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Attitudes toward Ethical Consumption in Clothing: Comparing Peruvian and Portuguese Consumers

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the personal factors that influence attitudes toward ethical consumption and its effects on life satisfaction, attitudes toward ecological clothing, and buying intentions, using a comparison of two different contexts: Portugal and Peru. A total of 520 valid questionnaires were collected. Structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypotheses. The findings indicate that idealism and pro-environmental beliefs have a positive effect on attitudes toward ethical consumption. Additionally, attitudes toward ethical consumption are positively associated with life satisfaction and attitudes toward ecological clothing, which can predict buying intentions. This research provides further insight into the attitude-intention gap, by highlighting the dual role of attitudes - combining ethical attitudes with attitudes toward ecological clothing - in two understudied contexts. It is noteworthy that this study offers a novel approach to understanding consumer motivation toward ethical consumption and its impact on life satisfaction.

KEYWORDS

Attitude toward ethical consumption; ecological clothes; intention to buy; satisfaction with life

Introduction

Ethical consumption is a relatively new area of study within the field of consumer behavior, with increasing interest due to consumers becoming more aware of the environmental and ethical implications of their consumption practices (Govind et al. 2019; Hosta and Zabkar 2021; Lee and Cheon 2018). This practice is prevalent in developing countries and is more commonly observed among younger, highly educated individuals who are particularly concerned about the future of future generations (Zollo 2021). In general, ethical consumption refers to practices that consider the environmental, social, and economic impact throughout the entire lifecycle of a product, from production to consumption (Govind et al. 2019).

Although the field of ethical consumption is relatively new, with the first publication of the *Ethical Consumer* magazine in the late 1980s

(Witkowski and Reddy 2010), several studies have been conducted on this topic, which is also referred to as sustainable, responsible, or consensual consumption. Some notable examples include the study by Ariztía et al. (2014) which focused on the understanding and contextual practices of ethical consumption in Chile and Brazil, aimed at promoting sustainable development. Dermody et al. (2018) analyzed the behavior of purchasing and sustainable consumption in the emerging markets of China and Poland and Sousa and Romero (2018) examined the influence of personal values on ecological consumption and the intention to purchase ecological products among Brazilian university students. Zou and Chan (2019) analyzed consumer involvement in green behaviors.

Despite the growing body of research on ethical consumption, there is still a lack of understanding and investigation into the gap between consumer attitudes and behaviors (Vitell 2015;

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Hassan, Shiu, and Shaw 2016; Govind et al. 2019; Fei, Zeng, and Jin 2022). This gap is the focus of analysis in this study. According to these authors, theories such as the theory of planned behavior and the theory of reasoned action have been used to explain this gap, but the underlying motivations remain largely unknown (Lundblad and Davies 2016).

In the context of fashion products, particularly clothing, research in this area is limited, with studies such as those by Jung, Kim, and Oh (2016), Lundblad and Davies (2016), and Park and Lin (2020) being notable examples. The first study analyzed the determinants of green leather ethical consumption in the Chinese and Korean markets, while the latter two studies investigated the values and motivations that underlie sustainable fashion consumption among London consumers, and the gap between ethical consumer's buying intentions and actual purchases of recycled and upcycled fashion products, respectively. Additionally, Holgar, Foth, and Ferrero-Regis (2009), although from a different perspective, analyzed fashion as a means of communication to increase environmental awareness and sustainable consumer practices.

The aim of this study is to examine the personal antecedents of the attitude toward ethical consumption and its impact on satisfaction with life, attitudes toward ecological clothes, and buying intention, using a comparison of two distinct contexts: Portugal and Peru. To achieve these objectives, a research model was developed that considers the antecedents and consequents of the attitude toward ethical consumption. The antecedents include value consciousness (Zollo 2021), idealism (Vanhamme, Lindgreen, and Sarial-Abi 2023), social influence (Zollo 2021), and pro-environmental beliefs (Abbas and Bashir 2020). The consequents include attitudes toward ecological clothes (Liu et al. 2021), satisfaction with life (Ryoo, Sung, and Chechelnytska 2020), and buying intention (Stringer, Mortimer, and Payne 2020).

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 520 individuals (256 Peruvians and 264 Portuguese). Past research indicates that consumers show different perception in the value they put on preserving environment

in their consumption options. Peruvian consumers have a positive attitude toward ethical consumption and their attitude is shaped based on environmental concern and perceived environmental knowledge (Leclercq-Machado et al. 2022). Portuguese consumers are less investigated but there are evidences that new generations, with the influence of the COVID pandemic, increased their environmental engagement (Severo, De Guimarães, and Dellarmelin 2021). Therefore, comparing Peru and Portugal in an investigation about ethical consumption may provide useful insights into the different results of the different approaches, cultural norms, and government policies surrounding ethical consumption in these two countries. The comparison may reveal differences and similarities in the levels of consumer awareness, the availability and accessibility of ethically sourced products, and the overall cultural attitudes toward sustainability and ethical consumption.

The study used structural equation modeling to test the proposed hypotheses. Results indicate that idealism and pro-environmental beliefs positively influence ethical consumption attitude, while ethical consumption attitude is positively related to satisfaction with life and attitudes toward ecological clothes, which may predict buying intention. This investigation contributes to the understanding of the attitude/intention gap, introducing the double role of attitudes, combining ethical attitudes with attitudes toward ecological clothing, and applying the study to two distinct and under-researched contexts: Portugal and Peru.

