

Fashion Consciousness and Cultural Influence on Sustainable Apparel Choices

Poorani. G¹, Dr. M. Banumathi²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, Annamalai University, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Govt. Arts College, India

KEYWORDS

Fashion
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ABSTRACT:

This study proposes conscious consumption as a way to promote sustainable garment consumption. Fashion has historically been linked to ostentatious spending and the never-ending search for fresh trends. On the other hand, a significant movement towards sustainable consumerism and fashion conscience has emerged in recent years. This change in viewpoint acknowledges the fashion industry's negative effects on society and the environment and seeks to encourage more morally and responsibly conducted business. Being mindful of fashion involves being aware of our consumers' decisions and comprehending the effects of those decisions. In a time when environmental consciousness is rising, buyers are become more discriminating when it comes to the moral implications of the products they buy. This study looks at how cultural values, which influence people's attitudes and actions, affect their propensity to purchase sustainable fashion items. Furthermore, a key moderator in the decision-making process is the degree to which people prioritize personal style and fashion trends, or fashion consciousness. We use a quantitative research methodology to examine data from a broad sample of people in order to find relationships between cultural influences, fashion participation, and aspirations to make sustainable purchases. With growing concerns about the environment and the impact of consumer behavior on sustainability, it is important to understand the factors influencing consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable apparel. Environmental knowledge and awareness are crucial in shaping consumers' perceptions of ecological safety and purchasing behaviour. Additionally, consumers' fashion consciousness, including their preferences for eco-friendly and stylish clothing, also influences their purchase intentions. By considering these determinants, marketers, and policymakers can better understand and target consumers more likely to engage in sustainable apparel purchases.

1. Introduction

According to many, the fashion industry is the second most polluting sector of the world economy, and environmental harm is growing along with the industry growth. According to UN report estimate the manufacture of clothing produces around 92 million tons of trash yearly, 8–10% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, and over 20% of the industrial wastewater pollution from dyeing and finishing textiles. This problem has been made worse by the emergence of fast fashion, which has led to a marked increase in the amount of clothing manufactured and thrown away. Aesthetic and cultural considerations are important in the transition to sustainable fashion. Consumers' growing concern for the environment has increased demand for goods that follow social and ecological norms. But for many customers, sustainable clothing is still a little unclear. They frequently base their purchases on practical, economical, and aesthetic factors, which may lead to less interest in sustainable solutions.

It is essential to comprehend the cultural and aesthetic factors that impact consumers' intents to purchase sustainable clothing. Social norms and values are cultural influences that influence how consumers view and adopt sustainable fashion. Design, style, and perceived beauty are examples of aesthetic elements that are equally significant since they have a direct impact on customer preferences and purchasing behaviour. Consequently, it is imperative to recognize and tackle these variables to augment consumer engagement and facilitate the shift in the fashion sector towards sustainable consumption.

This study attempts to investigate how aesthetic value, fashion consciousness, and environmentally conscious consumerism interact in the context of sustainability. The study's first goal is to identify the fundamental aesthetic principles that guide designers in producing goods that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also morally and practically sound. The research will offer insights into how businesses may position themselves as pioneers in ethical fashion, incorporating sustainability without sacrificing aesthetic appeal, by evaluating the interaction of ethical, functional, and visual elements. The study looks at how consumer behavior is affected by fashion consciousness, especially how understanding of trends in fashion affects judgments about what to buy. The purpose of the project is to investigate if fashion-conscious customers can be persuaded to buy more sustainably via focused awareness and education initiatives. This goal will

clarify how fashion-forward customers can act as change agents by increasing demand for more environmentally friendly apparel options. Customers are starting to match their own beliefs with their purchasing habits as a result of growing ecological awareness, looking for items that demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. This study will look at how ethical beliefs and purchase intention are related to environmentally aware purchasing, giving companies' important information on how to build stronger relationships with customers based on shared environmental concerns.

