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Analysing The Impact of Impulsive Buying on Apparel Disposal Behaviour of Indian Customers in Delhi NCR

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Abstract

Clothing Disposal is also a significant point of concern in recent times since landfills are apparently growing daily. Many consumers use apparel as a form of self-expression, social cue, and as an emotional bond than to fulfil a fundamental need. Fast fashion has altered the consumption patterns by promoting frequent purchases and reducing garment lifespans due to affordability and lower quality. Consumers engagement with apparel happens through five stages like acquisition, usage, storing, maintenance, and disposal. The typical disposal techniques are resale, reuse, donation, retailer take-back schemes, and discarding. This paper explores how Impulsive buying contributes to Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB) among the consumers in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). Online survey was done and Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used to analyse data. The results confirm the suggested model of SEM but indicates that there is no significant influence of impulse buying on the Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB).

Keywords: Sustainable Apparel Disposal, Attitude, Behavior, Impulsive Buying, TRA

1.Introduction

Apparel disposal is one of its major stage in its the product life cycle. It is affected by factors such as Fashion changes, bodily changes, psychological changes, wearing restrictions, or poor quality of clothes (Shim, 1995; Zhang et al., 2020). Fast fashion (FF) that brings frequent fashion change and makes clothes cheaply available to people, cause more purchase and reduce the number of wear cycles of the garment, and consequently, increase textile waste (Bianchi and Birtwistle, 2012; Birtwistle and Moore, 2007).

In densely populated nations such as India, it is typical to dispose of or store unworn clothes at home (Zhang et al., 2020). Knowledge of the causes of apparel disposal, particularly in the Indian urban environment, is key to the advancement of sustainable practices. This paper seeks to explore the effect of impulsive purchasing on Sustainable Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB) among consumers in Delhi NCR. It formulates and tests a structural equation model (SEM) to identify how impulsive buying, subjective norms and attitudes affect apparel disposal intention and behaviors. The aim is to create knowledge that could be used to recommend interventions to make consumer practices more sustainable.

2.1 Apparel Disposal and its types

Disposal is the intentional process of ridding something that is believed to be useless. When individuals cease to wear clothes on a regular basis, typically perceived to use lesser than once a year, it is considered as obsolescence and may cause disposal (Goudeau and Lee, 2022; Weber et al., 2017). Body physical changes affecting fit and comfort are the most frequently described reasons to abandon some clothing (Koch & Domina, 1999). Jacoby classifies dispositions into three; retention, permanent disposal, and temporary disposal in her taxonomy of disposition behavior. An example of temporary disposal is that of lending or storing, whereas permanent disposal includes disposing or donating something to others; and retention is holding an item without utilization (Wai Yee et al., 2016).

2.2 Common methods of Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB)

Primarily there are two groups of consumers as fashion-oriented consumers, who purchase clothing frequently and dispose of it fast, and non-fashion consumers, who purchase less, and preserve their clothes longer. However, even among the non-fashion consumers it remains unclear whether the techniques of disposal will become sustainable(Weber et al., 2017). Disposing of clothes by throwing them away, donating them, storing them, reusing them, and reselling them again is

considered the most popular means of clothing disposal (Kashyap, 2018; Nanayakkara, 2019). Furthermore, certain customers reuse their old garments as dusters at home or cloth rags, give away to other friends and relatives (Koch & Domina, 1999). The most recently under-explored strategy is retailer take-back programs, in which brands collect discarded clothing and recycle it or reuse it. However, the consumers tend to consider this option at the end of the disposal process (Yan et al., 2021).

2.3 Factors Affecting Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB)

Past studies have found that there are certain factors that are significant, which influence the disposal behavior in the context of sustainable apparel disposal and these factors are; environmental attitudes, social norms, personal motivations, and cognitive or emotional triggers (Hassan et al., 2022). These factors, however, do not affect the situation in the same way or in contact with different customer groups.

