

Sustainable Consumption Behavior in the Clothing Industry: A Bibliometric Analysis

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*¹Diksha Chauhan and ²Prof. Monica Bedi

¹Research Scholar, University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh

²Professor, University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Abstract: *The study aims to provide an overview of the existing literature by identifying key contributors and emerging themes, and offering insights that can guide future research and inform policymakers in promoting sustainable consumer behavior within the clothing industry. Although numerous studies have explored Sustainable Consumption Behavior in clothing, to the author's knowledge, only a few bibliometric studies have examined Sustainable Consumption Behavior in the clothing industry. A bibliometric analysis of 172 research papers on "sustainable clothing consumption behavior" published between the years 2005 and 2025 using Biblioshiny and VOSViewer software was conducted. The analysis incorporated both performance analysis and scientific mapping techniques. The findings of the study suggest the key themes and topics that could be explored by the researchers in future. Unlike previous studies that broadly examined sustainable consumption behavior, this study specifically focuses on sustainable consumer behavior within the clothing context, thereby offering a more industry-specific perspective.*


Keywords: *Sustainable consumption behavior, clothing industry, bibliometric analysis, biblioshiny, Vosviewer*

1 | INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the consumption of environmental resources has increased substantially, resulting in their rapid depletion and severe environmental damage (Alisat & Reimer, 2017; Vergura et al., 2023). This surge in consumption is because of change in consumer behavior, where consumption is motivated by socio-economic desires rather than actual necessity (Bulut et al., 2017; United Nations Environment Programme, 2015; Vergura et al., 2023). Consequently, sustainable consumption has

*Corresponding Author

 Diksha Chauhan, Research Scholar, University Business School, Panjab University, Chandigarh

 dikshachauhan2506@gmail.com

10



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gained importance in addressing these issues. In the year 1992, the term "Sustainable Consumption" was introduced in the Rio de Janeiro "Earth Summit", and according to Hornibrook et al. (2013), sustainable consumption means "behavior that implies the correct use of goods and services aimed at satisfying one's needs and improving the quality of life".

In recent years, the clothing industry has emerged as the most polluting industry across the globe (Kemi & Hasan, 2025). It consumes vast amounts of natural resources, causing their depletion and environmental harm (Kozłowski et al., 2018). Clothing manufacturing industries prioritise the production of garments of low-quality material having short life spans, which accelerates consumption and generates excessive textile waste (Cooper & Claxton, 2022; Kozłowski et al., 2018). Therefore, there is a need to shift to Sustainable Consumption within the clothing industry.

Prior research highlights several determinants of sustainable clothing consumption behavior. As per Kautish & Sharma (2021), the consumers' choice to purchase sustainable clothing products is influenced by Environmental Awareness. Furthermore, Legere & Kang (2020) stated that a positive Self-concept leads to positive Sustainable Behavior though the relationship was mediated by Perceived Self-enhancement Benefits. Similarly, Social Motivation has a positive influence on "Sustainable Clothing Purchase Behavior", but it negatively influences the disposing behavior of clothing waste (Soyer & Dittrich, 2021). In contrast, Harris et al. (2016) revealed some barriers that negatively influence the Sustainable Consumer Behavior, such as diverse consumer ethical concerns, the complexity of sustainability as a concept, and the perception of clothing as a non-altruistic purchase. In some studies, it has been revealed that age could also be a predictive factor in consumption habits. According to Preuit & Yan (2016) and Poolulanga & Shephard (2013), young consumers are more inclined to purchase 'fast-fashion' products, contributing to increased consumption and rapid disposal of clothing items. These fast-fashion brands emphasise producing trend-driven clothing items and hence urge consumers to buy frequently, leading to huge amounts of apparel waste. However, Norup et al. (2019) demonstrated that practices such as recycling and reusing clothes can significantly reduce clothing waste and its environmental consequences.

Although numerous studies have explored Sustainable Consumption Behavior in clothing, to the author's knowledge, only a few bibliometric studies have examined Sustainable Consumption Behavior in the clothing industry (Kemi & Hasan, 2025; Corboş et al., 2023). However, these studies also identified gaps. First, the year 2025 was not included in the prior studies, and various recent themes have emerged in the literature during this year (Kemi & Hasan, 2025). Second, the number of articles employed for bibliometric analysis was limited, potentially restricting the depth and comprehensiveness of the findings (Corboş et al., 2023). Also, the scope of the papers was broad and did not specifically focus on consumer behavior.

In the present study, a bibliometric analysis of published research related to sustainable clothing consumption behavior is conducted, with a primary focus on consumer behavior. The aim is to provide an overview of the existing literature by identifying key contributors and emerging themes, and offering insights that can guide future research and inform policymakers in promoting sustainable consumer behavior within the clothing industry.

The study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1) What bibliometric information is available in the literature about sustainable clothing consumption behavior and how it has evolved?

RQ2) Which countries have contributed significantly to the research field?

RQ3) Who are the most prominent authors, and which journals are the most relevant in the field?

RQ4) What are the most emerging keywords and terms related to sustainable clothing consumption behavior?

RQ5) How have the themes evolved over the past years, and what are the future research directions?

RQ1 examines the publications' trend over time, while RQ2 analyses the contributions of the top ten countries based on their publication output. Additionally, RQ3 reveals the most relevant journals and prominent authors in the literature. RQ4 explores the emerging keywords with the help of co-occurrence network analysis. Finally, RQ5 examines thematic evolution with the help of a thematic map, thus suggesting future research directions.

The study is structured as follows: the first section introduces the research problem by including the need and significance of the study. The next section outlines the methodology used to extract data for bibliometric analysis. The following section presents the study's analysis and results, illustrated through charts and graphs. Finally, the fourth section discusses the future research directions in sustainable clothing consumption behavior. Finally, the fifth section concludes the study.