Literature review and research hypotheses

Attitude toward ethical consumption

Ethical consumption, also referred to as responsible consumption, is the practice of considering the environmental and social impact of one's consumption decisions and behavior. This concept has gained increasing attention in recent years due to the growing awareness among consumers of environmental and ethical issues stemming from consumer practices (Thøgersen and Ölander 2006; Newholm and Shaw 2007; Haws, Winterich,

and Naylor 2014). These changes in consumer behavior can be attributed to the pressing environmental issues such as climate change, global warming, and threats to biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural resources, as well as the impact of pollution on public health and food security (Dermody et al. 2018). This has led to the emergence of a new class of consumers, referred to as ethical consumers, who are looking for more sustainable solutions for their needs and tend to reduce consumption and adopt more ethical buying practices (Shaw and Newholm 2002). These consumers are looking for greener solutions for their needs and tend to reduce consumption and look at their buying practices with ethical eyes.

The link between consumption and ethical issues, such as environmental degradation and fairness in global trade, has led to the emergence of a group of consumers known as ethical consumers. Understanding the behavior of these consumers is crucial, especially as government and organizations' objectives can impact and alter such behaviors, which may contribute to continued ecological deterioration. This highlights the importance of measures that reduce consumption, promote ecological responsibility and self-sufficiency, and encourage ethical consumption and the use of organic and ecological products. Additionally, it is necessary to raise awareness of the ecological costs of consumption (Prendergast and Tsang 2019).

According to Ariztia et al. (2014) and Sousa and Romero (2018), ethical consumption is driven by underlying motivations and rational behaviors, which are characteristic of an individualized post-modern culture, stimulated by changes in global capitalism, where ethical and moral values take precedence over unsustainable, excessive, and unregulated consumption, negatively impacting the well-being and quality of life of individuals. Consumption is also a cultural activity, which is becoming increasingly visible, conscious, and synonymous with the identity of some societies. In this regard, Long and Murray (2013) and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2019) state that ethical consumption encompasses the act of purchasing goods that have social, environmental, or health attributes, rooted in fair trade principles, that go beyond their practical

value and have a positive impact on the market and the consumer's future quality of life.

Ethical consumption refers to the responsibility of consumers to consider the moral implications of their actions as market actors (Li et al. 2021). This type of consumption is primarily found in high-income countries and is supported by organizational and public policies that promote and shape its adoption (Barnett et al. 2005). Ethical consumption includes a focus on reducing consumption and making more conscious, responsible choices, considering the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of companies and products throughout their entire lifecycle, from production to purchase and use (Jung, Kim, and Oh 2016; Longo et al. 2017).

Ethical consumption encompasses both conscious and sustainable consumption, although the two concepts have distinct characteristics. Conscious consumption is an individual act focused on achieving personal satisfaction through the acquisition and use of products and services that have a positive impact on social, economic, and environmental relations (Jackson 2004). In contrast, sustainable consumption is the result of collective action among social actors, and thus, it is an extension of conscious consumption (Kingston 2021). Therefore, comparing customers from different countries, namely different levels of individualism, indulgence, and long-term orientation (Hofstede and Bond 1988; Hofstede 2010) may bring additional insights to the comprehension of the ethical consumption (Halder et al. 2020).

Antecedents of attitude in relation to ethical consumption

Value consciousness

Recent studies on human values have improved our understanding of consumer behavior, demonstrating that attitudes toward the environmental impact of consumption are influenced by an individual's general set of values (Kahle and Xie 2008). This relationship between values, attitudes, and environmentally conscious behavior has been established (Jones et al. 2008). In other words, individual consumer values, which are based on concepts such as sustainability, ecology, and

resource preservation, form the foundation for the development of attitudes, which are then expressed through consumer behavior (De Silva, Wang, and Kuah 2021).

Consumer values, which are individual in nature, are determinants of how consumers interact with the environment and with other consumers. These values represent what is desirable (Olson and Zanna 1993) and thus, being conscious of one's values has a direct impact on the consumer's attitude and behavior in ethical and moral terms, as well as the environmental effects of this consumption (Coelho, Gouveia, and Milfont 2006). Consumer values are acquired through the process of socialization and learning, with the purpose of motivating action, giving it emotional direction and intensity, and serving as a standard for evaluating and justifying behavior (Schwartz 1994).

Value consciousness refers to the attitude and role of the consumer in relation to environmental issues and the conservation of resources, both physical and financial (Haws, Winterich, and Naylor 2014). It also facilitates the consumer's adaptation to environmental concerns (Longo et al. 2017). Increased knowledge and value consciousness of the environment can also lead to greater concern for the environment among individuals (Jabbour 2014). From an economic perspective, value consciousness can be defined as the relationship between the quality received and the price paid in any transaction (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993). In the context of ethical consumption, this means that consumers are willing to pay a higher price for a product that does not have negative environmental implications when they perceive that they are receiving a high-quality good in return.

