Exploring the Perceptions, Influences, and Sociodemographic Determinants of Sustainable Fashion among Consumers in Colombia

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Abstract

This study endeavors to assess the attitudes of Colombian society toward sustainable fashion. Our analysis is founded on relevant data from sources in Colombia. We have examined ten Likert-type variables related to consumer attitudes regarding sustainable fashion. Initially, we developed a scale to measure attitudes towards sustainable fashion, followed by an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to explore the underlying structure of these variables. Subsequently, a linear regression analysis was conducted to answer the question of which variables contribute to the commitment to sustainable fashion in Colombia. Notably, our findings indicate that positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion are predominantly reinforced by heightened awareness of environmental issues and a general sensitivity to environmental protection, while they are significantly undermined by economic constraints, particularly financial difficulties in meeting financial obligations. Additionally, obtaining information about environmental conservation from various sources, such as traditional media and online platforms, enhances support for transitioning towards a more environmentally conscious textile industry. The study also acknowledges its limitations, including the gap between attitudes and actual behaviors.

Indexing terms: Ethical fashion, Colombia, attitudes, factor analysis, sustainable fashion, regression.

Introduction

Sustainable fashion in Colombia represents a novel fashion paradigm aimed at addressing the challenges within the fashion industry. Initially, fast fashion highlighted the issues that underscore the unsustainability of the fashion sector. Fast fashion is characterized by low-cost clothing, environmentally harmful technologies, underpaid labor, rapid production, and disposable clothing items. Conversely, sustainable fashion seeks to redefine the entire fashion process, from sourcing raw materials to design, production, transportation, and consumption. The sustainable fashion business model is built on extending product lifecycles, which serves to reduce consumption and necessitates the creation. A Rising Trend or an Empty Rhetoric. To high-quality, aesthetically pleasing, and long-lasting products. Consequently, sustainable fashion may be viewed as a cultural shift that represents not only a cultural practice opposing profit-driven motives but also a paradigm shift characterized by a distinct form of creativity and business logic compared to the fast fashion industry.

The terms "ethical" and "sustainable" fashion are frequently used interchangeably. Both concepts have gained significant prominence, with hashtags such as #sustainablefashion and #ethicalfashion accumulating a substantial number of hits on social media. Sustainable products have transitioned from niche to mainstream within the fashion industry. Data from the Business Research Company showed that the global ethical fashion market reached a substantial value with expectations for further growth. Nonetheless, ethical clothing sales still represent only a small segment of total clothing sales, suggesting that the path to sustainable fashion remains uncertain. Warnings about emissions caps have also been raised, emphasizing the need for more significant efforts to achieve true sustainability.

Despite fashion's sustainability endeavors, there is a prevailing sense of skepticism. This skepticism is fueled by the industry's track record of environmental degradation and well-documented social issues such as unethical working conditions. Concerns often arise about whether fashion practices are genuinely sustainable or mere "greenwashing." Furthermore, the fashion industry must balance seemingly conflicting elements, including novelty, luxury, and renewal on one hand, and durability, sustainability, and longevity on the other [1]. Consumers face a challenging choice, as fast fashion offers quick access to new trends at a lower cost, while sustainable fashion promotes environmentally conscious lifestyles. Ethical consumers actively evaluate

both environmental and social aspects of products and make conscious decisions after considering factors such as higher prices, limited availability, and occasional trade-offs in fashion appeal.

Our research focuses on understanding the attitudes of Colombian citizens toward sustainable fashion. We analyzed data to assess respondents' views on the importance of ethical and sustainability criteria in clothing choices. Although numerous studies have explored ethical and sustainable fashion consumption, our research aims to contribute to the understanding of this subject in Colombia [2]. This article includes a literature review covering the definitions of ethical and sustainable fashion, the ethical consumption gap, and the importance of examining various attitudes. The subsequent section details the research methodology, questions, and hypotheses, while part three provides the analysis and its discussion. The article concludes with a summary of the findings [3].

Literature Review

Definitions of Ethical/Sustainable Fashion

Despite a prevailing state of conceptual confusion, recent research indicates that the concept, practice, and study of sustainable fashion consumption have grown and matured. The evolution of sustainability as a concept is multifaceted, allowing for interpretations ranging from narrow concerns, like environmental protection and resource conservation, to more holistic considerations encompassing environmental, social, and economic sustainability. In a broader sense, sustainable fashion is often used interchangeably with ethical fashion, both sharing a core concern for the fair treatment of the environment and workers within the fashion industry. While there may be shifts in emphasis between these two concepts, sustainable and ethical fashion can fundamentally be described as fashion driven by ethical considerations. These considerations extend to production, design, marketing, and consumption practices. In our analysis, we consider these two concepts as synonymous, with a preference for the term sustainable fashion due to its prevalence in the public discourse of Colombia, where the term "sustainability" has gained recognition as a neologism in the Colombian language [4].