To lessen the detrimental effects of consumption on the environment, environmentally conscious consumers use various responsible behavioural practices throughout the purchase, usage, and disposal of products. The concept of "conscious consumption" (CC), which is one component of Gupta and Agrawal's ERC scale, encompasses actions like refraining from wasteful consumption, utilizing items in moderation, making sure there is as little waste as possible, and buying quantities that might be used. In this essay, we define conscious consumption as a thrifty approach to natural resources linked to consumers' concern for the environment's health. To identify different consumer behaviours that are environmentally responsible, Agrawal and Gupta conducted a study. They discovered that, in terms of conscious consumption, respondents made conscious efforts to reduce the volume of their consumption, limit consumption to a necessary level, and avoid excessive consumption.

People who are interested in fashion and shopping are more inclined to research new goods related to apparel, which increases their curiosity about eco-apparel and, in turn, increases their likelihood of buying EFC. This article aims to investigate the sets of variables—fashion orientation, shopping orientation, Aesthetic values, cultural values eco-friendly behavior and environmental concern—that may impact customers' desire to buy Environment conscious fashion apparel in the future.

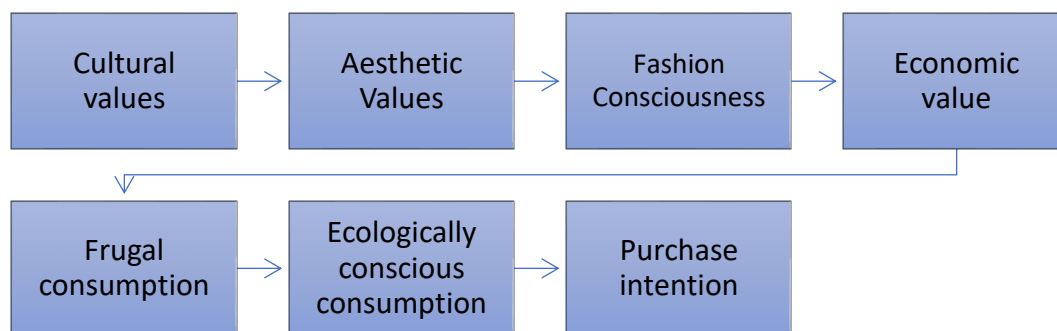


Figure 1: Classification of Responsible Consumption

2. Review of Literature

The sustainable apparel industry has attracted more and more attention year by year, especially in recent years when buyer's conscience is rising. There is a need to identify factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions of sustainable apparel in order to support sustainable consumption initiatives from various organizations. This literature review is therefore meant to provide an overview of the current work on this topic, especially concerning: Cultural values and fashion consciousness.

The present study defines cultural values to be important factors influencing consumers' attitudes and buying intentions towards sustainable apparel. Religiosity was determined by Agarwala, Mishra, and Singh (2019) as an antecedent that has an impact on consumers' purchasing behavior, with religious consumers displaying higher levels of receptiveness to sustainable consumption. Besides that, Chekima et al., (2016) indicate that cultural values are indestructible components that contribute to the consumer knowledge and attitude towards sustainable consumption. This is what points to the need to factor in culture when analyzing sustainable apparel purchase intentions. This paper aims to establish that fashion consciousness, which is a person's level of concern with fashion trends and goods, is a strong influencer of consumer behavior. Sustainable apparel product attitude, which is associated with fashion consciousness was also found to have a significant positive interaction on some aesthetic values, and the result reveals that attitude toward sustainable apparel product has a positive effect on purchase intention. This implicitly means that people, who possess an enhanced aesthetic sensitivity, are likely to buy environmentally friendly clothing. However, in a similar vein, O'Cass, Lee, and Siahtiri (2013) discussed the compatibility of two variables, namely Islam and status