As a result, consumers who exhibit a higher level of value consciousness tend to be willing to spend more money on eco-friendly products if they feel that they are promoting the conservation of natural and environmental resources throughout the entire production process (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer 1993; Haws, Winterich, and Naylor 2014). In line with this, Thøgersen and Ölander (2006) have observed that individuals with a strong sense of value consciousness tend to exhibit more environmentally-

friendly behaviors, and that this is often reflected in their purchasing choices for organic products. Furthermore, Yin, Qian, and Singhapakdi (2018) argue that values play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase, in addition to being a key determinant of ethical attitudes and behavior. Therefore, it is expected that:

- H1: Value consciousness has a direct and positive impact on Attitude toward ethical consumption.

Idealism

Idealism has been widely studied in the field of ethical consumption, and it is considered an internal characteristic of the individual that is reflected in altruistic attitudes toward others and a concern for their well-being (Forsyth 1992). According to Forsyth (1980) and Zou and Chan (2019), idealists tend to follow moral and normative principles that are socially accepted and capable of producing desirable effects, and they believe that actions should not be justified by their consequences but by the possibility of harming others. Thus, idealism plays a role in shaping ethical consumption, particularly at the level of consumer attitudes toward various consumer activities, from the decision-making and purchasing stages to disposal (Leonidou, Leonidou, and Kvasova 2010, 2013; Zou and Chan 2019). It is also related to the perception that a behavior is ethical or socially responsible (Forsyth 1992) and values such as tradition, security, and conformity (Vitell 2015).

According to Forsyth (1992) and Zou and Chan (2019), the level of idealism can vary among consumers, with highly idealistic individuals pursuing altruistic goals and adopting higher moral standards. They tend to avoid consumption that could harm others or the environment, considering it unethical and prioritize ethically correct actions. Similarly, Leonidou, Leonidou, and Kvasova (2013) and Vitell (2015) have found that more idealistic consumers are less tolerant of corporate ethics and more likely to reject questionable or unethical business practices. This suggests that idealism plays a significant role in

shaping ethical consumption. Additionally, Witkowski and Reddy (2010) and Culiberg and Bajde (2014) have also found that individuals with a high level of idealism tend to have a more ethical attitude toward consumption.

In this way it is expected that:

- H2: Idealism has a direct and positive impact on attitude toward ethical consumption.

Social influence

Consumer ethical behavior is not solely determined by internal factors such as beliefs, idealism, or value consciousness, but also by external or situational characteristics that result from the consumer's accommodation to their social environment (Chen and Moosmayer 2020). This means that consumers are constantly subject to social influence, which shapes their perception of what is considered good or desirable behavior by others (Han and Stoel 2017; Zou and Chan 2019). It is believed that individuals tend to compare their actions to those of others and make judgments about what others do to better evaluate their own behavior and determine whether it is good or bad, appropriate, or inappropriate (Thompson, Heinberg, and Tantleff-Dunn 1991).

Social influence refers to the phenomenon where an individual's emotions, opinions or behaviors are affected by the expectations, evaluations, or attitudes of others. This can be observed in various purchasing behaviors, where the consumer, either voluntarily or involuntarily, seeks the opinion and knowledge of others before making a decision (Thompson, Heinberg, and Tantleff-Dunn 1991; Dermody et al. 2018). According to Dermody et al. (2015, 2018) and Park and Lin (2020), social influence can also play a role in the purchase of environmentally friendly or ethical products, particularly when it comes to goods with high visibility and impact on society. These products allow the consumer to maintain a positive moral self-image, while also signaling a certain social status and level of happiness (Zollo 2021).

Dermody et al. (2015, 2018) conducted a study in the United Kingdom and China (2015) and

Poland and China (2018) to investigate the relationship between ethical consumption and social consumption. The results of the study indicate that social consumption positively impacts consumers' purchasing behavior and sustainable consumption. These studies also suggest that sustainable consumption is not only influenced by the approval of others, but also by the desire for social status.

Social influence, in addition to internal ethical ideology, plays a role in shaping the consumer's attitude toward ethical consumption, as it predicts what is socially desirable or good for the majority. Dermody et al. (2015, 2018) also point out that when ethical behavior is predicted, consumers tend to be more sensitive to the actions of others and use it as a benchmark to evaluate their own behavior.

According to Witkowski and Reddy (2010), individuals who belong to civic organizations, such as political, religious, recreational, or work and family-related groups, tend to exhibit a greater degree of social influence. This membership also has a significant impact on the consumption of both public and private goods. Vitell (2015) and Joshi and Rahman (2017) also note that the beliefs and opinions of others significantly shape the formation of a consumer's own beliefs, attitudes, and subsequent behaviors. This highlights the strong impact that social context can have on ethical attitudes and behaviors. As a result, it is expected that:

- H3: Social influence has a direct and positive impact on Attitude toward ethical consumption.

Pro-environmental beliefs

Consumerism at the end of the twentieth century was marked by an excessive focus on comfort and the accumulation of material goods, leading to overproduction and the wastage of natural resources, resulting in environmental imbalances (Sousa and Romero 2018). However, with the dawn of the new millennium, there has been a gradual shift in consumer attitudes toward environmental concerns and a desire to reduce the conflict between consumption and

the environment, thereby paving the way for sustainable and ethical consumption (Li et al. 2021). Today, there is ongoing and multidisciplinary debate surrounding the relationship between consumption, the environment, climate change, and sustainability (Shang and Wu 2022). Consumers are increasingly seeking ways to align their behavior with environmental protection, particularly with regards to natural resources, and are becoming more aware of the use of environmentally friendly products and sustainable raw materials (Kumar and Polonsky 2017).

