This knowledge includes knowing that using ethical apparel is a substantial way to diminish the wasteful utilization of natural resources, which in turn conserves the eco/natural system. The findings concur with a study by Shen et al. (2013), who found that awareness of environmental issues prompts individuals to buy sustainable products. More specifically, a study by Mollel-Matodzi et al. (2022) ascertain that understanding the socio-environmental benefits of clothing influences the decision to buy sustainable apparel.

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Environmental knowledge)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
EK 1	I believe buying/using ethical apparel is a substantial way to reduce the wasteful use of natural resources	3.69	0.95
EK 2	I believe using ethical apparels is a great way to conserve natural resources	3.83	0.86
EK 3	Knowing about environmental issues allow me to make better fashion choices	3.83	0.85

4.7.8 Situational context (SC)

Situational context refers to temporary encounters with elements in the entire environment at a given time (Belk, 1975). The encounters may include physical surroundings (location, sounds, weather, light, and aroma); temporal (time); social surroundings (other people present during the purchasing occasion); and characteristics such as influences and interpersonal interactions (Carrington et al., 2010). The situational context was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 4.13 presents the mean values as follows: M=3.29, STD 0.87; M=3.25, STD 1.04; M=3.42, STD 0.89; and M=3.48, STD 0.91. Although the values are not significantly high, respondents could not agree or disagree that ethical fashion is usually out of stock and never on sale. The rating for the presence of a salesperson was slightly higher compared to other variables. While it remains

neutral, it tends to lean lightly towards agreement. The results align with those of Laroche et al. (2001), who suggested that the presence of others typically influences consumers' decision-making processes. White et al. (2019) also reported that salespeople or acquaintances slightly influence consumers. Similarly, a study by Ngo (2021) revealed that the presence of a salesperson can influence customers' buying decision and can probably lead to a new product purchase. On the last statement "I am not excited in buying ethical fashion", respondents could not agree or disagree but remained neutral on this variable.

Table 4.13 Descriptive statistics: Predictor variable (Situational context)

ITEM CODE	QUESTIONNAIRE STATEMENT	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
SC 1	When shopping for clothes, I don't find ethical apparel instore, they are usually out of stock	3.29	0.87
SC 2	When shopping for clothes, ethical apparel is never on sale (price reduction)	3.42	0.89
SC 3	The presence of a salesperson helps me in decision making to purchase ethical apparel	3.48	0.91
SC 4	I am not excited in buying fast fashion	3.25	1.04

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The demographic analysis commenced with the screening of respondent data to ensure its suitability for descriptive analysis. This chapter presents an in-depth examination of the demographic characteristics of the sample population, encompassing variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, marital status, monthly income, and residential location within South Africa. A total of 302 responses were completed. Secondly, an analysis of whether respondents knew about ethical fashion and if they purchased it was completed. This was followed by finding out the most important attributes they considered when purchasing clothes and the sources of information they consulted in regards to ethical and environmental issues. To sum up, this chapter thoroughly examined the descriptive analysis of the psychographic measurement variables. Having provided an overview of the questionnaire data, the following chapter will delve into inferential statistical results to address the study's aims and objectives. This will involve testing and drawing conclusions regarding the hypotheses formulated in this study.

CHAPTER 5:

5.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, we will initially examine the measurement model to verify the reliability and validity of the scales employed. Following this, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will be employed to assess the connections among the predictor variables within the model and to examine the hypotheses related to the TPB model and additional variables. Finally, the proposed model structure will be reevaluated to ascertain its impact on the intention of South African Millennials to purchase ethical fashion.

5.2 MEASUREMNT MODEL EVALUATION

Assessing the measurement model is the initial step in ensuring the accurate measurement of each construct. The strength of the proposed model (extended TPB) is evaluated through an examination of reliability and validity, which are fundamental prerequisites in research (Putri and Akbari, 2021). Measurement model evaluation is one of the structural modelling processes aimed at evaluating the consistency and validity of the items used to measure research variables (Hair et al., 2014). Assessing consistency includes performing individual manifest and construct reliability tests, while the validity of the variables is analysed through convergent and discriminant validity tests. Individual manifest reliability measures the consistency of each manifest variable relative to its associated latent variable by calculating the standardised outer loading of the manifest variable (Menon, 2014). In this study, a two-stage analysis variance-based method using Partial Least Squares was employed to evaluate both the measurement model and structural model. The structural model was utilised to test the research hypotheses by assessing the standardised path coefficients and their significance levels (Tenenhaus et al., 2005).

5.2.1 Reliability (internal consistency)

In line with the discussion in Chapter 3, this study employed Cronbach's alpha (α) test, also known as Coefficient alpha, to evaluate the internal consistency among grouped variables or to measure their corresponding latent construct (Sanchez, 2013). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is utilised, particularly when Likert scales are employed (Kor et al., 2005). While there are no absolute rules for internal consistencies, a minimum internal consistency coefficient of 0.70 is widely accepted (Lewis et al., 1995). This study adheres to the proposed degree of reliability by Hinton et al. (2005), which suggests four cutoff points categorised as follows: excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below). Table 5.1 indicates the alphas for all the constructs, ranging from 0.0550 to 0.897, indicating a moderate level of internal consistency.

