

Female Consumers' Motivation and Intent to Dispose of Apparel in an Eco-friendly Manner:
A South African Emerging Market Perspective

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Poor waste management and consumers' disposal behavior remain topics of intense environmental concern and has, for these reasons, been the focus of several studies in developed countries (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014). Less attention has been devoted to the topic in developing countries such as South Africa, despite the fact that disadvantaged communities in these countries are at greater risk and are more negatively influenced by environmental deterioration that is caused by overflowing landfills (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014). Most effort to date has focused on the disposal of plastic, glass, and paper, but various stake holders including the South African Clothing Federation, have in recent years voiced concern about disposal of apparel and textile products (Larney & Van Aardt, 2010). This emphasizes the need for further empirical investigation regarding consumers' apparel disposal behavior (i.e. donating, reselling or recycling), especially among females, because women tend to be the principal role players in households' decisions regarding clothing (Solomon, Russell-Bennett & Previte, 2013). In order to grasp the determinants of pro-environmental motivation and intent, a combination of variables from Schwartz's (1977) Norm-Activation Theory (NAT) (i.e. awareness of consequences, moral norms) and Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (i.e. social norms, attitude, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and behavioral intent) was used. Construct associations were hypothesized as illustrated in Figure 1.

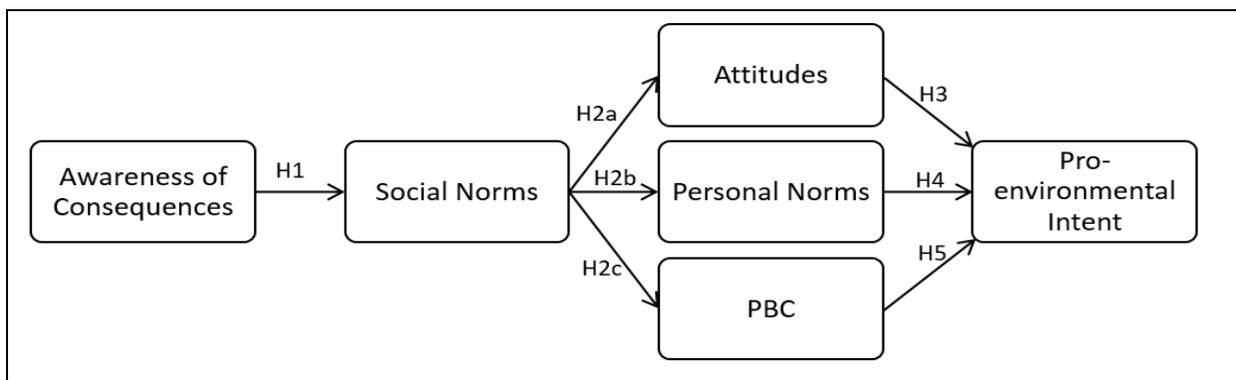


Figure 1. Proposed construct associations (adapted from Schwartz, 1977; Ajzen, 1991).

A structured, self-administered web based questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire included scale items derived from prior empirical research that were adapted and pre-tested to comply with local conditions. Data was collected online by means of Qualtrics software. The eventual non-probable purposive sample comprised of 315 female consumers between the ages of 18 and 65 years, who reside in the geographical scope of Gauteng, South Africa. Most respondents had some form of tertiary education (65%) and belonged to middle income levels (54%). Initial data analysis involved exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using varimax rotation. Cross loadings and items that failed to exhibit a factor loading above 0.4 were eliminated. A resulting eight factor solution with remaining items was validated by means of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The λ coefficients of indicator variables ranged from 0.73 to 0.97. The measurement model fit the data well with fit indices as follows: CMIN/DF = 1.72, GFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.05, NFI = 0.94 and CFI = 0.97. Following the specification of a measurement model, the final stage of data analysis involved Structural Equation Modelling. The model's overall fit (incorporating maximum likelihood estimation with raw data as input) was good (CMIN/DF = 2.14, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.06, NFI = 0.92 and CFI = 0.96). All the hypotheses excepting H5 were supported with the path coefficients being statistically significant ($p < .001$) and positive. The strongest predictor of intent was attitudes ($\beta = .351$, $p < .001$), followed by personal norms ($\beta = .280$, $p < .001$). The path between PBC and intent was weak and not significant ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$), which may point to the fact that female respondents may find it difficult to dispose of apparel in an eco-friendly manner. This clearly necessitates further investigation. Collectively, PBC, personal norms and attitudes explained 30% of the behavioral intention's variance. Furthermore, awareness and social norms were positively related ($\beta = .358$, $p < .001$), whereas social norms then also had a positive influence on attitudes ($\beta = .286$, $p < .001$), personal norms ($\beta = .666$, $p < .001$) and PBC ($\beta = .510$, $p < .001$). The findings of this study provide insight pertaining to the relevance of existing theoretical insights in a developing emerging market context and offer a basis for the development of pro-environmental waste disposal campaigns and intervention strategies. It may also serve as a basis for further investigation in other emerging markets to establish underlying motivational factors that may contribute to consumers' eco-friendly apparel disposal behavior.

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