From the above, it can be inferred that pro-environmental beliefs refer to attitudes, beliefs, or opinions that are oriented toward the environment and the collective well-being, as opposed to individual interests (Thiermann and Sheate 2020). Consumers who exhibit high levels of pro-environmental beliefs are those who are concerned about the environment and who, even when making purchasing decisions, strive to conserve and improve the environment (Jung, Kim, and Oh 2016). There is a consistency between these attitudes (based on pro-environmental beliefs) and the ethical behavior of consumers, which allows for the continuation of their experience: purchasing behavior and consideration of environmental impact (Dermody et al. 2018).

In theoretical terms, the examination of pro-environmental beliefs finds some support in the Theory of Planned Behavior or the Theory of Rational Choice, which posits that consumer behavior is influenced by the intention of pro-environmental behavior, which is shaped by attitudes based on beliefs about the costs and benefits of behavior (Coelho, Gouveia, and Milfont 2006). Abeliotis, Koniari, and Sardanou (2010) and Sarkar (2011) also examine the role of pro-environmental beliefs, and their findings suggest that pro-environmental beliefs have a greater impact on the attitudes and behaviors of women, as they tend to have a higher level of environmental awareness than men. This is evident, for example, in the form of reduced consumption, reusing, and recycling of products, and as a result, are more likely to engage in ethical consumption. Therefore, it is expected that:

- H4: Pro-environmental beliefs have a direct and positive impact on Attitude toward ethical consumption.

Consequences of attitude toward ethical consumption

Attitude toward ecological clothing

"Clothing overconsumption is a burgeoning global phenomenon with severe consequences for the environment and society" (Diddi et al. 2019, 200). Understanding consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly clothing, in addition to issues related to environmental sustainability, is a complex and challenging task, as current reality tends to contradict the principles that underlie conscious production and consumption, particularly the increased lifespan of products (Abbas and Bashir 2020). The fashion industry is one of the sectors with the highest environmental impacts, such as pollution and environmental degradation, resulting from various stages of the production process involved in clothing production, washing, use, and textile waste (Lundblad and Davies 2016). Additionally, it is a sector that is constantly evolving, with new clothes, colors, fabrics, styles and trends being introduced, while clothes from previous seasons are discarded and removed from the market, driving consumer demand for the new. This is because clothing products, which were once considered durable goods, are now subject to a revolving cycle in the consumer market, driven by fashion trends (Young et al. 2009).

In the context of ethical consumption, there is a tension between the motivations behind clothing purchases, such as environmental considerations, and the outcomes of such purchases, which may be inconsistent with the concept of ethical and/or sustainable consumption (Abbas and Bashir 2020). As noted by Young et al. (2009), each purchasing decision or action has varying levels of impact on what constitutes ethical consumption, as each ethical purchase involves a set of factors that define it as such, including the ethics underlying the purchase, the resources consumed, the waste generated, and the environmental impact, which may or may not be present and the multiplicity and significance of

which make the entire process too complex for the average consumer to fully grasp. Similarly, Oh and Yoon (2014) argue that attitudes toward ethical consumption can predict ethical behavior.

As previously discussed, consumers today are becoming increasingly concerned and aware of environmental issues and are increasingly taking into account the potential negative impacts of their consumption behaviors on the environment. This awareness of the need to preserve natural resources for future generations is reflected in their growing understanding of ethical and sustainable consumption. This environmental consciousness is manifested through consumers' attitudes, which play a determinant role in shaping their ethical consumption behaviors. This allows consumers to identify different forms of consumption and/or adapt their current behaviors in order to have a positive impact on the environment (Bertolini and Possamai 2005; Oh and Yoon 2014).

Contrary to the belief that increased consumer awareness of ethical consumption leads to increased purchases of goods in this category, research suggests that there may be a gap between intention and action (Morwitz, Steckel, and Gupta 2007; Mondini et al. 2018). Ecological fashion, also known as eco-fashion or sustainable fashion, aims to address environmental issues by utilizing organic and nonpolluting materials, recycling, and upcycling. This results in reduced waste, longer product lifespan, decreased energy consumption, and resource conservation, aligning with the principles of sustainable consumption (Dissanayake and Sinha 2015; Lundblad and Davies 2016). Some brands, such as Nike, Levi's, and Timberland, have already adopted ethical production methods, such as using organic materials, which has led to a positive image and a greater market share among consumers who prioritize ethical consumption (Holgar, Foth, and Ferrero-Regis 2009).

According to Jung, Kim, and Oh (2016), there has been a growing trend of consumer awareness regarding ethical consumption, particularly in the fashion market. The authors conducted a study on the ethical consumption of leather clothing in China and Korea and found that consumers who prioritize ethical consumption tend to avoid products that do not align with commonly

accepted standards of ecological or sustainable practices. They also found that as consumers become better informed about environmentally friendly options, their beliefs and knowledge about ethical consumption have a significant impact on their purchasing behavior.