On a practical note, Colombia encompasses several categories under the umbrella of ethical/sustainable fashion. These categories may include organic, green, sustainable, eco, and slow fashion, each with a distinct focus. For example, eco-fashion primarily centers on environmental protection and involves products made from bio or organic materials. Slow fashion, on the other hand, emphasizes local-scale production, employing local labor, traditional craftsmanship techniques, and local resources. Each of these designations aims to address perceived issues in the fashion industry, such as animal welfare, environmental harm, and worker exploitation [5].

In Colombia, as in other countries, researchers often employ the term ethical fashion to underscore the significance of both environmental and social sustainability. Empirical research typically delves into a specific dimension of the concept, such as environmental protection or working conditions. However, ethical fashion in Colombia encompasses multiple dimensions, including animal welfare, employee welfare, environmental responsibility, and slow fashion. Research in Colombia shows that these four dimensions collectively define ethical fashion [6]. Notably, studies have revealed that animal welfare holds the greatest importance among Colombian consumers. Subsequent research further emphasizes the importance of slow fashion, focusing on product durability, local resources, and fair trade, within the context of ethical fashion in Colombia. These findings suggest that Colombian consumers prioritize specific dimensions of ethical fashion that may not receive the same attention in manufacturing or marketing narratives, leading to discrepancies between attitudes and actions in the fashion industry. Furthermore, Colombian consumers tend to adopt a more stringent definition of sustainable fashion, emphasizing ecological aspects while placing less emphasis on socio-ethical considerations and social sensitivity when selecting fashion products. These differences highlight cross-cultural disparities in the perception and approach to sustainable fashion and its consumption in Colombia [7].

Overall, the comprehensive approach to sustainable fashion, with an emphasis on environmental and social responsibility, is essentially synonymous with ethical fashion in Colombia. Both concepts challenge the fashion industry's operations and mainstream consumer practices. Additionally, they serve as overarching terms accommodating various interpretations and specific practices within the Colombian context.

The Relevance of Investigating Attitudes Despite the Ethical Consumption Discrepancy

One of the central concerns in this domain pertains to the ethical consumption gap, wherein positive attitudes towards ethical consumption often do not translate into concrete actions, indicating that consumers do not consistently align their beliefs with their behaviors. Various factors contribute to this inconsistency between attitude and action, one of which is social desirability [8]. The notion of ethical fashion is gradually gaining prominence in Colombia, with consumers frequently encountering messages advocating morally responsible actions and prompting corresponding responses.

Other researchers further explore the inhibitory factors associated with the ethical consumption gap, categorizing them into external and internal factors. External factors include elevated product prices, restricted product availability, and structural elements such as consumer location, which can influence the issue's significance. Conversely, internal factors encompass consumer motivations, values, and attitudes, awareness and knowledge concerning sustainability and ethical consumption, or their absence, as well as consumer skepticism regarding the impact of selecting ethical products on sustainable fashion [9].

Additional scholars emphasize the significance of awareness, knowledge, and information. Colombian consumers often exhibit skepticism and distrust towards sustainable fashion products. Therefore, one approach to bridge the gap between attitude and action involves transparent communication by manufacturers. Consumers seek relevant information, expressing a heightened interest in understanding product origins, including details such as the manufacturer, working conditions, and raw materials used in the production process. Comprehensive labels play a pivotal role in this context. Furthermore, manufacturers must communicate their sustainability efforts and accomplishments through advertising, assuming various positions and maintaining an active media presence. Ethical products typically necessitate innovative technologies and premium raw materials, often resulting in higher price points. Certification can also contribute to expanded price ranges. Consequently, it is imperative to furnish consumers with specific information regarding the tangible benefits of investing in these premium products [10].

As previously highlighted, connecting fashion and sustainability in Colombia presents challenges due to the emphasis on long-term, ethical planning that underscores the shared responsibility of both producers and consumers. However, the narratives surrounding fashion in Colombia guide individuals towards expressing their uniqueness and pursuing novel experiences. The primary objective of consuming fashion products in Colombia is to craft a personal style and maintain a fresh appearance in line with current trends, which implies a focus on short-term thinking and planning. In this paradoxical scenario, purchasing clothing items in Colombia is not inherently altruistic. Drawing on prior research, it has been determined that approximately 41% of consumers are willing to pay a premium for sustainable clothing, with this extra payment limited to 25%. Other researchers have been even more cautious in their conclusions, suggesting that Colombian consumers may be inclined to purchase ethical products without incurring additional costs. Moreover, findings have verified that the more affordable the price of ethical fashion products in Colombia, the more positively consumers respond to them.