consumption in the fashion industry, revealing that there is a relationship between some particular cultural/religious values affecting fashion consciousness and therefore the purchasing motives. Busalim et al.'s (2022) systematic review address how customers' awareness of sustainable clothes is increasing. They stress that to promote sustainable fashion, it is important to educate customers and create interventions. The drivers and moderators of sustainable fashion consumption (SFC) over the previous 25 years are identified by Dabas and Whang (2022). Their research demonstrates how consumer behaviour has evolved to adopt more environmentally friendly habits. In their assessment of slow fashion consumer behaviour, Domingos et al. (2022) point out that environmental concerns and the need for style and quality both influence sustainable consumption behaviours. Kong et al. (2016) concentrate on how sustainable knowledge sources affect consumer behaviour and discover a positive correlation between more engagement in sustainable fashion consumption and a greater understanding of sustainability. The impact of social influence and green consumption values on the propensity to purchase organic apparel was investigated by Varshneya et al. (2017). They emphasised how ecological and economic values influence consumers' green purchase habits Hassan et al. (2022) investigated how young consumers' intentions to purchase eco-bags and their level of green consumption were influenced by perceived values, which included social, environmental, and economic values. Jung et al. (2020) explored the combined effects of aesthetic, cultural, economic, and ecological values on sustainable apparel purchase intentions. They found that these values influence consumer attitudes and behaviors towards sustainable fashion. Lin and Chen (2022) reviewed the factors influencing sustainable apparel purchase intentions, noting the moderating effects of generational cohorts on the relationship between environmental consciousness and purchase intention.

3. Objectives

1. To determine the key aesthetic value that influences fashion across cultures.
2. Assessing the Impact of Fashion Consciousness Consumption on Intention to Purchase
3. To Explore the Mediating Role of Ecological Conscious Consumption in the Relationship Between Values and Purchase Intention.

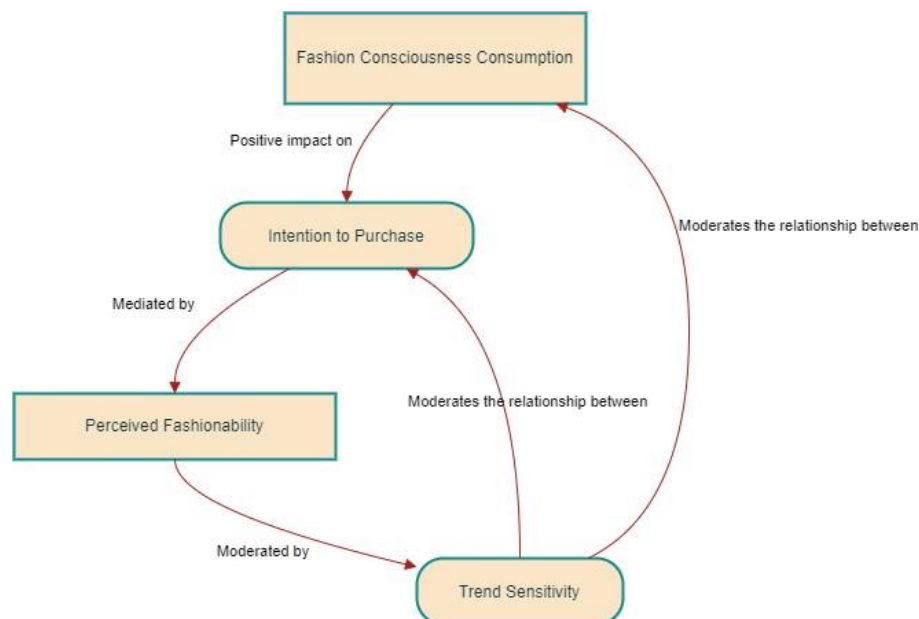


Figure 2: Impact of Fashion Consciousness Consumption on Intention to Purchase

Table 1: Research Objectives for Purchase Intention

Objective	Description	Focus
Determine the key aesthetic value	Gain insights into the combination of ethical, functional, and visual factors resulting in sustainable and appealing products.	Establishing a brand that epitomizes ethical principles, sustainability, and attractiveness.

Investigate the impact of fashion consciousness consumption	Explore the correlation between consumers' purchasing behaviours and their awareness of fashion patterns, with a particular emphasis on sustainability.	Evaluate the potential for fashion-conscious consumers to alter their purchasing behaviors by educating them about sustainability.
Examine the role of Ecologically conscious consumption	Investigate the manner in which ecologically conscious consumption serves as a interface between the desire to acquire sustainable products and one's personal values.	Promote a culture of ecological awareness that encourages individuals to integrate their own beliefs with sustainable purchasing habits.