Oh and Yoon (2014) also suggest that consumer behavior plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward ethical consumption. They argue that the more favorable a consumer's attitude toward ethical consumption, the greater the impact on their attitude toward ecological clothing. This is supported by the findings of Yin, Qian, and Singhapakdi (2018), who suggest that consumer values and identity may mediate the relationship between consumers' ethical intentions and their behavior. Furthermore, Zou and Chan (2019) found that consumers' ethical intentions may predict their behavior toward clothing, supporting the hypothesis that consumer behavior is influenced by their ethical intentions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H5: Attitude toward ethical consumption has a direct and positive impact on the general attitude toward ecological clothing

Satisfaction with life

Satisfaction with life is an individual's emotional and affective state that results from a global assessment of one's own life and happiness. It is based on the comparison of experiences with expectations and the presence of positive aspects in one's life (Diener et al. 1985; Ryoo, Sung, and Chechelnytska 2020). The concept is rooted in hedonism, with the goal of feeling good and achieving maximum pleasure through wellness, which includes aspects such as health, personal relationships, self-esteem, security, community integration and contributing to the well-being of others. Therefore, an individual's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life is influenced by how they feel about the important aspects of their life (Huppert and So 2013; Sirgy et al. 2013; Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft 2019).

Many studies have investigated the relationship between satisfaction with life and materialism, and there is a range of contradictory findings.

Some studies, such as those by Burroughs and Rindfleisch (2002) and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2019), suggest that materialistic individuals believe that the acquisition and possession of goods leads to satisfaction in life, while the lack of these goods leads to dissatisfaction. However, other studies argue that dissatisfaction with life is a result of an excessive focus on materialism. This perspective is more widely accepted, as materialistic individuals are also found to have traits and characteristics such as possessiveness, envy, and low generosity, which can lead to negative feelings and emotions, and thus dissatisfaction with life, more often (Sirgy 1998; Sirgy et al. 2013).

Satisfaction with life is also a variable that is commonly used in consumer behavior studies, particularly in measuring the happiness associated with purchasing and consuming a good, and as a predictor of whether or not a good will be purchased (Coelho et al. 2016). Additionally, happiness and consumer well-being are believed to be dependent on consumption (Abdulrazak and Quoquab 2018; Sousa and Romero 2018).

According to Diener et al. (1985), satisfaction with life also results from a state, event, or circumstance that a person deems to be most appropriate. Therefore, it is determined by an individual's attitude toward any event, making the attitude toward the consumption of ecological clothing a predictor of satisfaction. Shaw and Newholm (2002) have shown that an ethical attitude and the reduction of consumption can influence life satisfaction. Baer (2015) suggests that ethical behavior positively improves life satisfaction: people who engage in ethical consumption are likely to have a sense of personal responsibility and a desire to make a positive impact on the world, which can lead to a greater sense of well-being and satisfaction. Additionally, as ethical consumption often involves the purchase of products that are considered to be of higher quality, these products may last longer and provide greater value, which can also contribute to feelings of satisfaction. Furthermore, Lee and Sirgy (2004) found that perceptions of ethical firms' behavior and environmental compliance may enhance customer quality of life. Based on this, it can be expected that:

- H6: Attitude toward ethical consumption has a direct and positive impact on satisfaction with life.
- H7: The attitude toward ecological clothing has a direct and positive impact on life satisfaction.

Intention to buy ecological clothing

The concept of intention to purchase is rooted in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), which posits that individuals use available information in a rational manner to assess the potential impact of their actions. The TRA suggests that there is often a disconnect between individuals' thoughts, desires, and actions and that there is a gap between intentions and consumer behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Hassan, Shiu, and Shaw 2016). The intention to purchase is considered a mediator between an individual's attitudes and behavior, as attitudes influence the intention to buy and in turn, the behavior. Additionally, intentions may change over time (Chan 2001; Ferraz et al. 2017; Hassan, Shiu, and Shaw 2016). In the context of ecological consumption, a positive attitude toward eco-friendly products is a crucial factor in driving ecological consumption (Chan 2001; Park and Lin 2020).

The intention to purchase eco-friendly products has been examined by several researchers, including Jung, Kim, and Oh (2016) and Paul, Modi, and Patel (2016). These studies define the concept as a consumer's willingness to buy goods and adopt environmentally friendly behaviors, even if it means paying a higher price than for non-ecological alternatives. According to Lopes and Pacagnan (2014), the intention to purchase eco-friendly products is influenced by a variety of factors, such as culture, customs, values, and personal experiences, which lead consumers to prefer goods that offer environmental benefits over similar products that do not possess these characteristics.

Similarly, Mondini et al. (2018) and Cardoso and Van Schoor (2017) have also studied the intention to purchase eco-friendly products. Mondini et al. (2018) analyzed the impact of environmental awareness and sustainable consumption habits

on the intention to buy eco-friendly products and found that individuals with higher environmental concerns and sustainable consumption habits had a greater likelihood of purchasing eco-friendly products. Similarly, Cardoso and Van Schoor (2017) also confirmed through a study of Portuguese consumers that the purchasing of eco-friendly products is determined by the level of environmental awareness and that there is a positive relationship between these two factors.

However, as reported by Morwitz, Steckel, and Gupta (2007) and Mondini et al. (2018), the intention to purchase eco-friendly products does not always translate into actual purchases. Consumers may have positive attitudes toward eco-friendly products and environmental concerns, but this may not be reflected in their buying behavior, revealing a disconnect between intentions and actions. In order to better understand this disconnect, Hassan, Shiu, and Shaw (2016), Lundblad and Davies (2016), and Jung, Kim, and Oh (2016) identify various barriers to the purchase and growth of organic products, including lack of information, limited availability of eco-friendly products, poor quality, unattractive appearance, and inadequate marketing and fair pricing in relation to consumer needs. Vitell (2015) adds to these barriers, stating that consumers may doubt whether a product is truly eco-friendly or that the environmental impact of purchasing an eco-friendly product may be insignificant compared to that of a non-eco-friendly product.

