Indian Youth's Intention to opt for Sustainable Fashion Consumption Decision.

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Abstract:

The fashion industry, despite its economic significance, is recognized as the second most polluting industry worldwide. With apparel and footwear industries contributing over 8 percent of global carbon emissions and a significant portion of clothing ending up in landfills or incinerators within a year, the need for sustainable fashion consumption is critical. This study aims to investigate the factors influencing Indian youth's intention to buy sustainable fashion. A dataset comprising 116 Indian youths was analyzed to examine our hypotheses. The findings revealed that functional value plays a crucial role in shaping Indian consumers' decisions to opt for sustainable fashion. By understanding these factors, businesses can leverage functional value to promote sustainable fashion consumption among Indian youth, contributing to environmental sustainability in the fashion industry.

Keywords: sustainable, fashion, youth, environment & business.

We, the authors of this note on sustainable fashion consumption decision, would like to provide insights and recommendations regarding the importance of sustainable practices in the fashion industry. We have dedicated our efforts to study and promote sustainable fashion. In recent years, the fashion industry has faced increasing scrutiny due to its negative environmental and social impacts. As consumers, our purchasing decision play a crucial role in shaping the industry's practices and promoting sustainability. By making conscious choices when buying clothes, we can contribute to mitigate the harmful effects of fast fashion and encourage positive change. By embracing sustainable fashion consumption, we can contribute to the preservation of our planet and the well-being of its inhabitants. The aim of this research is to find out the factors which influence people to opt for sustainable fashion.

1. Introduction:

Sustainability, defined as the continuous support and maintenance of processes over time, has become a crucial consideration across various industries. In the realm of business, sustainability entails conducting operations in a manner that positively impacts the environment while preventing the depletion of natural resources.

One industry that holds significant global economic influence is the fashion industry. According to McKinsey's "State of Fashion 2017" report [1], if the fashion industry were ranked alongside individual countries' GDP, it would stand as the world's seventh largest economy. However, like many other industries, the fashion industry faces mounting pressure to adopt sustainable practices due to its significant environmental impact.

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Garment production, a cornerstone of the fashion industry, contributes to approximately 20 percent of industrial wastewater pollution, 8 percent to 10 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and generates over 92 million tons of waste annually. The apparel and footwear sectors alone account for more than 8 percent of global carbon emissions, surpassing the combined emissions of international airline flights and maritime shipping routes. On average, an individual consumes 11.4 kg of apparel per year, while a single cotton shirt requires approximately 2,720 litres of water to produce—equivalent to an average person's three-year water consumption.

Recognizing the need for change, sustainable fashion aims to produce clothing, shoes, and accessories using environmentally and socio-economically sustainable methods. This includes adopting sustainable patterns of consumption and use, necessitating shifts in individual attitudes and behaviours. Unfortunately, consumer awareness regarding sustainable fashion remains relatively low, despite the industry's detrimental effects on the environment.

Alarming statistics demonstrate that approximately 60 percent of all clothing produced ends up in landfills or incinerators within a year of being made (McKinsey 2016) [1], contributing to the anticipated total level of fashion waste reaching 148 million tons by 2030. Textile dyeing, the second-largest polluter of clean water globally, further exacerbates the environmental impact of the fashion industry.

In response to these severe conditions, numerous sustainable fashion brands have emerged, aiming to address the industry's ecological footprint. Brands such as People Tree, Patagonia, Mother of Pearl, MUD Jeans, and Quince champion sustainability and offer alternatives to conventional fashion practices.

As the industry shifts towards sustainability and increasingly utilizes it as a marketing tool, it becomes vital to assess the impact of these changes on consumers.

By analysing a dataset consisting of 116 Indian youths, this study will explore the relationships between these independent variables and their impact on the intention to buy sustainable fashion. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sustainable fashion consumption, with implications for businesses, marketers, and policymakers seeking to encourage sustainable choices among Indian youth.

Overall, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the factors that influence Indian youth's intention to buy sustainable fashion products. By uncovering the unique dynamics at play in the Indian context, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for promoting sustainable fashion practices and fostering a more environmentally conscious fashion industry in India.

2. Literature Review

Sustainability, in general, refers to the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It encompasses the responsible and balanced use of resources, consideration of environmental impacts, and the promotion of social well-being. In recent years, sustainability has gained significant attention in various industries, including fashion.

