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DRIVERS AND HINDRANCES BEHIND SUSTAINABLE FASHION CONSUMPTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN UKRAINE

Bachelor Thesis

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I have written this Bachelor Thesis independently. Any ideas or data taken from other authors or other sources have been fully referenced.

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Introduction

In recent years, sustainability has emerged as one of the most important values guiding business practices, investment decisions, and consumer behavior. Despite growing awareness of the long-term environmental impact of unsustainable actions, people often choose the easier option, which tends to have a worse effect, even when there are alternatives that could reduce the harm to the planet. This contradiction is particularly evident in the fashion industry, which, according to Niinimäki et al. (2020), ranks as the second-largest polluting industry after aviation, consuming over 1.5 trillion liters of water and generating more than 92 million tons of waste annually. Although public awareness of these issues is rising, unsustainable shopping habits persist. For instance, as the European Environment Agency (2019) claims, each person in Europe buys an average of 26 kg of textiles per year and discards approximately 11 kg, contributing significantly to textile waste.

Given these pressing issues, it is crucial to examine the sustainability of fashion within the academic domain. While research on sustainable fashion is growing, much of the current literature remains focused on supply chain processes (Shen et al., 2012), leaving consumer perspectives underexplored. Studies that do explore consumer motivations often overlook the barriers to sustainable purchasing behaviors (Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Shen et al., 2012). Additionally, some research focuses only on consumers already engaged in sustainable practices, making it difficult to understand and reach those who are not (Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Hiller Connell, 2010). Moreover, several studies are restricted to one or two countries, highlighting the need to explore a broader range of cultural contexts that might shape consumer behavior in unique ways (Riesgo et al., 2022; Lundblad & Davies, 2015). This creates a substantial research gap, as consumers play a crucial role in driving demand for sustainable products. By exploring both the drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption, more effective strategies could be developed to encourage sustainable shopping behaviors.

Moreover, the Ukrainian market is particularly important to investigate, as sustainable fashion is still in its early stages of development. The existing research on Ukraine is limited and focuses primarily on the emergence of sustainability as a concept or supply-side challenges while mainly neglecting the consumer perspective (Pokhodenko, 2023; Kolosnichenko et al., 2021). This study's emphasis on the Ukrainian market is further justified by the author’s familiarity with the Ukrainian context, including language, networks, and data access, enabling a deeper and more localized analysis.

Furthermore, studying the consumer behaviour of young adults is crucial, as they are a key demographic that drives trends and will shape future consumption patterns, making their attitudes toward sustainable fashion particularly impactful. In this study, young adults refer to individuals aged 18 to 25, following previous research (Johari et al., 2019; Beaudoin et al., 1998). According to Repetskaya (2021), this consumer segment is characterised by low purchasing power, a preference for affordable mass-market brands, active online shopping, and prioritising trendiness over quality. Moreover, they tend to follow influencers rather than fashion experts. Considering this, financial constraints lead them to cheaper, often unsustainable options, while their tendency to chase trends contributes to overconsumption. As De Koning et al. (2024) found, young adults are one of the main drivers of overconsumption, whose unsustainable behaviour is largely influenced by social media trends and advertising. Nevertheless, younger consumers appear more engaged with sustainable fashion than older age groups; for example, 65.7% of 18–24-year-olds in the U.K. reported purchasing sustainable fashion items, compared to 47.4% of the general population (Fashion: The New Priorities of Young Consumers, n.d.).

This thesis aims to identify drivers and hindrances behind the sustainable fashion consumption of young adults in Ukraine.

To achieve this aim, the following research tasks will be pursued:

- To provide an overview of key definitions, concepts, and consumer behaviour theories related to sustainable fashion consumption.
- To summarize key findings from existing empirical studies on drivers and hindrances influencing sustainable fashion consumption.
- To design and conduct a quantitative survey to examine the drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine.
- To analyze the survey data and identify key drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine.

The thesis structure consists of theoretical and empirical parts. The theoretical part will clarify definitions, explore key ideas, and analyze significant findings from prior studies to provide context and insights into sustainable fashion behaviors. Subchapters will focus on building a theoretical foundation, with a review of existing research on drivers and hindrances for sustainable fashion consumption.

The subchapters from the empirical part encompass the empirical research. This part will involve designing and conducting an original survey targeting Ukrainian young adults,

aimed at collecting quantitative data on the drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption. The findings from this survey will be systematically analyzed and compared with results from previous studies.

Key words: sustainable fashion, consumer behavior, young adults, drivers, hindrances

1. Theoretical foundations of drivers and hindrances in sustainable fashion consumption

1.1. Key definitions, concepts, and consumer behaviour theories in sustainable fashion consumption

Sustainable fashion encompasses different terms and has various synonyms; it does not have one single definition that fits every interpretation, as it is a complex field shaped by different priorities and perspectives. While sustainable fashion generally aims to reduce the negative impacts of the fashion industry, its definitions emphasize different aspects, including environmental sustainability, social impact, and longevity. Analyzing various definitions of sustainable fashion reveals key distinctions based on which of these aspects are given priority (see Table 1).

Table 1

Main definitions of sustainable fashion

Author (year)	Term	Environmental impact	Social impact	Longevity
Joergens (2006)	Ethical fashion	✓	✓	
Niinimäki (2010)	Eco-fashion	✓	✓	✓
Chan and Wong (2012)	Eco-fashion	✓	✓	
Kang et al. (2013)	Environmentally sustainable textiles and apparel	✓		
Carey & Cervellon (2014)	Ethical clothing	✓	✓	
Jung and Jin (2016)	Slow fashion	✓	✓	✓
Fu and Kim (2019)	Eco-fashion	✓		
Dissanayake, D., & Weerasinghe, D. (2021)	Circular fashion	✓		✓

Source: Adapted from Busalim, Fox, & Lynn (2022), with author's modifications

The main terms related to sustainable fashion, as presented in the table and used in this work, include ethical fashion, eco-fashion, environmentally sustainable apparel, ethical clothing, slow fashion, and circular fashion. While these terms are interconnected, they differ in certain aspects. Those similarities and differences will be described further. To avoid confusion, this thesis will primarily use the terms sustainable fashion and eco-fashion, referring specifically to fashion that incorporates environmental, social, and longevity-related practices.

Overall, sustainability is often associated with environmental, social, and economic dimensions (Syed et al., 2024). Although the economic aspect is not explicitly mentioned in most sustainable fashion definitions, it may be assumed by default, as the fashion industry is generally associated with profitability. Still, economic elements can be found in some definitions. For instance, durability (Niinimäki, 2010; Jung & Jin, 2016), circular practices like material reuse (Dissanayake & Weerasinghe, 2021), and preventing resource depletion (Kang et al., 2013) implicitly link to the economic dimension by promoting cost efficiency and resource optimization.

Several definitions prioritize reducing the environmental footprint of the fashion industry by focusing on eco-friendly materials and processes. For example, Carey and Cervellon (2014, p. 486) describe eco-clothing as clothing produced through „environmentally friendly processes“, and Fu and Kim (2019) focus on biodegradable materials and natural dyes. Similarly, Kang et al. (2013, p. 443) mention production processes „in which resources are not depleted or permanently damaged“, thereby minimizing adverse environmental impacts. Each of these definitions places the environment as the main priority, seeing sustainable fashion as primarily about protecting natural resources and reducing waste.

Other definitions prioritize ethical and social responsibility, focusing on fair treatment and the well-being of workers, consumers, and communities directly or indirectly involved in the fashion industry. Carey and Cervellon (2014) view ethical clothing as minimizing harm to both the environment and the employees themselves, while Chan and Wong (2012) extend this concept even further, highlighting eco-fashion’s role in benefiting society as a whole, including both workers and consumers. Those definitions blend environmental and social priorities, providing a more comprehensive view of sustainable fashion. For instance, Niinimäki (2010, p.152) defines eco-fashion as “designed for long lifetime use“, ethically produced, with environmentally low impact. Slow fashion, as described by Jung and Jin

(2016), also combines these aspects, positioning itself as an ethical, environmentally conscious alternative to fast fashion's unsustainable practices.

The third theme across these definitions is an emphasis on the longevity of clothing, especially as a reaction against the fast fashion model, which promotes rapid production and disposal. Jung and Jin (2016) and Niinimäki (2010) highlight the importance of designing clothing for extended use. Here, eco-fashion is not just about sustainable production, it also promotes a shift in consumer habits toward valuing quality over quantity. Dissanayake and Weerasinghe (2021) build on this idea with the concept of circular fashion, which not only prioritizes product longevity but also introduces a regenerative model that enables multiple reuses of materials. This approach fosters resource circulation and addresses the critical issue of resource scarcity.

From this sustainability framework, the concept of sustainable consumption behaviour emerges, covering the whole consumption process, including purchase, use, and disposal (Syed et al., 2024). Sustainable consumption behaviour, as defined by Geiger et al. (2017), is "individual acts of satisfying needs in different areas of life by acquiring, using and disposing goods and services that do not compromise the ecological and socio-economic conditions of all people (currently living or in the future) to satisfy their own needs" (p. 5).

To better understand what influences sustainable consumption behaviour, this work provides a brief overview of the main theories that are frequently used in studies to explain it.

In traditional economic theory, consumers are viewed as rational decision-makers, aiming to maximize their utility based on their preferences, prices, and income. Nevertheless, usually this does not reflect how people behave in real life. In many cases, decisions are shaped by emotions, habits, or social influences, and this is where more modern theories offer useful explanations. According to the review by Syed et al. (2024), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was the most commonly used framework to study sustainable consumption behaviour, often with extensions like altruistic motives or environmental concern included. It was followed by the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory. Another theory often cited in this context is Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which offers valuable insights into the motivational drivers behind sustainable behaviour.

Starting with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Ajzen (1991) explains that behaviour is primarily driven by intention, which derives from three key factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. In the context of sustainable consumption, these factors relate to one's perception of sustainable products (e.g., environmental benefits or quality), social expectations around sustainable choices, and

confidence in one's ability to identify and access such products (Syed et al., 2024). This relationship is illustrated in Figure 1, which shows the original model of the TPB along with extensions such as altruism, environmental concern, social concern, and actual behavioural control.