In addition to Cronbach's alpha, the present study used Dillion-Goldstein's rho coefficient to assess internal consistency reliability. Dillon-Goldstein's rho coefficient, also known as composite reliability, assesses the variance of indicators within the construct under examination. It is regarded as a superior indicator of internal consistency compared to Cronbach's alpha as it considers how well the constructs explain their grouped indicators (Sanchez, 2013). However, Similar to Cronbach alpha, higher values indicate greater internal consistency. In this study, all variables have a DG coefficient ranging from 0.758 to 0.925, indicating a satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 5.1 Measurement model: Standard loadings and Cronbach's alpha reliability results

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Measurement model - Standardized loadings
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	Reflective: ATT	Reflective: PCE	Reflective: INT	Reflective: SN	Reflective: PBC	Reflective: EC	Reflective: EK	Reflective: SC
ATT1	0.738							
ATT2	0.867							
ATT3	0.848							
ATT4	0.865							
ATT5	0.890							
PCE1		0.769						
PCE3		0.917						
INT1			0.812					
INT2			0.633					
INT3			0.741					
INT4			0.824					
SN2				0.774				
SN3				0.917				
PBC1					0.833			
PBC2					0.788			
PBC3					0.885			
EC1_reverse						0.707		
EC2_reverse						0.865		
EC5_reverse						0.757		
EK1							0.814	
EK2							0.842	
EK3							0.772	
SC1								0.673
SC2								0.678
SC3								0.790
Cronbach	0.897	0.621	0.750	0.629	0.784	0.677	0.737	0.550
DG	0.925	0.833	0.841	0.837	0.874	0.821	0.851	0.758
rho_A	0.900	0.714	0.777	0.720	0.788	0.707	0.737	0.565

As illustrated in Table 5.1, four out of the eight predictor variables achieved high reliability scores, ranging from 0.73 to 0.897, as measured by Cronbach's alpha. These are ATT (0.897); INT (0.750); PBC (0.784); and EK (0.737). However, the other four variables; namely PCE 2, SN 1, EC3, 4, and SC 4 were suppressed from the model due to lower loadings. In regards to environmental concern, its remaining variables; EC 1,2, and 5 were reverse coded. The removal of some indicators with loadings below 0.40 is acknowledged by Hair et al. (2014). However, the authors recommended that researchers should thoroughly analyse the impact of removing items on both composite reliability and the content validity of the construct, this ensures that acceptable values are attained.

In this study, the removal of variables with lower loading produced new acceptable Cronbach's alpha values of PCE (0.621); SN (0.629); EC (0.677); and SC (0.550). As a result, all the variables received acceptable values of above 0.5 as suggested by Hinton et al. (2005), thus allowing the study to proceed with validity tests.

5.2.2 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the obtained scores faithfully represent the underlying construct (Zikmand et al., 2013). In reference to section 3.7.5, Convergent validity evaluates how closely related a scale is to other measures or constructs (Malhotra, 2010; Middleton, 2020). According to Hair et al. (2017), to suggest a greater degree of convergent validity, an acceptable AVE of 0.5 and above is required. Accordingly, the current study assesses the convergent validity of each construct using the AVE with an acceptable value of 0.5. Table 5.2 illustrates AVE values of between 0.512 and 0.721, thus affirming that the items adequately reflect the constructs.

5.2.3 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is the final stage in the measurement model, indicating the degree to which a specific construct stands apart from other constructs within the model (Ravand and Baghei, 2019; Putri and Akbari, 2021). The Fornell and Larcker criterion was utilised to determine discriminant validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed the squared correlations between constructs. Table 5.2 demonstrates that the diagonal values indeed surpass all inter-correlations between the constructs, thus confirming the discriminant validity of each construct.

Table 5.2 The Fornell-Larcker results

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Discriminant validity - Squared interfactor correlation vs. Average variance extracted (AVE)
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
          |    ATT       PCE       INT       SN        PBC       EC        EK        SC
----------+------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
     ATT  |   0.711
     PCE  |   0.144     0.716
     INT  |   0.229     0.243     0.572
      SN  |   0.123     0.067     0.205     0.721
     PBC  |   0.097     0.027     0.175     0.139     0.699
      EC  |   0.023     0.025     0.002     0.029     0.018     0.605
      EK  |   0.186     0.225     0.287     0.099     0.111     0.074     0.659
      SC  |   0.006     0.042     0.063     0.073     0.050     0.032     0.131     0.512
----------+------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
     AVE  |   0.711     0.716     0.572     0.721     0.699     0.605     0.656     0.512
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

The reported validity and reliability coefficients indicate that the measurement instrument used in this study had good internal consistency and is reliable for assessing the intended purchase behaviour of ethical fashion among Millennials in South Africa.

5.3 THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

Once the measurement model's adequacy was confirmed, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was conducted using Stata V16 software to test all hypotheses. Bootstrapping was utilised for parameter estimation and to estimate associated standard errors. Table 5.3 displays the results of the structural model and the outcomes of the proposed hypotheses.

Table 5.3 Structural model- Standardised path coefficients (Bootstrap)

Variable	ATT	PCE	INT	SN	PBC
ATT			0.221 (0.001)		
PCE			0.309 (0.000)		
SN			0.197 (0.001)		
PBC			0.209 (0.000)		
EC	0.039 (0.517)	0.160 (0.020)		−0.168 (0.012)	−0.132 (0.079)
EK	0.421 (0.000)				
SC			0.071 (0.194)		
r2_a	0.182	0.022	0.443	0.024	0.014

Notes: p-values in parentheses: (1) * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; (2)

The table shows the coefficient path of attitude towards ethical fashion is (β=0.221, p<0.001), subjective norms and intention (β = 0.197, p < 0.001) and perceived consumer behaviour to intention as (β = 0.197, p < 0.001). These scores indicate that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have a significant positive effect on intention to buy ethical fashion. Similarly, the coefficient path for perceived consumer effectiveness and intention is (β = 0.309, p < 0.000) showing a strong and significant positive effect of perceived consumer effectiveness on intention to buy ethical fashion. This relationship is significant at the p < 0.001 level. Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 are accepted.