2 | METHODOLOGY

Bibliometric analysis is referred to as "a quantitative technique used to systematically examine the progress of a research field by identifying various relevant themes, trends, and gaps existing in the literature" (Bagdi et al., 2023). It involves the collection and analysis of research articles' data from various databases such as 'Scopus' and 'Web of Science', enabling researcher to identify trends in the literature and provide future research directions (Li et al., 2019; Elgaar et al., 2024).

For the present study, the 'Scopus' database was selected for data collection, as it includes a wide range of documents and classifies them into various categories, making it easy for the researcher to conduct bibliometric analysis (Chadegani et al., 2013; Burnham, 2006). Data were collected on 6 January 2026, and only the articles published over the past 20 years (2005-2025) were included. This time frame was selected as limited studies were available before 2005, and the period of two decades is sufficient to represent the trend in sustainable consumption behavior of consumers relating to clothing and apparel (Goyal & Goyal, 2024).

The four-step "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA)" framework was used for conducting a systematic review for the study, which includes "identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of papers" (Elgaar et al., 2024).

During the first stage of identification, articles focusing on "sustainable consumption" and "consumer behavior" in the context of "clothing and apparel" were retrieved; thus, the following search strategy was employed: "Sustainable consumption" OR "Sustainable Consumption Behavior" AND "Clothing" OR "Apparel". This yielded a total of 296 documents. For the subsequent stage of screening and eligibility assessment, the documents were refined based on the inclusion criteria. The first inclusion criterion was the field, and only studies related to the field of Business Management and Social Sciences were retained, as the study aims to explore consumer behavior consequently, 25 documents were removed. Another criterion was the language and the document type; only "peer-reviewed journal articles" in English were included, while conference papers, book chapters, and other document types were not included. Thereafter, a sample of 172 documents was obtained to conduct the bibliometric analysis. In the end, the selected 172 documents were exported from the 'Scopus' database in CSV format. Figure 1 represents PRISMA framework used for bibliometric analysis, and Table 1 shows the demographic information of the articles reviewed.

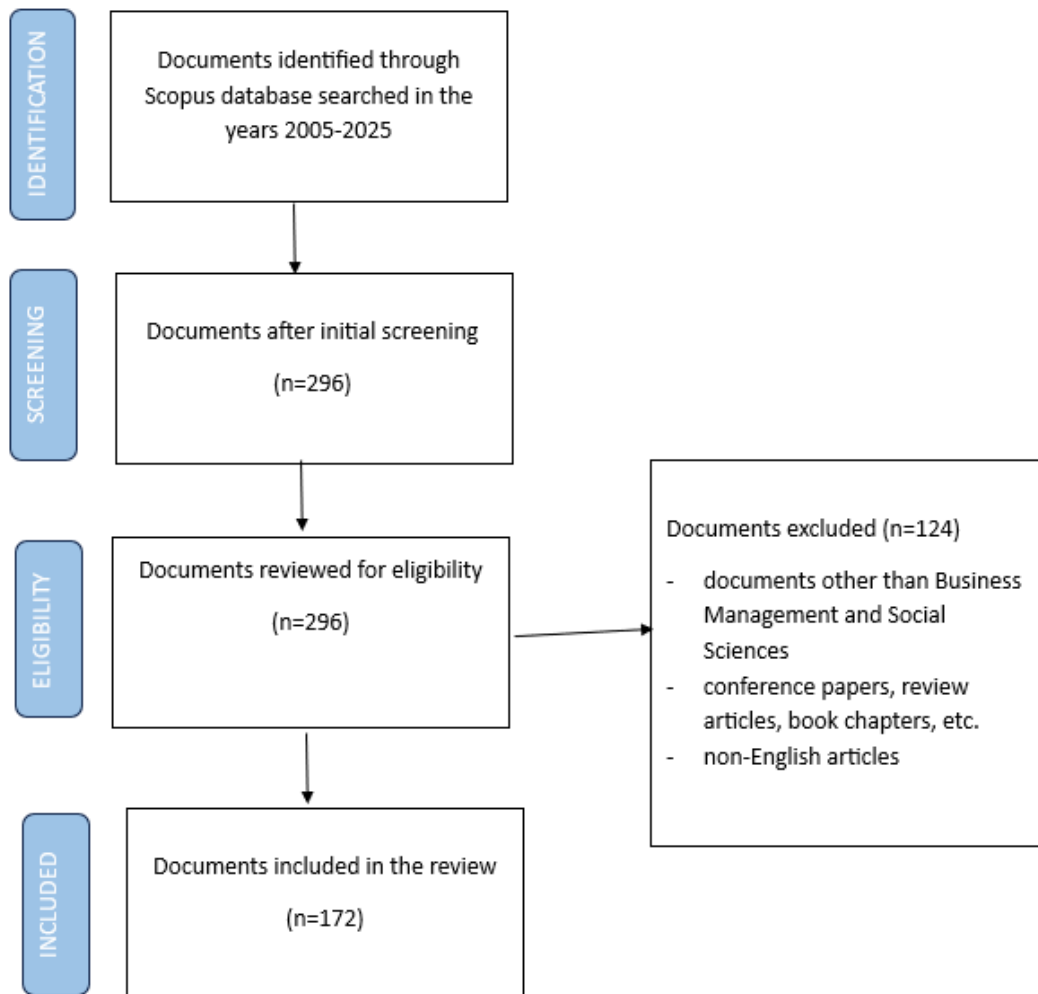


Figure 1. PRISMA framework
Source: Created by Authors

Table 1. Demographic information

Description	Results
Timespan	2005:2025
Sources (Journal, Book, etc.)	73
Documents	172
Annual Growth Rate %	19.95
Documents Average Age	5.18
Average Citations per doc	36.84
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keyword Plus (ID)	384
Author's Keywords	609
AUTHORS	
Authors	476
Authors of single-authored documents	18
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authors Documents	18
Co-authors per Documents	3.1
International co-authorships %	23.84

Source: Authors' own work

3 | RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In the following section, the result of the bibliometric analysis conducted on the documents selected through the PRISMA framework has been presented. The analysis has been conducted in two parts: performance analysis and scientific mapping. The performance analysis examines publication trends in the past years, the most relevant authors and journals, and the most relevant countries. The scientific mapping focuses on the co-occurrence analysis of keywords. Additionally, thematic analysis has been conducted to highlight the major themes and their evolution over time. The research findings are presented in the subsequent sections.

