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A Study On Consumer Awareness And Feedback For Sustainable Fashion Apparels In Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable fashion has begun to attract the attention of contemporary consumers amidst the growing discussions on environmental protection and ethical production. The present study was conducted in Coimbatore city to investigate the awareness of consumers regarding sustainable fashion apparel and how their views can be related to the growth of this niche. It aimed to examine consumer perceptions, needs, and expectations and identify the factors that affect their purchasing behavior. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected using convenience sampling, and data were then collected using a structured questionnaire. To analyze the findings, simple percentage analysis was employed to interpret the distribution of responses, while Chi-square testing was used to test for relationships among variables, such as level of education and acceptance of feedback. The findings illustrated that people are becoming more aware of sustainability in fashion, yet price, product availability, and convenience of access remain important factors driving their decision-making. Interestingly, the Chi-square test found no significant relationship between educational background and whether consumers believed their feedback is acted upon by companies. It could thus be concluded that while people are somewhat aware of sustainable fashion, awareness has, however, not yet been translated into sustained buying behavior. There is an urgent need for companies to communicate better, create personalized experiences, and adopt visible sustainability initiatives to gain trust and loyalty from consumers.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Sustainable Fashion, Consumer Feedback

INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is undergoing a significant transformation as sustainability becomes an increasingly important focus. With growing concerns over the environmental impact of fast fashion, there is a rising demand for sustainable alternatives, particularly in the apparel sector. Consumers today are more conscious than ever about the environmental and social implications of their purchasing choices. This heightened awareness has led to a shift in consumer behavior, with many seeking eco-friendly and ethically produced clothing options. The city of Coimbatore, known for its textile industry, is witnessing this shift as well, making it an ideal location to study consumer awareness and feedback on sustainable fashion apparel.

Sustainable fashion refers to clothing and accessories produced using processes that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically viable. This includes the use of organic materials, ethical labor practices, and low-impact manufacturing methods. However, despite the growing awareness of sustainability in fashion, there is still a significant gap between consumers' environmental concerns and their purchasing habits. Coimbatore, known as the "Manchester of South India," holds a strong place in India's textile and apparel industry. With its deep-rooted connection to fabric production and garment exports, the city serves as a fitting location to study shifts in consumer behavior, especially regarding sustainability. The people of Coimbatore represent a blend of traditional textile consumers and modern, eco-conscious shoppers, making it an ideal demographic to assess awareness and gather insights.

As the demand for sustainable fashion continues to grow, understanding the perceptions and feedback of consumers in Coimbatore can contribute to the broader conversation on sustainable consumption. This research not only aims to support brands in aligning their strategies with consumer expectations but also to foster a more sustainable future for the fashion industry as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J.F et.al,(2012). This study explores the paradox between fast fashion and the growing consumer interest in sustainability. The authors argue that while many consumers express concern for the environment, their actual buying behavior does not always align with sustainable practices. The paper highlights the role of ethical branding in influencing consumer choices and suggests that luxury brands are better positioned to promote sustainable fashion due to their focus on quality and longevity.

Niinimäki, K. (2010). Niinimäki examines how eco-friendly clothing is connected to consumer identity and values. The study shows that consumers who are environmentally and socially conscious are more likely to choose sustainable apparel. However, the author notes that a lack of awareness and availability can limit the adoption of eco-clothing. The research emphasizes the need for clear communication from brands about the sustainability of their products.

Shen, B., Wang, Y et.al,(2012). This research investigates how ethical concerns, such as fair labor and environmental impact, influence consumer decisions in the fashion industry. The authors found that while consumers are aware of ethical fashion, their willingness to pay a premium for such products is limited. The study suggests that price, style, and accessibility still play dominant roles in purchase decisions, and that increasing consumer education could help close the awareness-action gap.

Verma, S. (2015). In this study, Shalini Verma explores the level of awareness and behavioral patterns of Indian consumers in relation to sustainable consumption, including fashion. The research highlights that although there is a growing awareness of sustainability in urban areas, consumer behavior often fails to reflect this awareness due to factors such as limited product availability, lack of trust in green claims, and the higher cost of sustainable goods. The study emphasizes the importance of educating consumers and promoting transparency in the fashion supply chain to encourage more sustainable purchasing decisions in the Indian context.