Most of the studies identified environmental awareness as a strong predictor of sustainable disposal behavior. The impulsive nature of the apparel consumption aspects is particularly not addressed in the Indian context with the same seriousness(Hassan et al., 2022). Thus, the focal point of the research is the influence of impulsive buying (IB) on the sustainable apparel disposal behavior (ADB) of the clothing purchases made by the Delhi NCR consumers. It is believed that IB influences the attitudes on sustainable disposal, which in turn allows customers to act or intend to act in a particular way. This study aims to provide an in-depth body of knowledge, by combining the theory and the practice of consumer decision-making, on what influences discarding sustainable apparel in an urban Indian context.

2.3.1 Impulsive Buying and Sustainable Apparel Disposal Attitude:

Impulsive buying occurs when the customer buy products which have been triggered by an external stimulus such as promotions, the layout of the store or even the display of the adverts (Agbebo, 2020). IB is reactive and lack pre purchase planning and are often accompanied by remorse or discontent upon purchase. The are three types of impulse buying like purely impulsive, reminder-driven, fashion oriented and planned impulse purchases (Shahan Tinne, n.d.). Impulsive purchasing contributes significantly to the acceleration of disposal behavior in the context of fashion consumption. Clothes people buy impulsively tend to be of lower quality, are less used, and are disposed of much faster (Harris et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2020). The Generations Y and Z customers are the Impulsive buyers who do not care much about the environment and often do not consider the consequences of their disposal actions in the long run(Kashyap,2018). The paper examines how IB negatively influences the apparel disposal attitude of the Delhi NCR.

Hypothesis 1: There will be significant influence of impulsive buying on attitude towards Sustainable apparel disposal.

2.3.2 Subjective norms and Sustainable Apparel Disposal Attitude:

Subjective norms are the perceived social pressures that people experience regarding the need to perform or not to perform a particular action. Such norms are formed as an individual adopts the expectations of significant individuals, i.e., friends, families, peers, or colleagues and is obligated to meet those expectations (Ham et al., 2015). Ajzen theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 2002) also identifies subjective norms, attitudinal and perceived behavioral control, as important predictors of behavioral intention.

Although hoarding or discarding can be subtly discouraged in tight-knit communities or peer groups, such behavior as donating, reusing, or participating in clothing drives can be socially supported. Conversely, individuals might have fewer incentives to discard waste in a sustainable manner in the environments where fast fashion and waste are condoned (Goudeau & Lee, 2022; Ham et al., 2015).

This paper will assess the importance of subjective norms among the consumers in Delhi NCR in determining their perceptions towards the sustainable apparel disposal.

Hypothesis 2: Subjective norms positively influence Sustainable apparel disposal attitude

2.3.3 Sustainable Apparel Disposal Attitude and Sustainable Apparel Disposal Intention:

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) outlines the behavior of a particular person based on their behavioral purpose which is influenced by their attitude to the behavior and subjective norms surrounding it (Al-Suqri and Al-Kharusi, 2015;

Yadav et al., 2022). When it comes to the way of disposing of clothing, the disposition of a consumer towards sustainable disposal can be seen as an extension of the overall evaluation of techniques such as reuse, resale, donation, take-back, or discarding. When the customers have a positive attitude to sustainable disposal, they will prefer environmentally friendly disposal methods to include donation or reuse(Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022). Categorization theory splits disposal techniques in the mind of the consumers into two categories, including sustainable (reuse, donation, resale, and take-back) and unsustainable (discard). Their attitudes determine the type they belong to(Goudeau and Lee, 2022).

It is the test of whether positive attitudes toward sustainable apparel disposal predict greater intention to reuse, donate, take back or discard apparel and the reverse.

Hypotheses 3a–3d: Sustainable Apparel Disposal Attitude positively influences intention to a) take-back, b) reuse, c) donate, and negatively influences intention to d) discard apparel.

2.3.4 Subjective norms and Sustainable Apparel Disposal Intention:

The subjective norms in the context of apparel disposal do not only govern the attitude but also directly effect the intention to behave in a sustainable manner in donation, reuse, or take-back, as the antecedent to actual behavior (Ajzen, 2002). Research indicates that when social groups perceive sustainable disposal practices to be positive, people tend to embrace such practices in order to conform to the group in the group (Al-Suqri and Al-Kharusi, 2015). This work evaluates the importance of subjective norms on the intention to implement sustainable disposal practices and limiting the intention to discard clothing to consumers.