In view of the barriers to ethical and sustainable consumption, it is crucial for companies across various industries to provide consumers with the necessary information to make informed and responsible purchasing decisions. Research has shown that individuals tend to develop ethical and environmentally-friendly buying behaviors when they believe that their actions can help mitigate environmental problems (Park and Lin 2020). Specifically, when it comes to purchasing eco-friendly clothing, the sustainability of the product is often the most significant factor in consumers' intention to buy (Jung, Kim, and Oh 2016). However, for ethical purchasing to occur effectively, the quality and comfort of the product should not be sacrificed.

Moreover, Chan (2001) argues that consumers' attitudes and intentions to buy are reinforced when they perceive the behaviors of companies as environmentally friendly. Cultural values may, therefore, have a strong impact on the decision-making process, especially reinforcing this attitude toward consumption and sustainability (Halder et al. 2020). Additionally, knowledge and awareness of environmental issues can lead to more positive ecological attitudes (Vitell 2015). As a result, it can be expected that consumers are more willing to purchase organic products and pay a premium for them, provided they perceive the companies that market them as exhibiting ethical behaviors over time. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H8: Attitude toward ethical consumption has a direct and positive impact on the intention to buy ecological clothes.
- H9: The attitude toward ecological clothing has a direct and positive impact on the intention to purchase ecological clothing.

Method

Considering the previous literature review, Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that depicts the research hypotheses of this investigation.

Sample and data collection

Data collection

As previously stated, this study aimed to collect data from two distinct cultures, and thus, data was gathered from Peru (in South America) and Portugal (in Europe). Peru and Portugal offer a good comparison when investigating ethical fashion due to their unique cultural and historical contexts that may have a strong influence on their approach to fashion and sustainability. Peru is known for its rich textile traditions and has a strong connection to natural fibers, such as alpaca wool and cotton, that have been used for centuries. Many Peruvian fashion brands prioritize ethical and sustainable practices, such as working directly with local artisans and using natural dyes and materials. Therefore, Peru can serve as an

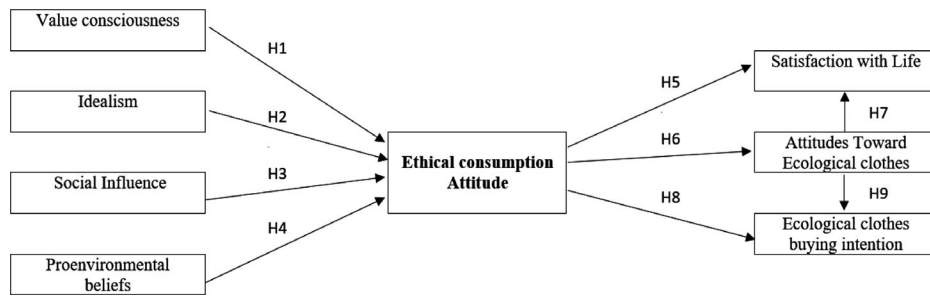


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

example of how traditional techniques and materials can be incorporated into a modern and ethical fashion industry (Leclercq-Machado et al. 2022). Portugal, on the other hand, is known for its textile manufacturing industry and has a long history of producing textiles and clothing. In recent years, Portugal has been making efforts to prioritize sustainable and ethical fashion practices, such as investing in renewable energy, reducing waste, and promoting fair labor practices. Portugal can therefore serve as an example of how established fashion industries can adapt and prioritize sustainability.

The research employed a quantitative methodology, where an online survey was developed using Google Forms, and then distributed *via* email and Facebook to individuals residing in Peru and Portugal. We developed the questionnaire in English, then translated into Spanish from Peru and Portuguese. The Peruvian version was translated by a group of Peruvian PhD students. The Portuguese version was developed by two Portuguese marketing professors. Both questionnaires were then back translated into English to verify the accuracy of the translation (Brislin 1970; Sekaran 1983). A pretest was conducted in both countries with three PhD students, two professors and 10 potential respondents under survey conditions to assure the flow and the clarity of questions. The survey was released in July and August of 2020. The final sample size for this study was 520 individuals, consisting of 256 participants from Peru and 264 from Portugal. The main characteristics of the final sample can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the samples.

	Sample 1	Sample 2
Female	60.9%	56.4%
19 and 40 years old	57.8%	71.3%
single	62.5%	48.9%
bachelor's degree or higher	46.2%	29.6%
lived in a house with 3 or fewer people	41%	44.8%
Income: less than 2.499 PEN or 1.499 EURO	58.2%	67.8%

Notes: sample 1- Peru; sample 2- Portugal.