This study aims to enhance our comprehension of the impact of personal beliefs on consumer behavior regarding sustainability, specifically by examining the mediating effect of ecologically aware consumption (Figure 2). The study will provide significant information for firms, marketers, regulators, and educators that aim to encourage sustainable consumption patterns.

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following research approach has been used to analyse the aforementioned objectives.

A. Data Gathering

Primary data have been gathered for this investigation. the data gathering process employed a comprehensive and systematic approach to collect primary data relevant to the research objectives. By leveraging a well-designed questionnaire, targeting a diverse sample, and carefully structuring the data collection process, The objective of this investigation is to offer a thorough examination of the factors that influence the intention to purchase sustainable apparel, with a particular emphasis on the influence of cultural values and fashion consciousness on consumer behavior.

The dataset contains information on seven factors influencing consumer behavior, including aesthetic values, cultural factors, fashion consciousness, economic impacts, utilitarian consumption, ecological awareness, and purchase intention. Each factor is associated with two metrics: the percentage of respondents who consider the factor important and its importance score on a scale from 1 to 5.

Table 2: Data Gathering Process for Sustainable Product Research

Aspect	Description
Questionnaire Design	A meticulously designed questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire addressed all aspects of consumer perceptions, brand association, and product awareness related to sustainability. Wording, order of questions, and structure were carefully considered to minimize bias and ensure clarity.
Sampling Method	A stratified sampling approach may have been used to target individuals knowledgeable about sustainable consumption practices. The sample aimed for diversity across demographics (age, location, socioeconomic background, Ecological awareness).
Data Collection Period	Data collection occurred over two months (May-June 2024). This strategic timeframe aimed to capture potential variations in consumer behavior across seasons.
Sample Size	115 participants were included in the study. While modest, the sample size may be sufficient for meaningful conclusions if representative and rigorously collected. Focus on qualitative insights may further enhance data richness.

B. Statistical Tools

In our study, we utilized Python, another powerful programming language renowned for its data analysis and visualization versatility. While our statistical analyses were conducted using Python, it's important to note that R, with its extensive suite of statistical and graphical tools, is a widely-used software package in the field of data science and statistical analysis.

Python offers a plethora of libraries and packages tailored for data manipulation, statistical analysis, and visualization, making it a popular choice among data scientists and researchers. In our analysis, we leveraged libraries such as pandas for data manipulation and matplotlib for data visualization, both of which are widely used in the Python ecosystem.

4. Visualizing Consumer Behavior Factors: An Analytical Approach

In this analysis, we examine the impact of various factors on consumer behavior using a series of visualizations. These visualizations aim to uncover insights about how different factors influence consumer preferences and the perceived importance of these factors. The following plots are created using a sample dataset to provide a comprehensive view of the data.

