

YOUNG GENERATION'S PERCEPTION ON SUSTAINABLE CLOTHING: A STUDY BASED ON KUET

Farhana Momotaz*, Joydip Datta, Shafkat Mahbub Shafin

Department of Textile Engineering, Khulna University of Engineering & Technology, Khulna, Bangladesh
farhanatex@yahoo.com*, joydip0606@gmail.com, shafkatshafin23@gmail.com

Abstract- The study was intending to investigate the consumer perception and current barriers on purchasing sustainable clothing and also figure out the target customer for introducing the sustainable clothing in future. For this purpose, 80 respondents were selected randomly and a standard questionnaire was distributed among them to collect their responses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) is used to conclude the project results from different statistical analysis. The result revealed that 65% respondent heard the term “sustainability” and among them 90% were concerned about the social, environmental, and ethical impacts the fashion industry has on the world. It is found that unavailability of sustainable clothing outlet in our country to purchase the eco-friendly product (34%) is the main barrier factor. Target customer (age group 21-25 years) were found who spent BDT 1000-2000 per month are mostly interested on sustainable clothing (73.9%) which has revealed that young generations are merely concerned about environment and willing to purchase sustainable product. The learning gained through such an approach could inspire future system level research as well as business model innovation to have Sustainable and Green fashion world.

Key words: sustainability, recycling, up cycling, young generation, sustainable clothing.

1. INTRODUCTION

The often-cited definition of sustainability proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) outlines social, environmental, and economic concerns with the goal of preservation (WCED, 1987). Sustainability refers to materials derived from eco-friendly resources, like sustainably adult fiber crops or recycled materials. It additionally refers to however these materials are created. Recycled and up cycled clothing are outlined as sustainable clothing. The apparel industry has specific negative impacts on the environment through all stages of the apparel product life cycle, from fiber growth and manufacturing, dyeing and printing, transportation to stores and selling, to end of the garment life disposal.

Many consumers have low levels of knowledge concerning the environmental effects of apparel production and selling. Such concern for the environmental impact of apparel production is important, as the Earth cannot indefinitely support the current level of production and disposal of apparel due to depletion of natural resources and quickly filling landfills. However, despite being unaware of unsustainable practices used to create the products they purchase; some apparel consumers are beginning to question the impact and are interested in purchasing environmentally friendly apparel. Young generation customers are particularly socially involved and aware of several world problems. These

customers are a strong market section with income, are characterized by data direction, inflicting each raised awareness of environmental, social, and economic ills and skepticism of marketers' claims to be concerned regarding such problem.

Researchers have been studying for so long on sustainable textile products and determined the key influencing factors affecting consumer purchase behavior. The objective of this research is to discuss sustainability and sustainable clothing and to share concrete ideas for the future development of sustainable fashion and also illustrated to evaluate the acquaintance, perception, and outcome of sustainability among the Young generation.

2. METHODS

2.1 Survey Site

Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET) is at Fulbarigate, the northwest part of Khulna City (the third largest south-western divisional city in Bangladesh. The KUET campus covers 101 acres. There are six boy's hostel and one girl's hostel which were selected to collect data and to conduct the survey further. The responses were collected from students, teachers, and staff from KUET.

2.2 Study design and data collection

A sample questionnaire was made to analyze the consumer's subjective knowledge about sustainability and the current barrier factors during purchasing

sustainable clothing. The 80 responses were taken through the questionnaire on a printed form through a field survey of 5 days in KUET where we found a variety of thinking among the respondents. The respondents willingly shared their perceptions through the questionnaire. 80 people of different age groups: 16-20, 21-25, 26-30 and up to 35 years were selected via random stratified sampling method to perform the survey.

2.3 Data analysis

After collecting the data from the respondent, the data were processed by using SPSS statistics 25. Then the results were presented in the form of percentages, bar diagram and pie charts. We find out the correlation between different parameters and also analyze the significance of this correlation through this software.

2.4 Ethical consideration

This survey-based research did not implicate any harm to the subjected respondents.

3. RESULTS

3.1 The knowledge of "sustainable clothing"

In figure 3.1 the study revealed that about 40% of the total respondents thought sustainable clothing means recycled or up cycled fabrics. Another major response, about 35% thought it is related to a reduction in chemicals used. The percentages are specified through a bar diagram below.

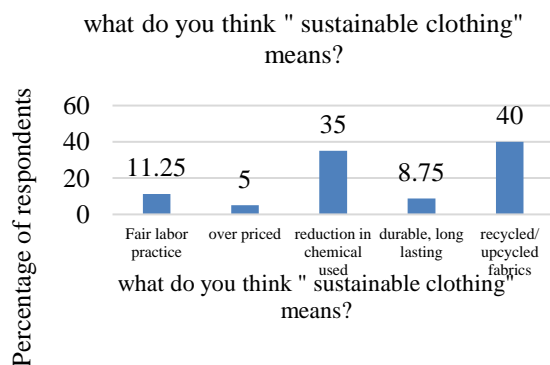


Figure 3.1 Graphical Representation of response % according to the knowledge of the term "sustainable clothing"

From the study, it is evidence that most of the people think sustainable clothing means recycled or up cycled clothing in general.