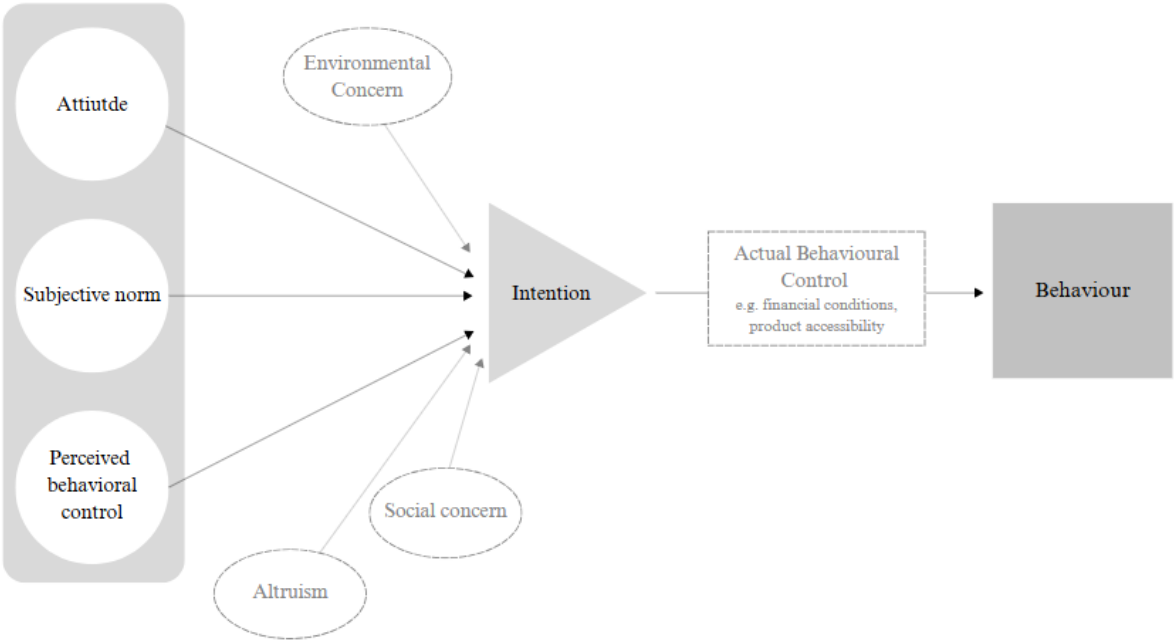

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behaviour
Source: Adapted from Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991), with additional extensions added by the author.

Numerous studies have applied the TPB to sustainable consumption, showing that each factor's importance varies across different contexts. Moreover, many of them have shown that the original TPB factors are not always sufficient to fully explain actual behavior or bridge the gap between intention and action. As a result, various extensions have been proposed, including altruism (Yarimoglu & Binboga, 2018), environmental concern (Borusiak et al., 2021), and social concern (Frommeyer et al., 2022). For instance, Chang and Watchravesringkan (2018) found that, in the context of sustainable apparel, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control all significantly influenced young consumers' purchasing intentions, which in turn closely aligned with their actual behaviour. However, they also acknowledged that perceived behavioural control did not directly impact behaviour. This suggested that actual behavioural control, such as real financial conditions and access to sustainable options, might be a useful extension of the TPB. This idea was later

investigated empirically by Kaur and Bhardwaj (2022), who, in a study from India, identified actual behavioural control as a key factor in turning sustainable intentions into real purchases. On the other hand, Frommeyer et al. (2022) found that subjective norms strongly influenced sustainable clothing intentions, while social concern, as TPB extension, showed a stronger influence on sustainable clothing intentions than perceived behavioural control. They also confirmed that intention alone is not enough to ensure behaviour, supporting the view that it is a necessary but not sufficient condition.

The next relevant theory is the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) Theory. Syed et al. (2024) identify that it is based on internal motivation and explain how individuals' values influence their behaviour through a chain of beliefs and personal norms. The theory outlines three core value types: egoistic (focused on self-interest), altruistic (focused on the well-being of others), and biospheric (focused on the environment). The structure of the VBN Theory, adapted to sustainable fashion consumption, is illustrated in Figure 2.

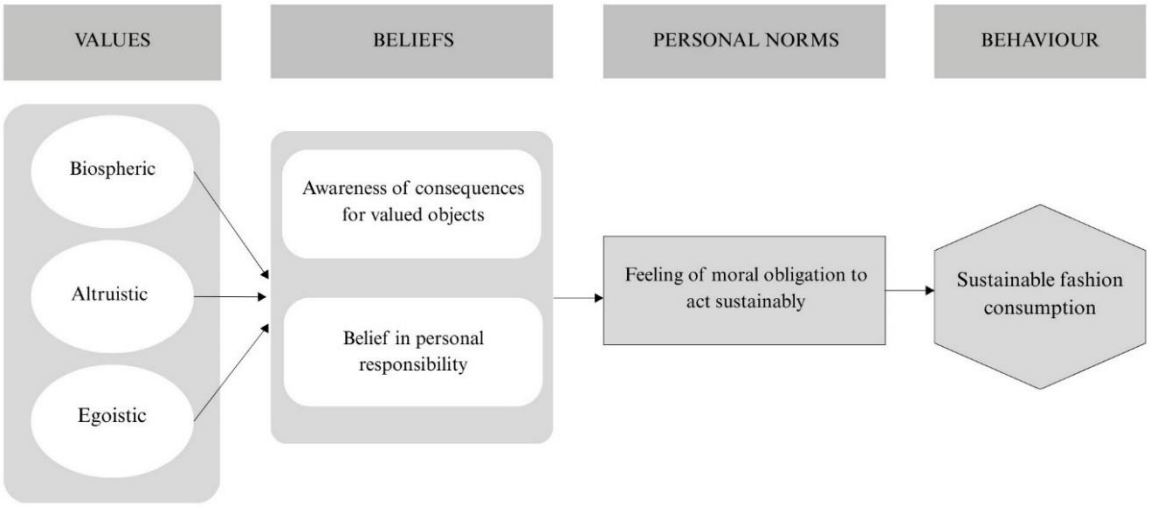

Figure 2. Value-Belief-Norm

Source: Adapted Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) model based on Stern et al. (1999), adjusted for the context of sustainable fashion consumption.

As shown, individuals' values (egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric) influence their beliefs about the consequences of their actions and their sense of personal responsibility. These beliefs, in turn, activate personal norms, a moral obligation to act, which then drive sustainable behaviour, such as engaging in sustainable fashion consumption. For example, Yeow and Loo (2022) identify biospheric and altruistic values as key drivers of sustainable

consumption. This is confirmed by Afridi et al. (2022), who found that generative consumers (those concerned about future generations) and individuals with a strong connection to nature are more likely to engage in green purchasing behaviour. Meanwhile, this theory suffers from an overfocus on internal characteristics, neglecting important external factors such as the environment and society (Syed et al., 2024).

One of the main theories used to explain the motivations behind sustainable behaviour is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Syed et al., 2024). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the SDT model suggests that the fulfilment of basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, leads to the development of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, which in turn drive behaviour (see Figure 3). Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something to achieve an external outcome, such as a reward or approval, while intrinsic motivation means engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction it provides. For example, Ruan et al. (2022) found that both intrinsic motivations (such as hedonic benefits, uniqueness, and environmental concern) and extrinsic motivations (including economic benefits, social norms, and self-image) play important roles in driving consumer engagement in luxury fashion rental.

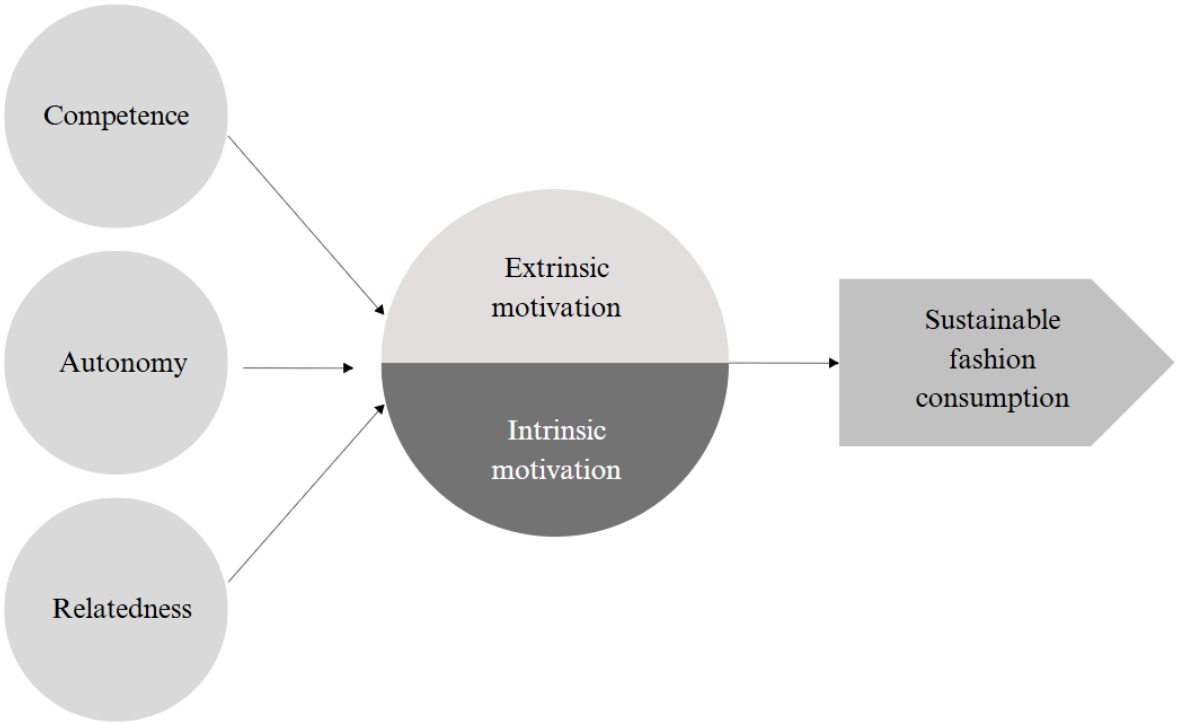

Figure 3. Self-Determination Theory

Source: Adapted from Ryan and Deci (2000), with author's modifications

In addition to the presented theories, a variety of other theoretical frameworks have been used to examine sustainable fashion consumption. These include the conceptual model of pro-environmental behavior (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002), the Theory of (Un)planned Behavior (Johnstone & Lindh, 2022), Means-End Theory (Lundblad & Davies, 2015), Heider's Balance Theory (Han, Seo, & Ko, 2016), the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Zhao et al., 2019), and the Prototype Willingness Model (Zhao et al., 2019). Each of these offers a different lens through which consumer behaviour can be understood.

While those theories, such as TPB, VBN, and SDT, have been widely applied to explain sustainable consumption, this thesis does not adopt a single theoretical framework. Instead, it relies on prior empirical studies, discussed in the following section, to identify the main drivers and hindrances influencing sustainable fashion choices. This approach was chosen to keep the analysis closely grounded in real-world insights, allowing more flexibility in capturing context-specific patterns.

In conclusion, sustainable fashion is defined by a combination of ethical, environmental, and circular principals, though definitions differ in their emphasis. Whether they highlight ethical responsibility, environmental impact, or the fashion cycle, all definitions reflect a shared goal: to make fashion less harmful and more mindful of its effects on both people and the planet. According to the theories reviewed, sustainable fashion consumption is shaped by a mix of rational thinking, personal values, social influences, and motivation. Models such as TPB, VBN, and SDT show that both internal drivers and external factors need to be considered to fully understand sustainable behaviour.

1.2.Literature review on drivers and hindrances of sustainable fashion consumption

This section provides an overview of existing empirical studies on sustainable fashion consumption, aiming to identify the drivers and hindrances of sustainable fashion consumption highlighted in the literature. The author used the Google Scholar database as the primary source for studies, applying keywords such as "sustainable fashion consumption," "motivations," "barriers," "drivers and hindrances," "sustainability, and "fashion industry. " Moreover, only recent studies published from 2010 to 2022 were included to ensure the relevance of the findings.

