**Consumer Awareness and Acceptance of Circular Economy of Fashion**

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# ABSTRACT

This research paper aims at to provide an understanding of the circular economy concept in the fashion industry. It also includes the principles, benefits and challenges of the circular economy and also to understand the consumer awareness and acceptance of circular fashion practices. Consumer awareness and acceptance of reused and recycled products in the circular economy of fashion is assessed and recommendations and strategies for industry to improve sustainable practices. The study population consisted of 100 samples both male and female. A questionnaire was given to the samples to gather information regarding demographic data, awareness and acceptance of the circular economy in fashion industry. Results of the survey revealed that 53.3% of the population were aware of the bio-degradable clothes available in the market. Clothes which had tags regarding environment friendly information was preferred by 60% of the respondents. Sustainable clothes were preferred by 30% of the respondents which indicates a lower acceptance of circular fashion by the respondents. Respondents who wanted to support and encourage high price and biodegradable clothes were 50%. Respondents who had an interest to buy durable clothes compared to trendy clothes were 53.3% .Over 30% of the respondents were interested to purchase recycled clothes. The study proposes a that customers firmly felt that businesses should support sustainability, yet they were unwilling to pay more for sustainable items.

**Keywords**

Circular economy, fashion industry, consumer awareness

# Introduction

Circular Economy is a model of consumption and production of resources. It is considered more sustainable as it aims to reduce waste by reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling of products. In circular economy for fashion clothes are the most used products. Recycling or reusing of clothes that cannot be used anymore can be made to new clothes which enhance the value of materials in various levels. The fashion business has a major role in the environmental and social concerns that the world faces today. Due to its vital role that the fashion industry plays in our daily lives, the fact that it employs over 300 million people across the value chain, and the fact that it supports employment in low-income countries, the fashion industry is recognized as a significant economic sector globally. The industry produces a great deal of garbage and uses a lot of resources. Reducing the fashion industry's environmental impact and encouraging sustainability are becoming more and more crucial as environmental consciousness rises. The circular economy framework of fashion is a sustainable method of designing, producing, and consuming apparel that places a strong focus on reusing and recycling materials used in the apparel business. This concept is crucial for minimizing the damaging effects of the fashion industry on the environment while cutting waste and conserving natural resources. We can make a positive impact on a healthier planet and a more sustainable future by adopting the circular economy of fashion.

A complete response to numerous social, environmental, and economic problems is provided by the circular economy. The fashion industry has been working hard to put circular concepts into practice. Dissanayake and Weerasinghe (2021) have suggested four strategies to help apply the principles of the circular economy to the fashion industry: (1) resource efficiency (using non-toxic, renewable, and regenerative raw materials); (2) circular design (incorporating longevity, customization, disassembly, recycling, and decomposition); (3) product life extension (including repair, lease, swap, and rent); and (4) end-of-life circularity (reuse, resale, recycle, and remanufacture).

As Kalmykova et al. (2018) pointed out, this creative strategy optimizes, reuses, and reduces every resource and process in the production cycle. The circular economy is a notion that is expanding quickly on a global scale and is seen as the way forward for the fashion industry. It covers new business approaches, sustainable design techniques, sustainable fashion consumption, and textile waste management. As noted by Kant Hvass & Pedersen (2019), it is critical to remember that the circular economy is not just about waste; other important factors include lowering consumption rates, reevaluating design principles, changing the fashion industry, and promoting zero environmental pollution through efficient textile waste management. Using the concepts of the circular economy, we may create a more sustainable.

It is often known that advertising has a big influence on consumer patterns and behaviour. Companies employ a range of promotional techniques to convey their messages to prospective clients and mold their opinions about their offerings. Within the fashion industry's circular economy, advertising may have a significant impact on raising customer acceptance and adoption of sustainable fashion techniques as well as raising awareness of the value of repurposed and recycled apparel. Advertising may motivate consumers to make more sustainable purchasing decisions by clearly conveying the advantages of sustainable fashion and emphasizing the beneficial environmental effects of circular fashion models. Consequently, advertising has the potential to be an effective instrument for encouraging ecofriendly fashion methods and spurring development within the fashion sector.