3.2 Current barrier factors

In the current stage, there are some barrier factors on purchasing sustainable clothing in our country. We tried to find out the main barrier factors. By analyzing the data, we have found the main barrier factors to buy sustainable clothing. The factors are presented in the below chart.

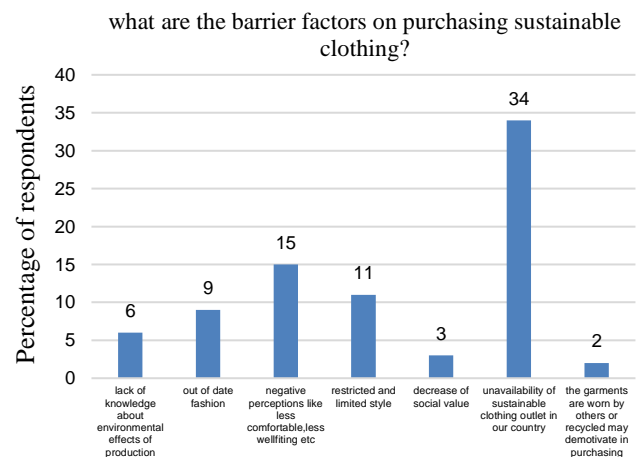


Figure 3.2 Graphical representation of response % according to barrier factors

From the figure 3.2 we can see that 34% respondent says that, unavailability of sustainable clothing outlet in our country is the main barrier factor on purchasing sustainable clothing and other barrier factors are lack of knowledge about environmental effects of production (6%), out of date fashion (9%), negative perception like less comfortable, less well fitting etc. (15%), restricted and limited style (11%), decrease of social value (3%), the garments are worn by others or recycled may demotivate in purchasing (2%).

3.3 Most encouraging factors during purchasing

To encourage the people to purchase sustainable clothing we tried to categorize the encouraging factors into four groups. From figure 3.3, among all the respondents 46.25% think the ecological reason is the most encouraging factor during purchasing sustainable clothing. Also, 30% of people responded for an economical reason as most encouraging.

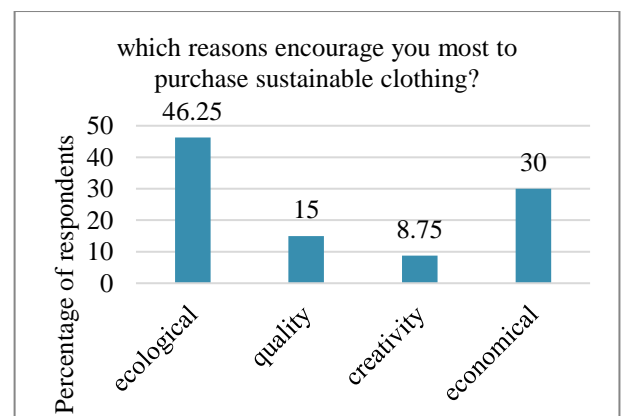


Fig. 3.3 Graphical representation of response percentage according to encouraging factors during purchasing

3.4 Availability of sustainable clothing outlet

In spite of being a small city Khulna has a great number of different popular clothing outlets and here is a

great scope for introducing sustainable clothing outlets. The available store of sustainable clothing would help to expand its market. In figure 3.4 we can see that 45% of people agreed that the availability of sustainable clothing outlets plays a vital role.

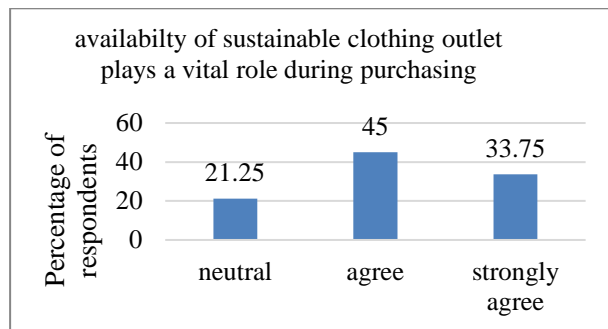


Figure 3.4: graphical representation of response percentage according to rating on availability of sustainable clothing outlet

Table 1: survey result of Consumer age vs willingness to spend more money for sustainable clothing

age * if style, comfort and quality are the same, would you purchase sustainable clothing even if it costs more than normal price? Cross tabulation					
			if style, comfort and quality are the same, would you purchase sustainable clothing even if it costs more than normal price?		Total
			yes	no	
age	16-20 years	Count	10	6	16
		% within age	62.50%	37.50%	100.00%
	21-25 years	Count	34	12	46
		% within age	73.90%	26.10%	100.00%
	26-30 years	Count	6	6	12
		% within age	50.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	30+	Count	0	6	6
		% within age	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Total		Count	50	30	80
		% within age	62.50%	37.50%	100.00%

There is a significant relationship between consumer age

and their willingness to spend money on sustainable clothing. From Table 1, we have found customers between the 21-25 years range are mostly interested in purchasing sustainable clothing even it costs more than the normal price and the percentage is 73.9%. And we also found a handsome response from the customers between 16-20 years (62.5%). so, it is a huge range of target customer groups for introducing sustainable clothing in the future.