Graphical Representations

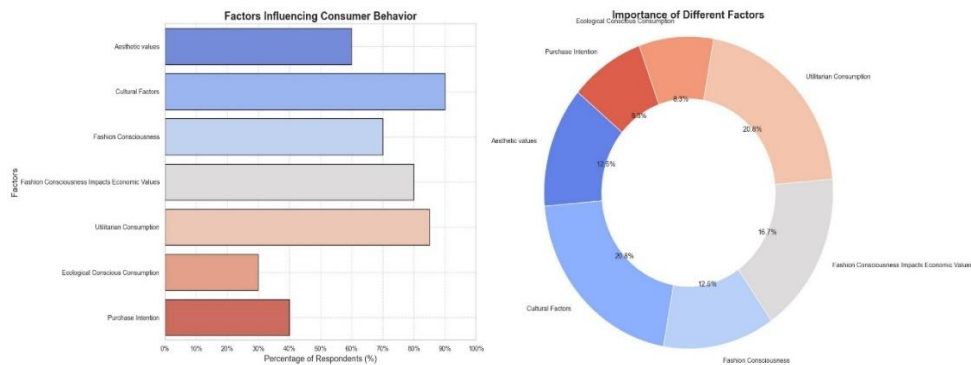
- The percentage of respondents who believe each element to be relevant is shown in the bar plot (Figure 3A). Every bar denotes a component, and the height of the bar shows the percentage of participants. Based on survey data, this visualization aids in determining which factors have the most and least influence. The higher percentages for factors like "Cultural Factors" and "Fashion Consciousness Impacts Economic Values" indicate that these factors are seen as having more significance.
- The proportionate distribution of the importance scores given to each element is depicted in the pie chart (Figure 3B). The distribution of importance among the components offers a clear picture of each factor's relative relevance as perceived by the respondents. You can learn which factors are considered most and least important by looking at this chart.
- The distribution of the percentage values across the various parameters is displayed in the histogram (Figure 3C). The distribution and central tendency of respondents' perceptions of the significance of different elements are better understood with the aid of this plot. To improve the visualization of the data distribution, a kernel density estimate (KDE) line is added, which adds a smooth curve.
- The link between the important score and the percentage of responses is shown in the heatmap (Figure 3D). This graphic aids in establishing whether there is a correlation between the relevance score awarded to a factor and the number of respondents who believe it to be significant. The color gradient of the heatmap shows the direction and strength of the link.
- The trend between the importance score and the percentage of responses is plotted on a line graph (Figure 3E). This plot, which helps to visualize any potential linear correlations, indicates whether there is a consistent trend or pattern between these two variables by joining data points with lines.
- The percentage of respondents is plotted against the importance score for each element in the scatter plot (Figure 3F). We may see how these two variables connect to one another by charting them. A color scheme and factor labels aid in differentiating between various factors and their locations on the plot.
- A overview of the distribution of importance scores for each element is given by the box plot (Figure 3G). It shows the data's quartiles, median, and outliers. This plot helps distinguish between aspects that respondents perceive as having a more consistent perception and those that have a broad range of relevance rankings.

Algorithm 1 Data Visualization Algorithm

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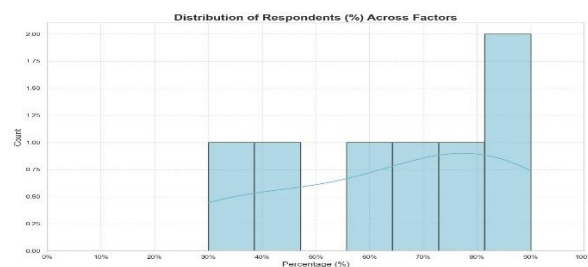
1: Input: Data dictionary with keys 'Factors', 'Percentage', 'Importance'
2: Output: Various visualizations
3: Import libraries: pandas, matplotlib.pyplot, seaborn
4: Create DataFrame df from data dictionary
5: Set Seaborn style to "whitegrid"
6: Create color palette using seaborn.color_palette("coolwarm", len(df))
7: Graph 1: Bar Plot
8: Plot horizontal bar chart with 'Percentage' on x-axis and 'Factors' on y-axis
9: Set title, x-axis label, y-axis label
10: Display the bar plot
11: Graph 2: Pie Chart
12: Plot pie chart for 'Importance' with labels from 'Factors'
13: Set title
14: Display the pie chart
15: Graph 3: Histogram
16: Plot histogram for 'Percentage' with KDE
17: Set title, x-axis label, y-axis label
18: Display the histogram
19: Graph 4: Correlation Heatmap
20: Compute and plot correlation matrix for 'Percentage' and 'Importance'
21: Set title
22: Display the heatmap
23: Graph 5: Line Plot
24: Plot line plot showing trend between 'Percentage' and 'Importance'
25: Set title, x-axis label, y-axis label
26: Display the line plot
27: Graph 6: Scatter Plot
28: Plot scatter plot with 'Percentage' on x-axis and 'Importance' on y-axis,
    color-coded by 'Factors'
29: Set title, x-axis label, y-axis label
30: Display the scatter plot
31: Graph 7: Box Plot
32: Plot box plot for 'Importance' scores across factors
33: Set title, x-axis label, y-axis label
34: Display the box plot