Growth Trend

The research articles for the period 2005-2025 have been selected, and that gave us a total of 172 documents. As shown in Figure 2 the highest number of documents was published in 2025, with 38 publications accounting to 22.09% of total documents, while the lowest number of publications was observed in the years 2005-2011, with only 1 publication (0.58%). It has been observed that overall, the publication trend remained relatively stagnant from 2005 to 2011, followed by a gradual increase in subsequent years. A notable and consistent growth in the number of publications is observed from 2018 onwards, indicating rising scholarly interest in the field. However, there have been some fluctuations in the trend, as the number of papers published in 2014 and 2017 has decreased instead of increasing in comparison to their respective previous years. In 2014, there was a decline of 2 papers, whereas in 2017, the decrease was the highest, with 4 papers. Despite these fluctuations, a sharp increase was observed in 2025, exhibiting the highest year-to-year growth with 14 papers. This suggests that Sustainability as a research field is gaining huge interest from researchers across the globe, and "sustainable consumption behavior" in the "clothing and apparel" industry is also receiving increasing scholarly attention.

Table 2. Number of Papers

Years	Number of Papers
2025	38
2024	24
2023	14
2022	20
2021	16
2020	11
2019	9
2018	7
2017	4
2016	8
2015	4
2014	2
2013	4
2012	4
2011	1
2010	1
2009	1
2008	1
2007	1
2006	1
2005	1
Total	172

Source: Created by Authors

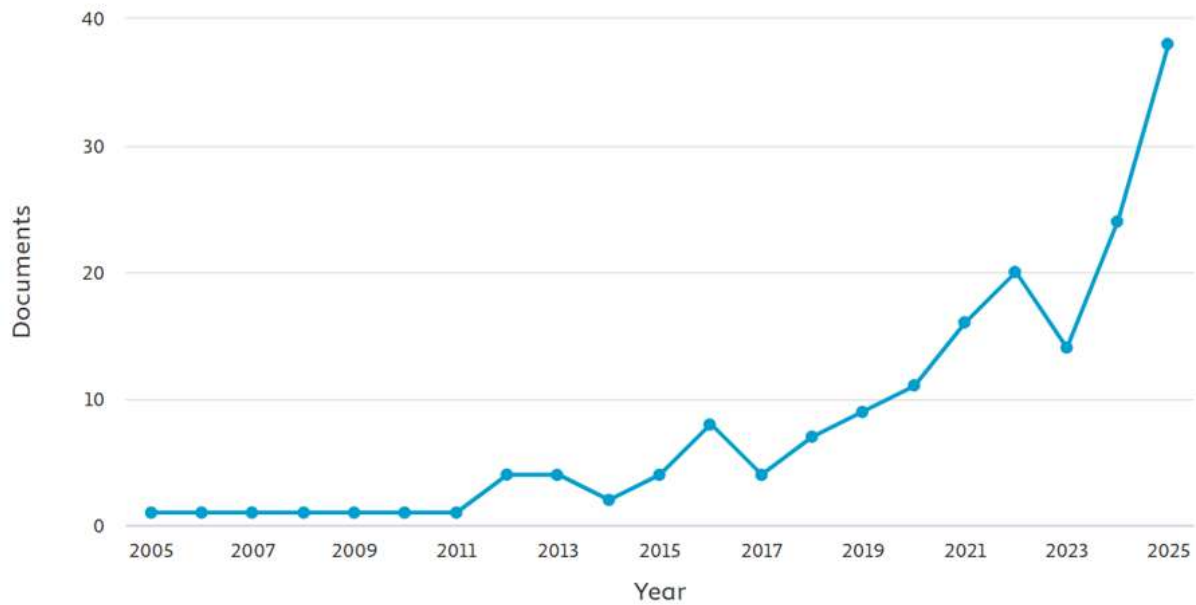


Figure 2. Trend of the number of papers from 2005 to 2025

Source: Created by authors through the Scopus database.

Top countries

Under this head, a descriptive analysis of the top 10 countries has been done. These countries have published the highest articles in relation to "Sustainable Consumption Behavior" in the clothing industry. Table 3 presents the top 10 countries based on publication output. The United States (USA) has maximum publications at 42, which is 24.45% of the total publications, and comes in first place. This demonstrates that the researchers in the USA are the most concerned about sustainable consumption issues. Then the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany follow in second and third position with 23 (13.3%) and 13 journal publications (7.5%) respectively. China comes next with 12 publications, contributing 6.9% in total output. India also ranks among the top 5 countries, with 11 (6.3%) publications, indicating a growing inclination among researchers towards sustainable clothing consumption in India. Overall, this highlights the dominance of developed economies, alongside the rising contribution of emerging economies, in advancing research within the domain.

Table 3: Top 10 countries

Country	Publications	Contribution in total articles published
Unites States	42	24.5%
United Kingdom	23	13.3%
Germany	13	7.5%
China	12	6.9%
India	11	6.3%
Itlay	11	6.3%
South Korea	8	4.6%
Malaysia	7	4%
Netherlands	7	4%
Australia	6	3.4%

Source: Created by Authors

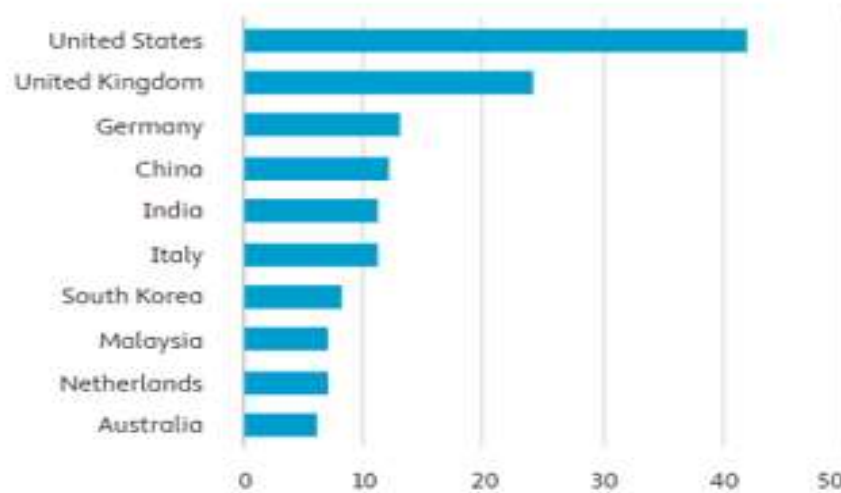


Figure3: top 10 countries

Source: Created by authors using the Scopus database.