The fashion industry, known for its fast-paced and resource-intensive nature, has been increasingly scrutinized for its environmental and social impacts. Researchers and industry professionals have recognized the need to address these concerns and have undertaken extensive studies to understand and promote sustainability within the fashion sector. This research often focuses on topics such as sustainable sourcing of materials, environmentally friendly production processes, waste reduction and recycling, ethical labour practices, and the promotion of circular economy models.

By exploring these aspects, researchers aim to develop strategies and frameworks that enable fashion companies to transition towards more sustainable practices. This includes the adoption of eco-friendly materials, the implementation of ethical supply chains, and the encouragement of conscious consumer behaviour. Through these research efforts, the fashion industry can move closer to achieving a more sustainable and responsible approach, minimizing its negative impacts and fostering positive change.

In their research, Radaković. (2016) [3] discovered that the younger generation frequently lacks awareness regarding the consequences and ethical implications associated with their fashion purchases. Nonetheless, the study also revealed that once the youth are informed about these implications, their attitudes and decisions regarding fashion purchases can be influenced. This suggests that raising awareness among young consumers about the ethical aspects of fashion consumption has the potential to positively impact their behaviours and choices.

The current era has witnessed a growing emphasis on sustainability, as it has the potential to shape consumers' perspectives and, consequently, their purchasing decisions. Against this backdrop, the study by Vincenza Ciasullo. (2017) [4] addresses two research inquiries: (i) Can a theoretical model be developed within the fashion industry to determine whether factors such as "importance," "expectations," and "social influence" significantly influence consumers' willingness to support sustainable fashion brands through their purchasing behaviour? (ii) To what extent are consumers willing to pay a premium for sustainable clothing items? To explore these questions, the researchers employ a Multiple Linear Regression Model, yielding intriguing findings. Notably, consumers assign limited importance to a brand's sustainability, instead basing their decisions on their own

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expectations and the opinions of their peer group. Additionally, respondents express a willingness to pay no more than a 20% premium for sustainable clothing.

In their study, Cassidy and Eunsuk Hur (2019) [9] aimed to investigate perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable fashion among individuals involved in fashion design, as well as to identify the challenges associated with implementing sustainable design practices. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing qualitative open-ended questions in five interviews and conducting a survey with a sample of 50 fashion designers.

The findings of the research revealed both internal and external challenges in incorporating sustainability into the fashion design process. Internal challenges were primarily attributed to personal and organizational factors. Firstly, there was a lack of consensus and knowledge regarding sustainable design among the participants. Additionally, the lack of design-led approaches hindered the integration of sustainability principles into fashion design. Moreover, designers perceived trade-offs between sustainability and other design criteria such as aesthetic styles, costs, and prevailing fashion trends.

External challenges, on the other hand, were identified as factors outside the direct control of fashion designers. The complexity of sustainability issues was recognized as a significant external challenge. Participants also perceived insufficient consumer demand and noted attitude and behaviour gaps in consumer purchasing decisions, particularly concerning sustainable collection ranges. Furthermore, there appeared to be a lack of sufficient incentives or values for businesses to prioritize and implement sustainable design strategies.

Overall, the study by Cassidy and Eunsuk shed light on the barriers and obstacles faced by fashion designers when striving to incorporate sustainability into their design practices. The identified challenges encompassed both internal aspects related to knowledge, approaches, and design considerations, as well as external factors such as consumer demand and industry incentives. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding sustainable fashion and highlight the areas that need attention and improvement in order to promote sustainable design practices within the fashion industry.

Tran. (2022) [6] examined the determinants of consumer purchase behaviour and identified three key factors that influence this behaviour: product-service quality, environmental awareness, and pro-environmental attitudes. These factors were subsequently categorized into distinct dimensions of values by Laura Valtanen (2021) [8], including functional, conditional, social, emotional, and epistemic values. The findings suggest that consumer purchase decisions are influenced not only by the perceived quality of the product or service but also by their level of environmental awareness and their pro-environmental attitudes. Furthermore, Valtanen's categorization provides a framework for understanding how different values contribute to shaping consumer behaviour in relation to sustainability and the environment.

Eue-Jun Lee et al. (2019) discovered that despite positive attitudes toward sustainability, many fashion consumers do not prioritize sustainability when making purchasing decisions. There exists a significant gap between consumers' attitudes and their actual green purchasing behaviour, leading to a psychological imbalance. This finding was supported by Pragya *Gargee (2020)* [7] in an Indian context, particularly among the surveyed youth aged 18-21 years who did not prefer sustainable fashion.