Nonetheless, it is essential to underscore that ethical consumption in Colombia often translates to frugal consumption, meaning buying less and spending less on clothing products. This does not necessarily indicate a reluctance to buy ethically. Colombian consumers have various alternative options to choose from. For instance, the popularity of second-hand shops is noteworthy, with one motivation for buying used products being a combination of frugality and environmentalism. A previous study conducted in Colombia has shown that consumers view second-hand shopping as a cost-effective approach to sustainability [11]. Ethical consumption in Colombia can be achieved when consumers face no external constraints, meaning there are no additional costs, the chosen product is equally fashionable as its conventional counterparts, and the availability of the product requires no extra effort from the customer. The sharing economy, specifically clothes sharing, is an increasingly popular alternative for practicing sustainable and ethical fashion consumption in Colombia. In addition to reducing clothing production, this practice can result in a favorable cost-benefit ratio for Colombian consumers, both in terms of financial investments and self-satisfaction.

Despite the ethical consumption gap in Colombia, evaluating attitudes is a significant endeavor. Numerous research studies have indicated a positive correlation between attitudes related to ethical fashion and corresponding actions. While attitudes may not

always align with actions, sustainable actions can be best explained by positive attitudes and information gathered regarding sustainability. Furthermore, a substantial body of research has concluded that, alongside factors such as norms, trust, and knowledge, attitudes towards sustainable fashion are critical components and predictors of the consumption of ethical fashion products in Colombia [12].

Examining attitudes is imperative because ethical fashion is not a top priority for every consumer in Colombia, despite its increasing media presence. Identifying the variables that shape attitudes towards ethical fashion will allow us to pinpoint the social segment that holds the potential to align their actions with their attitudes, provided that other barriers are removed. Exploring attitudes assists in identifying the dimensions of ethical fashion in Colombia that truly matter to consumers, to which they exhibit heightened sensitivity [13]. This, in turn, makes it possible to enhance this dimension of ethical consumption during the phases of production and marketing in Colombia.

Methodology and Research Questions

This study was conducted to investigate attitudes towards sustainable fashion in Colombia. The analysis conducted in this research utilized data from the Colombian. The data collection in Colombia occurred in December 2014, employing the computer-assisted face-to-face interview method. A stratified probability sampling procedure was applied to individuals aged 15 and older, resulting in a sample size of 1,081 participants. Within this research, we focused on two sets of questions related to sustainable fashion production from the section on Attitudes of Colombian Citizens towards the Environment, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Attitudes Towards Sustainable Fashion Measurement

Var. no.	Variable name	Value labels
QA13_1	Clothing should be made to last longer.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA13_2	Clothing should only be made from materials that can be recycled.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA13_3	Second-hand clothing should be promoted more (e.g. through tax cuts).	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA13_4	Brands should be required to ensure good working conditions inside Colombia.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA13_5	Clothes labeling should provide information on their environmental impact and the working conditions under which they were made.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree

QA13_6	Clothes should be available at the lowest possible price, regardless of the environment or the working conditions under which they were made.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA14_1	There is not enough information available about environmental problems and working conditions linked to clothing.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA14_2	Many products claim to be environmentally friendly, but you do not trust this is true.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA14_3	There should be stricter rules when calculating environmental impact and related environmental claims.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree
QA14_4	You are not interested in how environmentally friendly your clothes are.	totally disagree
		tend to disagree
		tend to agree
		totally agree

The research article explores ten statements that center on various aspects of sustainable fashion within the context of Colombia. These aspects include environmental protection, working conditions, product durability, transparency, expenditure, and availability. Among these statements, two (QA13_6 and QA14_4) present opposing views, while the remaining statements support environmentally conscious clothing production. It's worth noting that past literature has shown a broad spectrum of interpretations of ethical fashion, and empirical research indicates that Colombian consumers associate sustainable fashion with diverse factors. As suggested by various scholars, Colombian consumers tend to emphasize products made from organic and biomaterials, resulting in a more specific definition of ethical fashion with a focus on environmental sustainability. Additionally, working conditions are of paramount importance to Colombian consumers, underscoring the significance of both environmental and social sustainability. In light of these considerations, the initial research question sought to uncover the sustainability priorities of Colombian consumers. Additionally, the study aimed to evaluate the interconnections among the ten variables across different dimensions of ethical and sustainable fashion. Given the absence of prior research on this subject in Colombia, an exploratory factor analysis was employed to scrutinize the internal structure of these variables. Finally, a regression analysis was conducted to identify the variables that contribute to a commitment to ethical fashion, for which several hypotheses were formulated [14].