Ten key studies, identified through Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Emerald Insight, were selected for their strong methodological foundations and alignment with the research objectives, offering diverse insights into sustainable fashion consumption across

various cultural and regional contexts. A detailed overview of each study, including its focus, methodology, and theoretical framework, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Author (year)	Country	Sample	Methodology	Key theory used
Niinimäki (2010)	Finland	246 respondents	Survey	-
Lundblad & Davies (2015)	UK	39 frequent sustainable fashion consumers	In-depth interviews	Means-end theory
Han, Seo & Ko (2016)	South Korea	24 participants	Multi-method participatory action research	Balance theory
Wiederhold & Martinez (2018)	Germany	13 respondents	Semi-structured interviews	Kollmuss and Agyeman's (2002) conceptual model
Zhao et al. (2019)	China	238 respondents	Survey	TRA and Prototype Willingness Model
Algahni & Al-Dabbagh (2020)	Saudi Arabia	506 responses and 34 participants in the focus group	Focus groups and surveys	-
Bianchi & Gonzalez (2021)	Chile	22 participants	Semi-structured interviews	-
Pereira et al. (2021)	Portugal	50 participants	Interviews and qualitative analysis	-
Johnstone & Lindh (2022)	Europe	448 respondents	Survey	Theory of (un)planned behavior
Riesgo et al. (2022)	Spain	1,063 respondents and 23 participants in the focus group	Mixed-method approach (focus group and survey)	TPB

*Overview of Selected Studies*Source: Compiled by the author, based on information from Riesgo et al. (2022); Bianchi & Gonzalez (2021); Lundblad & Davies (2015); Pereira et al. (2021); Algahni & Al-Dabbagh (2020); Wiederhold & Martinez (2018); Johnstone & Lindh (2022); Han, Seo, & Ko (2016); Niinimäki (2010); Zhao et al. (2019).

From the table, it is clear that these studies focus on nine different countries and the European continent, and collectively provide an interconnected view of sustainable fashion from various cultural and regional perspectives. Their methodologies include surveys, in-depth interviews, multi-methods, and focus groups, which ensure reliable findings.

It is also worth mentioning that studies vary in their focus on age. Most focus on the general population without explicitly addressing specific age groups, such as Riesgo et al. (2022) and Wiederhold and Martinez (2018). Others emphasize both Millennials and Generation Z, like Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021) and Niinimäki (2010), or focus exclusively on Millennials, such as Johnstone and Lindh (2022). Meanwhile, only one study, Han et al. (2016), explicitly investigates young adults.

Overall, sustainable fashion is still a novel segment, emerging in more markets globally. In Spain, for instance, it accounts for only 8.65% of the market, emphasizing its early-stage development (Riesgo et al., 2022). Despite persistent hindrances, such as affordability and accessibility, the combination of evolving consumer motives and increasing awareness of sustainability suggests that this market segment is steadily expanding. As Pereira et al. (2021) highlight, the overall tendency indicates positive changes in consumer behavior and perception, suggesting a dominant trend for improvement and a promising future for the sustainable fashion industry.

Insights from the studies discussed below reveal both similarities and distinctions that offer a deeper understanding of sustainable fashion consumption. A shared theme across the studies is the significance of intrinsic moral values, driven by environmental and ethical concerns, in motivating sustainable fashion consumption (Riesgo et al., 2022; Bianchi & Gonzalez, 2021; Niinimäki, 2010; Lundblad & Davies, 2015). For example, in Spain, consumers are guided primarily by ethical considerations rather than external pressures like peer influence (Riesgo et al., 2022). Similarly, in Chile, concerns about the environmental and societal consequences of the fashion industry, the desire to contribute to societal well-being, and support for local businesses reflect the intrinsic values that shape consumer choices (Bianchi & Gonzalez, 2021).

However, peer pressure does not always play such a negligible role. In some countries, especially those with collectivistic cultures or developing economies, social norms and peer influence can have a stronger impact on sustainable behavior, as shown in studies on the Korean market (Han, Seo, & Ko, 2010) and the Chinese market (Zhao et al., 2019)

Besides the influence of the community, social media also plays a significant role in promoting sustainable behavior. It serves as a primary source of information on sustainable

fashion (Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020), a platform for peer referrals and recommendations (Zhao et al., 2019), and a space for inspiration, where media influencers act as intermediaries shaping attitudes and driving sustainable fashion consumption (Johnstone & Lindh, 2022).

Interestingly, alongside these ethical drivers, there is a strong egocentric component to consumer motivations. Chilean consumers, for example, are drawn to sustainable brands not only for the noble cause but also for the quality, authenticity, and satisfaction associated with owning unique, durable items (Bianchi & Gonzalez, 2021). This finding aligns with insights from Lundblad and Davies (2015), who emphasize the importance of authenticity, self-expression, and personal accomplishment in sustainable fashion consumption. Moreover, Niinimäki (2010) reveals that while a niche group of consumers, referred to as "ethical hardliners," prioritize ethical considerations, the majority focus more on product attributes such as quality, design, and functionality. This suggests that personal preferences and desires, rather than moral obligation, are the primary decision-making factors in the fashion industry.

Altogether, these findings reveal a two-sided motivation, where consumers prioritize commonwealth (altruistic goals) while also seeking personal satisfaction. This motivation is shaped by both internal and external factors. Figure 4 provides a clear overview of these drivers, summarizing the key factors that motivate sustainable fashion consumption.

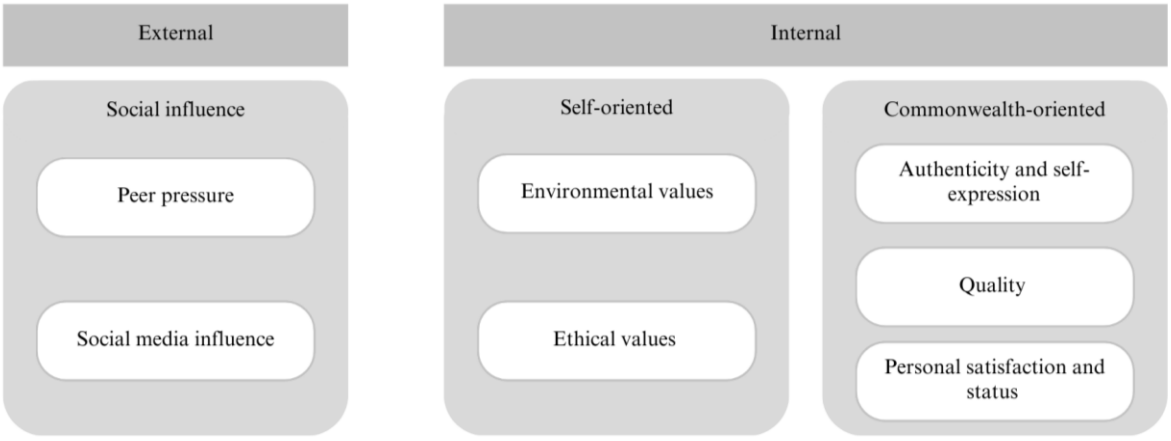

Figure 4. Key Drivers of Sustainable Fashion Consumption
Source: compiled by the author

Despite strong motivations, consumers face significant obstacles when it comes to adopting sustainable fashion. One of the biggest issues is mistrust in companies' claims about sustainability and fears of greenwashing. Both Spanish and Chilean consumers are skeptical

towards the bold claims made by companies (Riesgo et al., 2022; Bianchi & Gonzalez, 2021), showing that building trust is a major challenge for businesses in this sector. Moreover, a study by Pereira et al. (2021) also confirmed the lack of information and questionable business transparency as critical barriers. Talking about the Saudi market, the concept of sustainability was rarely used overall; 47.1% of respondents were not even aware of this market segment (Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020). Together, these challenges can be grouped under a broader issue of insufficient knowledge, whether about sustainability in general or the specific activities of companies, ultimately provoking mistrust in organizations and reducing consumer motivation to adopt sustainable practices.

Along with this, the limited availability and accessibility of sustainable fashion products present significant barriers to their adoption, as highlighted in several studies (Pereira et al., 2021; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020). For example, respondents in Saudi Arabia reported that the lack of sustainable options in the market is a primary reason for not purchasing such items. Moreover, even when eco-friendly clothing is available, it is often perceived as neither modern nor fashionable due to prevailing stereotypes and the restricted variety of styles offered (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020). These limitations emphasize the need for broader availability and diversification of sustainable fashion to align with consumer expectations and modern fashion trends.

Price sensitivity is another key barrier. Sustainable products are often more expensive, which makes them less accessible to many consumers (Riesgo et al., 2022; Bianchi & Gonzalez, 2021; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). Furthermore, some consumers do not perceive the value in paying the price premium if it is not adequately justified (Han, Seo, & Ko, 2016).

Another critical obstacle is the rooted purchasing habit, where consumers tend to shop at familiar stores, buy similar styles, and stay within their usual price range, which reduces their willingness to explore sustainable alternatives. This behavior requires strong motivation to change, and often, consumers see little value in doing so, believing their individual actions will not significantly impact the global situation. (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018)

Based on the reviewed literature, four main hindrances were identified: insufficient knowledge, limited availability and accessibility, price sensitivity, and rooted purchasing habits (see Figure 5).

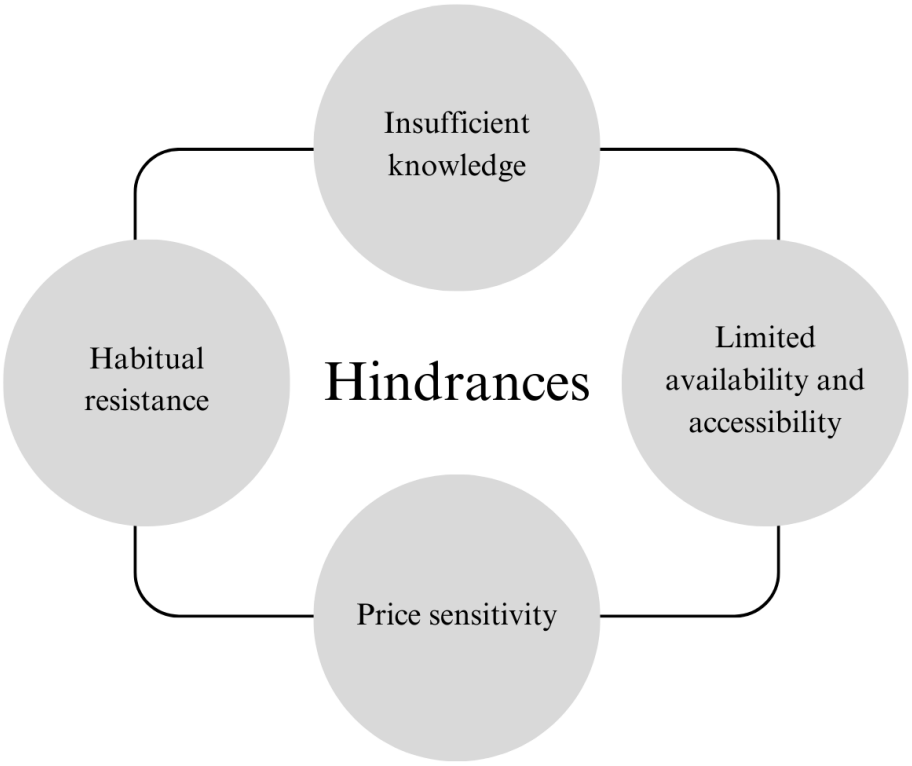

Figure 5. Key Hindrances of Sustainable Fashion Consumption
Source: compiled by the author

However, not all consumers see these hindrances as a downturn. Lundblad and Davies (2015) suggest that higher prices and limited availability can make sustainable fashion more appealing by providing exclusivity and higher quality. For some, these challenges enhance the perceived value of sustainable clothing, showing that these barriers can also act as motivators for certain groups.