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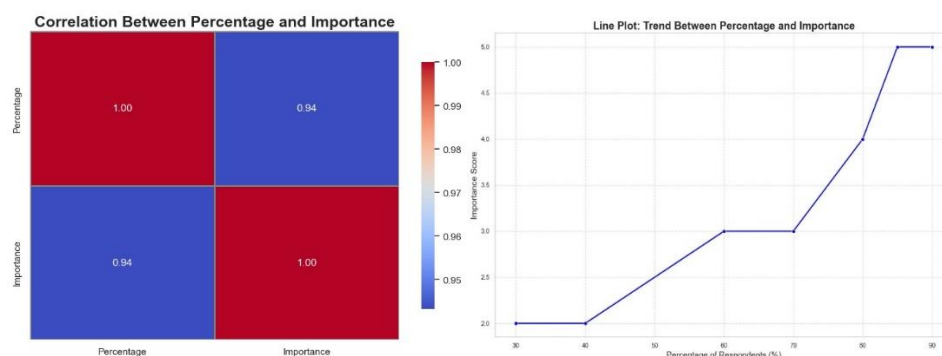


(A)

(B)



(C)



(D)

(E)

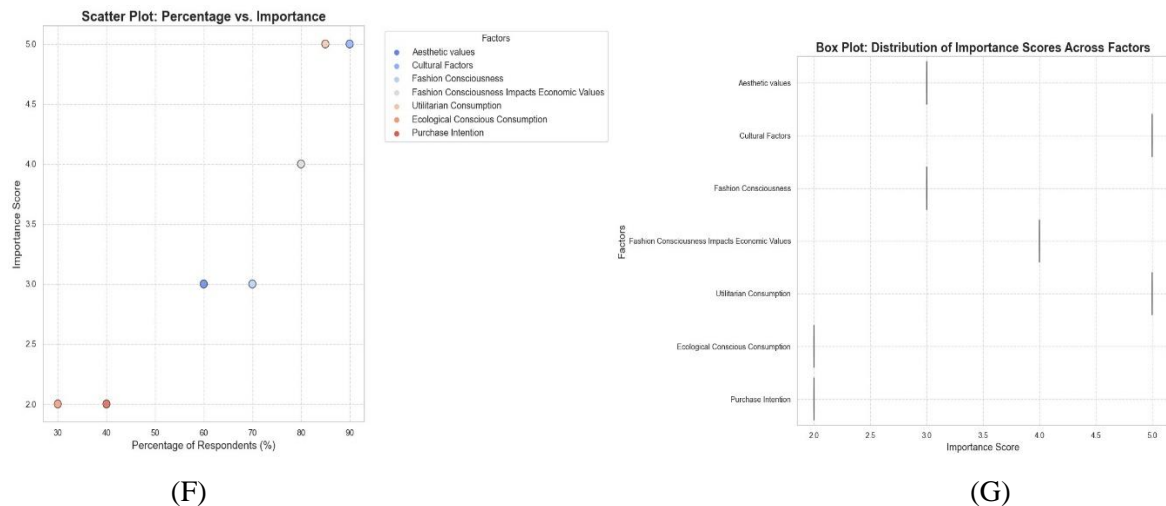


Figure 3: Various Visualizations of Consumer Behavior Factors

These visualizations collectively offer a robust analysis of the factors influencing consumer behavior. By exploring the data through various graphical representations, we gain a deeper understanding of which factors are most significant and how their importance is perceived by respondents. This comprehensive approach provides valuable insights for businesses and researchers aiming to align their strategies with consumer preferences.

5. Findings

- 1.Aesthetic values:** Despite inferior product quality, a sizable portion of respondents place a higher value on design and aesthetics. It may be inferred from this that aesthetic appeal plays a significant role in counteracting the pragmatic and economical inclinations shown elsewhere.
- 2.Cultural Factors:** 90% Respondents are proud of and respectful of traditional cultural values, and they place a high value on their cultural heritage. This shows that cultural influences are crucial in determining the tastes and behavior of consumers.
- 3.Fashion Consciousness:** The majority of participants exhibit a moderate to high interest in maintaining an updated wardrobe and emphasizing stylish styling. The findings, however, imply that although fashion consciousness exists, it might not be everyone's main concern.
- 4.Fashion Consciousness Impacts Economic Values:** There is a strong inclination to use caution while spending money on clothing. Many respondents are prepared to put off purchases in order to save money and value making the most of their financial resources. This suggests that there is a strong emphasis on making economical choices while purchasing clothing.
- 5.Utilitarian Consumption:** The usability, value for money, and safety of the items are typically given top priority by participants. They have a utilitarian approach to consuming, as seen by the importance they place on practicality and functional advantages while making purchases.
- 6.Ecological Conscious Consumption:** Respondents' commitment to acting in an environmentally responsible manner is notably lacking. Purchasing goods in recyclable or recycled packaging is not something that many people prioritize. The findings point to a discrepancy between consumer choices and environmental knowledge, suggesting room for improvement in the promotion of sustainability.
- 7.Purchase Intention:** Purchase intention is significantly influenced by ecologically conscious consumption, especially among customers who are aware of and concerned about environmental concerns. The desire to buy clothes that is socially and ecologically conscious is present, but it is not a very strong one. Though they would need more encouragement or rewards to regularly give these alternatives priority, participants could be receptive to making such purchases.

