

Environmental Awareness and Sustainable Behaviour as Predictors of Green Apparel Adoption among Young Adults in Haryana

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Abstract

The rise of fast fashion has driven substantial growth in the apparel industry, with a reported growth rate of 6.2% in 2020. However, this expansion has also resulted in severe environmental damage. As the demand for eco-friendly fashion grows, apparel manufacturers are adopting sustainable practices to reduce their environmental impact. A quantitative research design was employed using primary data collected from 300 young adults through a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and inferential techniques, including correlation and multiple regression analysis, were applied to examine relationships and assess the influence of key determinants on green apparel adoption.

Keywords: Environment, Awareness, Sustainable Awareness, Green Apparel Adoption

Introduction

Clothing is one of the basic requirements of human beings. However, due to the rapid growth of development, this basic requirement has become a status symbol. A greater number of clothes, particularly the most trending ones, are being purchased by the young generation. The global apparel industry is a mix of rapid innovation, shifting customer needs, and growing digital influence. Fashion is no longer just about clothing — it is about experience, speed, sustainability, and personalization.

Sustainability is no longer a choice but a necessity. Sustainable fashion is defined as clothing produced using eco-friendly materials, reduced carbon emissions, and ethical labour practices has emerged as a prominent trend in modern fashion consumption. Sustainable fashion is part of the slow fashion movement, developed over the past decades, and used interchangeably with eco-, green-, and ethical-fashion (Carey and Cervellon, 2014). Sustainable fashion first emerged in the 1960s, when consumers became aware of the impact clothing manufacturing had on the environment and demanded the industry change its practices (Jung and Jin 2014). Although eco-fashion was negatively perceived at first, this changed with the anti-fur campaign emerging in the 1980s/90s, followed by an interest in ethical clothing in the late 1990s. Ethical fashion is associated with fair working conditions, a sustainable business model, organic and environmentally friendly materials, certifications, and traceability (Johnston, 2012).

Eco-friendly clothing, also known as Organic clothing, can be explained as clothing made from any fabric material grown by using organic practices without any use of pesticides, chemicals, or artificial additives and which can be recycled and are biodegradable. Some fibres and textiles used to manufacture eco-friendly clothing are hemp, jute, organic cotton, organic linen, organic silk, organic wool, ramie, bamboo,

hessian cloth, corn, soya bean, pineapple, lyocell, tencel, lycra, recycled cotton, and recycled polyester, among others (Rahaman *et al.*, 2024)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mishra and Devkumar (2018) identified the factors influencing green consumer purchase behaviour for organic apparel products in India. Based on the scholarly journals from national and international publications, the research gap was recognized. And scholar has found factors such as Green Trust, Green Motive, Green Perceived Value and Green Attitude having strong influential capabilities on purchasing preferences for organic apparel products. It was also noticed that various generation cohorts as Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z, exhibit uniqueness in their consumption patterns for such products. In addition, consumers' transition towards organic clothing is on the rise in India recently due to an increase in environmental, health and social hazards associated with conventional apparel products.

According to Chang, M. Y., & Chen, H. S. (2022), sustainability factors—such as eco-friendly materials and ethical production—positively influence purchase decisions, especially among millennial consumers. Their research suggests that shoppers increasingly consider environmental impact as part of value when selecting clothing. This trend aligns with global shifts toward green consumption and indicates that sustainability credentials are becoming essential in shaping modern apparel purchasing patterns.

Vlastelica et al. (2023) investigated the determinants of environmentally and socially responsible clothing consumption among young adults in a developing economy. The study found that green consumption values positively affected receptivity to green communication, suggesting that consumers with greater environmental concern are more receptive to eco-friendly clothing.

Khare and Kautish (2022) studied the influence of past behavior, knowledge, and peer pressure on perceptions of the benefits of wearing green clothing. They found that higher ecological knowledge (EK) increased the likelihood of consumers' intention to purchase green products, indicating that greater knowledge enhances green purchasing behavior.

Khare et al. (2017) investigated the impact of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII), past green behavior, green peer influence, and green apparel knowledge on the green apparel purchasing behavior of Indian youth. The sample consisted of 981 individuals aged 18–24. The study revealed that past green behavior positively influenced green apparel purchase behavior ($b = 0.586$, $p < 0.01$). CSII positively influenced past green behavior ($b = 0.476$, $p < 0.01$) and green peer norms ($b = 0.846$, $p < 0.01$) but negatively impacted green apparel purchasing behavior ($b = -0.172$, $p < 0.01$). However, CSII did not directly influence green apparel purchase behavior.

Schiaroli et al. (2024) reported that an alternative method of sustainability from "green clothing" was collaborative consumption. It had been stated that numerous sorts of collaborative consumption modes already exist, as well as their positive impact on the environment. The economic impact of collaborative consumption was a complex component that cannot be defined straightforwardly.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employs a quantitative research approach, integrating both descriptive and analytical designs. The descriptive component facilitates the assessment of the level of environmental awareness, personal sustainability values, and green apparel adoption among respondents. The analytical component is used to

examine the relationships among variables and to determine the extent to which these factors influence sustainable fashion adoption.