Leading businesses that support sustainable and justifiable profit-based ideals and principles are the first to adopt the circular economy advertising strategy. These businesses demonstrate that they are more than just a company that sells products; they also play a significant role in protecting the environment and the economy. In light of this, advertising that promotes the circular economy can be a potent instrument for raising consumer perceptions of value and encouraging creativity. Through emphasizing their dedication to sustainable practices and the concepts of the circular economy, businesses can gain a competitive edge and set themselves apart from competitors. When it comes to building trust and loyalty with consumers, who are becoming more conscious of the environmental and social implications of the things they buy, effective circular economy advertising may be quite helpful.

The European Apparel Action Plan is an initiative of the European Union, and Moorhouse & Moorhouse (2017) set out to analyse it. The implementation of this ambitious strategy aimed to improve the sustainability of textiles from the point of design to the point of end usage by 2019. The significant volume of textile waste that this plan addresses is one of the main issues. The study emphasizes that achieving sustainability involves more than just one person's effort. Rather, it necessitates a team effort from every global garment supply chain partner. The textile and apparel sectors may experience a significant improvement in their overall sustainability if every business, from manufacturers to retailers, adopts eco-friendly procedures and works to reduce waste.

Gomes De Oliveira et al. (2022) looked into how fast and slow fashion shops saw their customers' sustainability behaviours differently. In particular, it contrasts how consumers see sustainability initiatives at two different kinds of retailers in Brasilia—one specializing in slow fashion and the other in quick fashion. In order to perform the comparative analysis, a customer survey from 2017 and 2018 as well as documented procedures provided by the stores were examined. 400 patrons of rapid fashion stores and 118 patrons of slow fashion stores participated in the study's survey. The study's startling conclusion is that most consumers are unaware of the sustainability measures these companies have implemented. But when fast and slow fashion clients were compared, an intriguing pattern showed up. Most consumers (78% of fast fashion customers and 91% of slow fashion customers) were unwilling to pay a premium for more ecologically friendly products, even though they were aware of or understood a company's sustainability efforts.

Customers firmly felt that businesses should support sustainability, yet they were unwilling to pay more for sustainable items. The study proposes a contradictory customer behaviour in which consumers expect sustainability from businesses yet must be ready to foot the bill for such activities.

# Objectives

1. To give an explanation of the circular economy concept in relation to the fashion industry.
2. To determine customer awareness towards circular economy of fashion in regard to products made from recycled and reused materials.
3. To determine customer acceptability towards circular economy of fashion in regard to products made from recycled and reused materials.

**Research Methodology**

This study's methodology is grounded in an analytical descriptive approach. The objective of this scientific research methodology is to gather information and data through quantitative data analysis and make inferences from the results.

# Sample and Research population

This study consisted of 100 samples both male and female residents of Mysore. The target population were potential sustainable fashion consumers.

Convenience sampling was used to choose 100 people at random for the sample. The results might not apply to a larger portion of the target demographic due to the small sample size. Nonetheless, given the parameters of the investigation, the sample size is sufficient for statistical analysis and interpretation.

**Research Tools Used**

In this study a questionnaire was framed to collect data in the main areas: demographic information, awareness about sustainable fashion, and acceptance of circular economy of fashion.

**Research Terms**

**Circular economy**: The circular economy refers to a system of economic activity in which resources are continuously used and waste is eliminated. Reuse, share, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, and recycle are all part of circular systems, which minimize resource consumption and lower waste, pollution, and carbon emissions while creating a closed loop.

**Circular Fashion**: Fashion that is produced and used in a way that minimizes waste and its negative effects on the environment at every stage of its lifecycle, from obtaining materials to disposing of them. Through recycling, donation, repair, and reuse, it seeks to prolong the life of clothing. This enhances the effectiveness of resources and could lessen the impact of fashion.