Moreover, the price obstacle may be mitigated by new trends in consumption. Both Riesgo et al. (2022) and Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021) highlight that sustainability-conscious consumers in Spain and Chile are increasingly turning to second-hand shopping or clothing rental options instead of frequently purchasing new clothes. These models align with ethical values and also offer practical benefits such as affordability and reduced waste, further enhancing their appeal.

In summary, this subchapter explores the drivers and hindrances behind sustainable fashion consumption. The key drivers identified include internal values, like ethical and environmental values, quality, personal status, and authenticity, as well as external influences, such as peer pressure and social media. On the other hand, significant hindrances persist, including insufficient knowledge, lack of accessibility, price sensitivity, and habitual

purchasing behaviors. While these obstacles hinder broader adoption, for some consumers they can also enhance the exclusivity and perceived value of sustainable fashion.

2. Empirical analysis of drivers and barriers to sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine

2.1. Overview of the research methodology and data collection

In this subchapter, the methodology and data collection process for the empirical analysis are presented. This study uses a quantitative approach to examine the factors that drive or hinder sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine, specifically those aged 18 to 25. As Bryman (2012) notes, quantitative methods are well-suited for identifying patterns in consumer behavior, making them appropriate for this topic.

This approach aligns with previous research on sustainable fashion consumption, including studies by Gwozdz et al. (2013), Riesgo et al. (2022), Johnstone & Lindh (2022), Park and Lee (2020), Mishra et al. (2023), Niinimäki (2010), and Zhao et al. (2019), which also used surveys. According to Busalim et al. (2022), over 70% of studies in this field apply quantitative methods, confirming the relevance of this approach.

The methodology of this study includes five main steps: literature review, survey design, survey distribution, data analysis, and presentation of findings (see Figure 6).

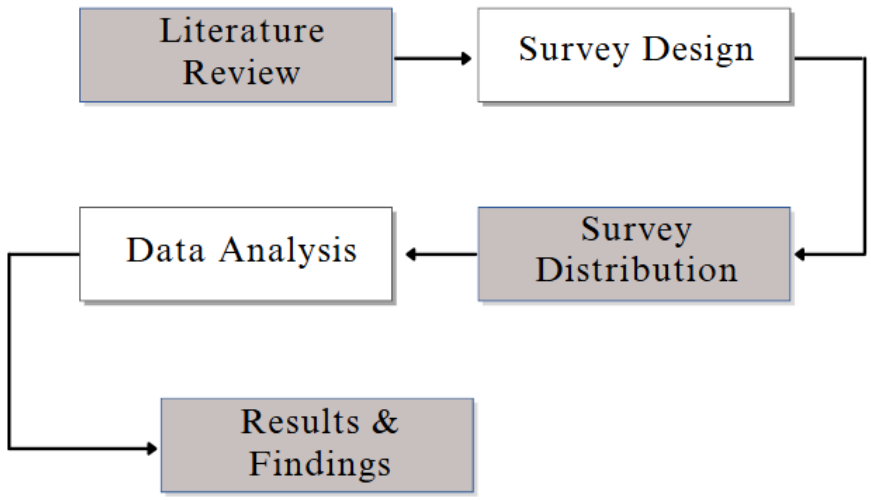

Figure 6. Methodology process

Source: compiled by the author

The literature review (discussed in the previous chapter) provided input for the survey structure. Based on key themes identified from earlier studies (see Table 3), the final survey is structured into four main sections: demographics, shopping behavior, drivers, and hindrances.

Table 3

Overview of quantitative studies and survey structure

Author (year)	Survey themes	Analysis method
Riesgo et al. (2022)	1. Fashion Shopping Habits 2. Interests and Involvement with Sustainable Fashion 3. Attitude-Behavior Scales (Environmental Concern, Subjective Norm, Perceived Consumer Effectiveness, Future Purchase Intentions) 4. Sociodemographic Data	Descriptive statistics, ANOVA
Johnstone & Lindh (2022)	1. Purchase Intent 2. Fashion Consciousness (Personal, Social, Environmental) 3. Corporate Social Responsibility 4. Influencer Influence	Regression analysis, Structural Equation Modeling, mediation effects testing (Johnstone & Lindh, 2022)
Niinimäki (2010)	1. Ethical Interest in Consumption 2. Real Ethical Purchasing Decisions in Clothing 3. Consumer Attitudes Toward Clothing Attributes 4. Identity and Ideology in Clothing Consumption	Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Thematic Analysis
Zhao et al. (2019)	1. Social Media Use and Perception 2. Influence of Peers on Social Media 3. Subjective Norms Toward Sustainable Apparel 4. Attitudes Toward Sustainable Apparel 5. Purchase Intentions	Structural Equation Modeling, bootstrapping for hypothesis testing, Hierarchical Regression
Algahni & Al-Dabbagh (2020)	1. Awareness of Sustainable Fashion 2. Awareness of Fast Fashion's Environmental Impact 3. Effect of Social Media on Consumer	Descriptive statistics, SPSS analysis

Source: compiled by the author

The full list of survey questions, including sociodemographic items and sustainable fashion-related questions, can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

The first section gathers basic sociodemographic data, including age, gender, education, occupation, income, and current location, to segment respondents and explore how individual factors relate to sustainable fashion consumption.

The second section, shopping behavior, examines how often respondents buy new clothes, their preferences when choosing clothing, and their engagement with sustainable practices. Based on Riesgo et al. (2022), Gwozdz et al. (2013), Park and Lee (2020), this section provides essential insights into consumption patterns, distinguishing between sustainable and non-sustainable behaviors.

The third section, drivers, is divided into three groups: external (social influence), internal commonwealth-oriented, and internal self-oriented drivers, in line with the structure shown in Figure 1.

The fourth and final section, hindrances, is also in line with previous findings (see Figure 2). These factors were incorporated into the survey through targeted questions addressing price sensitivity, limited availability and accessibility, insufficient knowledge, and habitual resistance.

Before launching the full survey, the survey was first piloted among four acquaintances to test its clarity, length, and usability. The average time to complete the pilot was around 10 minutes. Based on the feedback received, the most significant change made was replacing the English term "sustainable" with more familiar alternatives in Ukrainian, such as “eco” or “responsible” (e.g., “eco clothing” or “responsible brands”), since the term “sustainable” has not yet gained widespread use in Ukrainian everyday language.

Moreover, an introductory section was added at the beginning of the survey to give participants a clear understanding of the research purpose. It briefly explained the researcher's background, introduced the concept of sustainable fashion, and clarified the purpose of the study. It was explicitly stated that the survey would not collect any personal data and that all responses would remain strictly anonymous and be used exclusively for academic research purposes.

After final adjustments, the survey was distributed in April 2025 through LimeSurvey, which ensured secure and confidential data collection. To maximise participation and reach young adults across Ukraine, a combination of convenience and snowball sampling was applied. The link was shared on social media platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok, as well as through personal referrals.

To attract interest and engagement, the posts included brief visual elements highlighting the topic and encouraging participation. The survey was designed and conducted in Ukrainian to ensure clarity and accessibility for participants from different regions.

Responses were measured using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). This was done intentionally to avoid neutral response options. Additionally, the option „Prefer not to answer“ was provided separately.

A total of 115 responses were collected through the survey. After excluding participants older than 25, the final sample included 109 respondents, which is sufficient for conducting basic statistical analysis and identifying patterns relevant to the study.

Table 4 provides an overview of the respondent's profile, including age, gender, education level, employment status, income, and current residency. The average age of participants is 21, with the most frequent age being 20. The gender distribution shows a slight female majority, with approximately 60% identifying as female and 40% as male. These inclinations in both age and gender likely reflect a sampling bias due to the snowball method used, which tends to spread within peer groups and similar social networks, potentially limiting the diversity of the sample.

In terms of education, most respondents reported having completed secondary education, which correlates with the high proportion of students in the sample. A smaller portion had attained higher education, while very few reported less than secondary education, indicating an overall well-educated group. Employment status further supports this, with the majority identifying as students, though around 40% reported either part-time or full-time employment, highlighting a potential basis for income-based segmentation.

Regarding income, nearly a third of respondents indicated having no income, while another substantial portion reported earning over 30,000 UAH, suggesting financial support from employment or family. The remaining participants were distributed across lower and mid-income brackets. Additionally, 60% of the sample currently reside outside Ukraine, likely due to war-related displacement, an important contextual factor that may influence their consumption behavior and sustainability considerations. At the same time, a significant portion of respondents still live in Ukraine, which may point to a different set of priorities shaped by the ongoing war, like affordability, practicality, and stability.

Overall, the average respondent is 20 years old, female, has completed secondary education, and is currently a student with no income, residing outside of Ukraine.

Table 4

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Age	18	9	8.3%
	19	16	14.7%
	20	36	33%
	21	8	7.3%
	22	8	7.3%
	23	9	8.3%
	24	13	11.9%
	25	10	9.2%
Gender	Female	65	59.6%
	Male	44	40.4%
Education	Less than secondary	3	2.75%
	Secondary	53	48.6%
	Vocational/technical	9	8.3%
	Bachelor’s degree	21	19.3%
	Master’s degree	19	17.4%
	PhD	3	2.75%
	Other	1	0.9%
Occupation	Full-time employed	30	27.5%
	Part-time employed	11	10.1%
	Self-employed	5	4.6%
	Student	54	49.5%
	Unemployed	4	3.7%
	Other	4	3.7%
	Prefer not to answer	1	0.9%
Income	No income	29	26.6%
	Up to 8000 UAH	16	14.7%
	8000 – 16000 UAH	12	11%
	16000 – 30000 UAH	17	15.6%
	Above 30000 UAH	26	23.8%
	Prefer not to answer	9	8.3%
Location	Not in Ukraine	63	57.8%
	In Ukraine	43	39.45%
	Prefer not to answer	3	2.8%

Source: compiled by the author

Finally, the results were analyzed and compared with existing literature to draw conclusions about the drivers and barriers of sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine. For data analysis, Stata was used to perform descriptive statistics. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of predefined

categories derived from the literature. To explore statistically significant differences between these categories, paired-samples t-tests were conducted, helping to identify the most influential factors. Key findings were visualized to support the interpretation of the results. The detailed results and their comparison with previous research will be presented and discussed in the following subchapter.

