



## IMPACT OF FASHION BRAND SUSTAINABILITY ON CUSTOMER'S PURCHASE DECISION

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**Abstract:**

As sustainable development is becoming one of today's hot topics, people are increasingly focusing on environmentally conscious lifestyle, with eco-friendly consumption and thoughtful shopping decisions. Even the brands in the fashion industry have adopted the concept of sustainability. The research is conducted to understand the influence of this concept on customer's purchase decisions. As the concept of sustainability has recently emerged in the world of fashion, it is crucial to know it's awareness and acceptance amongst the customer. The research is considered to be a quantitative in nature. The data is collected through random sampling technique, with the assistance of a questionnaire, the internet, and various articles. It is important to raise customer understanding about the relevance of sustainability in the regard to the environment, since this will facilitate the transition to eco-friendly fashion brands. This will contribute to a significant change in the fashion business and may have a positive impact on the environment.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, environment, awareness, impact, acceptability.

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**Introduction:**

Fashion is a term used interchangeably to describe the creation of clothing and accessories of different cultural aesthetics and their mixing and matching into outfits that depict distinctive ways of dressing. The fashion industry represents an important part of our economies, employing over 75 million people worldwide. It has undergone gradual changes and has seen distinct trends that have created a boom in the industry, and now the fashion industry is witnessing an era that focuses on styles originating from the idea of SUSTAINABILITY. The rising adverse effects on the environment because of fashion gave a significant growth to the concept of SUSTAINABILITY IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY. Sustainable fashion is an effort within the fashion industry to reduce its environmental impacts, protect workers producing garments, and uphold animal welfare . It means

creating clothing and accessories in a way that minimizes the negative impact on the environment and society. Sustainability concept has come up with a marvellous notion of creating trends that are trying to save the carbon footprints of environment.

**Research Methodology:****Research Questions:**

In an era, where sustainability is increasingly emphasised, understanding how consumers perceive and respond to eco-friendly practices in fashion is crucial for businesses. The idea of sustainability is yet to be discovered by many researchers. Hence, this research aims to investigate the awareness, influence, and the overall impact of fashion brand sustainability on customers purchase decisions. By identifying and analysing these factors, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform fashion brands and marketers in developing more effective strategies to

promote sustainability and drive consumer engagement.

### Objectives:

Following are the objectives that state the aims of this research:

- To study the awareness of fashion brand sustainability amongst the customers.
- To analyse the influence of sustainability in fashion brands on customer's purchase decision.

H0: The sustainability of the fashion brands does not influence customers overall shopping preference.

H2: The sustainability of the fashion brands influence customers overall shopping preference.

H0: Customers have not accepted the change in fashion brands caused by sustainability.

H3: Customers have accepted the change in fashion brands caused by sustainability.

### Significance:

This research will be beneficial for the businesses to understand the perspective of customers and take necessary initiatives. Following are the significance of this research to Businesses:

Understanding the influence of fashion brand sustainability on customer purchase decisions is pivotal for businesses. It enables companies to tailor their offerings to evolving consumer preferences, boosting product appeal. Moreover, research in this area empowers businesses to adopt sustainable practices, gaining a competitive edge with environmentally conscious consumers. Sustainable practices also bolster a brand's image, fostering a reputation for responsible practices and enhancing brand loyalty. Moreover, recognizing the link between sustainability and purchase decisions allows businesses to address environmental and ethical concerns proactively, mitigating risks like negative publicity and legal issues. Furthermore, understanding sustainability's impact aids compliance with regulations and optimization of supply chains, enhancing operational efficiency.

To study the acceptance of sustainability in fashion brands by customers.

### Hypothesis:

The hypothesis for the given objectives is as follows:

H0: Customers are not aware about the concept of fashion brand sustainability.

H1: Customers are aware about the concept of fashion brand.

Ultimately, aligning with consumer values through sustainable practices can positively impact financial performance, guiding businesses toward long-term profitability while benefiting the environment.

### Methodology:

In this study, the Descriptive Research approach, also known as Quantitative Research, is applicable. Primary data sources like questionnaire and Secondary data sources (reviews, essays, articles, and Wikipedia) are used in this study to collect data. Simple Random Sampling Technique and Voluntary Response Sampling is the method used for sampling. This study has a sample size of 109 respondents. The said study was conducted in the Thane District. The test used to analyse the data are ANOVA and CHI-SQUARE TEST.

### Limitations:

Following are the limitations of the research:

**Generalization Constraints:** The findings of this research may not be universally applicable as they are based on a specific demographic or market segment.

**Time Frame Limitation:** The study focuses on the current snapshot of customer perceptions, and the rapidly evolving nature of the fashion industry may influence sustainability trends in the future.

**Geographic Scope:** The research is conducted within a specific geographic region, and variations in cultural norms and consumer behaviour in different areas may not be fully represented.