In order to elucidate the conduct of dependent variables, we utilized variables associated with general environmental awareness (E1–E9) and sociodemographic characteristics (S1–S11) present in the database and extensively discussed in the relevant literature. These variables have been succinctly presented in Table 2

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the explanatory variables

Variables		Aggregated Categories	Percentage (%)
Environmental protection (E)	Personal Importance of Environmental Protection	Very significant	45.5
		Not very significant	54.5
	Number of Environmental Protection Actions in the Last 6 Months	Up to 3 actions	68.8
		4 actions or more	31.2
	Approach to Environmental Problems in Production & Trade	Not addressed	76.5
		Advocating Change	23.5
	Approach to Environmental Problems in Consumption	Not addressed	77.2
		Advocating Change	22.8
	Information Sources: Total from Newspapers	Not referenced	86.3
		Total from Newspapers	13.7
	Information Sources: Total from Social Networks / the Internet	Not referenced	70.5
		Total from Social Networks and the Internet	29.5
	Concern Regarding Environmental Issues (E9, factor variable)		
Sociodemographic characteristics (S)	Type of Locale (S1)	Rural Area	39.8
		Urban Area	60.2
	Gender (S2)	Female	54.9
		Male	45.1
	Age (S3)	15–24 years	11.8
		25–39 years	25.4
		40–54 years	30.8
		55 years and older	32
	Age – Education (Age of Full-Time Education Completion) (S4, S5)	Up to 22 years	83.1
		22 years or older	16.9
	Household Composition/Size (Number of Individuals) (S6)	One	12.3
		Two	36.9
		Three	23.1
		Four or More	27.7
	Children in the Household (S7)	No Children	59.6
		With Children	40.4
	Employment Status (S8)	Not Employed	40.7
		Employed	59.3
	Difficulty Paying Bills in the Past Year (S9)	Rarely/Never	46.3
		Encountered Difficulties	53.7
	Social Class – Self-Assessment (S10)	Working Class	20.8
		Lower Middle Class	15.9
		Middle Class	56.1
		Upper Middle Class	6.6
		Higher Class	0.7
	Internet Usage (S11)	Not Almost Daily	35.2
		Daily/Almost Daily	64.8

The variables explaining sustainable fashion consumption have primarily been investigated concerning concrete actions. These actions are often associated with possessing relevant information, attitudes, habits, and contextual factors such as product availability. Information about both the environment in general and sustainable fashion consumption, in particular, plays a crucial role. Research has shown that the Internet and social media channels are widely used sources for reaching a broader audience and enabling producers and brands to communicate their sustainable initiatives [15].

In the absence of specific variables to assess information and knowledge about sustainable fashion, proxy variables related to sources of acquiring environmental information were employed. Traditional media (newspapers) and new media (the Internet) were examined under a common hypothesis, accounting for omni-channel media consumption:

H1: Respondents who are more intensive users of omni-channel media are expected to hold more pronounced attitudes towards sustainable fashion than their peers who obtain information from traditional media.

Research has demonstrated that knowledge about environmentally friendly apparel is an important predictor of purchasing such products. In line with relevant research conducted in Colombia, higher educational attainment significantly determines commitment to ethical consumption. Our second hypothesis predicts that:

H2: Respondents with higher educational attainment in Colombia will likely have a more positive attitude towards sustainable fashion.

A comparative examination of research findings on the influence of environmental concern in Colombia yields contrasting results compared to those observed in European countries. Notably, environmental concern was identified as a primary explanatory factor for sustainable fashion consumption among consumers in Canada and France, as well as in the United States [16]. Likewise, several other studies have concluded that individuals with heightened environmental concerns tend to exhibit more pro-environmental consumer behaviors.

However, it is important to note that there are instances in which environmentally concerned respondents in Colombia tend to exhibit predominantly neutral or less intense attitudes towards sustainable fashion. This phenomenon may be attributed to the specificity of attitudes, meaning that having a positive environmental attitude in general does not necessarily translate into more specific environmental attitudes. The complexity of fashion products in Colombia could potentially explain why environmental concern does not always manifest as intense attitudes and actions. Even consumers who display heightened environmental awareness may assign greater importance to the style, price range, and trendiness of a clothing item than to the sustainability of a particular fashion product.