# Results and Interpretation

A questionnaire was given to the samples to gather information regarding demographic information, awareness about sustainable fashion, and acceptance of circular economy of fashion.

These results offer insightful information on the sample's demographic composition, level of awareness and acceptance of the circular economy in the fashion sector.

1. Demographic Information

Table 1.1: Age group

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 20-30 | 30-40 | 40-50 |
| 51.7% | 33.3% | 15% |

Table 1.1 highlights that 51.7% of the sample were between the age group of 20-30, 15% of population were in the age group of 40-50, 33.3% were between the age group of 30-40.

Table 1.2: Gender of respondent’s

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| MALE | 56.7% |
| FEMALE | 43.3% |

Table1.2 Shows that majority of participants i.e is 56.7% were male, whereas 43.3% of the participants were females.

1. Acceptance of circular economy of fashion

This part of the questionnaire was prepared regarding he acceptance of circular economy among the respondents. Respondents were asked to answer questions such as their attitude or interest towards recycled clothes available in the market. Preference among the respondents towards the purchase of clothes made of natural fibres. Which clothes were most preferred by the respondents durable clothes or the trendy clothes.

The results revealed the key findings:

Most of the respondents i.e 70% did not prefer recycled clothes, whereas only 30% of participants preferred to buy recycled clothes. 53.3% of the respondents preferred clothes that are durable, whereas 46.7% of participants preferred to buy clothes that are according to the trend. 75% of the samples preferred natural fibre clothes, whereas 25% of participants did not prefer natural fibre clothes.

1. Awareness of about sustainable fashion

This part of the questionnaire was prepared regarding the Awareness of about sustainable fashion among the respondents. Respondents were asked to answer questions such as their awareness of about the bio-degradable clothes which they purchased in the market. Interest of purchasing high price bio-degradable clothes vs low price non bio-degradable clothes. Respondents were asked if they were aware about environment friendly clothes

The results revealed the key findings:

53.3% of the respondents are aware of bio-degradable clothes, whereas 53.3% are not aware of bio-degradable clothes. 50% of the respondents have an interest to purchase high price biodegradable clothes, whereas 50% of the respondents have an interest to purchase low price non bio-degradable clothes. 60% of participants were aware of environment friendly clothes, whereas 40% of participants were not aware of environment friendly clothes.

**Conclusion**

This paper's primary goal was to present a methodical analysis of the awareness and acceptance of circular economy in the fashion sector. The fashion industry needs to transition to a circular economy and implement circular strategies in the production and consumption of materials and energy as a result of the growing "fast-fashion" phenomenon and its effects on the environment, society, and economy.

The current research study included 100 respondents among them the awareness and acceptance of circular economy was observed. To find out acceptance and awareness of circular economy of fashion respondents were asked to answer questions such as their attitude or interest towards circular economy of fashion. The data revealed that 53.3% of the respondents were aware of the bio-degradable clothes available in the market while the other 47.7% of participants were not aware of bio-degradable clothes. Clothes which had tags regarding environment friendly information was preferred by 60% of the respondents while the other 40% of respondents would not go through the information in the tags. There was a lower interest of 70% to buy recycled clothes and only 30% of the respondents were interested in buying recycled sustainable clothes, which indicate a low acceptance of circular fashion by the respondents. Higher interest of 75% was showed among the respondents who preferred clothes made out of natural fibres and the rest 25% did not prefer clothes made of natural fibers. 50% of the respondents showed an interest towards high price bio-degradable clothes, whereas 50% of the respondents showed an interest towards low price non bio-degradable clothes. There was an interest of 53.3% among the respondents to buy durable clothes and the remaining 47.7% preferred trendy clothes. Henceforth from this resreach study we can conclude that awareness of sustainable fashion should be promoted to enhance circular economy.

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