In relation to environmental knowledge and attitude, results indicate that EK has a strong and significant positive effect on ATT at (β= 0.421, p0.001), thus confirming H6 d. The coefficient path of EC is β= 0.039 and the p-value is = 0.517, is higher than the usual significance level of 0.05. This means EC does not influence ATT towards ethical fashion. Therefore, H5a cannot be accepted. The coefficient path of EC and SN (β=-0.168, p=0.012) signify a negative relationship between EC and SN. This means as EC increases, SN tends to decrease, thus we can assume that individuals who are more environmentally concerned may not feel as much social pressure to buy ethical fashion compared to those who are less concerned about the same issues. Similarly, the coefficient for EC and PBC is (-0.132, p0.079), indicating a significant but negative relationship between EC and PBC. Environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness, 's coefficient is (β=0.160 and p-value =0.020), is less than 0.05, meaning a significant relationship between EC and PCE exists. Lastly, situational context recorded a p-value greater that 0.05 (β=0.071, p=0.194), implying that hypothesis relationship is not validated.

The study's findings therefore accepted H1, H2, H3, H4, H5d, and H6; while rejecting H5a, H5b, H5, cand H7. Table 5.4 illustrates structural model results-hypotheses testing results.

Table 5.4 Confirmation of hypothesis through SEM analysis

Path (Hypothesis)	Standardised Regression β	Significance P	Supported
H1: ATT → IN	.221	.001	Yes
H2: SN → IN	.197	.001	Yes
H3: PBC → IN	.209	.000	Yes
H4: PCE→ IN	.309	.000	Yes
H5a: EC→ ATT	.039	.517	No
H5b: EC→SN	.-168	.012	No
H5c: EC →PBC	.-132	.079	No
H5d: EC →PCE	.160	.020	Yes
H6: EK →ATT	.421	.000	Yes
H7: SC →IN	.071	.194	No

5.4 MODEL ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

After assessing the structural model to ascertain its explanatory capability and to test the hypotheses concerning the relationships among the constructs, the model's explanatory power was further examined using the coefficient of determination (R^2). The R^2, also known as the determination coefficient, indicates the percentage of variance in the endogenous latent variable explained by its independent latent variables (Garson, 2016). According to Hair et al. (2014), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 for dependent variables can be interpreted as substantial, moderate, and weak effect sizes of predictive variables. However, Sanchez et al. (2016) consider R^2 values greater than 0.60 as high, between 0.30 and 0.60 as moderate, and below 0.30 as low. This study considered the ranges proposed by Sanchez et al. (2015), as they are more recent than those

by Hair et al. (2014). Therefore, in this model, the study looked at the R squared for the dependent variable, which is intention (INT), as predicted by independent variables ATT, SN, PBC, PCE.

The R^2 value for the attitude (ATT), as predicted by environmental knowledge (EK) and perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE), is 0.182 which signify a limited explanation of attitude towards ethical fashion, accounting for 18.2% of its variance. The R^2 value for Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) is 0.022, or 2.2%. This is low, indicating that environmental concern does not adequately explain why people feel effective as consumers. Subjective norms R^2 = 0.024 meaning that only 2.4% of what influences Subjective Norms is explained by the model. This means the model is not explaining much about why consumer's subjective norms change. Subsequently, the R^2 value for perceived behavioural control is =0.014, hence1.4% of what influences perceived behavioral control is explained by the model. This means the model partially explains why Millennial consumers feel in control of their behavior. Notably a 0.44.3% that is 44.3% of the variance in Intention is explained by atttitude, perceived consumer effectiveness, subjective Norms, perceived behavioral control, and environmental concern. This is high and reflects a good fit for this part of the model.

These results indicate that ATT, SN, PBC are better predictors of intention towards ethical fashion among Millennial consumers in South Africa than the additional proposed variables EC and SC. More importantly, it turns out that EK is a significant predictor of attitude towards ethical fashion while EC and SC are not meaning there could be other influential factors at play. The new proposed model is therefore presented in Table 5.1 below.
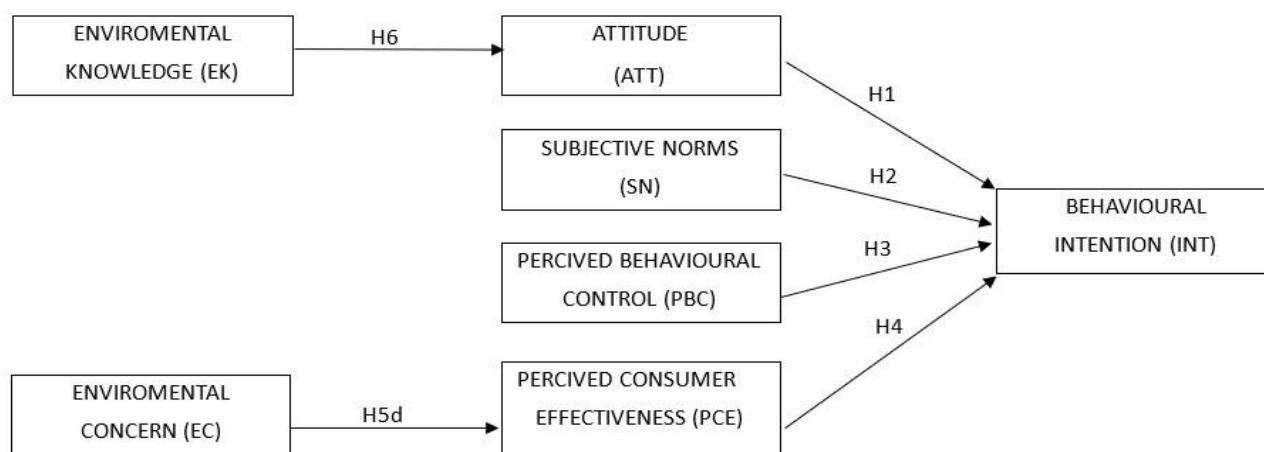

Figure 5.1: Structural model of the predictive ability for South African Millennial consumers' purchase intention of ethical fashion

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The section above revealed the statistical results obtained from the current study. First, the analysis began with an examination of the measurement model, which assessed the reliability and validity of the research. Subsequently, the proposed hypotheses were tested to determine their acceptance or rejection within the model. Lastly, the model was evaluated to determine its adequacy and predictive power in predicting millennial consumers' intention towards ethical fashion in South Africa. The results can be seen in table 18 above. The next section discusses these findings in detail.