Top 10 authors

This section represents the top 10 authors contributing to the field. In Table 4, the list of most prominent authors is provided, along with their number of publications and fractionalised contributions. Joyner Armstrong C. M. ranks first with 5 publications and the highest fractionalised score of 16.67. However, the next seven authors naming Fahy F., Geiegr S. M., Karpova E., Maguire H., Millward Hopkins J., Park H., Schrader U., all have the same publications ($n=3$) and their fractionalised score is 10 each. Similarly, the remaining two authors, Alvarez Risco A., and Baurley S., have two publications each, with a matching fractionalised score of 6.67. Although the top authors have published a relatively modest number of articles, their contribution to the field is significant. Together, the total articles published by the top 10 authors ($n=30$) represent 17.4% of the total publications in the field, underscoring their substantial influence in advancing the literature on “sustainable consumption behavior” in the “clothing” industry.

Table4: Top 10 Authors

Authors	Articles	Fractionalised Contribution
Joyner Armstrong C. M.	5	16.67
Fahy F.	3	10
Geiegr S. M.	3	10
Karpova E.	3	10
Maguire H.	3	10
Millward Hopkins J.	3	10
Park H.	3	10
Schrader U.	3	10
Anderson Seminario	2	6.67
Baurley S.	2	6.67
Total	30	100

Source: created by authors

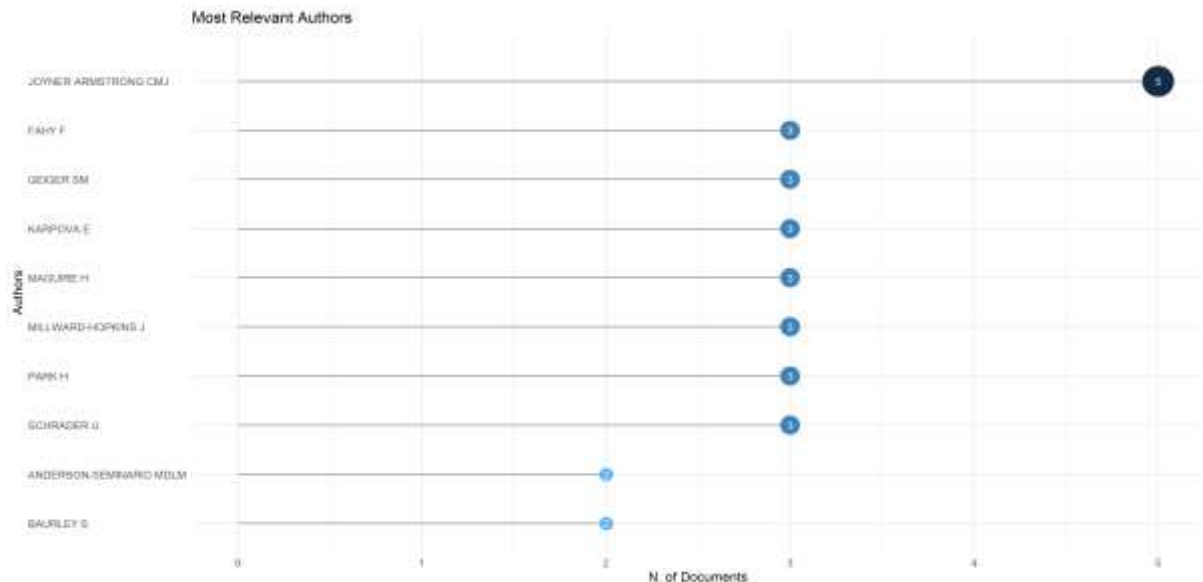


Figure 4: Top 10 Authors

Source: Created by authors through Biblioshiny.

In Table 5, the top authors' impact in the literature is calculated using several indices: the number of publications, h-index, total citations (TC), and citations per year (C/Y). Schrader U. emerges at the top with the highest total citations (255), 3 publications, and an h-index of 3, indicating a substantial influence in the domain. Geiegr S. M., with 229 total citations, an h-index of 3 and 3 publications, stands in second position. Joyner Armstrong C. M. comes next in the list, recording 211 total citations across 5 articles (h-index = 5), reflecting both productivity and sustained academic influence. Followed by Park H., who has published 3 articles with 156 citations (h-index = 3). However, Anderson Seminario has a comparatively lower publication count (n = 2) and h-index (2); the author has accumulated 61 citations, reflecting a notable influence in the research field. Collectively, these top ten authors are pivotal in shaping the literature and advancing future directions.