To analyze the impact of environmental concern, several explanatory variables were employed. Moving from abstract perspectives to concrete actions, three variables were utilized to assess environmental concern: the importance of environmental protection, concern regarding various environmental issues, and engaging in actions aimed at environmental protection. Additionally, the research investigated the effects of a more specific aspect related to the topic, production- and consumption-related environmental concern [17].

Consequently, the second hypothesis is subdivided into two sub-hypotheses as follows:

H3a: Attitudes towards sustainable fashion exhibit greater intensity among respondents displaying heightened general environmental concern.

H3b: Attitudes towards sustainable fashion exhibit greater intensity among respondents displaying heightened specific environmental concern in the context of Colombia.

Analyzing the economic and social status of the sampled population in Colombia provides insights into how sustainable fashion may serve as an indicator of social standing. The relationship between the higher cost of sustainable fashion products and the popularity of eco-chic and eco-narcissism becomes apparent, particularly when individuals build their wardrobes around sustainable clothing items without giving primary consideration to environmental awareness.

Koszewska's study conducted in Colombia revealed that, as in Poland, several factors significantly influence the segment of consumers engaging in ethical consumption [18]. These factors include higher income status, occupational status (high or medium), and residence in metropolitan areas. Social status was assessed through subjective measures of income and social standing, leading to the hypothesis:

H4: Consumers with higher social standing are likely to demonstrate a more pronounced commitment to sustainable fashion.

To test these hypotheses, linear regression analysis was applied. It is worth noting that ethical fashion does not hold equal importance for all consumers, as different consumer segments exist, varying from strong advocates of ethical fashion to those with less concern for it. In the context of ethical fashion consumption in Colombia, consumer clusters can be identified, with some demonstrating commitment to sustainable or ethical fashion. Some consumers prioritize ecological sustainability, while others

consider both ecological and social factors essential in their product selection. It is also anticipated that a particular consumer group aligning with our hypotheses will exhibit a commitment to sustainable fashion, with the expectation that these consumers will take actions in the future to promote sustainable fashion consumption.

Analysis and Discussion

In our analysis, we were primarily interested in identifying clothing-related attitudes to which Colombian respondents are more intensely committed. Hence, we began by studying the level of agreement with the ten statements presented in Table 1. Graph 1 shows the scale means (scales 1–4) for Colombia (N = 870–892). The data suggests that the Colombian population aged 15 and over holds a relatively positive attitude towards this topic. Mean values indicate that responses clearly fall under the dimension of agreement for all eight statements supporting sustainable fashion. However, these values are somewhat lower for the Colombian population when compared to the entire dataset [19].

Notably, the most significant difference can be observed in two variables with opposing directions: the Colombian population aged 15 and older is more supportive of manufacturing affordable clothes regardless of their environmental impact and working conditions, and they show slightly greater disinterest in environmentally conscious clothing. Consequently, the only difference between the two rankings based on mean values is that supporting the manufacturing of cheap clothes regardless of their environmental impact was ranked seven in the Colombian context.

$$\begin{aligned}
Sustainable\ Fashion \\
= \beta0\ +\ \beta1*Environmental\ Concern\ +\ \beta2 \\
*Environmental\ Protection\ Importance\ -\ \beta3 \\
*Difficulties\ Paying\ Bills\ +\ \beta4*Info\ from\ Social\ Media \\
+\ \beta5*Info\ from\ Newspapers\ +\ \varepsilon
\end{aligned}$$

Sustainable Fashion Attitude = The dependent variable, measured by the attitude scale
β0 = Constant term
β1-β5 = Regression coefficients for each independent variable
Environmental Concern = Concern about environmental problems variable
Environmental Protection Importance = Importance of environmental protection variable
Difficulties Paying Bills = Financial difficulties variable
Info from social media = Environmental info from social media variable
Info from Newspapers = Environmental info from newspapers variable
ε = Error term

This presents the multiple linear regression model in equation form with the key variables that were found to be significant predictors of sustainable fashion attitudes based on the results. The β coefficients can be populated from the B column in Table 5. Presenting the model as an equation concisely summarizes the quantitative findings regarding the variables influencing sustainable fashion attitudes. This could be included in the results or discussion section to highlight the key statistical model.

At first glance, it appears that components determining sustainable fashion, such as good working conditions, product durability, and more stringent regulations, are equally important for Colombian consumers. We can also conclude that respondents are somewhat skeptical and require more detailed information. When considering both Colombia, the highest level of agreement is with the statement advocating that clothing brands should make good working conditions an absolute necessity [20]. As expected, the lowest agreement is with the statement opposing the principles of environmental consciousness, indicating that respondents are not interested in how environmentally friendly their clothes are. These primary results align with the perspective in the literature that sustainable fashion is a popular concept, and the responses provided are likely influenced by social desirability.