CHAPTER 6:

6.1 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter summarised the results obtained from the inferential data analysis, which aimed to validate the hypotheses formulated for this study. Consequently, Chapter 6, serving as the concluding segment of the research, offers a comprehensive summary and overview of the study results vis-à-vis the identified problem, objectives, and the corresponding hypotheses formulated during the study. Additionally, this chapter emphasised the contribution made by the study, delineates its limitations, and elucidates the implications and recommendations derived from the findings.

6.2 DISCUSSION OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to explore the intended purchase behaviour of South African Millennials towards ethical fashion. The study adopted the TPB model to understand the factors that influence consumers in their purchase intention toward ethical fashion, while considering their concerns and knowledge regarding the negative effects of fast fashion as additional variables to better explain their intended behaviour. The study results revealed the original TPB model variables (ATT, SN, PBC) to be the best predictors for explaining South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion, while additional variables were not good predictors of intended behaviour. The subsequent discussion elucidates the outcomes of the research objectives, drawing from the findings obtained through both descriptive and inferential data analysis.

6.2.1 Objective 1: To determine the ability of the TPB variables; attitudes (ATT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion.

The first research objective set for the study was to determine and describe the relative ability of the TPB predictor variables, namely attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) to predict South African Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion. The analysis of this research objective includes the following hypothesis; H1, H2, and H3.

Hypothesis 1 – Attitude will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion

Statistical analysis results indicated a positive and significant correlation between attitude and intention with standardised coefficient of (β = 0.221, p < 0.001), thus suggesting that attitude plays a significant role in

shaping consumer ethical purchase intentions within the context of fashion among Millennials consumers in South Africa.

The findings of Hypothesis 1 are in accordance with the TPB theory, which asserts that attitude is a significant predictor of behavioural intention (Ajzen, 1991). Similarly, attitude is regarded one of the main factors that has strong influence on purchase intention (Paul et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2017). This finding is consistent with literature investigating eco-fashion purchase intention, which indicates that consumer attitude is a significant predictor of intention to purchase ethical fashion (Kang et al., 2013; Yadavak et al., 2017; Brandão and Costa, 2021; Nam et al., 2017; Farzin et al., 2023).

Hypothesis 2 – Subjective norm will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

Subjective norm refers to the individual's perception of how other people think about a specific object (Ajzen, 1991). It is an individual's perception of what others might think about a particular behavior (Borusiak et al., 2020). Through this research it was found that subjective norm has a positive and a high significance level on intention (0.197, p=0.001). While previous studies have identified a lack of evidence regarding the influence of subjective norms on purchase intentions (Kumar et al., 2017; Park and Lin, 2018), studies by Lui et al. (2021), and Rizkalla et al. (2022) observed that subjective norm has a notable impact on consumers' intentions to purchase environmentally friendly apparel and ethical fashion. The present study, therefore, supports Hypothesis 2, indicating that subjective norms exert a positive and significant influence on the intentions of South African Millennial consumers regarding ethical fashion. This suggests that social pressure plays a significant role in ethical intention, with younger consumers being influenced by their social circles and aligning their behavior accordingly (Cherradi and Tetik, 2020; Sreen et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 3 – Perceived behavioural control will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

Perceived behavioral control assesses an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior. It measures how effectively one believes they can manage the factors that could facilitate or hinder the actions necessary to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The study's results indicated a positive and highly significant correlation between PBC and intention with standardised coefficient of ($\beta = 0.209$, p =0.001). The outcome is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which suggests that Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is a crucial predictor of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Additionally, the findings

of this study are in line with prior research conducted by Rizkalla et al. (2022), Han and Stoel (2017), and Yadav and Pathak (2017). Having said that, it is noteworthy to recognise the study of Lui et el. (2021), which found PBC not to have any significance on intention towards ethical fashion. Despite the aforementioned, the current study confirms Hypothesis 3 and asserts that Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) exerts exert a positive and notable impact on the intentions of South African consumers towards ethical apparel consumption.

6.2.2 Objective 2: To determine whether integrating perceived consumer effectiveness as direct construct to behavioural intention would have any influence towards the intention to purchase ethical apparel among millennial consumers in South Africa, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 4 – Perceived consumer effectiveness will have a positive and significant impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

Perceived consumer effectiveness pertains to the degree to which a consumer perceives their personal actions can contribute to addressing a particular issue (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2006). In the present study, PCE emerged as a significant predictor of behavioral intention, with a standardised coefficient of β 0.309; p=0.000. These findings underscore the importance of PCE as an enhancement to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in the realm of ethical fashion. This aligns with previous research by Jaiswal and Kant (2018) and Kamalanon et al. (2022), who also observed a direct and positive impact of PCE on ethical purchase behavior. Therefore, the study confirms Hypothesis 4, indicating that PCE positively influences the intention of South African Millennial consumers towards ethical fashion.

6.2.3 Objective 3a: To determine if the relationship between environmental concern and all other direct constructs of behavioural intention (ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE) will enhance the predictive ability for South African millennial consumers intention to purchase ethical apparel, the following four hypotheses were formulated.

H5a – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on attitude and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5b – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on subjective norm and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5c – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

H5d – Environmental concern will have a positive impact on perceived consumer effectiveness and the purchase intention of ethical fashion by Millennial consumers in South Africa.