2.2.Survey results and future discussion on drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption among young adults

This section presents the results of the conducted survey and discusses the key findings in relation to existing research. The results are compared to earlier studies reviewed in the theoretical part of the thesis, with the aim of identifying key drivers and hindrances behind sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine. In addition to interpreting current results, this section also highlights directions for future research on this topic.

To provide context for the survey findings, this section begins with an overview of the respondents' overall consumption behaviour, including how often they purchase clothing (Figure 7), preferred shopping channels (Figure 8), and key product preferences (Figure 9). This helps to better understand the general habits and preferences of young consumers before analysing their motivations and barriers related to sustainable fashion choices.

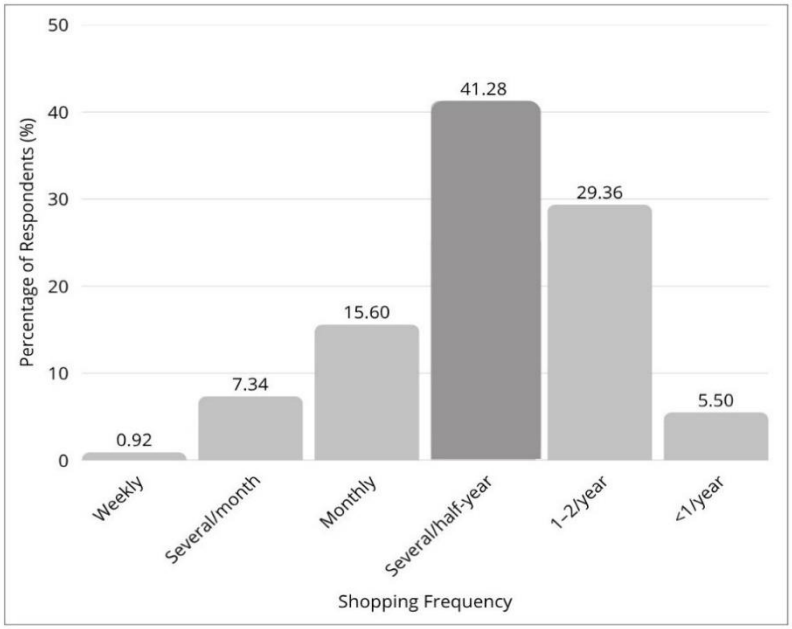

Figure 7. Clothing purchase frequency among young adults

Source: compiled by the author

As shown in Figure 7, the majority of respondents buy clothes several times per half-year (41%), while nearly a third shop only once or twice a year. This suggests that clothing purchases are relatively regular but do not indicate overconsumption overall.

When it comes to shopping channels, in-store and online shopping are the most popular (see Figure 8). About 67% of respondents reported buying online at least once in the past six months, and 88% purchased in-store during the same period. Second-hand shopping is also a crucial channel, with 47% of respondents engaging in it, mostly 1–2 times per half-year. This might indicate a growing interest in more sustainable options. At the same time, alternatives like swapping, supermarket clothing, or designer purchases remain less common. These findings suggest that traditional channels, especially in-store and online, still dominate, while second-hand shopping is becoming more relevant, though it is still not the primary choice.

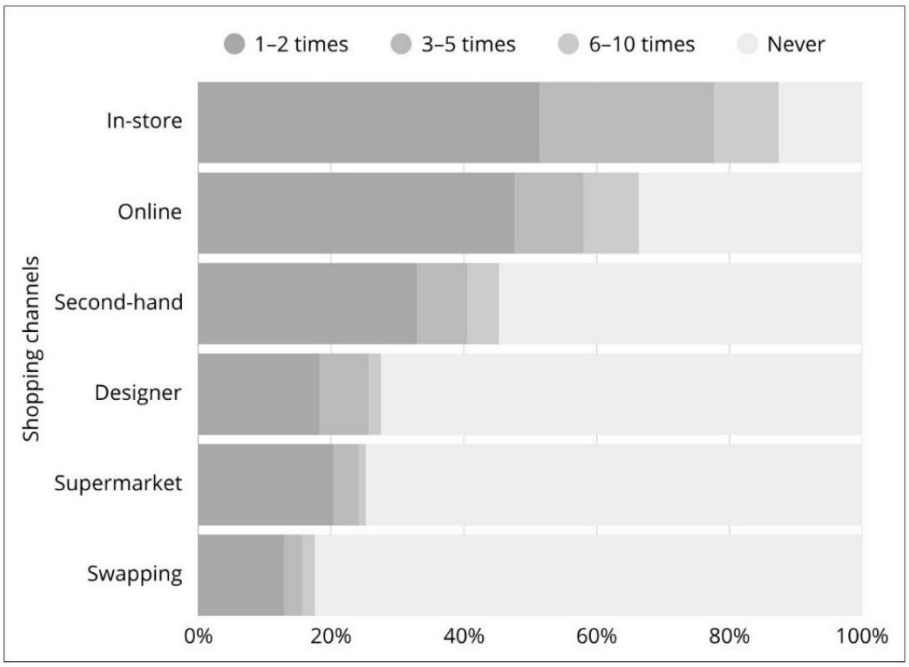

Figure 8. Shopping channel use frequency in the last 6 months
Source: compiled by the author

Moreover, respondents were asked to evaluate a set of product-related characteristics based on their importance when making clothing purchases (see Figure 9). A paired-sample t-test was conducted to assess whether the observed differences in mean scores between features were statistically significant. The results show that practical features such as fit (mean = 5.36), quality (mean = 4.90), price (mean = 4.74), and design (mean = 4.73) were

rated as the most important, with fit receiving the highest score, statistically different from the rest ($p < 0.001$), while quality, price, and design received slightly lower mean scores and were statistically similar to each other (all $p > 0.05$; see Appendix C for full t-test results). This aligns with findings by Riesgo et al. (2022), indicating that respondents prioritise functionality and practicality over symbolic aspects such as brand or prestige.

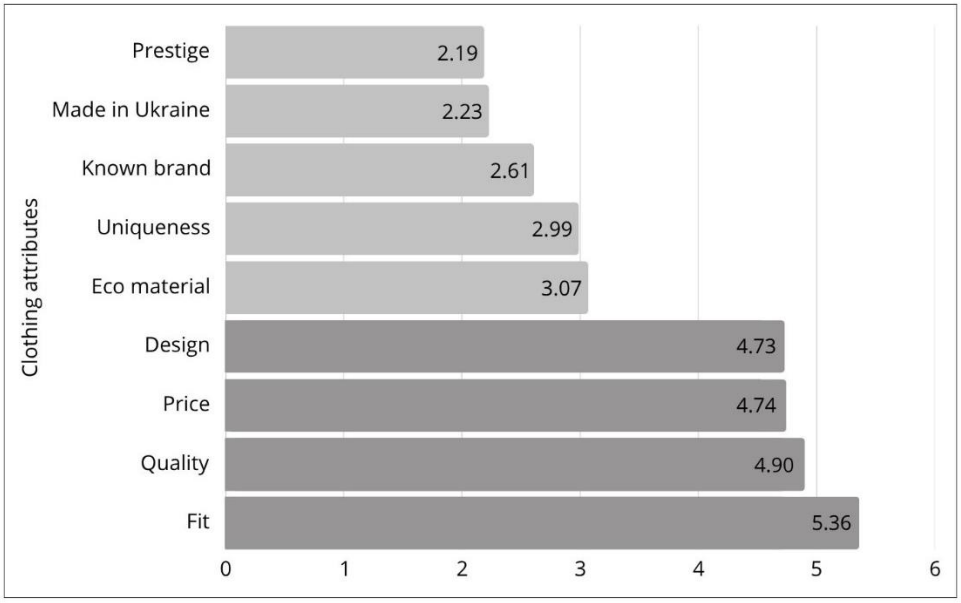

Figure 9. Importance of clothing attributes among young adults (1–6 scale*)*
Source: compiled by the author

While ecological material (mean = 3.07) was not among the top priorities, its mean score was close to that of uniqueness (mean = 2.99), and no statistically significant difference was found between them. However, it did receive a significantly higher score than „from a known brand“ (mean = 2.61), „Made in Ukraine“ (mean = 2.23), and „from a prestige brand“ (mean = 2.19). This may suggest a limited but emerging openness to sustainability-related product features, contrasting with Riesgo et al. (2022), where ecological characteristics were rated lowest by average consumers. The relatively low scores for uniqueness and brand-related attributes in this study contrast with the findings of Lundblad and Davies (2015), who identified authenticity, individuality, and self-expression as and self-expression as central criteria in clothing choices in the UK. This suggests a distinct pattern in the Ukrainian sample, where symbolic values currently play a much smaller role. Overall, the findings reflect a practical approach to clothing, where comfort, appearance, and price matter more than brand associations.

To understand the respondents' attitudes towards sustainability, several questions were asked, focusing on whether they prioritise certified sustainable brands, prefer second-hand options, avoid impulse purchases, donate or pass on used clothing, and intend to purchase sustainable apparel in the future. The respondents reported moderately positive agreement with statements such as reusing clothes (mean = 4.44) and avoiding impulse buying (mean = 4.03), suggesting that some participants are already engaging in more conscious clothing practices.

However, less attention is paid to whether brands are certified as sustainable (mean = 1.90), and second-hand shopping does not come as the first choice when buying clothes (mean = 2.07). While t-test results showed statistically significant differences between most other behaviours, the difference between these two was not significant ($p = 0.29$), suggesting that respondents show similarly limited engagement with both certified brands and second-hand purchases (see Appendix C for t-test result on attitudes towards sustainability). These trends are further reflected in the average score for the intention to purchase sustainable apparel in the future (mean = 3.23), which remains close to the midpoint, indicating that the intention to engage in sustainable behavior remains uncertain. This reflects the pattern observed by Johnstone and Lindh (2022), who found that while sustainability values are often expressed, they do not always translate into actual purchasing behaviour.

The following part presents the central findings of this thesis, focusing on the key drivers and hindrances to sustainable fashion consumption as identified through the survey.

First of all, to ensure the reliability of these survey blocks, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each category of drivers and hindrances (see Table 5).

Table 5

Cronbach's alpha scores and internal consistency by category

Category	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal consistency
External Drivers	0.51	X
Internal Drivers Self-oriented	0.77	✓
Internal Drivers Commonwealth	0.84	✓
Price sensitivity hindrances	0.75	✓
Insufficient knowledge hindrances	0.85	✓
Habitual resistance hindrances	0.74	✓
Limited availability/accessibility hindrances	0.68	X

Note: Internal consistency is considered acceptable if Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7

Source: compiled by the author

Driver groups such as Internal Drivers (self-oriented) (α = 0.77) and Internal Drivers (commonwealth-oriented) (α = 0.84), as well as hindrance categories like Price sensitivity (α = 0.75), Insufficient knowledge (α = 0.85), and Habitual resistance (α = 0.74), demonstrated acceptable levels of internal consistency. However, two categories fell below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7: External social influence (α = 0.51) and Limited availability and accessibility (α = 0.68). Even after testing different question combinations, the alpha values remained low. Nevertheless, most of the categories showed sufficient reliability, allowing for the calculation and comparison of mean scores across groups.