Table5: Impact of top authors

Authors	TC	h-index	Publications	PY_start	C/Y
Schrader U.	255	3	3	2017	28.3
Geiegr S. M.	229	3	3	2017	25.4
Joyner Armstrong C. M.	211	5	5	2015	19.18
Park H.	156	3	3	2016	15.6
Anderson Seminario	61	2	2	2022	15.25
Millward Hopkins J.	48	2	3	2023	16
Baurley S.	46	2	2	2023	15.3
Fahy F.	19	2	3	2022	4.75
Maguire H.	19	2	3	2022	4.75
Karpova E.	18	2	3	2022	4.5

Source: Created by Authors

Top Sources

Table 6 represents the most relevant sources that have published articles on "sustainable consumption behavior" in the "clothing" industry. 'Sustainability (Switzerland)' has the highest number of publications (n=29), a fractionalised score of 31.5, h-index of 207 and a Q1 SJR ranking, highlighting its strong visibility and influence in the field. Then 'Journal of Cleaner Production' comes in second position with a total of 19 publications, a fractionalised score of 20.6, and the highest h-index (354), indicating a strong citation score of the journal. 'Cleaner and Responsible Consumption' is the third most relevant source,

in terms of publication count ($n=7$, fractionalised score=7.6). However, it has the lowest h-index (22), suggesting that though the journal publishes a large number of articles, the quality of the articles does not match the relevant criteria. 'International Journal of Consumer Studies' and 'International Journal of Fashion Design Technology and Education' have published 6 articles each and share the same fractionalised score (6.5). However, there is a huge difference in their h-index. While the *International Journal of Consumer Studies* has a relatively high h-index (108), the *International Journal of Fashion Design Technology and Education* has the second-lowest h-index (33). Overall, nearly all the journals, except *Fibres and Textiles in Eastern Europe*, in the top 10 hold a Q1 SJR ranking, indicating high-quality research in the field. These journals may therefore be considered key sources for future studies, as they continue to dominate research on sustainable consumption behavior in the clothing industry.

Table 6: List of Top Sources

Sources	Articles	h-index	SJR	Fractionalised Score
'Sustainability Switzerland'	29	207	Q1	31.5
'Journal of Cleaner Production'	19	354	Q1	20.6
'Cleaner and Responsible Consumption'	7	22	Q1	7.6
'International Journal of Consumer Studies'	6	108	Q1	6.5
'International Journal of Fashion Design Technology and Education'	6	33	Q1	6.5
'International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management'	6	107	Q1	6.5
'Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management'	6	72	Q1	6.5
'Fibres and Textiles in Eastern Europe'	5	47	Q3	5.4
'Business Strategy and the Environment'	4	173	Q1	4.3
'Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services'	4	167	Q1	4.3
Total	92	-	-	100

Source: Created by Authors

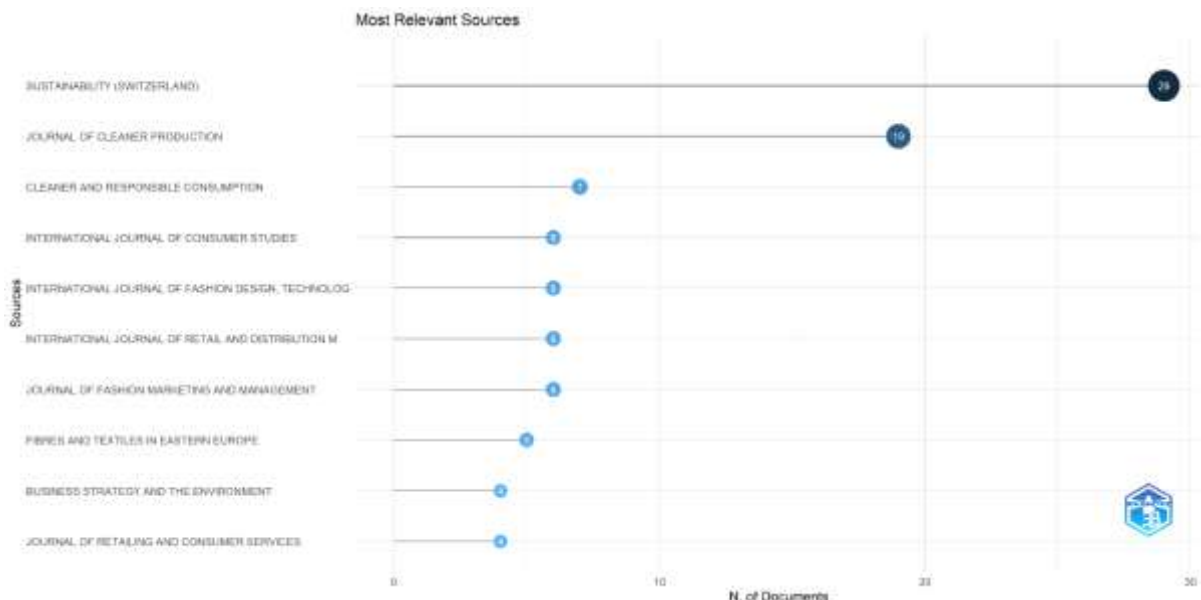


Figure 5: List of Top Sources

Source: Created by authors through Biblioshiny.

Top-cited documents

Table 7 lists the top-cited documents on consumers' sustainable clothing consumption over the past two decades (2005-2025). The table summarises the documents' title, author, publication year, publication source, total citations over the past two decades. The article "An investigation of young fashion

consumers' disposal habits" published in the *'International Journal of Consumer Studies'*, has received the highest total citations (357) (Morgan & Britwistle, 2009). The article explores consumers' clothing waste disposal habits and their sustainable clothing behavior. The article titled "Green thinking but thoughtless buying? An empirical extension of the value-attitude-behavior hierarchy in sustainable clothing", authored by Jacobs, K., Peterson, L., Horish, J., and Battenfeld, D. (2018), is the next most cited document and explores the "attitude-behavior gap" in "sustainable clothing behavior" (Jacob et al., 2018). The article received a total of 273 citations to date and was published by the *'Journal of Cleaner Production'*. Next in the list is "Fashion clothing - where does it all end up?" authored by Birtwistle, G., and Moore, C. M. (2007), published by the *'International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management'*, which received 263 total citations (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). Following that, "Business models for sustainable consumption in the circular economy: An expert study" received 238 total citations. The authors, Tunn, V. S. C., Bocken, N. M. P., Van de Hende, E. A., and Schoormans, J. P. L. (2019), aim to develop future business models to promote "sustainable consumption" in the "clothing" industry by conducting various rounds of interviews with the industry experts (Tunn et al., 2019). The last in the top five list is "The consumption side of sustainable fashion supply chain: Understanding fashion consumer eco-fashion consumption decision", authored by Chan, T. and Wong, C. W. Y. (2012), published by the *'Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management'*, having 210 total citations (Chan & Wong, 2012). The article demonstrates that store-related attributes positively influence the consumers' "ecologically friendly fashion consumption". These were the top five cited documents over the last two decades (2005-2025) that have guided researchers worldwide for further exploration of the research field.