Ting-Yan Chan. (2012) [5] conducted a research to identify the influence of store- related attributes on eco- fashion positively influence consumers' eco- fashion consumption decision. Affirming the influence of store related attributes and also identifying that, such relationship can be weakened by the price premium level of eco- fashion. It is not enough for fashion companies to manufacture fashion clothing in an ethical production system and develop and design fashion clothing with sustainable and recyclable materials. They must also improve store- related attributes of eco- fashion to better satisfy fashion consumer needs, and should be cautious in the direct and moderating effect of price premium level of eco- fashion when determining the price premium level of eco- fashion.

The summary also highlights some research gaps. Firstly, the factors influencing purchase decisions were not studied specifically from an Indian buyer's perspective. Secondly, some studies relied solely on qualitative approaches. Finally, the Indian research conducted focused on an age group with limited purchasing power, potentially limiting the independence of their purchase decisions. To address these gaps, there is a need for further research to identify purchase decision factors from the perspective of Indian youth with adequate purchasing power.

While sustainability has gained global attention, the specific factors influencing Indian youth's intention to buy sustainable fashion products remain relatively unexplored. Built on the Sweeney and Soutar [2] found that functional, emotional and social values are three fundamental dimensions of perceived value. This research aims to bridge that gap by examining three key independent variables: social, functional, and emotional factors :-

- The social variable considers the influence of social approval received from friends, family, and others after purchasing sustainable fashion products. Understanding how social factors impact Indian youth's sustainable fashion choices will shed light on the role of peer influence and societal norms in driving sustainable consumption behaviours.

- The functional variable focuses on the feel of fabric materials, fit and finish, and the functional utility of sustainable fashion products. Assessing the importance of functional value will reveal how Indian consumers prioritize practical considerations when making sustainable fashion purchase decisions.

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- The emotional variable delves into the aesthetics, design, and styling of sustainable fashion products. Investigating the emotional appeal of such products will provide insights into how Indian youth connect with sustainable fashion on a personal and emotional level.

3. Hypotheses Development:

Effects of functional, social, emotional factors on purchase intention: The purchase intention for a product can be driven by various factors. The most prominent factors being functional, social, and emotional factors. While purchase decision for some products is driven by a single factor, the purchase decision for some products may be a combination of two or more factors combined, where the weightage of each factor will vary from consumer to consumer. For the purpose of researchers' study, these factors are analysed for intention of purchase decision for sustainable fashion by Postgraduate students in India.

Hypotheses 1 (H1): Functional Value increases the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

Hypotheses 2 (H2): Social Value increases the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

Hypotheses 3 (H3): Emotional Value increases the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

4. Methodology

We used a questionnaire to collect data for hypotheses testing. To help subjects understand the meaning of sustainable fashion, we provided definition of the concept of sustainable fashion (i.e., products like clothing apparel, shoes, and other products which are partially or completely made by using environmental friendly materials, techniques, practices, which can be consumed for a sustained period of time. These materials, techniques, and practices includes: use of recyclable materials, organically grown fabrics, natural dying agents and much more.) The survey was comprised to measure how much functional, social and emotional value impact the youths' buying decision towards sustainable fashion.

Table 1:

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
1. Functional Value	1. Intention to purchase Sustainable Fashion
2. Social Value	
3. Emotional Value	

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Built on the Sweeney and Soutar [2] found that functional, emotional and social values are three fundamental dimensions of perceived value. Functional value is defined as the perceived utility for "functional, utilitarian, or physical performance", and emotional value refers to the product's capacity to "arouse feelings or affective states", and social value is the value acquired from the product's association "with one or more specific social groups". For example, a product made of organic cotton may protect the user's body from allergies (functional value), and its appealing design would make the user feel good (emotional value). By purchasing a socially desirable product, the user may expect greater social approval (social value), as well as fulfilling environmental needs by consuming less harmful material to the environment.

Researchers will analyse the cause and effect relationship between functional value, emotional value, social value and intention of youth to purchase sustainable fashion. The researcher used likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The survey was conducted on India youth in the age group of 21-30 via distribution of questionnaire to the target respondents.

5. Results and Discussion

For analysing our collected data, we run a regression to find out the impact of all three values on the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

The first Model consists of all three value's impacts.

Then, we observe that the p-value of Emotional value is greater than 0.05, i.e., 0.88. This means Emotional values does not bring any noticeable change in customers' mind to buy sustainable fashion.