Then, average scores were calculated for each reliable category. See Table 6 for the results on Drivers and Table 7 for the results on Hindrances. These values were then used to compare the relative importance of different drivers and hindrances. As the sample size was sufficiently large, the assumptions of the paired-samples t-test were fulfilled, and the method was applied to assess whether the differences between selected categories were statistically significant (see Appendix C). Comparisons were conducted only between categories with acceptable internal consistency (α ≥ 0.7), including commonwealth vs. self-oriented drivers, knowledge-related hindrances vs. both price and habitual resistance hindrances, and price vs. habitual resistance hindrances.

Table 6

Mean scores and standard deviations for drivers

Category & items	Mean	St. deviation
1. External Drivers	**-**	**-**
Social expectations	2.83	1.58
Influencer impact	2.13	1.24
Family and friends expectations	2.06	1.32
2. Internal Drivers – Self-Oriented	**3.65**	**-**
Prefer durability	4.62	1.45
Organic fabrics beneficial for skin	4.15	1.54
Quality over price	3.79	1.52
Aesthetic appeal	2.94	1.38
Style	2.74	1.40
3. Internal Drivers – Commonwealth	**4.05**	**-**
Care about future generations	4.89	1.31
Belief in impact of one's sustainable choices	3.94	1.48
Emotional satisfaction from sustainable actions	3.82	1.65
Sacrifice for the environment	3.53	1.30

Source: compiled by the author

Table 7

Mean scores and standard deviations for hindrances

Category & items	Mean	St. deviation
1. Price Barrier	**3.66**	-
Not willing to pay extra for sustainable fashion	3.69	1.60
Sustainable fashion is too expensive	3.62	1.74
2. Insufficient knowledge hindrances	**4.17**	-
Don't know which stores offer sustainable fashion	4.61	1.43
Don't know which brands offer sustainable fashion	4.39	1.54
Don’t know where to get information	4.28	1.67
Concerns about greenwashing	4.25	1.45
Don't know what sustainable fashion means	3.34	1.65
3. Habitual resistance hindrances	**3.64**	-
Preference for current shops	3.86	1.49
Lack of interest	3.41	1.85
4. Limited availability/accessibility hindrances	-	-
Lack of local sustainable options	3.50	1.70
Limited style availability	3.24	1.57
Size availability issues	2.51	1.53

Source: compiled by the author

The next part takes a closer look at the mean scores of variables within each category, followed by the average scores across categories to compare the relative strength of different drivers and barriers.

The highest mean score for drivers was found in the Commonwealth-oriented category (mean = 4.05), indicating that environmental and social concerns are the dominant motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption among Ukrainian youth. In this category, almost all variables showed moderately high values, emphasising the role of those motivators. The strongest agreement was observed for care about future generations,

followed by the belief in the impact of one's choices and the emotional satisfaction from sustainable actions. These findings are in line with Park and Lee (2020), who emphasised the role of personal beliefs in sustainable consumption. However, the willingness to sacrifice for the environment received less support. This contrast suggests that, while respondents express strong concern for future generations, they are less willing to make personal sacrifices, pointing to a potential gap between values and actions. While this supports previous studies suggesting a possible general value–behaviour gap (Niinimäki, 2010), it contrasts with findings from research on regular sustainable fashion consumers, such as Lundblad and Davies (2015), who observed that internal ethical values often translated into concrete behavioural choices. This difference may be explained by differences in consumer type, suggesting that for the average consumer, ethical concern does not always translate into action. Notably, even in the broader sample analysed by Blas Riesgo et al. (2022), average consumers in Spain reported a relatively high willingness to make personal sacrifices, exceeding the levels observed in the present study. It suggests another contextual difference. Overall, these findings suggest that in Ukraine, while commonwealth-oriented motivations are the strongest, they do not consistently lead to behavioural change.

Moving to Internal self-oriented drivers, they had a slightly lower average score of 3.65. The results show that consumers care most about durability when choosing sustainable clothes. The idea that sustainable clothing is healthier, particularly due to organic fabrics, was also commonly supported, aligning with findings from Lundblad & Davies (2015). In addition, the perception that sustainable products are well-made and worth the cost received moderate agreement, suggesting that good quality can partially offset the price barrier. In contrast, aesthetic appeal and the style of sustainable clothing were supported less strongly. This may indicate that respondents do not associate sustainable fashion with visual attractiveness or trendiness, as was also observed by Wiederhold and Martinez (2018), or that these features are not their primary drivers when making purchasing decisions, reinforcing earlier findings in this study that respondents value practicality the most. Moreover, this contrasts with findings from Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021), who identified authenticity and aesthetic uniqueness as central motivators among eco-conscious women in Chile.

Lastly, the results for the External Drivers (Social influence) category revealed generally low agreement. Due to the low internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.58), the items under this category could not be averaged into a single category. Therefore, they will be analysed and compared with other drivers separately. Family expectations and influencer impact received particularly low scores, while social expectations from others scored slightly

higher, though still below the midpoint. These findings closely align with previous research by Riesgo et al. (2022), who also reported low influence from family or society. This suggests that in both cases, sustainability is not yet deeply rooted as a cultural or societal norm, and individuals largely do not feel external pressure to make more sustainable fashion choices. In contrast, a study on Chinese consumers by Zhao et al. (2019) found that in strongly collectivist societies, social expectations can significantly shape environmentally responsible behaviour. In such contexts, peer and family influence play a larger role in promoting sustainability, even if sustainable fashion is not yet widespread. Furthermore, the limited impact of influencers observed in this study contrasts with findings by Johnstone and Lindh (2022), who identified them as key sustainability promoters among European millennials. This discrepancy may be explained by cultural or generational differences in how such content is perceived and trusted.

Overall, among the three driver categories, internal commonwealth-oriented drivers showed the strongest influence (mean = 4.05), suggesting that environmental concern and care for future generations play a key role in encouraging sustainable fashion choices. Self-oriented internal drivers followed with a moderate average score of 3.65, indicating that personal motivations such as durability and quality still matter, though to a lesser extent. A paired-samples t-test confirmed that the difference between commonwealth- and self-oriented drivers was statistically significant ($p < .001$), supporting the stronger influence of commonwealth-oriented drivers over self-oriented ones. In contrast, external social influence scored the lowest, with all items falling well below the midpoint. This suggests that, in the Ukrainian context, sustainability is not yet strongly promoted by social norms or peer expectations. The general pattern where moral values are the main driver and social influence is the least important reflects the tendencies reported by Riesgo et al. (2022) and Bianchi and Gonzalez (2021). The low role of peer pressure also corresponds to those studies, but contrasts with findings from more collectivist cultures, like in Han, Seo, and Ko (2010) or Zhao et al. (2019), where social expectations have a stronger influence. It is worth noting that while many earlier studies have highlighted self-oriented drivers as the most important (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012; Johnstone & Lindh, 2022), this was not supported in the present study. Here, commonwealth-oriented motivations clearly dominated, suggesting that ethical and societal concerns outweighed personal benefit in shaping sustainable fashion choices. To better visualise the main drivers, the word cloud was created (See Figure 10).

Figure 10. Word Cloud for Drivers

Note: Word size reflects the relative importance of drivers, with larger words indicating stronger drivers based on their average Likert scale ratings (1–6). Colours represent the following categories: green = commonwealth-oriented drivers, orange = self-oriented drivers, and purple = external drivers.

Moving to hindrances, knowledge-related barriers showed the highest agreement among respondents (mean = 4.17). While most participants seem to have a basic understanding of what sustainable fashion is, the bigger issue lies in applying that knowledge in real-life contexts. This is reflected in the strongest barriers, which were related to uncertainty about where to buy sustainable items and which brands offer them. Unlike in Algahni and Al-Dabbagh (2020), where consumers were mostly unfamiliar with the concept itself, or in Lundblad and Davies (2015), which focused on already engaged sustainable consumers, the issue here lies somewhere in between. These findings suggest that Ukrainian consumers are aware of sustainability and its importance, but still lack the practical knowledge needed to turn that awareness into actual behaviour.

The second most important barrier was the price-related barriers showed moderate agreement among respondents (mean = 3.65). Among the two statements, unwillingness to pay extra received slightly stronger support than the general perception that sustainable fashion is too expensive. This suggests that while respondents recognise the higher cost of sustainable fashion, the greater issue is that many are not ready to pay a premium for it. This is in line with Han, Seo, and Ko (2016), who noted that consumers often do not see sufficient reasons to pay the premium for sustainable products. However, this finding differs from Wiederhold and Martinez (2018), where cost was identified as the most dominant barrier, and

sustainable fashion was often excluded from consideration due to assumptions about unaffordability. In the present study, the issue appears less related to financial constraints and more to perceived value. Overall, price sensitivity remains a relevant factor, though not the strongest one.

In the case of habitual resistance barriers (mean = 3.64), the greater issue appears to be the preference for familiar shops, while the lack of interest received only moderate agreement. This suggests that respondents are not necessarily uninterested in sustainable fashion but may be hesitant to shift away from established shopping habits. This is consistent with Wiederhold and Martinez (2018), who found that preference for familiar stores can discourage consumers from considering ethical fashion alternatives.

Similarly to the external drivers, the limited availability/accessibility hindrances demonstrated low internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.68), so the statements within this category are analysed and discussed separately. The item related to the unavailability of sustainable clothing in local stores received the highest agreement, suggesting a moderate level of concern. This was followed by difficulty in finding appropriate styles, while size-related concerns were rated noticeably lower. These findings imply that physical accessibility is not perceived as a major barrier, though it may still matter for some respondents. In contrast, earlier studies have found availability and lack of appealing styles to be more prominent obstacles (Pereira et al., 2021; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). This may be explained by a lack of active engagement, as respondents who are not actively searching for sustainable options might underestimate how limited the actual availability is, reflecting the earlier identified gap between general awareness and practical knowledge.

Comparing the average scores across the barrier categories reveals that lack of awareness stands out as the strongest hindrance (mean = 4.17), followed by price sensitivity (mean = 3.65) and habitual resistance (mean = 3.64), which are similarly moderate. Limited availability and accessibility scored the lowest overall, with individual item means ranging from 2.51 to 3.50, suggesting that although availability is a concern, it is perceived as a weaker barrier compared to informational or behavioural factors. A paired-samples t-test confirmed that knowledge-related barriers were significantly stronger than both price sensitivity ($p = 0.004$) and habitual resistance ($p < .001$), while no statistically significant difference was found between price and habit ($p = 0.92$). These results indicate that the most critical challenge lies in the lack of practical and accessible information, while financial and habitual factors also play a notable role. This general pattern aligns with previous findings

where insufficient knowledge and lack of transparency were identified as primary obstacles, while availability and access issues played a smaller role (Pereira et al., 2021; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020). The moderate impact of price also reflects earlier studies showing that the premium is only accepted when clearly justified (Han, Seo, & Ko, 2016). Likewise, the role of habits and convenience is consistent with prior research showing that many consumers prefer familiar shops and styles, even if they support sustainability in principle (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). However, unlike studies where price or availability were seen as dominant barriers (e.g., Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018; Algahni & Al-Dabbagh, 2020), the present results suggest that for young Ukrainian consumers, informational gaps plays the biggest role in hindrering the sustainable fashion consumption. To better visualise the main hindrances, the word cloud was created (See Figure 11).