Table7: Top-cited documents

Rank	Title	Author and Year	Source	Citations
1	"An investigation of young fashion consumers' disposal habits"	Morgan, L.R. and Britwistle, G. (2009)	<i>'International Journal of Consumer Studies'</i>	357
2	"Green thinking but thoughtless buying? An empirical extension of the value-attitude-behavior hierarchy in sustainable clothing"	Jacobs, K., Peterson, L., Horish, J., and Battenfeld, D. (2018)	<i>'Journal of Cleaner Production'</i>	273
3	"Fashion clothing - where does it all end up?"	Birtwistle, G. and Moore, C. M. (2007)	<i>'International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management'</i>	263
4	"Business models for sustainable consumption in the circular economy: An expert study"	Tunn, V. S. C., Bocken, N. M. P., van de Hende, E. A., and Schoormans, J. P. L. (2019)	<i>'Journal of Cleaner Production'</i>	238
5	"The consumption side of the sustainable fashion supply chain: Understanding fashion consumer eco-fashion consumption decision"	Chan, T. and Wong, C. W. Y. (2012)	<i>'Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management'</i>	210
6	"Identity, self-concept and young women's engagement with collaborative, sustainable fashion consumption models"	McNeil, L. and Venter, B. (2019)	<i>'International Journal of Consumer Studies'</i>	192
7	"The sustainable clothing market: An evaluation of potential strategies for UK retailers"	Goworek, H., Fisher, T., Cooper, T., Woodward, S.,	<i>'International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management'</i>	178

		and Hiller, A. (2012)		
8	"Influencing factors of Chinese consumers' purchase intention to sustainable apparel products: Exploring consumer "attitude-behavioral intention" gap"	Jung, H. J., Chai, Y. J., and Oh, K. W. (2020)	'Sustainability Switzerland'	172
9	"Rebirth fashion: Secondhand clothing consumption values and perceived risks"	Hur, E. (2020)	'Journal of Cleaner Production'	171
10	"Beyond the throwaway society: A life cycle-based assessment of the environmental benefit of reuse"	Castellani, V., Sala, S., and Mirabella, N. (2015)	'International Environmental Assessment and Management'	139

Source: Created by Authors

Thematic Map and Evolution

Figure 6 illustrates the thematic map of the analysed articles divided into four major areas: "motor themes", "niche themes", "basic themes", and "emerging themes". The first area is of the motor themes, which has two prominent clusters in green and blue colours are identified. The blue cluster is slightly bigger than the green cluster and encompasses themes like "sustainability", "consumption behavior", and "clothing industry". This cluster is highly relevant and has a strong potential for future research development. Whereas the green cluster represents themes such as "sustainable development", "fast fashion", and "circular economy". Although this cluster is highly developed but lacks relevance in comparison to the blue cluster. However, both clusters in the motor theme quadrant represent a core and influential research area. In the niche theme quadrant, the major themes are "fashion sustainability", "least squares method", and "sustainable consumption behavior"; these themes are high in density but lack centrality. This demonstrates that the themes are well-developed, relatively specialised and less connected to the broader research domain. In the basic themes' quadrant, the themes such as "sustainable consumption", "fashion", and "consumer behavior" are emerging. These themes have the potential to grow further and lead the research field, as they have strong centrality and are well-connected to other themes. In the fourth quadrant of emerging themes, there are again two clusters in purple and orange colours. The purple cluster is bigger than the orange cluster and represents "clothing", "consumption", and "consumer behavior"; these themes are least developed but have the potential to grow as they are still evolving and are quite relevant to the field of research. Additionally, the orange cluster is the smallest and is almost non-existent, demonstrating that themes like "India", "fashion consumption", and "commodity" are the least explored themes. However, they have the potential to become significant in the research field specifically related to geographical context and contextual perspectives.