**Data Collection Method:** Limitations may arise from

the chosen data collection methods, such as surveys or interviews, as they rely on participants' self-reporting. Social desirability bias and memory recall issues could impact the accuracy of responses.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Below mentioned are the research papers of authors that are part of the literature review and have been of great help for this research:

#### **PAPER 01:**

Doroteja Mandaric and et al.(2022) stated in their research paper that the purpose of this confirmatory study was to examine customer opinions about the sustainability of fashion businesses and how these beliefs impact purchase decisions. The goal was to see if the difference between attitudes and purchase behaviour existed among Croatian consumers to the same level as earlier research had demonstrated. The findings indicate that participants have a good outlook on the sustainability of fashion businesses. The results of this study provide a body of work for a greater understanding of the various factors that may influence consumer behaviour, such as the sustainability of a fashion brand or product, potentially encouraging the development of apt strategies in the fashion industry and changing the way fashion works and is understood in the future.

#### **PAPER 02:**

Hannah L. Neumann and et al.(2021) in the study began by defining sustainability and focusing on its environmental aspect within the fashion industry. They

examined perceived consumer efficacy, attitude, trust, purchase intention, and social responsibility in sustainable behaviour.

Results supported relationships between customer efficacy and social responsibility, and trust and purchase intention. The conclusion stressed the importance for fashion companies, customers, and stakeholders to prioritize sustainability.

#### **PAPER 03:**

Zdenka Musova and et al.(2021) in this study explored consumer perceptions and support for circular fashion models, emphasizing the importance for businesses to leverage these models for competitive advantage. Findings revealed greater willingness to support innovative circular approaches compared to awareness levels. Patchwork, upcycling, and slow fashion were favoured based on customer preferences, with a gender difference noted primarily in support for slow fashion.

#### **PAPER 04:**

Neha and et al.(2024) in this study examined how fashion brands implement sustainable marketing and how consumers perceive them, aiming to understand the relationship between sustainable marketing, brand image, trust, loyalty, and purchase behaviour. It focused on young consumers' behaviour and emphasized the importance of sustainable marketing for brand image, loyalty, and purchase behaviour, highlighting economic, social, environmental, and cultural factors' impact.

#### **Data Analysis & Discussions:**

A questionnaire was circulated among various groups of society through different platforms. Each question is asked with the view of verifying hypothesis. 69.7% of respondents belong to the age between 15 – 25 years followed by 26 – 35 years, 36 – 45 years, and above.

Respondents were prompted to choose from a list of options when filling out the questionnaire.

H0- Customers are not aware about the concept of sustainability

H1- Customers are aware about the concept of sustainability.

How familiar are you with the concept of sustainability in fashion brands?

Options	%	No.
1- Not at all familiar	4.6	5
2- Somewhat familiar	72.5	79
3- Very Familiar	22.9	25
Total	100	109

Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Expected Proportion	Percentage Deviation	Standardized Residuals
1	5	36.33	0.33330275:	-86.24%	-5.2
2	79	36.33	0.33330275:	+117.45%	+7.08
3	25	36.33	0.33330275:	-31.19%	-1.88

Note that for df=1, the calculated value of chi-square is corrected for continuity.]	[For df=1, this is the uncorrected value of chi-square.]
chi-square = 80.67	
df = 2	
P = <.0001	[P is non-directional]

From the above data it is recognized that the value of p is less than 0.05 ( $p < .0001$ ). Hence, it is apprehended that H1 is accepted.

### Interpretation:

It is evident that 72.5% of respondents had some familiarity with the notion of sustainability in the fashion business. Most individuals do not take the initiative to gather knowledge on this issue.

However, people are aware of the benefits of sustainability, since the majority of them have correctly chosen to be drawn to the usage of eco-friendly products as a result of this concept. Thus, it is assumed that customers are aware of the concept of sustainability in the fashion field.

H0: The sustainability of the fashion brands does not influence customers overall shopping preference.

H2: The sustainability of the fashion brands influence customers overall shopping preference.

The impact of sustainability in fashion businesses on consumers is attempted to be quantified based on age.

### ANOVA: Single Factor Summary

Groups	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
15 - 25	76	167	2.197368	0.29386
26 - 35	10	25	2.5	0.277778
36 – 45	14	29	2.071429	0.071429
Above	9	13	1.444444	0.527778

## ANOVA

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	5.961109	3	1.987036	7.027179	0.000237	2.691133
Within Groups	29.69027	105	0.282764			
Total	35.65138	108	1.444444	0.527778		

As P value is less than 0.005 and F Critical is less than F value, we accept H2.

**Interpretation:**

Customers are neutral about a brand's commitment to sustainability. Furthermore, it has been observed that fashion brand sustainability has a minor influence on client buying choices. They will pay a premium if a reputable brand offers ecological apparels. As a result, sustainability in fashion firms has influenced customers' purchasing decisions.

H0: Customers have not accepted the change in fashion brands caused by sustainability.

H3: Customers have accepted the change in fashion brands caused by sustainability.

Do you consider sustainability as an important factor when choosing fashion products?