3.5 Consumer age vs. monthly expenditure of consumer's

Table 2: survey result of Consumer age vs. monthly expenditure of consumer's

Age * on average how much do you spend on clothing purchase monthly? Cross tabulation								
			On average how much do you spend on clothing purchase monthly?					Total
			500 - 1000	1000 - 2000	2000 - 3500	3500 - 5000	others	
age	16-20 years	Count	4	6	3	2	1	16
		% within age	25.00%	37.50%	18.80%	12.50%	6.30%	100.00%
	21-25 years	Count	8	22	9	3	4	46
		% within age	17.40%	47.80%	19.60%	6.50%	8.70%	100.00%
	26-30 years	Count	1	4	5	0	1	12
		% within age	8.30%	33.30%	41.60%	0.00%	8.30%	100.00%
	30+	Count	1	2	2	0	1	6
		% within age	16.70%	33.30%	33.30%	0.00%	16.70%	100.00%
	Total	Count	14	34	20	5	7	80
		% within age	17.50%	42.50%	25.00%	6.30%	8.80%	100.00%

According to Table 2, we have investigated that the consumers who are young within the age limit of 16-20 years have a tremendous frequency of 37.5% for 1000-2000tk. shopping monthly. The consumers within the age

limit 21-25 years have the highest frequency of monthly shopping BDT 1000-2000 which is 47.8% Respondents, who were in between the age limit 26-30 and 30+, both have 33.3% of expenditure frequency on BDT 1000-2000. If we take a look at the total percentage, we can see that the highest percentage is 42.50% in the price range BDT 1000-2000.

Though our target was to analyze the perception of young customers, we also take the respondent of 30+ years to make a variation in our survey.

According to this statistical analysis, we can very well conclude that the consumers at the age limit 21-25 years will be the target customer with a handsome price limit ranging from BDT 1000-2000. Lastly, we can come to a point that young consumers from KUET have an excellent frequency of shopping and that makes them an amazing Target Market for introducing sustainable clothing brands in the future in our country.

3.6 Test of Significance of the Analysis

In general, the purpose of statistical tests is to determine whether some hypothesis is extremely unlikely given observed data. Statistical tests are carried out by first making some assumption, called the Null Hypothesis, and then determining whether the data observed is unlikely to occur given that assumption. Null hypothesis is a general statement or default position that there is no relationship between two measured phenomena or no association among groups if the probability of seeing the observed data is small enough under the assumed Null Hypothesis, then the Null Hypothesis is rejected. Now with the help of SPSS Software, we have analyzed the two numeric data Age of Consumer and monthly expenditure of consumers to get an output of the Chi-Square Test which is given on the following:

Table 3: Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.127	12	0.014
Likelihood Ratio	25.932	12	0.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.811	1	0.045
N of Valid Cases	80		

The significance level for a given hypothesis test is a value for which a P-value less than or equal to is considered statistically significant. P-value defines the significance of the statistical analysis.

- If P-value is less than or equal to 0.05; the test is significant and null hypothesis is rejected
- If P-value is more than 0.05; the test is not significant (means weak evidence against the null hypothesis)

Firstly, we assumed that there is no significant

relationship between age and the monthly expenditure of the customers, this is our null hypothesis. As we can see from Table 3.3 the Asymptotic Significance (P-Value) is 0.014 which is less than 0.05, so according to the P-value, we can say that the Null Hypothesis is rejected and the statistical analysis is significant. That means there is a significant relationship between the age of Consumers and the monthly expenditure of consumers.

4. DISCUSSION

This study sought to specifically describe young generation consumer's general perceptions and knowledge of sustainability and environmental practices in apparel. Overall, consumers expressed a positive sentiment toward sustainability but also acknowledged their lack of knowledge concerning the sustainability of apparel. Consumers need additional education on the specific adverse effects of apparel production to the environment and the sustainability movement overall to increase knowledge and alter attitudes and behaviors. Through the field survey and data analysis, we have found that the young generation is so much willing to purchase sustainable clothing at a reasonable rate (62.50%).

They are conscious of brand value and quality products. We also figured out a target amount (1000-2000tk) of spending money consumers were willing to pay for sustainable products. This investigation could also inspire the environment concern fashion and textile brands to launch sustainable fashion products in their clothing outlet to attract a huge number of young customers and make their customers not only look good but also feel good and do well for the environment.

5. LIMITATION

The survey was conducted only 80 people which signifies a very small sample size. It is obvious that if the study has been conducted over more people, it would have provided a more comprehensive outcome.

6. CONCLUSION

The young generation is the most enthusiastic target consumer of sustainable clothing and we found that the lack of sustainable clothing outlets in Bangladesh is one of the most important barrier factors for the unavailability of sustainable products. From this survey, we also found the most encouraging factor for using sustainable clothing and also the target amount which most of the customers willing to spend to purchase a sustainable product.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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