Measures

This research employed scales that have been previously validated in prior studies. The scale for value consciousness was adopted from Lichtenstein, Ridgway, and Netemeyer (1993), the scale for idealism was adopted from Leonidou, Leonidou, and Kvasova (2013), the scale for social influence was adopted from Thompson, Heinberg, and Tantleff-Dunn (1991), the scale for pro-environmental beliefs was adopted from Jung, Kim, and Oh (2016), the scale for ethical consumption attitude was adopted from Oh and Yoon (2014) and the scale for satisfaction with life was adopted from Diener et al. (1985). Additionally, the scales for attitudes toward ecological clothing and buying intention for ecological clothing were adopted from Chan (2001). It is worth noting that all items used in the model were measured on seven-point Likert-type scales, with anchors ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Common method bias

To ensure that common method bias was not affecting this investigation, a Harman's single-factor test and common latent

factor analysis were conducted, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003). The results of the Harman's test, as analyzed through SPSS, showed that no single factor could explain more than 21.8% of the variance and there were 6 factors with eigenvalues higher than one, which together explained 78.13% of the total variance. Additionally, in accordance with Hulland, Baumgartner, and Smith (2018), a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to link all items to a common single factor (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The results of this analysis, as conducted through AMOS 25, indicated that the model presented an unacceptable fit (incremental fit index (IFI)=0.514; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) =0.474; comparative fit index (CFI) =0.513; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=0.173; chi square/degree of freedom (χ^2/df)=16.537), suggesting that common method bias is not present in this research.

Validity

All measures underwent confirmatory factor analysis, and the data analysis was conducted using AMOS 25. After refining the model, the final measurement model exhibited an acceptable fit, as evidenced by high values of the following fit indices: IFI = 0.956; TLI = 0.949; CFI = 0.956; RMSEA = 0.054; and $\chi^2/df = 2.516$. Furthermore, the results suggest that the composite reliability (CR), average variances extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity were also satisfactory, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Standard deviation, correlations, Cronbach alpha, composite reliabilities, and average variances extracted.

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	AVE	CR
X1	0.854								0.546	0.857
X2	0.433	0.895							0.687	0.897
X3	0.180	0.205	0.867						0.693	0.871
X4	0.437	0.469	0.272	0.884					0.719	0.554
X5	0.443	0.233	0.233	0.578	0.943				0.850	0.944
X6	0.296	0.289	0.262	0.415	0.454	0.816			0.568	0.839
X7	0.414	0.403	0.182	0.661	0.658	0.37	0.951		0.868	0.952
X8	0.401	0.411	0.291	0.663	0.593	0.4	0.86	0.927	0.817	0.931

Notes:

(1) X1: Value consciousness; X2: Idealism; X3: Social influence; X4: Pro-environmental beliefs; X5: Ethical consumption attitude; X6: Satisfaction with life; X7: Attitudes toward ecological clothes; X8: Ecological clothes buying intention.

(2) Diagonal entries are Cronbach's alpha coefficients; CR=Composite Reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted.

Findings and discussion

The fit of the structural model is within current standards (IFI= 0.943; TLI= 0.936; CFI = 0.943; RMSEA = 0.060; $\chi^2/df = 2.890$). Table 3 presents the results of this investigation.

Long and Murray (2013) and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2019) posit that ethical consumption is associated with attitudes toward goods that possess social, environmental, or health-related attributes, with impacts on various issues such as fair trade or the future quality of life on Earth. Idealism, or the desire to make a positive impact on the world, can drive individuals to seek out and purchase products that are socially and environmentally responsible. Social issues, such as poverty, inequality, and human rights, can also influence an individual's ethical consumption attitude, as they may choose to support companies and organizations that address these issues through their practices and operations. Research has shown that an individual's ethical consumption attitude can be a strong predictor of their purchasing decisions, particularly when it comes to products and services that are associated with social and environmental issues (Zou et al. 2019; Yin, Qian, and Singhapakdi 2018).

Accordingly, the Peruvian sample supports the first four hypotheses identifying the main determinants of this attitude: value consciousness (H1: $b_1 = 0.229$; $p =$; $b_2 = 0.057$; $p > 0.05$), idealism (H2: $b_1 = 0.241$; $p =$; $b_2 = 0.249$; $p =$), social influence (H3: $b_1 = 0.109$; $p =$; $b_2 = -0.001$; $p > 0.05$) and pro-environmental beliefs (H4: $b_1 = 0.394$; $p =$; $b_2 = 0.453$; $p =$). On the other hand, the Portuguese sample only supports idealism (H2) and pro-environmental beliefs (H4), not supporting the hypotheses related to social influence and value consciousness. In fact, when comparing Portugal and Peru, based on Hofstede's dimensions, the Portuguese population is more individualistic and less indulgent, which might explain that they are motivated by more individualistic considerations and are more attached to rules and strongly attached to controls (Soares, Farhangmehr, and Shoham 2007). These characteristics may lead to a more idealistic approach to consumption (Dermody et al. 2018; Culiberg

Table 3. Results.