Further, in the next model (removed emotional values), we run regression once again and observe the values we get from the collected data. The p-value of social values is also greater than 0.05 which is 0.16. So, yes we can say, comparatively social value also does not bring any big impact on the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.

Table 2:

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.403040334
R Square	0.162441511
Adjusted R Square	0.155094507
Standard Error	0.887924301
Observations	116

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Table 3:

ANOVA					
	df	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*Significance F*
Regression	1	17.43165454	17.43165454	22.10989737	0.00
Residual	114	89.87869028	0.788409564		
Total	115	107.3103448			

	Coefficients	*Standard Error*	*t Stat*	*P-value*	*Lower 95%*
Intercept	1.720880301	0.412358053	4.173267108	0.00	0.904002173
Functional	0.465915191	0.099086276	4.702116265	0.00	0.269626041

From all the models we observe functional values increase the intention to purchase sustainable fashion as shown in the Table 3.

Only Hypothesis 1 (Functional Value increases the intention to purchase sustainable fashion.) is true else is false.

Table 4:

Functions	*Functional*	*Social*	*Emotional*	*Intention*
Mean	4.077586207	3.094827586	3.818965517	3.620689655
Standard Error	0.077586207	0.092425624	0.078973111	0.089689764
Median	4	3	4	4
Mode	4	3	4	4
Standard Deviation	0.835629022	0.995454437	0.85056644	0.965988319
Sample Variance	0.698275862	0.990929535	0.723463268	0.933133433
Kurtosis	0.457984559	-0.111965922	1.873838981	0.597316555
Skewness	-0.693680183	-0.408292428	-1.022732185	-0.643521674
Range	4	4	4	4
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5
Sum	473	359	443	420
Count	116	116	116	116

Functional value is highest important factor which impacts the intention of youth to buy sustainable fashion as its mean is greater than other independent variables as shown in the Table 4.

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Table 5:

	Functional	*Social*	*Emotional*	*Intention*
Functional	1			
Social	0.064253797	1		
Emotional	0.374729273	0.164232255	1	
Intention	0.403040334	0.146245915	0.180281429	1

There is a small positive correlation between social and emotional, social and intention to buy sustainable fashion and emotional and intention to buy sustainable fashion. Similarly, there is a medium positive correlation between functional and emotional and functional and intention to buy sustainable fashion as shown in the table 5.

6. Implications

Functional variable is the crucial factor for promoting the sustainable fashion among the youths of India, marketing managers should design promotional campaigns accordingly consist of utility of the product or physical performance of the product such as long lasting, recyclable products, etc. For example – marketing manager draws attention of youth towards use of organic cotton may good for the skin or protect the skin from allergies, so that they are able to increase the intention of youth to opt for sustainable fashion through aggressive advertising, awareness and availability of the product as respondents are affected by functional value of the product. Moreover, few customer are there who gets affected by social and emotional value of the product so marketer should highlight these two variables also. Another implication is that there is a need to use different marketing strategies based on the extent of the functional value. Therefore, for consumers who are less impacted by functional vale, then social and emotional value should be highlighted as it can increase the intention of youth towards sustainable fashion. Using communication strategy by marketer to spread awareness, to inform and to educate individuals to increase more users of the product. This may benefit companies who are dealing in sustainable fashion and sustainability of our country.

7. Future Studies

First, there may be other factors which positively impacts the intention to buy sustainable fashion. For example - Jin and Kang [10] found that face-saving had a significantly positive effect on both attitude and purchase intention toward foreign jeans brands among Chinese students, and similar results were found in Jin and Kang's [11] study or Consumers' Perceived Value of Sustainable Fashion Products. Secondly, we focused on Indian youth who have less purchasing capacity so further studies can happen on age group of 25-40 age to know their perspective towards sustainable fashion. Third, we only considered intention of youth towards sustainable fashion products.

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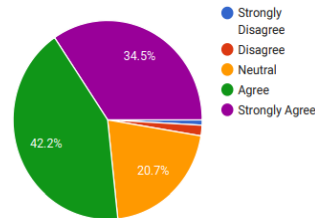*Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023,12(10), 11013-11026*

Annexure

On a scale of 1-5 (1 being lowest and 5 being highest) how would you rate your intention to purchase sustainable fashion products?
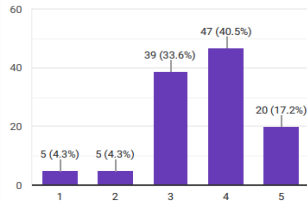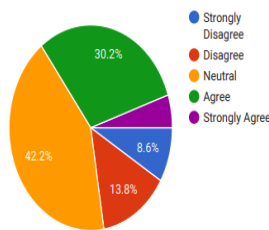
116 responses