Environmental concern refers to the overall attitude or disposition towards environmental protection and conservation efforts (Yadav and Pathak, 2016). The present study found that, while EC has a positive relationship with attitude, this relationship is not statistically significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 (β = 0.039; p = 0.519). This is result differs with that of Rausch and Kopplin (2021), which found that EC has a higher influence on ATT. Similarly, a negative impact was found between environmental concern and subjective norms (β -0.168; p=0.012), as well as environmental concern and perceived behavioural control (β 0.132; p=0.079). Although the beta was adequate, their p-values were bigger than the recommended 0.05 level. Regarding perceived consumer effectiveness, the relationship between environmental concern and perceived consumer effectiveness turns out to be positive and significant (β 0.160; p=0.020). As found before, PCE, therefore, has a significant impact on the purchase intention of ethical fashion among Millennial consumers in South Africa. From the findings, only hypothesis 5d is accepted, while hypothesis 5a, 5b and 5c were rejected.

6.2.4 Objective 3b: To determine whether the relationship between environmental knowledge and attitude will enhance the predictive ability for Millennial consumers intention to purchase ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated.

Hypothesis 6 – Environmental knowledge will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' attitude and purchasing intention of ethical fashion.

Environmental knowledge encompasses an individual's understanding of environmental issues and the consequences of their actions on the environment (Pagiaslis and Krontalis, 2014). The research findings indicate a positive and strongly significant correlation between environmental knowledge and attitude (β .421, p=0.000). The findings are constant with those of Martinho (2021), who found EK to have a positive influence on ATT for environmentally friendly apparel. The author added that EK can go as far as influencing the purchase intention for environmentally friendly apparel as well. Drawing from this finding, the current study, therefore, supports Hypothesis 6 and concludes that EK does positively affect attitude towards ethical apparel among Millennials in South Africa.

6.2.5 Objective 4: To determine the extent to which situational context influences South African Millennial consumers intended behaviour of ethical fashion, the following hypothesis was formulated.

Hypothesis 7 – Situational context/factors will have a positive impact on South African Millennial consumers' intention to purchase ethical fashion.

Situational context is characterised by environmental elements of an individual at a particular time (Loersch and Payne, 2011). Situational factors have the potential to block, frustrate, or conflict an individual's intended behaviour towards something (Gravel et al., 2013). In the present study, situational context did not have any significance towards the intention (β = 0.071, p= 0.194. Therefore, situational context is not a good predictor of intention. Based on this result, Hypothesis 7, which assumed that situational context positively affects intention of South African millennial consumers towards ethical apparel, is rejected. The finding is in line with Carrington et al. (2010), suggesting that the influence of situational context on intention towards ethical fashion remains relatively underexplored in research. There has not been a clear position on the extent to which situational context affects intention. This could be emanating from the broader aspect of situational context, which encompasses stimuli existing in the environmental, such as limited choice of merchandise, availability, and financial constraints; and object stimuli, which relates to product characteristics or features at the time of making a decision (Baecke and Van Den Poel, 2010).

In summary, this section elaborated on the research objectives and hypotheses of the study, detailing the performance and contribution of each predictor variable within the TPB model. The subsequent section provides a summary of the findings resulting from the discussion outcomes of the research objectives.

6.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN RESEARCH FINDING

In order to understand Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion, it was crucial to establish clear objectives and hypotheses. The main findings of the study derived during the assessment of the objectives and the hypotheses are, therefore, discussed. The research delineated the demographic profile and characteristics of the respondents, identifying them as Millennial South Africans with an intention to buy ethical fashion. Results revealed that Millennial consumers in South Africa who participated in the current project were females who mostly lived in Gauteng. The dominant racial group was Black Africans, followed by whites. The respondents predominantly comprised unmarried individuals aged between 20 and 28. A considerable portion of the participants had attained at least a bachelor's degree, were employed, and had a moderate to high monthly income, suggesting a demographic of middle to upper-class consumers.

Although Millennials in South Africa do seem to know about ethical fashion, there are gaps which marketers can fill by providing adequate information regarding ethical fashion, and how this could help resolve the environmental and social problems associated with fast fashion consumption. Respondents did sometimes

purchase ethical fashion, although the majority did not. In purchasing apparel, these Millennials consider quality the most important attribute, followed by price and branding. To obtain information on environmental and social issues, they mainly consult social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter). From these findings, we can conclude that South African Millennials do possess positive ethical intentions towards ethical apparel, however, a lot needs to be done to ensure they fully comprehend this new trend in sufficicient detail to alter their consumption habits.

To conclude the study, we can assert that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are significant predictors of intention. These findings align with those of Jalil and Shaharuddin (2019), reinforcing the importance of predictors in influencing consumer intentions towards eco-fashion purchases. Particularly, the correlation between attitude and behavioral intention emerged as the most robust and significant, followed by perceived behavioral control and subjective norm. These outcomes support the initial research inquiry, confirming the efficacy of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in predicting South African Millennial consumers' intentions to purchase ethical fashion.

Although all the original TPB variables in this the study had statistically significant effect on the intention towards ethical fashion, the study of Liu et al. (2020) produced contrasting results and concluded that PBC was not a significant predictor in their model. Meanwhile, in the studies of Martinho (2021) and Bong Ko and Jin (2017), PBC contributed the most to explain variance of purchase intention. Similarly, Han and Stoel. (2017) found that subjective norms significantly influence the intention to purchase sustainable items, while Rausch and Koppling (2021) did not find statistical support to confirm the impact of subjective norms on intention. Furthermore, the study proposes that intention towards ethical fashion is influenced by PCE. This variable is an additional independent variable added to the TPB model. PCE was found to be a significant predictor of intention, thus aligning with the study of Jung et al. (2021), asserting that PCE had a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention of sustainable apparel products. Taufique and Vaithianathan (2018) also verified that perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) significantly influences the intention to purchase eco-friendly products among young consumers. This implies that individuals who believe their actions play a significant role to mitigate environmental and social problems are likely to have intention which leads to the purchase of ethical apparel products (Jaiswal and Kant, 2018).