OBJECTIVES

To find an overview of customer awareness towards the apparels industry.

To identify the factors influencing the people at the time of purchasing the product.

To find a comparison among various branded apparels products.

METHODOLOGY

The present study followed a descriptive research design to understand consumer awareness and gather feedback on sustainable fashion apparel in Coimbatore city. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to support the research. Primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire that was distributed directly to consumers residing in various parts of Coimbatore. Secondary data was gathered from published articles, research journals, official websites, and relevant literature on sustainable fashion trends and consumer behavior. A total of 120 respondents were selected for the study using the simple random sampling method. This technique was chosen as it provided the researcher with a practical and unbiased approach to reach a diverse group of consumers within a limited timeframe. The data collection process was carried out over a span of approximately five months, beginning in December 2024 and concluding in April 2025. To interpret the collected responses, statistical tools were employed. These included simple percentage analysis, and chi square test, all of which helped in deriving meaningful insights from the data. Despite the comprehensive nature of the study, it was limited to the geographic boundary of Coimbatore. As a result, the findings may not fully represent consumer behavior in other regions due to time, resource, and location constraints.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Percentage analysis

- Majority 61% of the respondents are female.
- Majority 35% of the respondents are age group between 25-30 years.
- Majority 38% of the respondents are graduate qualification.
- Majority 55% of the respondents are unmarried.
- Majority 27% of the respondents are employed.
- Majority 34% of the respondents are earning Rs.10,000 to 20,000.
- Majority 34% of the respondents are experienced in 1-2 years.
- Majority 34.2% of the respondents are using men's wear.
- Majority 31% of the respondents have digital expectations.
- Majority 28% of the respondents are expecting data protection.
- Majority 30% of the respondents are expecting offer/service.
- Majority 34% of the respondents are expecting from quality customer service.
- Majority 31% of the respondents are providing importance to increase brand loyalty.
- Majority 36% of the respondents are highly satisfied effective of customer service.
- Majority 30% of the respondents are tried to meet standing out from competition.
- Majority 34% of the respondents are highly satisfied with personalized experience.
- Majority 30% of the respondents are needed to resolve their issues.
- Majority 35% of the respondents are strongly agreed with the company accept customer feedback.
- Majority 38% of the respondents are satisfied with customer feedback.
- Majority 39% of the respondents are strongly agreed with customer feedback.

Chi Square Test

There is no significant relationship between educational qualification and agreement with the company accepting customer feedback. The Chi-square test result supports the null hypothesis, indicating independence between the variables.

SUGGESTIONS

To encourage the adoption of sustainable fashion in Coimbatore, it is important to raise consumer awareness through informative campaigns and clear eco-labeling that highlights the value of environmentally friendly clothing. Brands should focus on making sustainable options more budget-friendly to attract a broader customer base. Expanding the presence of these products across retail outlets and online platforms will also improve access. Incorporating traditional materials and local cultural designs can help consumers connect better with sustainable fashion. Switching to eco-conscious packaging further supports a brand's commitment to the environment. Gathering regular consumer feedback can help improve product quality, style, and affordability. Introducing reward programs or exchange schemes can motivate customers to choose sustainable options more

often. Working with local influencers and colleges can increase outreach, especially among younger audiences. Organizing awareness drives, exhibitions, or events can directly involve the public. A strong local engagement strategy can significantly narrow the gap between awareness and actual consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that while awareness of sustainable fashion is growing in Coimbatore, there is still a gap between consumer knowledge and actual buying behavior. Many consumers appreciate the concept of eco-friendly clothing but are influenced by factors like cost, design, and availability. Feedback from respondents shows a positive attitude toward sustainable choices if made more accessible. The research emphasizes the importance of aligning sustainability with consumer expectations. Overall, there is strong potential for growth in the sustainable fashion market with the right strategic approach.

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