Feel of fabric materials, fit and finish, and functional utility are the most important factors you consider while buying sustainable fashion products.
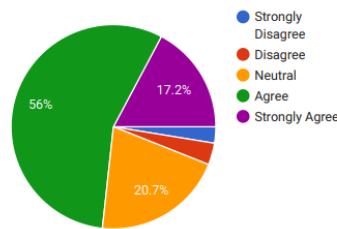
116 responses

Social approval received from your friends, family, and others is the most important factor for you to buy sustainable fashion products.
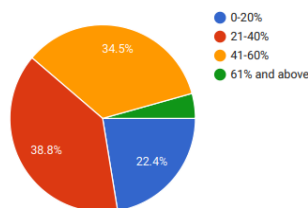
116 responses

Aesthetics, design, and styling are the most important factors you consider while buying sustainable fashion products.
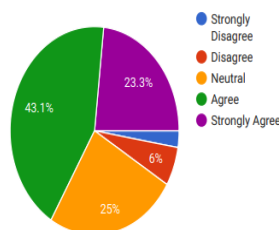
116 responses

What percentage of your total budget for fashion purchases, would you be willing to allocate for sustainable fashion.
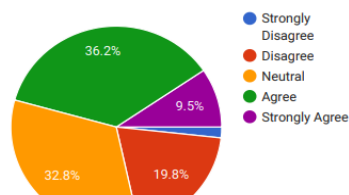
116 responses

Sustainable fashion does have a positive impact on the environment.
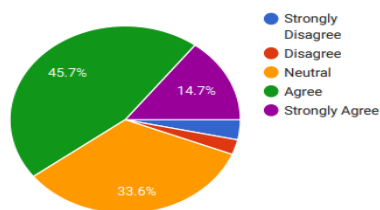
116 responses

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Sustainable fashion is simply a marketing tactic used by fasl around the world to sell more.
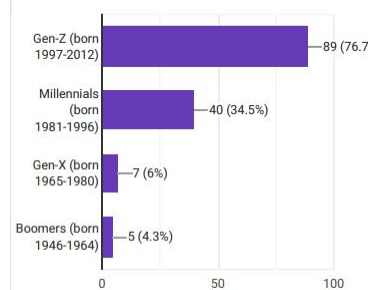116 responses

Sustainable fashion products are generally expensive.
116 responses

In your opinion, which segment(s) are the ideal target group for sustainable fashion products?
116 responses

Reason(s), if any, as to why you won't prefer to buy sustainable fashion products.
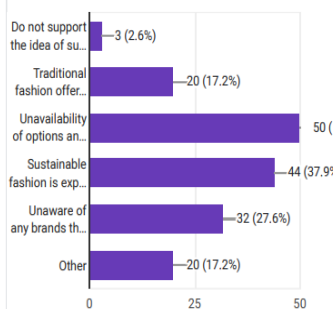116 responses

Table Notes

Abbreviations	Description
df	Degree of Freedom
SS	Sum of Squares
MS	Mean Square
F	F Statistic
P value	Probability
Multiple R	Multiple Correlation Coefficient
Adjusted R Square	Modified R Square
R Square	Variation of dependent variable by independent variable

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Cover Letter

Nipun Paruthi

To: European Chemical Bulletin

04 August, 2023

Subject: Cover Letter - Submission of Original Manuscript

Dear Ma'am/Sir,

I am writing to submit my original manuscript titled "Indian Youth's Intention to opt for Sustainable Fashion Consumption Decision" for consideration for publication in your renowned journal. I am confident that the research and findings presented in this manuscript will contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field.

I declare that this manuscript is an original work and has not been previously published, nor is it currently under concurrent consideration elsewhere. All authors listed have actively contributed to the content and preparation of the manuscript, and they have agreed to its submission to European Chemical Bulletin.

To the best of my knowledge, the content of this manuscript complies with all ethical guidelines and does not infringe upon the rights of any individual or entity.

I have included the necessary contact information below for any future correspondence:

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Eur. Chem. Bull. 2023,12(10), 11013-11026

I request to the editorial board and reviewers of European Chemical Bulletin for considering my manuscript for publication. I am confident that the research contained within it aligns with the aims and scope of the journal.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to receiving your favourable response.

Yours sincerely,

Nipun Paruthi

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