Moreover, the degree to which EC influences ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE generated unique results where EC did not have any influence on any of the dependent variables except for PCE. Environmental concern results indicate a positive and significant influence on perceived consumer effectiveness, but did not have an impact on attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. Previous research confirms this, although EC

influences intention through ATT, SN, and PBC. A relationship between EC and the original TPB variables has also not been found by other studies (Nguyen et al., 2019), and due to the values here, the relationship to EC also was rejected in this study. As a result, the current study suggests that future research should directly assess the impact of EC on intention.

In regards to EK, the degree of knowledge an individual possess about environmental issues and how environmentally-friendly products can help solve the issues determines their perception and attitude towards these products (Koellner and Rivas-Tovar, 2009). Statistical findings of the study found that environmental knowledge has a positive and significant effect on attitude. The results are similar to that of Rizkalla et al. (2022), who also found the same. Similarly, to the present study, the authors found that EK did not directly affect the purchase intention of ethical fashion, instead the effect was indirect through attitude. From the findings, we can deduce that lack of environmental knowledge could potentially block individuals from purchasing ethically-produced fashion (Rokicka, 2002). Therefore, when promoting ethical fashion, businesses should not only focus on the functionality of the items, but also highlight how using the items can help tackle existing environmental and social problems. In this sense, businesses may tailor their advertising campaigns not to only persuade consumers to buy the products, but also to educate them on the relationship between the problems and how the products can help solve them. Manufactures can also visually highlight the sustainability of their apparel through labels, while making sure to avoid the impression of greenwashing.

Lastly, situational context did not influence South African Millennials' intention to purchase ethical fashion. It seems situational context remains unexplored in the context of fashion due to its complexity (Untarini et al., 2020). Situational context is characterised by environmental elements influencing an individual at a particular time and place (Loersch and Payne, 2021). The variable categorises the aspects of situational context into environment (store design, merchandise, and customer service) and objects (product-related attributes such as style, design, and quality) (Polianskaia, 2018). Thus, the present study suggests future research narrow down the abovementioned aspects by first identifying either the object or environmental aspect of the context, and investigating accordingly so that meaningful results can be produced. Moreover, it is advisable to complement these findings with a mixed-method or qualitative approach to gain deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms driving these relationships. In summary, the study suggests that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, as proposed by Ajzen's (1991) TPB model, jointly forecast the intended behavior of South African Millennial consumers towards ethical fashion, whereas the extended model does not offer significant additional predictive power.

Results of additional variables in predicting intended behaviour were either not positive or significant, hence most of them were rejected. This study, therefore, investigated the discrepancies in the results as indicated in the aforementioned sections and provides the statistically significant relationships as pertaining to the South African Millennial cohort, per the current study. From this finding, we revert back to the original TPB theory in exploring Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) emerges as a robust predictor of behavioral intention, underscoring its relevance in understanding the behavioral tendencies of South African consumers towards ethical fashion. Building upon the insights gleaned from the findings, the subsequent section highlights the implications and offers recommendations for future research endeavors.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study explored Millennial consumers' intended behaviour towards ethical fashion in South Africa. As previously noted, the scarcity of research on this subject underscore the significance of the findings from this study. These findings contribute to filling the existing gap in the literature and provide a valuable foundation for future researchers to delve deeper into this topic. The study employed the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991) to assess the factors influencing South African Millennial consumers' purchase intention of ethical fashion, but also extended upon this theory. In the context of this study, it is confirmed that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control are all significant predictors of intention to consume ethically produced fashion among Millennials in South Africa, thus suggesting that there is room for further applications of the model in future research.

Although findings indicate that South African Millennial consumers' interest and intention towards ethical purchasing is gradually increasing, there seems to be a shortage of ethical fashion on the market as the country is still in the early stages of addressing the sustainability agenda (Taljaard and Sonnenberg, 2019; Fashion Outreach, 2017). This provides many opportunities for researchers and businesses alike to explore this new trend. For businesses, this study can provide insight into how to incorporate the TPB in promoting ethical fashion. As revealed in this study, intention would have the greatest influence because it has the highest R-squared value indicating that the independent variables collectively explain a larger proportion of the variance in INT compared to ATT, SN, PBC, and PCE.

According to Barber et al. (2010), attitudes are seen as the strongest foundation of an object or specific behaviour, therefore, manufactures of ethical fashion have to come up with strategies that enhance consumers' attitude towards their products and subsequent behaviour. As an example, to alter individual attitudes, a possible strategy may be for businesses to use celebrity endorsement in their marketing

campaigns in order to form favourable attitudes towards ethical fashion, as reference groups are regarded as important in the decision-making process (Varah et al., 2020). Marketers may also advertise ethical fashion as a new trend, seeing as consumers would be more likely to engage in behaviour that they believe is being done by the majority (Al Mamun et., 2018). In addition, using a public figure could help enhance the image of ethical fashion. Although a positive attitude may have been created, businesses must ensure ethical apparel is widely available and easily accessible. Information regarding the products and prices and where they can be purchased should be clearly communicated to potential consumers.

Another major observation relates to environmental knowledge. Environmental knowledge has been found to potentially block individuals from purchasing ethically-produced fashion (Rokicka, 2002). In promoting ethical fashion, businesses should emphasize not only the functionality of the items but also how using them can address environmental and social issues. They can tailor their advertising campaigns to educate consumers about the connection between these problems and how their products contribute to solutions. This approach can both persuade consumers to purchase and raise awareness about pressing issues. Manufactures and retailers may achieve this by clearly communicating their ethical endeavours to allow consumers to easily compare and contrast different retailers. This may be achieved by eco-labelling to adequately convey ethical production efforts, while making sure to avoid the impression of greenwashing (Vehmas et al., 2018).