Hypotheses 3a–3d: Subjective Norms positively influence intention to a) take-back, b) reuse, c) donate, and negatively influences intention to d) discard apparel.

2.3.5 Sustainable Apparel Disposal Intention and Sustainable Apparel Disposal Behavior

Behavioral intention is a solid predictor of real behavior, especially in low barrier, voluntary settings such as disposal of apparel. As per the TRA, intentions are the level of motivation a consumer has to dispose of a behavior, and it is determined by a combination of personal attitudes and perceived social norms (Al-Suqri and Al-Kharusi, 2015). In apparel disposal, intentions are those expressed by a consumer as to whether they are likely to dispose of that specific behavior through donation, reuse, resale, take-back, or discarding. The social framing and visibility of various disposal alternatives also determine the intentions to action. Acknowledgment or social appreciation of acts such as donation and reuse reinforce follow-through. On the contrary, disposal is generally a personal process, and it can dilute the intention-behavior connection here (Goudeau, 2005).

This study evaluates whether consumers' stated intentions toward various apparel disposal methods are positively associated with their actual disposal behaviors.

Hypotheses 4a–4d: Sustainable Apparel Disposal Intention positively influences corresponding Sustainable Apparel Disposal Behavior for: a) take-back b) reuse, c) donate, and d) discard

3.Methodology:

3.1 Sample

The target population for this study are Gen Y and Gen Z consumers residing in Delhi NCR, who represent a significant segment of the fashion-conscious and fast-fashion consumer base. Prior literature suggests that women under the age of 35 are particularly responsive to trends and susceptible to impulse buying behavior, making them a relevant focus group for research on apparel disposal (Goudeau & Lee, 2022).

The sampling strategy employed was non-probability convenience sampling using an online survey distributed via social media and personal networks. This was appropriate for reaching a demographic active in digital consumption and fast fashion. A total of 415 responses were collected, of which 400 were deemed valid and usable after screening for completeness and relevance.

In line with structural equation modeling (SEM) guidelines, a sample size of 5–10 times the number of measurement items is considered acceptable (Molwus et al., 2013)

3.2 Measurement Items

The survey instrument was developed into Six sections, where each section was intended to measure one of the central latent variables of the study, which are Impulsive Buying (IB), Apparel Disposal Attitude (ADA), Subjective Norms (SNADB). Apparel Disposal Intention (ADI), Apparel Disposal Behavior (ADB), and Demographics (DE)

Validated scales adapted to previous literature were used to measure all the items; this was done in order to achieve reliability and construct validity. Particularly, items of the Impulsive buying behavior were sourced from (Shahan Tinne, n.d.)Tinne (2011); Disposal attitude, subjective norms, and most disposal intention and behavior items were sourced from (Goudeau and Lee, 2022); and, Items related to retailer take-back programs were sourced from Clary (2020).

All the items were measured by a Likert-type scale(Goudeau and Lee, 2022), which is created to respond to agreement, frequency, or likelihood, depending on the construct.

4. Results

A total of 415 data points were collected, and 400 were useful. 65% of the respondents were female and 35% were male. 65% of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 40. Most respondents were college students 80%.

4.1 Data Analysis

The analysis of data was performed in three steps to analyze the connections between the constructs and to test the hypotheses. The underlying structure of the measurement items and latent dimensions were determined by using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in the first phase. Then Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was analyzed to test the reliability and the validity of measurement model. and, lastly Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to examine the complete hypothesized model, and the antecedent-attitudes-intentions-behaviors relationships.

EFA was done using SPSS (version XXI), CFA and SEM were done using AMOS (version18).

4.1.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After EFA, confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed with AMOS (v18) to test the measurement model and determine its reliability, convergent and discriminant validity. Figure 1 displays the graphical representation of the CFA which is the final calculated model. The CFA model had acceptable fit indices:

Chi-square (χ^2) = 884.738, df = 472, χ^2/df = 1.874 (acceptable threshold: < 3.0)

RMSEA = 0.053 (acceptable threshold: < 0.08)

RMR = 0.053, CFI = 0.913 (acceptable threshold of > 0.90),

GFI = 0.860 (moderately acceptable)

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The combination of these indicators indicates that the model has shown reasonable overall fit although it can be refined.