Study Area and Sample Characteristics

The empirical investigation was conducted in selected districts of Haryana, India. The target population comprised young adults aged 18–30 years, representing a key consumer segment in the apparel market. A total sample of 300 respondents was selected, including both college students and working professionals, to ensure heterogeneity in socio-economic and behavioural characteristics.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure proportional representation of the identified sub-groups. This method enhances the precision and generalizability of the findings by minimizing sampling bias.

Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed in accordance with the study objectives and supported by relevant literature. The instrument included multiple sections capturing constructs such as environmental awareness, sustainable apparel awareness and green apparel adoption.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Environmental Awareness and Sustainability Orientation among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Sustainability is important for a healthy future	2.72	0.52	1
2	Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility	2.69	0.55	2
3	I prefer to buy eco-friendly products	2.48	0.64	5
4	Personal choices can influence global sustainability	2.55	0.60	3
5	I try to reduce waste by recycling or reusing materials	2.51	0.63	4
6	I prefer buying from companies with sustainable practices	2.44	0.66	6
7	I regularly seek information about environmental issues	2.36	0.69	7

Overall Mean = 2.54

The table presents the level of environmental awareness and sustainability attitudes among young adults in Haryana. The highest ranked statement indicates that respondents strongly believe sustainability is important for a healthy future (Mean = 2.72), followed by the perception that environmental protection is a shared responsibility (Mean = 2.69). Respondents also acknowledge the role of personal choices in promoting sustainability. However, relatively lower mean scores are observed for actively seeking environmental information and preferring sustainable companies. Overall, the findings suggest a positive orientation towards sustainability, though practical engagement and proactive behaviour appear comparatively moderate among respondents.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainable Apparel Awareness among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Awareness of environmental impact of clothing production	2.58	0.60	2
2	Concern about pollution caused by textile industry	2.61	0.58	1
3	Knowledge of eco-friendly materials used by brands	2.42	0.67	5
4	Attention to environmental information on labels	2.39	0.68	6
5	Avoidance of fast fashion to reduce impact	2.34	0.70	7
6	Belief that sustainable apparel protects environment	2.54	0.62	3
7	Preference for recycled/organic clothing	2.48	0.64	4

Overall Mean = 2.48

The table highlights the awareness and perceptions of young adults in Haryana regarding the environmental impact of apparel consumption. Concern about pollution caused by the textile industry ranks highest (Mean = 2.61), followed closely by awareness of the environmental impact of clothing production (Mean = 2.58). Respondents also show a positive belief that sustainable apparel contributes to environmental protection. However, lower rankings are observed for avoidance of fast fashion and attention to eco-labels, indicating limited behavioural application. Overall, while awareness levels are relatively high, translating this awareness into sustainable purchasing practices remains moderate.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Green Apparel Adoption Behaviour among Young Adults in Haryana

S. No.	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
1	Actively look for green apparel options	2.28	0.72	6
2	Knowledge of brands offering green apparel	2.35	0.69	5
3	Ability to distinguish green apparel	2.31	0.71	7
4	Intention to buy green apparel soon	2.47	0.64	3
5	Willingness to pay more for green apparel	2.42	0.66	4
6	Preference for green over conventional apparel	2.50	0.62	2
7	Recommendation of green apparel to others	2.54	0.60	1

Overall Mean = 2.41

The table presents the adoption behaviour of green apparel among young adults in Haryana. The highest ranked factor is the recommendation of green apparel to others (Mean = 2.54), followed by preference for green over conventional apparel (Mean = 2.50), indicating a generally positive attitude. Intention to purchase green apparel and willingness to pay more also show moderate agreement. However, lower mean scores are observed for actively searching for green apparel and the ability to distinguish such products. Overall, while respondents exhibit favourable attitudes towards green apparel, actual awareness and proactive adoption behaviour remain relatively limited.

Table 4: Correlation between Environmental Awareness, Personal Sustainability Values and Sustainable Fashion Adoption

Variables	Personal Sustainability Values	Environmental Awareness	Sustainable Fashion Adoption
Personal Sustainability Values	1.000		
Environmental Awareness	0.528**	1.000	
Sustainable Fashion Adoption	0.601**	0.564**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$

The table presents the correlation among personal sustainability values, environmental awareness, and sustainable fashion adoption among young adults in Haryana. All variables show positive and significant relationships. Sustainable fashion adoption is strongly correlated with personal sustainability values ($r =$

0.601) and environmental awareness ($r = 0.564$), indicating that individuals with stronger values and awareness are more likely to adopt sustainable fashion. Additionally, personal sustainability values and environmental awareness are moderately correlated ($r = 0.528$). Overall, the findings suggest that both personal values and awareness play a crucial role in influencing sustainable fashion adoption behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides important insights into the factors influencing the adoption of green apparel among young adults in Haryana. The findings reveal that although respondents exhibit a moderate level of environmental awareness and personal sustainability values, the actual adoption of green apparel remains comparatively limited. This indicates a noticeable gap between awareness and behavioural implementation.

The results further highlight that young generation is aware about sustainability. They showed positive attitude toward sustainability. They also believe that sustainable apparel contributes to environmental protection. Although the awareness level is high about the environment and sustainable apparel but the adoption of green apparel is relatively low. Overall, the research contributes to the understanding of sustainable consumption in a regional context and offers practical implications for policymakers and marketers aiming to encourage environmentally responsible fashion choices.

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