The current study acknowledge that existing literature supports the potential for both direct and indirect effects of EC and EK on intention, although mediation analysis has not yet been applied. To address this gap and build on current findings, it is recommended that future research include mediation analysis to explore these relationships in depth. Future studies could integrate EC and EK into a broader TPB framework to examine how these factors influence the primary constructs of TPB and, subsequently, intention. Additionally, they should employ statistical techniques such as structural equation modeling (SEM) to test for the mediating effects of TPB components (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) and PCE on the relationship between EC, EK, and intention.

Last but not least, the inclusion of new variables to expand the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) may also contribute significantly to theoretical advancements. By incorporating additional factors into the TPB framework, researchers have the opportunity to deepen the understanding of the underlying mechanisms driving human behavior, thus making valuable theoretical contribution alongside its practical applications.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study offers valuable insights into South African Millennial consumer behavior regarding ethical fashion, it does have limitations. Firstly, its quantitative and cross-sectional nature restricts the depth of understanding. It's recommended that future research adopts a qualitative

and/or mixed-method approach to gather richer data on this topic. Additionally, cross-sectional data may not capture the long-term impact of the model or compare conditions over time. Therefore, a longitudinal study could be beneficial to track changes in purchase intention over time and assess whether intentions translate into actual behavior (Mei et al., 2012; Rizkalla et al., 2022).

Secondly, South African Millennial consumers were the main target for this study because of their homogeneity and awareness of new trends or techniques. This generation also influences the behaviour of other generations, especially the older ones (Tang and Lam, 2017). For this reason, findings from such a group may be difficult to generalise to the population or other consumer categories. It is, therefore, recommended that various other cohorts be investigated, or even a random sample of South African adult consumers could be undertaken. Another challenge may arise as respondents answer questions without the assistance of the researcher. Respondents may fail to comprehend or dedicate enough time to understanding questions as they may have rigid and limited information about the subject (Lambert, 2019). Furthermore, with surveys where respondents are also consumers of ethical fashion, respondents are likely to give more positive answers than their actual thoughts and/or behaviours, especially in the context of socially-desirable attitudes (Mainieri et al., 1997). This might produce unreliable responses, thus making it difficult to understand consumer intentions and behaviour towards ethical clothing consumption, and subsequently explaining the reasons for the existing intention-behaviour gap. Therefore, the researcher must interpret and generalise research findings with caution (Kawassaki, 2021). Future study may also consider the actual purchase behaviour of ethically-produced fashion as the scope of this study is only limited to intention and not actual behaviour.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

The excessive consumption of clothing has caused significant harm to the environment and human rights. Increasing global concerns, including in South Africa, have led to a shift towards ethical fashion to address these issues. This study, motivated by the urgent need to change consumption patterns, examined the intended behavior of Millennial consumers towards ethical fashion. Results indicate that South African millennials somehow know about ethical fashion and rarely purchase them. Millennials tend to consider quality more when making decision to purchase fashion and they get knowledge about ethical issues on social media platform such as Facebook, and Instagram signifying an increasing interest in ethical fashion. Although, their interest and concerns about the detrimental impacts of fashion is on the rise, there remains a gap

between millennial consumers intended behavior towards ethical fashion and the actual act of purchasing such options, possibly due to the early stage of the introduction of ethical fashion in the country. The study utilised the TPB model and additional variables (ATT, SN, PBC, PCE, EC, EK, and SC) to identify constructs that can predict millennial intended-behavior towards ethical fashion. The results indicate that ATT, SN, PBC are better predictors of intention towards ethical fashion among Millennial consumers in South Africa than the additional proposed variables EC and SC. More importantly, it turns out that EK is a significant predictor of attitude towards ethical fashion while EC and SC are not meaning there could be other influential factors at play.

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Exploring the attitude behaviour gap towards ethical fashion: an examination of the millennials in South Africa

Welcome to my survey

Dear Valued Respondent

Welcome to this online survey and thank you for your participation. My name is Tendai Simango and I am a postgraduate Masters student at the University of South Africa majoring in Consumer Sciences.

Environmental and social issues have grown in importance and scope in the fashion industry. Consumers seek ethical fashion even though their behaviour may not reflect this desire. Therefore the purpose of this study is to identify possible reasons of the attitude-behaviour gap in order to understand barriers preventing South African millennials from converting ethical intentions into ethical purchases.

The questionnaire is expected to take 10-15mins to complete and your participation is highly appreciated. You are entitled to withdraw at any time without penalty. Please be advised that your responses will be strictly confidential and will only be used for academic purpose of this study. By completing this questionnaire you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. Please answer all questions accurately and honestly. The information provided will be treated confidentially. There is no right or wrong answers.