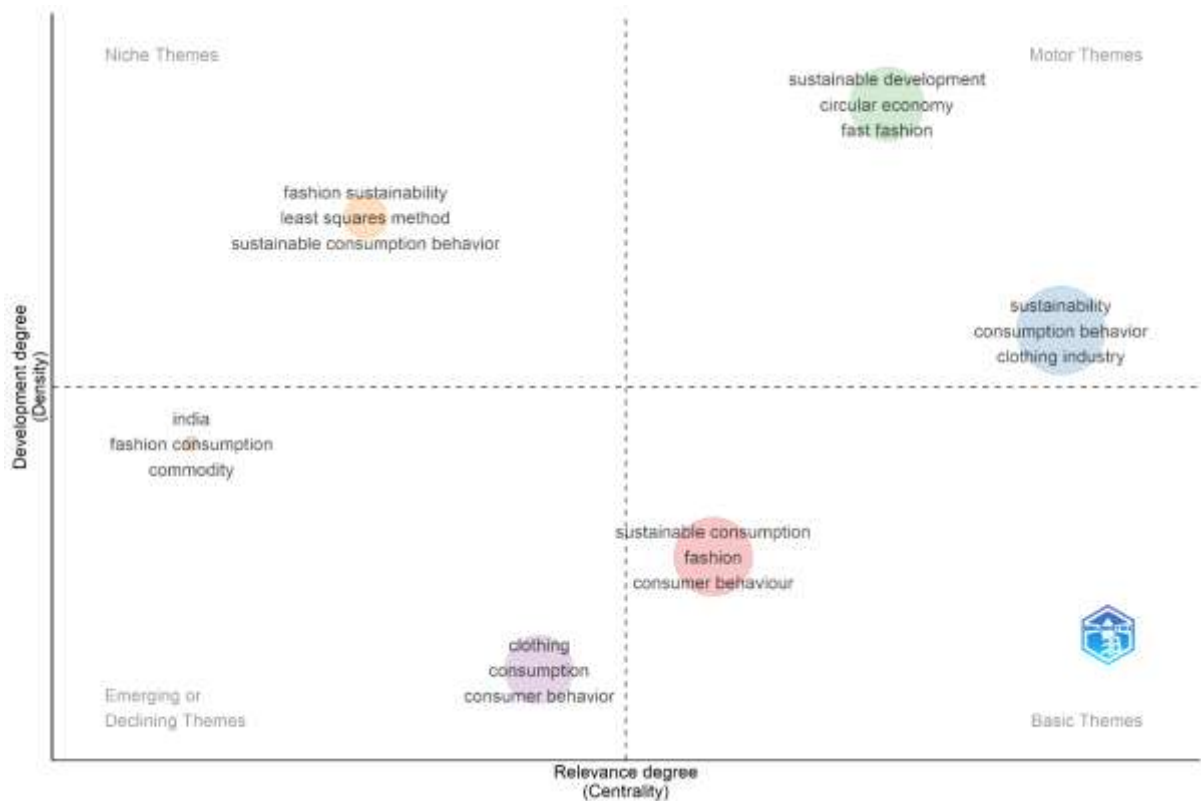


Figure 6: Thematic Map

Source: Created by authors through Biblioshiny.

Figure 7 is the thematic evolution diagram, which represents the evolution of various research themes that have evolved during two time periods. The strength of thematic continuity and transition between periods is represented by the width of the connecting flows. On the left-hand side, the themes related to the years 2005 to 2022 are shown. The major themes during this time period were: "clothing", "textile industry", "economic analysis", "environmental impact", "sustainability", "collaborative consumption", and "sustainable consumption". Among these themes, "sustainability" is the most studied one and is connected to various future research directions. On the right-hand side, the evolution of themes from 2023 to 2025 has been mentioned. The major themes were: "sustainability", "fast-fashion", "sustainable consumption", "the Theory of Planned Behavior", "factor analysis", "fashion", and "Gen-Z". During this era, the concept of "fast-fashion" and "Gen-Z" have emerged, representing the researchers' concern towards the sustainable clothing practices of the younger generation. Also, the emergence of the theory of planned behavior depicts that the researchers became more inclined towards theory-driven approaches. The flow of sustainability from the earlier period to sustainability in the current period demonstrates thematic continuity. Factor analysis has also emerged as an important theme in the current period, indicating reliance on empirical studies. In summary, the thematic evolution in Figure 7 depicts that the themes have evolved from industry-level to consumer-centric, behavior-oriented, and methodological.

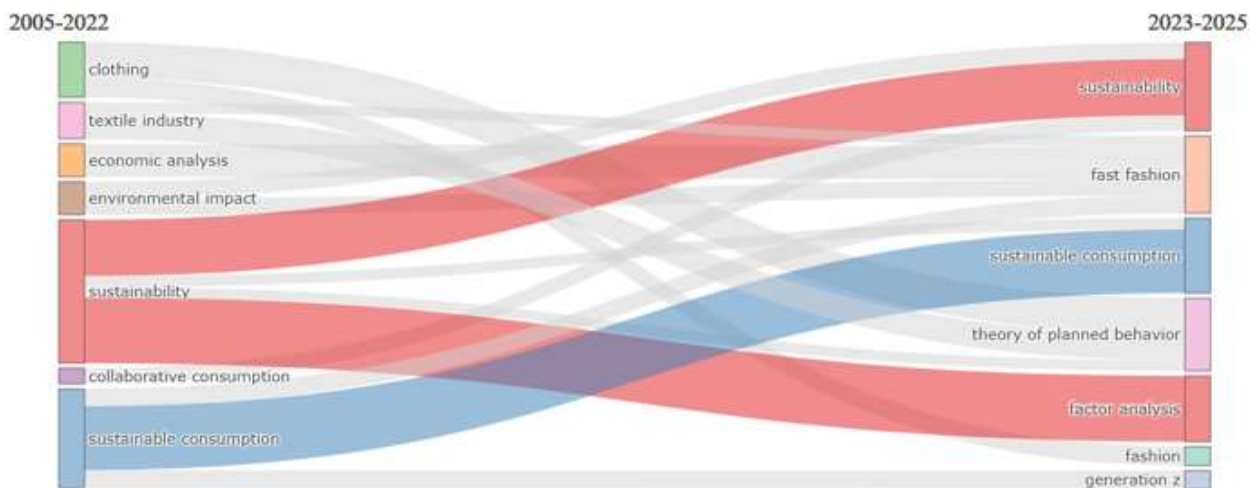


Figure 7: Thematic Evolution

Source: Created by authors through Biblioshiny.

Co-Occurrence Analysis

The co-occurrence network visualisation presented in Figure 8 was generated using VOSviewer. The analysis revealed four clusters via network visualisation: green, blue, yellow, and red. The key terms in the green cluster are "sustainable consumption", "sustainable development", "ethics", "surveys", "textiles", "recycling", "fashion", "consumer behavior", and "clothing". This cluster links sustainability with fashion and consumer behavior, making it the backbone of the literature. The blue cluster represents "sustainability", "consumption behavior", "public attitude", "China", "marketing", "purchase intention", "factor analysis", "perception", and the "clothing industry". In this cluster, "factor analysis" has emerged as a keyword representing the use of quantitative techniques to understand consumer behavior, specifically in relation to sustainable clothing. "Textile industry", "second-hand clothing", "sustainable fashion", "Generation Z", "consumer behavior", the "sharing economy", "apparel", "collaborative consumption", the "Theory of Planned Behavior", "knowledge", and "sustainable clothing" are related to the red cluster. This shows the emerging research interest in young consumers, particularly Gen-Z, and the alignment of the research with behavioral theories to understand sustainable fashion choices. Lastly, the yellow cluster represents "slow fashion", "fast fashion", "circular economy", "environmental impact", and "climate change". This cluster links clothing consumption with environmental concerns and its ecological consequences. Through this analysis, it was found that sustainable consumption, sustainability, and consumption behavior are the most connected nodes, revealing that they are widely used keywords in the research field.