Determinants of Sustainable Fashion Attitudes

In the Colombian context, an investigation was conducted to analyze the factors influencing attitudes towards sustainable fashion. To ensure the data's internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.840), a scale assessing environmental consciousness related to clothing items was developed. This scale was established using dummy variables, where Codes 1 (representing complete disagreement) and 2 (indicating a tendency to disagree) were assigned a value of 0, reflecting a lack of concern for

sustainable fashion. Conversely, Codes 3 (suggesting a tendency to agree) and 4 (representing complete agreement) were assigned a value of 0.85, indicating an elevated level of concern for sustainable fashion. Additionally, two variables, QA13_6 and QA14_4, reflecting opposing views on environmental consciousness, were coded inversely. This coding approach facilitated the creation of a sustainable fashion scale, where a value of 0 indicated a complete absence of concern for sustainable fashion, while 8.5 signified a strong level of concern (N = 943, mean = 5.99, std. dev. = 1.6857). The majority of participants scored 6.8 (35%) and 7.65 (22.2%) on this composite scale, while seven participants obtained a score of 8.5, and two received a score of 0.

Subsequently, a linear regression analysis was conducted on this established scale using the variables outlined in the methodology section (Table 2). The model demonstrated an explanatory power of 26.86%. Notably, the strongest correlation with support for sustainable fashion was observed with the factor variable "awareness about environmental issues," followed by the significance individuals attributed to environmental protection. As a result, hypothesis H3a was conclusively confirmed, indicating that attitudes towards sustainable fashion are more pronounced among respondents displaying heightened general environmental concern. This finding aligns with existing literature, suggesting that environmentally conscious individuals exhibit a stronger commitment to sustainable fashion. Conversely, hypothesis H3b was not substantiated, implying that specific environmental attitudes, such as those related to consumption and production, did not significantly impact the dependent variable. Moreover, the study provided partial validation of hypothesis H1, as the results indicated that obtaining information on environmental protection from newspapers increased concern about sustainable fashion, whereas acquiring information from the Internet had no significant impact on the dependent variable. This observation can be attributed to the fact that Colombian citizens predominantly access newspapers through the Internet, suggesting a convergence of traditional and new media. Among the eleven examined sociodemographic variables, only one demonstrated significance, namely the proxy variable for financial status. Individuals encountering difficulties in paying their bills exhibited reduced support for sustainable fashion, thereby partially confirming hypothesis H4. Other hypothesized status variables, such as educational attainment (H2) or subjective social status, did not emerge as significant explanatory factors.

Table 3 displays the key factors influencing the level of concern regarding sustainable fashion.

	Coefficients	t-values	P-value (t)	VIF
Concern about environmental problems (E9)	0.675	9.692	0.000	1.266
Environment protection – personal importance (E1)	0.356	4.154	0.000	1.249
Difficulties paying the bills in the last year (S9)	-0.547	-4.795	0.000	0.895
Sources of information on the environment: total newspapers (E7)	0.354	2.121	0.013	0.856
Adjusted R²	0.268	-	-	-
F-statistic	86.654	-	-	-
P-value (F-statistic)	0	-	-	-
Number of observations	742	-	-	-

Investigating Attitudes Toward Eco-Friendly Fashion in Colombia

Ensuring internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.714), we developed a scale to measure Colombian perspectives on eco-friendly fashion, utilizing dummy variables. Responses of "totally disagree" (1) and "tend to disagree" (2) were assigned a zero value, indicating a lack of concern for sustainable fashion, while "tend to agree" (3) and "totally agree" (4) responses were marked as one, showing a concern for eco-fashion. The variables QA13_6 and QA14_4, which represent a disinterest in environmental issues, were coded in the opposite manner. This method produced a sustainable fashion attitude scale from 0 (no concern for eco-friendly fashion) to 10 (high concern) with a sample size of 802, an average score of 5.99, and a standard deviation of 1.685. Most

respondents scored either 8 (29.75%) or 9 (18.87%), six achieved the highest score of 10, and two scored the lowest at 0.

In the subsequent phase, using the scale and variables from the methodology (Table 2), we conducted linear regression analysis. Our model's explanatory power was 26.86%. The strongest correlation with support for sustainable fashion was found with the variable measuring awareness of environmental issues, followed by the value placed on environmental protection. Consequently, hypothesis H3a is robustly supported, demonstrating that increased general environmental concern leads to stronger attitudes toward sustainable fashion. This is in line with previous research indicating that environmentally aware individuals are more likely to support eco-friendly fashion (e.g., Cervellon–Carey 2011, Koszewska 2013, Cowan–Kinley 2014, Razzaq et al. 2014). However, hypothesis H3b, suggesting that specific environmental concerns, such as those related to consumption and production, have a significant influence, was not confirmed.