Options	%	No.
No	5.5	6
Maybe	21.1	23
Yes	73.4	80
Total	100	109

Category	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Expected Proportion	Percentage Deviation	Standardized Residuals
1	6	36.33	0.33330275	-83.48%	-5.03
2	23	36.33	0.33330275	-36.69%	-2.21
3	80	36.33	0.33330275	+120.2%	+7.25

[Note that for df=1, the calculated value of chi-square is corrected for continuity.]	[For df=1, this is the uncorrected value of chi-square.]
chi-square = 82.7	
df = 2	
P = <.0001	[P is non-directional]

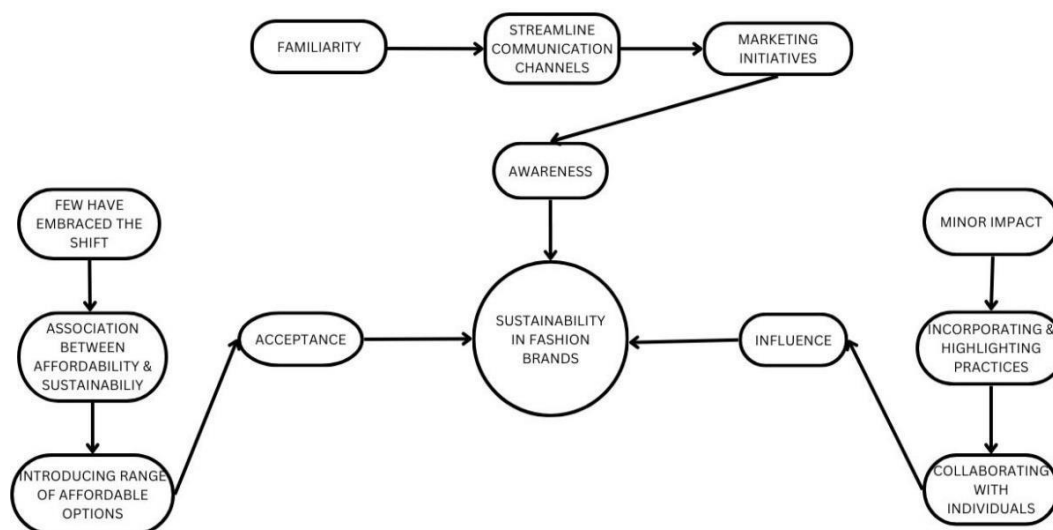
From the above data it is recognized that the value of p is less than 0.05 ( $p < .0001$ ). Hence, it is apprehended that H3 is accepted.

**Interpretation:** Even though the majority of buyers believe sustainability to be an essential aspect, just a small percentage consider sustainable activities while purchasing clothes. Customers appreciate sustainability in the fashion business. Overall, it is acknowledged that shoppers have embraced the shift in fashion brands stimulated by sustainability.

### Summary of Findings:

- I} It is evident that not every respondent is completely familiar with the concept of sustainability. This indicated that the questionnaire was filled out on the basis of their basic knowledge about the topic.
  - II} People are conscious of the benefits, which extend beyond environmental concerns to include other production-related resources. The majority of customers are relatively aware of the presence of sustainability in the field of fashion, but not everyone of them is inclined to participate in accumulating information about such initiatives. This implies that sustainability in apparels is yet to attain popularity.
  - III} Individuals are conscious of the relevance of sustainability in the fashion business and value any company that upholds this concept. The data backs up the assertion that this effort has an effect on some consumers, changing their entire purchasing experience.
  - IV} Consumers are willing to pay a little bit extra for reputable businesses that uphold the concept of sustainability. Although some of the respondents do consider sustainability while making decisions about clothing, others do not. The majority of respondents believe that it might lead to transformations in the fashion industry.
- The model that demonstrates the sequence of events necessary for fashion brands to have a strong reputation for sustainability among consumers is provided below:

### An Overview of Sustainability in the Fashion Brands



### Suggestions:

Businesses should focus on enhancing awareness and education about sustainability in the fashion industry. Implementing targeted marketing campaigns, utilize social media, in-store displays to disseminate information in a visually appealing and accessible manner, catering to diverse consumer preferences. Collaborating with influencers or celebrities aligned with sustainable values will amplify the message and reach a broader audience. Businesses should streamline communication channels, emphasizing not only

environmental aspects but also the positive impact of resources associated with manufacturing. Highlighting transparent supply chains, ethical sourcing, and eco-conscious manufacturing processes can strengthen a company's perceived commitment to sustainability. Brands can consider introducing a range of affordable and sustainable options that can appeal a broader customer base. To sum up, firms should prioritize marketing, education, transparency, incentives, and reasonably priced sustainability solutions.

**Conclusion:**

In the fashion business, sustainability is a relatively new idea. Despite the fact that the topic is relatively new to the industry, swift advancement is taking place. According to observations made during the study, people are aware of the significance of sustainability, but they do not yet possess the level of information that is truly needed. This hinders people from realizing all the benefits of sustainability. Customers appear to be unfazed by the notion of sustainability, or perhaps its message hasn't gotten through to them yet. We could easily interpret that even though they had considered the aspect of sustainability to be important, they still couldn't focus on this initiative when actually buying clothes. It is extremely important for businesses practicing sustainability to focus on the three important factors—Awareness, Impact, and Acceptance—of sustainability in apparels among their customers.

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