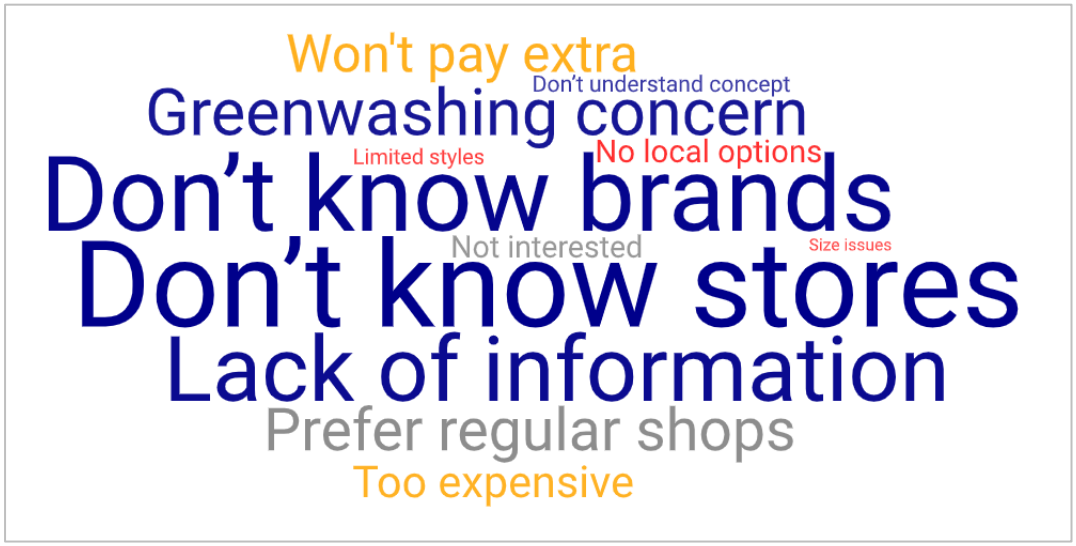

Figure 11. Word Cloud for Hindrances

Note: Word size reflects the relative importance of hindrances, with larger words indicating stronger hindrances based on their average Likert scale ratings (1–6). Colours represent the following categories: red = availability/accessibility issues, blue = knowledge-related barriers, grey = habitual resistance, yellow = price-related barriers.

While the survey provided important insights into the drivers and hindrances of sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine, it also uncovered several areas that deserve further attention. To begin with, although the survey results pointed to a value–behavior gap, the reasons behind this discrepancy remain unclear. It would be important to explore what prevents young adults from translating their concerns for the

environment and future generations into concrete purchasing behavior. This gap could be better understood through qualitative research methods, which allow for a deeper exploration of individual thoughts.

Moreover, it is worth considering that the ongoing war might also have an indirect influence on young adults' consumption behavior. Although not directly measured in this study, the war context may foster a tendency toward pragmatism, focusing on basic needs and stability over ethical considerations, while also affecting respondents' financial security and emotional resources.

Additionally, the findings showed that social and peer influences currently play a minor role in encouraging sustainable behavior. This raises questions about how social norms around sustainability might be fostered in Ukraine, and whether certain subgroups, such as active youth communities or eco-conscious influencers, could have a stronger impact if studied separately. Furthermore, this study focused solely on the 18–25 age group. Expanding future research to other generations would help to understand whether the patterns identified here are unique to young adults or reflect broader societal tendencies. Comparing different age groups or consumer types might also reveal generational differences in barriers, motivations, and consumption behaviors in sustainable fashion.

Finally, as the study was limited to the Ukrainian context, it highlighted culture-specific patterns, emphasizing the need for cross-cultural comparisons to determine whether these findings are consistent across different societies.

In summary, the survey revealed that commonwealth-oriented motivations were the strongest drivers of sustainable fashion consumption among Ukrainian young adults, followed by self-oriented drivers, while external social influence played only a minor role. Although many respondents expressed concern for future generations, they were less willing to make personal sacrifices, suggesting a possible gap between values and actions. Among the barriers, lack of practical knowledge was the most important, especially related to knowing where to buy or how to identify sustainable fashion, while familiarity with the concept still existed. Price sensitivity and habitual resistance were also relevant but appeared to be less critical than expected. Overall, the results suggest that young Ukrainians value ethics and sustainability in principle but face practical barriers in reality. The research also revealed several areas for future exploration, including the value–behavior gap, the impact of the war, the role of social influence, generational differences in sustainable fashion consumption, and the need to examine cultural context more broadly.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to identify the key drivers and hindrances behind sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine.

Overall, sustainable fashion remains a relatively novel concept, both globally and within the Ukrainian context, and, as highlighted in the theoretical chapter, the term itself lacks a clear, universal definition. In this study, sustainable fashion is defined as fashion that addresses environmental and social concerns while promoting long-term use. This study is particularly relevant due to the industry's significant environmental and social impacts. Despite growing global awareness of sustainability, there remain significant challenges in translating these concerns into concrete consumer behaviors. Moreover, the limited research on sustainable fashion, particularly from the consumer perspective, further emphasizes the need for this study.

Drawing on previous studies, the author of this thesis identified several key drivers of sustainable behavior, including internal motivations (self- and commonwealth-oriented) and external influences like social media and peer pressure. The literature also pointed to common barriers, such as lack of knowledge, price sensitivity, limited accessibility, and habitual resistance to change. These insights served as the theoretical foundation, shaping the design of the survey and guiding the interpretation of its results.

The survey itself collected 109 valid responses from young adults aged 18 to 25, primarily through convenience and snowball sampling methods. The sample consisted predominantly of female respondents, students, and individuals residing outside Ukraine, although a significant portion remained within the country. This demographic composition reflects certain biases linked to the sampling approach, yet it still provides valuable insights into the consumption behaviors of Ukrainian youth. Additionally, given the ongoing war, it is important to acknowledge that part of the sample’s current living conditions, whether in Ukraine or abroad, could have influenced their attitudes and consumption choices, potentially prioritizing immediate needs over long-term sustainability considerations.

The findings from the survey mostly confirmed the patterns identified in previous research but also presented some new insights. Commonwealth-oriented motivations, such as care for future generations and belief in the impact of one’s sustainable choices, were the strongest drivers. However, the willingness to make personal sacrifices for the environment was notably lower, suggesting a gap between values and actions. Self-oriented drivers, like durability and quality, also played a role, but to a lesser extent. External social influences,

such as family, friends, and influencers, had a minimal impact, indicating the lack of a widespread sustainable culture or movement in Ukraine.

Among the hindrances, insufficient knowledge emerged as the most critical barrier. Despite general awareness of sustainability, respondents struggled with practical aspects, such as identifying credible sustainable brands or knowing where to purchase such products. This suggests that the issue is less about conceptual unfamiliarity and more about a lack of actionable knowledge, which limits the ability to engage in sustainable consumption. Price sensitivity and resistance to habitual shopping behaviors were also present but appeared to be less critical than the informational gaps. These results were supported by statistical analysis, including Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency and paired-samples t-tests to identify significant differences between driver and barrier categories.

Overall, these findings offer valuable insights into sustainable fashion consumption in Ukraine, showing both similarities and differences when compared to other countries. While some similarities with other regions were observed, such as the role of personal values and the dominance of knowledge-related barriers, the lower willingness to make personal sacrifices and the minimal role of social influence highlight the absence of a broader sustainable fashion culture in Ukraine. Moreover, it is worth considering that the ongoing war might also have an indirect influence on young adults' consumption behavior. Although not directly measured in this study, the war context may foster a tendency toward pragmatism, focusing on basic needs and stability over ethical considerations, while also affecting respondents' financial security and emotional resources.

This research also has limitations. The sample was relatively small and skewed toward female students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data could also introduce biases, as respondents might overstate their sustainable intentions. Moreover, the varied interpretations of sustainable fashion, highlighted both in the literature and reflected in some survey responses, could have influenced participants' understanding of the questions, potentially affecting the consistency of their answers.

Future studies are encouraged to build on these findings by applying qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, to capture more nuanced consumer experiences and the value-action gap. Comparative research across different countries or cultural settings could also provide valuable insights into how broader societal and political contexts shape sustainable consumption behaviors among young adults. As already noted, other contextual factors, such as the ongoing war and country-specific cultural values, should

be further explored to better understand their influence on consumer behavior. Additionally, conducting generational comparisons could provide valuable insights by highlighting differences in sustainable fashion consumption patterns between young adults and other age groups. Finally, it could also be interesting to examine the effectiveness of communication strategies, such as influencer marketing, educational campaigns, or social media interventions, in promoting sustainable fashion consumption among young adults in Ukraine and other countries.

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APPENDIX A. Sociodemographic survey questions

Table A1. Sociodemographic Survey Questions

Section	Question	Answer options
Age	What is your age?	Open-ended
Gender	What is your gender?	• Female • Male • Other • Prefer not to say
Education	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	• Less than high school • High school • Vocational/technical education • Bachelor's degree • Master's degree • Doctoral degree • Other • Prefer not to say
Occupation	What is your employment status? (If more than one applies, choose the one that best characterizes your situation.)	• Full-time employed • Part-time employed • Self-employed • Student • Unemployed • Other • Prefer not to say
Income	What is your monthly personal income (after taxes)?	• I have no personal income • Up to 8,000 UAH • 8,000 - 16,000 UAH • 16,000–30,000 UAH • More than 30,000 UAH • Prefer not to say
Location	Are you currently residing in Ukraine?	• Yes • No • Prefer not to say

Source: compiled by the author

APPENDIX B. Survey questions on sustainable fashion consumption

Table B1. Survey questions on Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Measurement	Source
1. Shopping behavior	
How often do you buy new clothes? (every week, several times per month, every month, a few times every 6 months, a few times per year, less often)	Gwozdz, Netter, Bjartmarz & Reisch (2013)
In the last six months, how frequently did you use the following methods to acquire clothing? (online shopping, physical stores, second-hand, supermarkets, swap, designer, other)	Adapted from Gwozdz, Netter, Bjartmarz & Reisch (2013)
How important are these attributes for you when buying clothes or accessories? (how it fits me, design, quality, sustainable material, price, made in Ukraine, uniqueness, from a brand I know, from a prestigious brand)	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I only buy fashion garments from companies that are sustainably certified.	Johnstone & Lindh (2022)
I consider a second-hand clothing firstly when buying a garment.	Park and Lee (2020)
I avoid impulse buying when purchasing a garment.	Park and Lee (2020)
I donate clothes or give them to an acquaintance who needs it when disposing of clothes.	Park and Lee (2020)
In the future, I intend to purchase environmentally sustainable apparel.	Zhao et al. (2019)
2. External Drivers	
My family and friends expect me to buy more sustainable products	Riesgo et al. (2022)
Society expects me to buy more sustainable products	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I am more likely to buy a product if an online influencer reviews it positively.	Johnstone and Lindh (2022)
3. Internal Drivers Self-oriented	
Sustainable clothing consumption helps me with getting aesthetic satisfaction.	Park and Lee (2020)
Sustainable clothing offers a unique style to me.	Mishra et al. (2023)
I believe that clothing made from organic fibers is beneficial for my skin.	Mishra et al. (2023)
I believe that sustainable clothing is well-made and worth the money.	Mishra et al. (2023)
I prioritize selecting apparel that can be worn over a longer term compared to trendy apparel that goes out of style quickly.	Mishra et al. (2023)
4. Internal Drivers Commonwealth	
I am willing to make sacrifices to protect the environment.	Riesgo et al. (2022)