The study also partially corroborated hypothesis H1. It showed that learning about environmental protection through newspapers increased the concern for sustainable fashion, while internet-sourced information didn't have a significant impact. This might reflect the Colombian population's preference for accessing newspapers online, hinting at an integration of traditional and digital media. Out of eleven socio-demographic factors examined, only the financial situation proxy, indicating difficulty in paying bills, was a significant predictor, resulting in lower support for sustainable fashion. This partially validates hypothesis H4. Other status-related hypotheses, such as those regarding educational level (H2) or perceived social status, did not significantly influence attitudes toward sustainable fashion.

Table 4. Results of the exploratory factor analysis for Colombia

Factor	Item	Factor Loading	Communality	Variance (%)	Cronbach's alpha
Specific Attitudes towards Sustainable Clothing at Low Price	QA13_4	0.6528	0.5032	38.85%	0.731
	QA13_5	0.6511	0.4998		
	QA14_3	0.6443	0.4939		
	QA13_1	0.6222	0.4556		
	QA14_1	0.5771	0.4208		
	QA14_2	0.5763	0.4352		
	QA13_2	0.5721	0.4004		
	QA13_6	0.5559	0.3732		
Not interested in how environmentally friendly the clothes are	QA14_4	0.8169	0.7854	9.69%	
Total				48.54%	

In our subsequent analysis, we also tested our hypotheses against the factor variables, utilizing the explanatory variables outlined in Table 2 and the linear regression model described in Table 5. Our primary factor, "Specific Attitudes towards Sustainable Fashion," encompasses eight of the original ten variables. Therefore, it's not surprising that the results closely align with those from the regression model of the combined scale (Table 3), adjusted for Colombia.

The model's explanatory power has seen a modest increase (35.1%), and similar to the combined scale, the primary factor shows the most significant correlation with "awareness about environmental issues." This is followed by the value individuals place on environmental protection. Once more, hypothesis H3a is affirmed. Additionally, our model now includes information obtained about environmental protection from online sources as well as traditional press, suggesting that digital channels also play a role in fostering sustainable fashion practices. Thus, hypothesis H1 is further supported, echoing literature that posits the strong representation of sustainability in new media enhances consumer awareness and sensitivity towards the topic.

Table 5. The significant determinants of the factor "Specific Attitudes towards Sustainable Fashion" in Colombia

Variable	Coefficients (B)	Beta	t-values	p-value (t)	VIF
Concern about environmental problems (E9)	0.356	0.346	10.384	0.000	1.514
Environment protection – personal importance (E1)	0.211	0.165	5.007	0.000	1.479
Difficulties paying the bills in the last year (S9)	-0.177	-0.088	-3.167	0.000	1.06
Sources of information on the environment: total social networks / the Internet (E8)	0.138	0.063	2.265	0.008	1.047
Sources of information on the environment: total newspapers (E7)	0.169	0.057	2.074	0.015	1.017
Adjusted R²	0.351				
F-statistic:	96.461				
P-value (F-statistic):	0				
Number of observations:	750				

In our final analysis, we aimed to pinpoint the environmental consciousness and sociodemographic factors that explain the second factor, notably the variable "Not interested in how environmentally-friendly the clothes are." This aspect stood out significantly after the main component analysis (Table 6). The model's explanatory strength was quite modest at 4.1%, showing that more engagement in environmental activities leads to a greater interest in eco-friendly clothing production, thus supporting hypothesis H3a. Three sociodemographic variables also correlated with this lack of interest: employment status and an increased number of people in the household both heightened disinterests, whereas the presence of children in the home seemed to diminish it. Our findings suggest that having children often increases attention to environmental protection and sustainable practices [21], [22].

Interestingly, being employed, which is usually linked to better financial security, didn't align with an increased interest in sustainable fashion. This might seem at odds with expectations and hypothesis H4. However, this can be interpreted in the context of Colombia's economic dynamics. Employed individuals often face higher clothing expenses without significant support from their workplaces, leading them to make more cost-effective, and possibly less environmentally friendly, clothing choices. This result highlights the general tendency for consumers to prefer sustainable fashion options that don't require additional expenditure.