The findings suggest the responders appear to strike a mix between practicality, thrift, and fashion conscience. In addition to being fashionably aware, they prioritize getting the most out of their purchases and selecting goods that have useful features.

6. Conclusion

The study's conclusions, taken together, provide valuable insight into how consumers act and perceive cultural influences, utilitarian consumption, ecological awareness, fashion consciousness, consumption of inexpensive apparel, aesthetic preferences, and their intentions to purchase clothing that is both socially and environmentally conscious. The results highlight the diverse incentives that impact consumer choices in the apparel industry by illuminating the complex interplay among these factors. Even while a lot of customers still think highly of fashion, it is not their main priority, indicating that they balance other considerations against their need to be up to date.

A lot of people place a high value on being frugal with their money and carefully consider the cost-benefit ratio of the clothing they purchase. The importance of affordability and financial responsibility in the current economy is highlighted by this pattern. Even if people are growing more aware of environmental issues, the respondents' dedication to ecologically responsible consumption is noticeably inadequate. This suggests that, even with its increasing recognition, sustainability may not yet be the primary factor influencing the decisions of the majority of consumers. Even if people are growing more aware of environmental issues, the respondents' dedication to ecologically responsible consumption is noticeably inadequate. This suggests that even if sustainability is acknowledged, it may not yet be the primary factor influencing the decisions made by the majority of customers. Even though environmental problems are becoming more commonly acknowledged, the respondents' commitment to environmentally responsible consumption is noticeably inadequate. This suggests that although sustainability is acknowledged, it may not yet be the primary factor influencing the decisions made by the majority of consumers. Purchasing clothing that is environmentally and socially conscious is growing in popularity, yet it is not yet the dominant trend. Customers may require more persuasive arguments or incentives to incorporate these choices into their regular shopping habit.

7. Future Work:

Deep Dive into Sustainability: Future studies should examine the obstacles preventing consumers from adopting more sustainable habits, given the low level of commitment to ecological consumption. This can entail looking at the significance of perceived value, awareness, and the efficacy of marketing tactics intended to support sustainable fashion.

Cultural Influence on Consumption: More research should be done to determine how cultural values affect certain purchase decisions and how businesses may better connect with their target markets by aligning with these values. This study might be extended to compare other cultural groups or geographical areas.

Educating Consumers for Responsible Consumption: Future studies may examine the efficacy of educational initiatives designed to raise consumer knowledge of and modify consumer behavior pertaining to socially and ecologically responsible consumption. Gaining insight into the factors that encourage ethical consumer behavior may help develop more potent communication tactics.

Intersection of Sustainability and Aesthetics: The relationship between sustainable practices and aesthetic consumption may also be of interest. In order to develop tactics that appeal to customers who are fashion-conscious, research might look at how design features in sustainable products affect consumer perception and intention to buy.

Consumer Behavior Longitudinal Studies: Monitoring changes in consumer behavior over time using longitudinal studies may shed light on views toward sustainability, frugality, and fashion change. This might be useful in identifying patterns and forecasting changes in customer preferences in the future.

Future studies can offer more profound understandings of the intricate reasons for consumer behavior in the fashion business by focusing on these areas. This will make it possible to develop more focused and efficient tactics for encouraging environmentally friendly and culturally appropriate purchase habits.

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