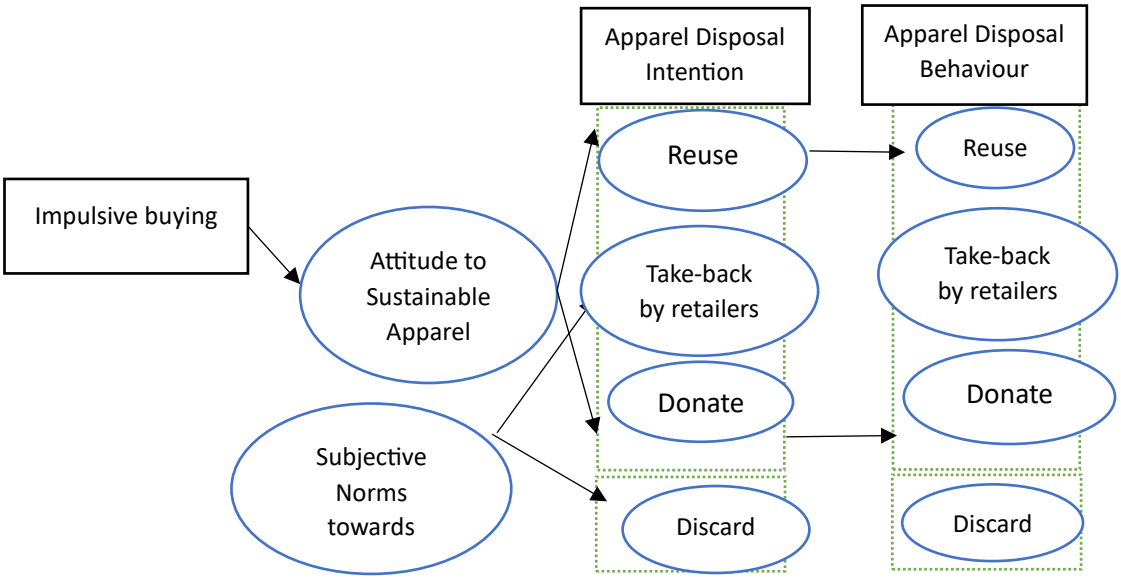

Fig 1 Theoretical Model

Variable/Construct	Items	Standardized Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	MSV
IBAD	IB 1	0.606	0.774	0.766	0.360	0.138
	IB2	0.667				
	IB3	0.679				
	IB4	0.624				
	IB5	0.607				
	IB6	0.361				
ADA	AdA 1	0.645	0.691	0.700	0.440	0.264
	AdA 2	0.58				
	AdA 4	0.753				
SNAD	SnAd2	0.745	0.801	0.765	0.405	0.264
	SnAd3	0.812				
	SnAd4	0.528				
	SnAd5	0.575				
	SnAd6	0.45				
DOADI	DoAdI 1	0.757	0.868	0.872	0.695	0.185
	DoAdI 2	0.864				
	DoAdI 3	0.875				
RUADI	RuAdI 1	0.778	0.862	0.864	0.679	0.127
	RuAdI 2	0.852				
	RuAdI 3	0.84				
DIADI	DiAdI 1	0.712	0.869	0.887	0.726	0.036
	DiAdI 2	0.987				
	DiAdI 3	0.835				
TBADI	TbAdI 1	0.744	0.878	0.882	0.715	0.082
	TbAdI 2	0.912				
	TbAdI 3	0.871				
DOADB	DoAdB 1	0.79	0.836	0.842	0.728	0.143
	DoAdB 2	0.912				
RUADB	RuAdB 1	0.643	0.782	0.815	0.698	0.023
	RuAdB 2	0.989				
DIADB	DiAdB 1	0.967	0.839	0.854	0.748	0.119
	DiAdB 2	0.749				
TBADB	TbAdB 1	0.964	0.915	0.920	0.852	0.119
	TbAdB 2	0.88				
Model Fitness: X2 = 884.738, df=472, X2/df = 1.874, RMSEA =0.053, RMR =0.049, CFI =0.913, GFI =0.860						

Table 1 Measurement model result

Convergent validity was evaluated with:

Standardized factor loadings (target: > 0.60)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (cut-off: ≥ 0.50 ideal, ≥ 0.40 acceptable)

Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (threshold: ≥ 0.70)

Key findings: Standardized factor loadings (SFL), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to evaluate convergent validity of the measure. The factor loading was found to be satisfactorily high at most, below 0.60 with some exceptions like IB6 (0.361) and SnAd6 (0.45), which showed weak item contributions. CR was found in the range of 0.700 to 0.920, which met the recommended level of internal consistency of 0.70. The values of Cronbach's alpha were also in ranges of acceptable to excellent (0.691- 0.915). Disposal intention and behavior constructs: DOADI, RUADI, DIADI, and TBADI and their respective behaviors had good convergent validity with values of 0.679 to 0.852 representing AVE. This implies that the core behavioral constructs had been well measured but attitudinal and normative constructs need to be refined. Nevertheless, constructs that had AVE values of less than the desired 0.50, such as IB (0.360), ADA (0.440), and SNADB (0.405), were kept because they were theoretically and contextually meaningful. All these items measured distinct aspects of impulse buying, subjective norms or attitudes to clothes disposal not sufficiently embodied by other indicators and thus, the conceptual integrity of the constructs was maintained. The total reliability coefficients such as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were limited to the acceptable level (0.691–0.801; 0.70), which showed that the constructs had internal consistency even with the low loadings. In new areas of activity like sustainable apparel disposal, weaker items that have been retained theoretically but weaker can be used to capture behavioral details that may become more salient in future research.

	DOADB	**IB**	**TBADI**	**DIADI**	**RUADI**	**DOADI**	**SNADB**	**ADA**	**TBADB**	**DIADB**	**RUADB**
DOADB	**0.853**										
IB	0.200	**0.600**									
TBADI	-0.002	0.063	**0.845**								
DIADI	-0.049	0.188	-0.008	**0.852**							
RUADI	0.084	0.040	0.242	-0.160	**0.824**						
DOADI	0.324	0.017	0.268	-0.189	0.357	**0.834**					
SNADB	0.234	0.371	0.196	0.186	0.003	0.230	**0.637**				
ADA	0.378	0.109	0.286	-0.114	0.222	0.430	0.514	**0.663**			
TBADB	0.236	0.121	0.100	0.149	-0.153	-0.030	0.168	0.102	**0.923**		
DIADB	0.172	0.064	-0.138	0.151	-0.047	0.018	-0.127	0.006	0.345	**0.865**	
RUADB	0.152	-0.028	0.081	-0.061	0.054	0.092	0.038	0.075	0.045	0.080	**0.835**

Table 2 Fornell & Larcker Criterion for discriminant validity

Note: Values in diagonal (bolded) are the square root of the average variance extracted. IB = Impulsive Buying, ADA = Apparel Disposal Attitude, SNADB = Sustainable Apparel Disposal Behavior, DOADB = Donation Apparel Disposal Behavior, DIADB = Discard Apparel Disposal Behavior, RUADB = Apparel Disposal Behavior, TBADB= Takeback Apparel Disposal Behavior, DOADI = Donation Apparel Disposal Intention, DIADI=Discard Apparel Disposal Intention, RUADI = Reuse Apparel Disposal Intention. TBADI = Take Back Apparel Disposal Intention

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell Larcker criterion, where square root of the average variance extracted (√AVE) were compared to inter- construct correlations. The majority of constructs achieved good convergent validity with √AVE values above a recommended threshold of 0.70 of key behavioral and intention constructs, e.g., donation (0.853), take-back (0.845), discard (0.852), and reuse (0.824). Attitudinal (ADA, 0.663) and impulsive buying (IB, 0.600) constructs demonstrated moderate convergent validity and subjective norms (SNADB, 0.637) was marginal. The correlations among constructs were relatively weaker than corresponding AVE scores, seeking to reflect satisfactory discriminant validity, but nonetheless, certain moderate correlations could be found, especially between subjective norms and apparel disposal attitude (0.514) as well as between subjective norms and impulsive buying (0.371). These overlaps make theoretical sense in the TRA, since the social norms tend to influence the attitudinal predispositions.