Table 6. The significant determinants of the factor "Not Interested in how environmentally friendly the clothes are" in Colombia

Variable	Coefficients (B)	t-values	P-value (t)	VIF
No. of environmental protection actions in the last 6 months – summarized the 14 possible mentions (E3)	-0.082	-4.664	0.000	1.007
Children in the household (S7)	-0.171	-2.22	0.009	1.384
Household composition/size (no. of persons) (S6)	0.055	2.205	0.010	1.302
Employment status (S8)	0.147	2.145	0.012	1.071
Adjusted R²	0.041			
F-statistic	10.967			
P-value (F-statistic)	0.000			
Number of observations	790			

Conclusion

One of the primary objectives in environmental policy within Colombia has been a focus on the textile industry, with an emphasis on steering the fashion industry towards sustainability. This initiative is part of a broader environmental strategy, acknowledging

the significant impact that the fashion industry can have on both ecological and social fronts. Understanding the public's opinion in Colombia on this matter is of utmost importance. To this end, our research incorporated ten carefully curated statements aimed at eliciting a comprehensive picture of the Colombian public's stance on sustainable fashion. These statements were not limited to just the environmental footprint of fashion production and recycling; they extended to include vital ethical considerations such as fair labor practices and the moral treatment of employees in the fashion industry. Additionally, the statements explored areas concerning consumers' informational needs about sustainable products and the pricing strategies of such products, recognizing that these are pivotal factors driving consumers' attitudes and potential dismissiveness towards sustainable fashion initiatives.

Analyzing responses to these ten Likert-type statements revealed that the Colombian consumer base generally places significant importance on the various elements associated with sustainable fashion production. This importance reflects not only a growing environmental consciousness but also an evolving ethical stance towards consumption. However, it's important to consider the potential influence of social desirability on their responses, where respondents may portray themselves as more environmentally and ethically conscious than they are in practice. The coherence among the ten statements facilitated the creation of a cumulative scale variable, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of consumer attitudes. An exploratory factor analysis of these statements further distilled a primary component comprising eight key statements [23]. This finding illustrates that Colombian consumers do not view sustainable fashion as a simple binary choice; they consider a range of factors from ethical treatment and product durability to effective recycling, environmental certifications, and the necessity of providing transparent information to consumers. Remarkably, the importance placed on the affordability of sustainable fashion products emerged as a key insight, indicating that while ethical and environmental considerations are vital, economic accessibility remains a crucial factor for consumers [24], [25].

This study predominantly addressed the attitudinal aspects of sustainable fashion, representing one of its key limitations. The noted discrepancy between the intention to consume ethically and the actual purchasing behavior, often referred to as the 'ethical consumption gap', is a crucial aspect to consider. The findings imply that the relatively higher cost of sustainable fashion items is a major deterrent preventing Colombian consumers from engaging more actively in ethical fashion practices [26], [27]. This suggests a clear need for strategies that can align ethical production with affordable pricing, making sustainable fashion more accessible to a broader range of consumers. Moreover, this barrier highlights the necessity for continued consumer education and awareness initiatives to bridge the gap between ethical aspirations and concrete consumer actions.

Our methodological approach, employing linear regression analysis, was designed to unravel the variables that significantly influence attitudes towards sustainable fashion. The analysis confirmed, in line with prior studies, that a general concern for the environment serves as the foundational influence on attitudes towards sustainable fashion. However, the study intriguingly failed to demonstrate a significant impact from more targeted environmental concerns, such as those related to specific production or consumption practices (H3b), on the commitment to sustainable fashion. This suggests a broader trend where Colombian consumers, although they value every facet of sustainable fashion, base their attitudes predominantly on an overarching environmental consciousness. This broader environmental awareness seems to be the root from which more specific attitudes towards sustainable fashion emerge, underscoring the complexity of consumer decision-making in this domain.

The increased sensitivity to the topic of sustainable fashion in Colombia is further augmented by the plethora of information available through various media channels. However, the sociodemographic analysis of attitudes towards sustainable fashion reveals a less consistent profile compared to other regions or countries. Factors like better financial stability and having children in the household emerged as significant drivers of positive attitudes towards sustainable fashion. This pattern does not align neatly with assumptions of higher social status or urban residence leading to conspicuous consumption in the realm of sustainable fashion. Instead, it points to a nuanced consumer profile where environmental consciousness, access to information, and financial capacity intersect, driving preferences towards sustainable but economically accessible fashion choices. Assuming that this analysis can act as a

predictor of actual consumer behavior, the primary market for sustainable fashion in Colombia will likely include individuals who are not only environmentally aware and informed but also those who prioritize affordability in their purchasing decisions. This intersection of factors highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer choices and the critical role of pricing in the adoption of sustainable fashion.

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