For any queries, please feel free to contact me:
Tendai Simango +263 77 832 3340
Email: 5C128620@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Or Dr Lorna Christie (supervisor-UNISA) +27 (0) 11 471 2811

1. What is your age?

○ 20 to 28

○ 29 to 35

○ 36 to 40

○ 41 +

2. What is your gender?

○ Female

○ Male

○ Non-binary

○ Prefer not to say

3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.) 💬

○ Black

○ White

○ Colored

○ Indian

○ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

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4. What is your highest level of education? 💬

○ Lower than matric/Grade 12

○ Matric/Grade 12

○ Grade 12 + degree/diploma

5. What is your approximate monthly income? 💬

○ Under R10,000

○ Between R10,001 and R15,000

○ Between R15,001 and R25,000

○ Between R25,001 and R35,000

6. What is your current employment situation?
💬

○ Permanent full-time

○ Permanent part-time

○ Contract work

○ Self-employed

○ Unemployed

7. What is your marital status? 🗩

○ Single

○ Married/Living with a partner

○ Divorced/seperated

○ Widowe/er

8. In which town or city do you live? 🗩

9. Do you know about ethical fashion? 🗩

○ Yes

○ A little

○ No

10. Do you purchase ethical fashion? 🗩

○ Yes

○ Sometimes

○ No

11. What attributes are most important to you when purchasing clothes?

(You may only choose one response) 🗩

○ Quality

○ Branding

○ Price

○ Ethicality

○ Other

12. Please indicate the sources of information you would most likely consult regarding environmental and ethical issues or trends on. (You may only choose one) 💬

○ Printed media e.g news paper and magazines

○ Internet e.g google and websites

○ Social media e.g facebook, twitter, instagram

○ Word of mouth from friends, family and colleagues

○ Other (please specify)

13. **Ethical fashion/apparel is** fashion that aims to reduce the negative impact on people, animals, and the planet. Producing an item of clothing involves design, labour and materials. Ethical fashion is kind to the planet and people at every step of the way, from seed to garment. Ethical fashion takes into consideration the rights of both the people who make the clothing and the animals from which some materials may be taken and the environmental impacts the creation of the clothing may have on the environment.

Please select one number that best describes your feelings or opinion regarding ethical fashion .

I consider that buying ethical fashion is 💬

Extremely negative	Neutral	Extremely positive

14. I consider that buying ethical fashion is 💬

Extremely unbeneficial		Extremely beneficial

15. I consider that buying ethical fashion is 💬

Really not useful		Extremely useful

16. I consider that buying ethical fashion is 💬

Extremely unworthwhile		Extremely worthwhile

17. I consider that buying ethical fashion is 💬

Extremely foolish		Extremely wise

18. Please indicatae in spaces provided your level of agreement with the following statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe that my behaviour in support of the environment can have a positive effect on society.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel my contribution on purchasing ethical fashion does not solve an environmental problem.	○	○	○	○	○
I believe I can protect the environment by purchasing ethical fashion	○	○	○	○	○

19. Please indicate in the spaces provided your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I plan to buy ethical fashion.	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to consider switching to other brands for sustainable and social reasons.	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to pay more for clothing which is ethically produced and helps protect the environment.	○	○	○	○	○
I will consider buying ethical fashion because they are less polluting.	○	○	○	○	○

20. Please read the questions carefully and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each question statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe close friends and family would think it is a good idea for me to buy ethical fashion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel important people in my life want me to buy ethical fashion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The people who I listen to could influence me or expect me to buy ethical fashion.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. Please read the questions carefully and indicate how you agree or disagree with each question statement. 💬

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I have the resources to buy ethical fashion.	○	○	○	○	○
I have the knowledge to buy ethical fashion.	○	○	○	○	○
I have the capacity to buy ethical fashion.	○	○	○	○	○

22. Please read the questions carefully and indicate how you agree or disagree with each question statement. 💬

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I am not worried about the state of South Africa's environment and what it will mean for my future	○	○	○	○	○
I believe human beings are not abusing the environment	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that when mankind interfere with the natural state of environment, it will most likely produce disastrous consequence	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that the balance of the natural environment is very delicate and can be easily upset	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that mankind does not need to live in harmony with the natural environment in order to survive.	○	○	○	○	○

23. Please indicate how you agree or disagree with each question statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe buying/using ethical apparel is a substantial way to reduce the wasteful use of natural resources.	○	○	○	○	○
I believe using ethical apparels is a great way to conserve natural resources.	○	○	○	○	○
Knowing about environmental issues allows me to make better fashion choices.	○	○	○	○	○

24. Please indicate how you agree or disagree with each question statement. W

When shopping for clothes, I don't find ethical apparel instore, they are usually out of stock.	○	○	○	○	○
When shopping for clothes, ethical apparel is never on sale (price reduction).	○	○	○	○	○
The presence of a sales person helps me on decision making to purchase ethical apparel.	○	○	○	○	○
I am not excited in buying fast fashion.	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for taking your time to complete this questionnaire!

Next

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA-CAES HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date: 28/10/2022

Dear Mrs Simango

| NHREC Registration # : REC-170616-051 |
| REC Reference # : 2022/CAES_HREC/152 |
| Name : Mrs T Simango |
| Student #: 50128620 |

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
27/10/2022 to 31/10/2025**

Researcher(s): Mrs T Simango
50128620@mylife.unisa.ac,za; +263-77-832-3340

Supervisor (s): Dr L Christie
chrisl@unisa.ac.za; 011-471-2811

| **Working title of research:** |
| **Exploring attitude-behaviour gap towards ethical fashion: An examination of the Millenial in South Africa** |

Qualification: M Consumer Science

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa-CAES Health Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years, **subject to submission of yearly progress reports. Failure to submit the progress report will lead to withdrawal of the ethics clearance until the report has been submitted.**

The researcher is cautioned to adhere to the Unisa protocols for research during Covid-19.

Due date for progress report: 31 October 2023
The progress report is available on the college ethics webpage:
https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Agriculture-&-Environmental-Sciences/Research/Research-Ethics

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

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*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the UNISA-CAES Health Research Ethics Committee on 27 October 2022 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2022/CAES_HREC/152** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*
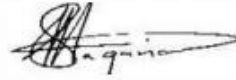
Yours sincerely,

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

Prof MA Antwi

Chair of UNISA-CAES Health REC

E-mail: antwima@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (011) 670-9391

Prof SR Magano

Executive Dean: CAES

E-mail: magansr@unisa.ac.za

Tel: (011) 471-3649

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

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