4.3 Structural Model Analysis

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was performed with AMOS to test the hypotheses proposed and measure relationships between latent variables, but on the basis of the factor scores obtained through the validated CFA model. The structural model showed a good fit:

The following table takes a summary of the path coefficients, level of significance and R^2 of the important endogenous constructs:

Hypothesised Relationship			Estimates	Standardised Estimates (β)	t-value	P Value	Decision	R^2
ADA		**IB**	-0.074	-0.106	-1.404	0.16	Rejected	0.297
ADA	**<---**	**SNADB**	0.389	0.576	5.981	***	Accepted	0.297
TBADI	**<---**	**ADA**	0.476	0.333	3.682	***	Accepted	0.118
DIADI	**<---**	**ADA**	-0.643	-0.356	-3.91	***	Accepted	0.131
RUADI	**<---**	**ADA**	0.549	0.433	4.43	***	Accepted	0.133
DOADI	**<---**	**ADA**	0.76	0.565	5.581	***	Accepted	0.273
DOADI	**<---**	**SNADB**	-0.081	-0.09	-1.104	0.27	Rejected	0.273
RUADI	**<---**	**SNADB**	-0.199	-0.231	-2.669	0.008	Accepted	0.133
DIADI	**<---**	**SNADB**	0.479	0.392	4.512	***	Accepted	0.131
TBADI	**<---**	**SNADB**	0.017	0.018	0.221	0.825	Rejected	0.118
TBADB	**<---**	**TBADI**	0.165	0.102	1.643	0.1	Rejected	0.010
DIADB	**<---**	**DIADI**	0.192	0.108	2.71	0.007	Accepted	0.012
RUADB	**<---**	**RUADI**	0.071	0.06	0.981	0.327	Rejected	0.004
DOADB	**<---**	**DOADI**	0.478	0.324	4.024	***	Accepted	0.105
Model Fitness: χ^2 = 1049.978, df=512, χ^2/df = 2.051, RMSEA =0.058, RMR =0.077, CFI =0.732 , GFI =0.832								

*** indicates p < .001

Table 3: Hypothesis testing Result

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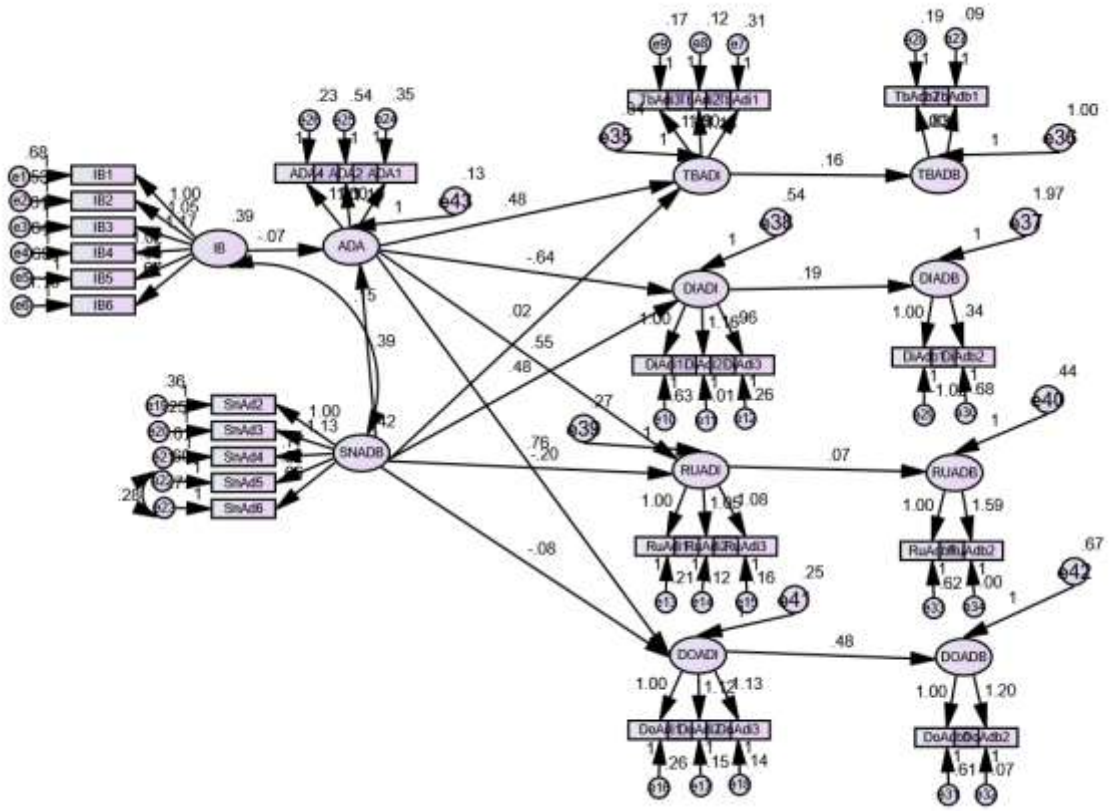
The structural model demonstrated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.051$, RMSEA = 0.058, GFI = 0.832),with a moderate CFI of 0.732, indicating scope for improving explanatory power further.