			Sample 1 PERU		Sample 2 PORTUGAL	
			SRW	P	SRW	P
H1	Value consciousness	→ Ethical consumption attitude	0,229	**	0,057	NS
H2	Idealism	→ Ethical consumption attitude	0,241	**	0,249	**
H3	Social influence	→ Ethical consumption attitude	0,109	*	-0,001	NS
H4	Pro-environmental beliefs	→ Ethical consumption attitude	0,394	**	0,453	**
H5	Ethical consumption attitude	→ Life satisfaction	0,661	**	0,240	**
H6	Ethical consumption attitude	→ Attitudes toward ecological clothes	0,713	**	0,631	**
H7	Attitudes toward ecological clothes	→ Satisfaction with life	-0,011	NS	0,134	NS
H8	Ethical consumption attitude	→ Ecological clothes purchasing intention	0,200	**	-0,037	NS
H9	Attitudes toward ecological clothes	→ Ecological clothes purchasing intention	0,725	**	0,882	**

Notes: **: $p \leq 0.01$; *: ≤ 0.05 (one-tail tests); NS- not significant ($p > 0.05$); srw- standardized regression weights (estimates).

and Bajde 2014), giving less importance to value consciousness and social influence. Additionally, Portuguese consumers are more prone to avoid uncertainty, which may explain the importance of idealism, since value consciousness and social influence would lead them to weigh the risk of their decisions.

The results of the study indicate that ethical consumption attitude has a positive and significant impact on life satisfaction (H5: $b_1 = 0.661$, $p < 0.01$; $b_2 = 0.240$, $p < 0.01$), attitudes toward ecological clothing (H6: $b_1 = 0.713$, $p < 0.01$; $b_2 = 0.631$, $p < 0.01$), and purchase intentions (H7) for the Peruvian sample. However, for the Portuguese sample, the hypothesis related to the impact of ethical consumption attitude on purchase intentions (H7) is not supported ($b_1 = 0.200$, $p < 0.01$; $b_2 = -0.037$, $p > 0.05$).

As stated by Zou et al. (2019) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitudes are good predictors of intentions and decisions. Furthermore, Yin, Qian, and Singhapakdi (2018) have demonstrated how an ethical attitude can mediate the relationships between individual characteristics, values, and customer behavior. The results of this study are consistent with these findings, with some notable differences between the Peruvian and Portuguese samples. The Portuguese consumers may be more idealistic, and thus, an ethical attitude is already assumed as natural, while for the Peruvian sample, the adoption of such attitudes may lead to greater life satisfaction (Shaw and Newholm 2002; Baer 2015).

The results of our study confirm that attitudes toward ethical consumption have a positive and significant impact on various outcomes, such as life satisfaction, attitudes toward ecological

clothing, and purchase intentions. Long and Murray (2013) and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2019) suggest that ethical consumption is connected to the attitude toward goods that have social, environmental, or health attributes with impacts on different issues such as fair trade or the future quality of life of people on earth. Our findings support these hypotheses and show that value consciousness, idealism, social influence, and pro-environmental beliefs are the main determinants of this attitude in the Peruvian sample. However, in the Portuguese sample, only idealism and pro-environmental beliefs are found to be significant determinants. These differences could be explained by the Hofstede dimensions, which show that the Portuguese population is more individualistic, risk avoidant and less indulgent, which might lead to a more idealistic approach to consumption and therefore, to ethical consumption.

Moreover, our results show that attitudes toward ecological clothing have a positive impact on purchase intention but not on life satisfaction. This supports Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action and goes in the same direction as the findings of Zou et al. (2019), who added an ethical dimension to the theory. However, the impacts on life satisfaction are not significant, perhaps because the general attitude toward ethical consumption might concentrate the full impact. Overall, our findings suggest that ethical consumption might give a sense of self-gratification, leading to an increased life satisfaction, while buying ecological clothing might sometimes have several implications such as less effectiveness and higher price, which might not be willing to pay by customers.

Contributions

The results of this investigation present three major contributions: first, bringing additional comprehension to the attitude/intention gap, introducing the double role of attitudes, combining ethical attitudes with attitudes toward ecological clothing; second, exploring the role of idealism and pro-environmental beliefs, combined with value perceptions and social influence, to better understand the customer motivation toward ethical consumption; third, exploring how an ethical attitude and behavior may lead to life satisfaction. Additionally, this investigation compares data from two different contexts, Peru, in south America and Portugal, in Europe, showing how ethical consumption crosses borders, even if with different effects across different cultures.

Managerial implications

The managerial implications of ethical consumption refer to the actions that businesses and organizations should take in order to align their practices and operations with ethical principles related to social, environmental, and health issues. This may include implementing fair trade practices, reducing the environmental impact of their operations, and ensuring the health and safety of their employees and customers, thereby responding to customer values, idealism, and social recognition. Additionally, businesses may need to communicate and market their ethical practices to consumers in order to appeal to the increasing number of consumers who prioritize ethical considerations in their purchasing decisions, thereby increasing perceived value. Furthermore, managers should be aware that ethical consumption attitudes may have a positive impact on life satisfaction, attitudes toward ecological clothing, and purchase intentions.

Limitations and future investigation

This investigation is not free from limitations, which are, in turn, opportunities to delve further into this field of research. Data was collected in a non-probabilistic manner and is cross-sectional, making it difficult to establish causality.

Complementing the data with longitudinal studies would make it easier to identify causal relationships. The choice of Portuguese and Peruvian samples, while potentially relevant, is not free of potential biases and claims for future studies considering other latitudes and other cultures.

Investigations into ethical consumption are recent and deserve further and more in-depth research. Specifically, using qualitative data collected through ethnographic studies can improve our understanding of consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, introducing moderators such as income or egoism/altruism might provide further insights, leading to a better comprehension of this phenomenon and new directions for research. At the same time, using cultural values as drivers of ethical attitudes or ethical consumption, or even as moderators of the proposed relationships, may provide additional explanations for ethical consumption issues.

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