I think it is important to protect and preserve the Earth for future generations.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I can contribute to make our society and the earth better by sustainable clothing consumption.	Park and Lee (2020)
I feel good about contributing to the environment through the practice of sustainable clothing.	Mishra et al. (2023)
5. Price sensitivity hindrances	
I haven't bought sustainable fashion, or do not buy it more often because it is too expensive.	Adapted from Riesgo et al. (2022)
I am not willing to pay more for clothing from environmentally and/or socially responsible clothing brands.	Adapted from Mishra et al. (2023)
6. Insufficient knowledge hindrances	
I cannot discern when a brand is really sustainable or when it just claims to be it in order to improve its image.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I don't know about where to get information about sustainable clothes or materials.	Adapted from Park and Lee (2020)
I do not know what sustainable fashion is.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I don't know about what sustainable clothing brands are out there.	Adapted from Park and Lee (2020)
I am not aware of where to buy sustainable clothes/brands.	Adapted from Park and Lee (2020)
7. Habitual resistance hindrances	
I haven't bought sustainable fashion, or do not buy it more often because I am simply not interested.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I intend to keep buying fashion garments from the online retailers I buy from today, even if they are not sustainable.	Adapted from Johnstone & Lindh (2022)
8. Limited availability/accessibility hindrances	
I haven't bought sustainable fashion, or do not buy it more often because it is not available where I live.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I haven't bought sustainable fashion, or do not buy it more often because I cannot find any style that I like or that suits me.	Riesgo et al. (2022)
I haven't bought sustainable fashion, or do not buy it more often because I cannot find clothes in my size.	Riesgo et al. (2022)

Source: compiled by the author

APPENDIX C. Paired t-test results

Table C1. Product-related characteristics

Comparison	Mean Difference	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Significance
Fit vs. Design	0.62	0.0000*	[0.40, 0.85]	a
Fit vs. Quality	0.46	0.0011*	[0.19, 0.73]	a
Fit vs. Eco Material	2.28	0.0000*	[1.96, 2.61]	a
Fit vs. Known Brand	2.75	0.0000*	[2.36, 3.14]	a
Fit vs. Made in Ukraine	3.13	0.0000*	[2.72, 3.54]	a
Fit vs. Prestige Brand	3.17	0.0000*	[2.81, 3.52]	a
Fit vs. Unique	2.37	0.0000*	[2.02, 2.72]	a
Fit vs. Price	0.61	0.0000*	[0.33, 0.90]	a
Design vs. Quality	-0.17	0.3135	[-0.49, 0.16]	b
Design vs. Eco Material	1.66	0.0000*	[1.28, 2.04]	a
Design vs. Price	-0.01	0.9551	[-0.33, 0.31]	b
Design vs. Made in Ukraine	2.5	0.0000*	[2.04, 2.96]	a
Design vs. Unique	1.74	0.0000*	[1.38, 2.11]	a
Design vs. Known Brand	2.13	0.0000*	[1.73, 2.53]	a
Design vs. Prestige Brand	2.54	0.0000*	[2.18, 2.90]	a
Quality vs. Eco Material	1.83	0.0000*	[1.56, 2.09]	a
Quality vs. Price	0.16	0.3465	[-0.17, 0.48]	b
Quality vs. Made in Ukraine	2.67	0.0000*	[2.28, 3.06]	a
Quality vs. Unique	1.91	0.0000*	[1.53, 2.29]	a
Quality vs. Known Brand	2.29	0.0000*	[1.95, 2.63]	a
Quality vs. Prestige Brand	2.71	0.0000*	[2.40, 3.00]	a
Eco Mat vs. Price	-1.67	0.0000*	[-2.04, -1.30]	a
Eco Mat vs. Made in Ukraine	0.83	0.0000*	[0.48, 1.19]	a
Eco Mat vs. Unique	0.08	0.6645	[-0.29, 0.46]	b
Eco Mat vs. Known Brand	0.47	0.0277*	[-0.05, -0.88]	a
Eco Mat vs. Prestige Brand	0.88	0.0000*	[0.48, 1.28]	a

Price vs. Made in Ukraine	2.52	0.0000*	[2.13, 2.91]	a
Price vs. Unique	1.75	0.0000*	[1.39, 2.11]	a
Price vs. Known Brand	2.14	0.0000*	[1.75, 2.53]	a
Price vs. Prestige Brand	2.55	0.0000*	[2.16, 2.94]	a
Made in Ukraine vs. Unique	-0.77	0.0002*	[-1.16, -0.37]	a
Made in Ukraine vs. Known Brand	-0.39	0.0442*	[-0.77, -0.01]	a
Made in Ukraine vs. Prestige Brand	0.03	0.8862	[-0.36, 0.41]	b
Unique vs. Known Brand	0.39	0.0389*	[0.02, 0.75]	a
Unique vs. Prestige Brand	0.80	0.0001*	[0.41, 1.18]	a
Known Brand vs. Prestige Brand	0.41	0.0054*	[0.12, 0.70]	a

Note: Results are considered statistically significant if $p < 0.05$. „a“ stands for statistically significant difference, „b“ indicates no statistically significant difference.

Source: compiled by the author

Table C2. Attitudes towards sustainable practices

Comparison	Mean Difference	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Significance
Certified Brands vs. Prefer Second-hand	-0.17	0.2864	[-0.50, 0.15]	b
Certified Brands vs. No Impulse buying	-2.13	0.0000*	[-2.52, -1.73]	a
Certified Brands vs. Donate-Reuse	-2.54	0.0000*	[-2.94, -2.14]	a
Certified Brands vs. Plan Sustainable consumption	-1.33	0.0000*	[-1.60, -1.06]	a
Prefer Second-hand vs. No Impulse buying	-1.95	0.0000*	[-2.35, -1.56]	a
Prefer Second-hand vs. Donate-Reuse	-2.37	0.0000*	[-2.76, -1.98]	a

Prefer Second-hand vs. Plan Sustainable consumption	-1.16	0.0000*	[-1.51, -0.80]	a
No Impulse buying vs. Donate-Reuse	-0.41	0.0379*	[-0.80, -0.02]	a
No Impulse vs. Plan Sustain	0.80	0.0001*	[0.41, 1.18]	a
Donate Reuse vs. Plan Sustain	1.21	0.0000*	[0.84, 1.58]	a

Note: Results are considered statistically significant if $p < 0.05$. „a“ stands for statistically significant difference, „b“ indicates no statistically significant difference.

Source: compiled by the author

Table C3. Drivers and hindrances

Comparison	Mean Difference	p-value	95% Confidence Interval	Significance
Commonwealth vs. Self-Oriented drivers	0.40	0.0000*	[0.23, 0.56]	a
Price vs. Knowledge hindrances	-0.52	0.0041*	[-0.87, -0.17]	a
Price vs. No interest hindrances	0.02	0.9219	[-0.35, 0.39]	b
Knowledge vs No interest hindrances	0.54	0.0007*	[0.23, 0.84]	a

Note: Results are considered statistically significant if $p < 0.05$. „a“ stands for statistically significant difference, „b“ indicates no statistically significant difference.

Source: compiled by the author

Resümee

KESTLIKU MOE TARBIMISE TÕUKEJÕUD JA TAKISTUSED UKRAINA NOORTE TÄISKASVANUTE SEAS

Sofiia Drogovoz

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö uurib peamisi tõukejõude ja takistusi kestliku moe tarbimise taga Ukraina noorte täiskasvanute seas. Uurimistöö on eriti aktuaalne, arvestades moetööstuse märkimisväärset keskkonna- ja sotsiaalset mõju ning raskusi, mis kaasnevad jätkusuutlikkuse teemade rakendamisega tegelikus tarbijakäitumises. Kestlikku moodi käsitleva tarbijakeskse uurimistöö nappus Ukrainas rõhutab selle uuringu vajalikkust.

Töö tuvastab kestliku moe tarbimist soodustavad peamised tegurid, sealhulgas sisemised motivatsioonid (enesekesksed ja ühishea-kesksed) ning välised mõjutajad, nagu sotsiaalmeedia ja eakaaslaste surve. Kirjanduse põhjal tuvastatud takistusteks on teadmiste puudus, hinnatundlikkus, piiratud kättesaadavus ja vastupanu muutustele – need tegurid suunasid ka küsitluse ülesehitust ja tulemuste tõlgendamist.

Uuringu käigus viidi läbi küsitlus, milles saadi 109 kehtivat vastust 18–25-aastastelt noortelt täiskasvanutelt, kasutades mugavus- ja lumepallivalimi meetodit. Valim oli valdavalt naissoost, koosnes peamiselt tudengitest ning hõlmas nii Ukrainas kui ka väljaspool riiki elavaid isikuid.

Küsitluse tulemused kinnitasid varasemates uuringutes täheldatud mustreid ning pakkusid ka uusi teadmisi. Ühishea-kesksed motiivid, nagu hoolimine tulevaste põlvkondade heaolust ja usk kestlike valikute mõjusse, osutusid tugevamateks tõukejõududeks. Samas oli isiklikust mugavusest loobumise valmidus keskkonna nimel madalam, viidates väärtuste ja tegude vahelisele lõhele. Enesekesksed motiivid, nagu toodete vastupidavus ja kvaliteet, omasid samuti teatavat mõju, kuid väiksemas ulatuses. Välised sotsiaalsed mõjutajad avaldasid minimaalset mõju, mis viitab kestliku moe kultuuri vähesele levikule Ukrainas. Takistustest osutus suurimaks probleemiks teadmiste puudus. Kuigi üldine teadlikkus kestlikkusest oli olemas, oli vastajatel raskusi praktiliste aspektidega, näiteks usaldusväärsete kestlike brändide äratundmise ja nende toodete ostukohtade leidmisega. Hinnatundlikkus ja harjumuspärasest ostukäitumisest loobumise raskus esinesid samuti, kuid näisid olevat vähem määravad kui teadmistega seotud puudujäägid.

Need tulemused pakuvad väärtuslikku ülevaadet kestliku moe tarbimisest Ukrainas, näidates nii sarnasusi kui erinevusi võrreldes teiste riikidega. Ehkki ühishea-kesksed motiivid ja teadmiste puudusena ilmnevad takistused kattuvad teiste piirkondade leidudega, viitavad

madalam valmisolek isiklikeks ohverdusteks ja sotsiaalse mõju vähesus kestliku moe laiemale puudumisele Ukraina kultuuris.

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