Fig 2



Structural Equation Model

The findings partially support the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980) which assumes that attitudes and subjective norms co-influence behavioral intentions and, in turn, lead to behavior. Impulsive buying (IB) did not have a significant effect on apparel disposal attitudes (ADA), meaning that past consumption behavior does not have a strong influence on the evaluation apparel disposal approach of the individual (= -0.106, p=0.16). Conversely, subjective norms (SNADB) also proved to be a potent predictor of the attitudes (0.576, p < .001), which confirms the idea proposed by TRA that attitudinal construction is guided by normative pressures. The attitudes were a significant predictor of intentions in all sustainable disposal pathways, positively correlated with take-back intention (TBADI: 0.333, p <.001), reuse intention (RUADI: 0.433, p <.001), and donation intention (DOADI: 0.565, p <.001), and negatively correlated with discard intention (DIADI: -0.356, p <.001). The relationships between subjective norms and intention were only positive and significant (discard intention) (β = 0.392, p < 0.001), which implies that currently present social norms promote unsustainable discarding behaviors. Norms had a significant effect on take-back intention (0.018, p = 0.825) or donation intention (0 = -0.090, p = 0.27) but a negative effect on reuse intention (0 = -0.231, p = 0.008).

The results of intention–behavior pathway analysis showed that donation intention produced the most effective results in behavior (DOADI → DOADB: β = 0.324, p < .001) yet discard intention produced a weak but significant effect on discarding behavior (β = 0.108, p = 0.007) and take-back (β = 0.102, p = 0.10) and reuse (β = 0.060, p = 0.327). The research results show partial agreement with TRA because the attitude–intention relationship was strong and subjective norms influenced intentions through both positive and negative effects and the intention–behavior relationship showed the highest strength for donation but the lowest for take-back and reuse. The results indicate that sustainable apparel disposal interventions should focus on developing positive attitudes toward sustainable disposal methods while working to change social norms that promote reuse and establishing easy collection systems and reward programs to help people follow through with their intentions for take-back and reuse.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The research findings support part of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) framework for understanding apparel disposal behavior and help develop TRA applications for sustainable fashion research. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) predicts that attitudes toward apparel disposal (ADA) drive sustainable intentions which lead to higher donation rates and reuse and take-back activities and lower discard behavior. The study confirms that attitude functions as the primary factor which drives intentional behavior in environmentally friendly situations. The relationship between subjective norms (SNADB) and attitudes is positive but negative for reuse intentions and very weak for take-back and donation intentions. The results show that donation behavior followed through from intentions but take-back and reuse behaviors did not. The research findings contradict actions. The research expands TRA theory by demonstrating how social norms function as both facilitators and obstacles TRA's assumption about behavioral consistency because structural and convenience-related obstacles affect the process of turning intentions into in apparel disposal and how people need specific environmental and infrastructural support to turn their intentions into actions. The research supports the addition of perceived behavioral control from the Theory of Planned Behavior and perceived convenience and infrastructure availability to models that predict sustainable fashion behaviors. The study shows that attitude formation remains essential but interventions need to work on changing social norms and removing practical obstacles to achieve sustainable waste disposal choices.

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