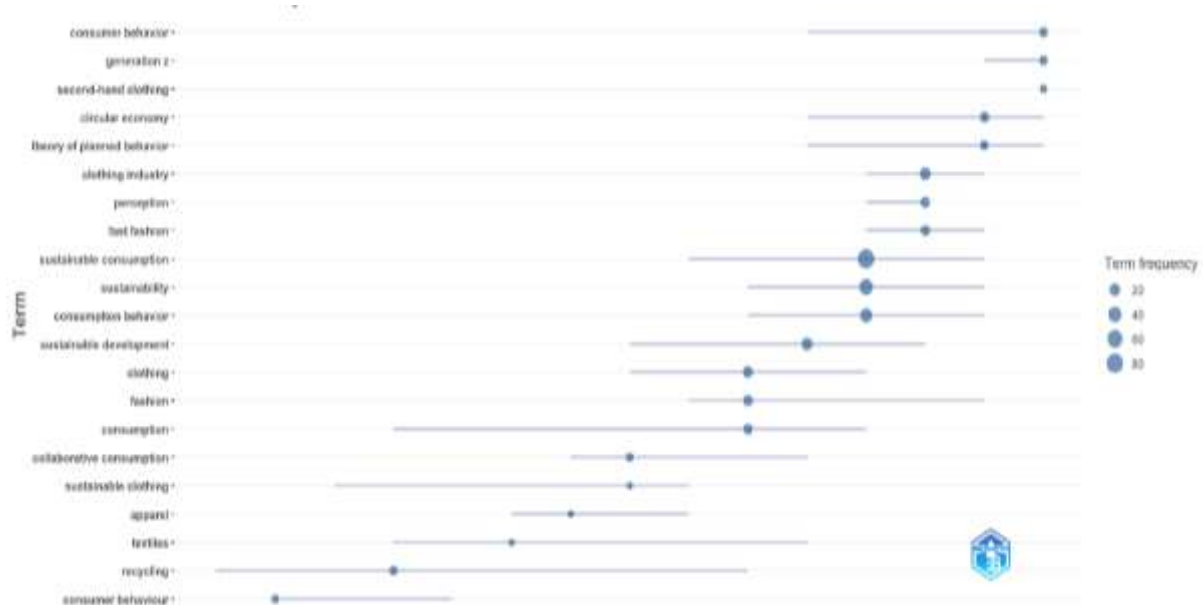


Figure 9: Topic Evolution

Source: Created by authors through Biblioshiny.

4 | FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Based on the bibliometric analysis conducted of the research related to “sustainable clothing consumption”, several directions for future research are proposed based. Firstly, future research could integrate other theories, rather than the Theory of Planned Behavior, for exploring consumers’ “sustainable clothing consumption behavior”. Additionally, various quantitative techniques, such as the least-squares method, surveys, and factor analysis, can be used to study the persistent intention-behavior gap in sustainable clothing consumption. The growing prominence of Gen-Z in the past few years is also a great research opportunity, as they are a young generation and their consumption habits strongly influence the environment. Future studies could use intergenerational comparisons to better understand how age affects clothing consumption habits across generations. Furthermore, motor themes such as “circular economy” and “collaborative consumption” could be studied to explore the use of rental platforms for purchasing second-hand clothes. Also, the environmental consequences of fast fashion should be examined more rigorously, especially in relation to climate change, resource depletion, and ecological imbalance. Finally, the lack of studies in the emerging economies indicates that future researchers could focus on emerging economies and underdeveloped regions for a global-inclusive growth.

5 | CONCLUSION

A bibliometric analysis of 172 research papers on “sustainable clothing consumption behavior” published between the years 2005 and 2025. The analysis incorporated both performance analysis and scientific mapping techniques. Several methods, such as trend of publications, top countries, prominent authors, relevant sources, top cited documents, thematic analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and trend of topics, have been employed to present a concise view of the literature. The findings of the study suggest the key themes and topics that could be explored by the researchers in future. Unlike previous studies that broadly examined sustainable consumption behavior, this study specifically focuses on sustainable consumer behavior within the clothing context, thereby offering a more industry-specific perspective.

The research highlights some underdeveloped and growing themes, like “fashion consumption” in relation to India, as well as some highly developed themes like “sustainable consumption” and “sustainability”. The thematic analysis reveals a clear shift from industry-centric research to consumer behavior-oriented research. Recent studies are increasingly application-based rather than merely

descriptive, reflecting a growing emphasis on behavioral insights and real-world implications. Moreover, the focus has recently shifted toward younger generations, particularly Gen-Z, and their purchasing habits, revealing their rising influence on sustainable clothing markets.

The environmental impacts and causes of ecological disruptions are being evaluated using various quantitative techniques like factor analysis and least squares methods, reflecting an empirical approach towards research. The emergence of motor themes like “fast fashion” and “circular economy” suggests that the trend has now shifted towards collaborative consumption, and the use of rental platforms for purchasing second-hand clothing is also rising. This trend indicates that rental and recommerce business models are likely to gain greater importance in the future, presenting significant opportunities for businesses within the clothing industry.

In addition, the research strives to empower policymakers and businessmen to make decisions that are more consumer-oriented and are aligned with the governmental sustainability goals. The study discusses various themes and keywords in the field of sustainability and presents a research roadmap based on the emerging concepts like “second-hand clothing”, “circular economy”, and “Gen-Z” for more real-world research. Overall, this study not only consolidates the already established knowledge but also contributes to advancing the literature by delivering a systematic and domain-specific synthesis to address sustainability challenges in the clothing industry.

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