A STUDY TO ANALYZE THE BUYING ATTITUDE OF GenZ FOR RECYCLED CLOTHS IN CHENNAI.

Richard K

Research Scholar, Faculty of Management, SRMIST, Kattankulathur,
rk5604@srmist.edu.in

Dr. Yaaseen Masvood

Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, SRMIST, Kattankulathur,
masvoody@srmist.edu.in

Elantheraiyan.P

Associate Professor , Department of Management Studies, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R&D Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, elantheraiyan@veltech.edu.in

Abstract

This study investigates the buying attitude of Generation Z consumers in Chennai, India, towards recycled clothing, focusing on factors influencing their purchasing decisions and their overall perception of sustainable fashion. Using quantitative approach, data were collected through surveys and interviews with 200 respondents aged 18–25. The findings reveal that while Gen Z consumers are generally supportive of environmental sustainability, their actual purchasing behaviour is influenced by factors such as price sensitivity, brand perception, and style trends. the study highlights the potential for growth in the recycled clothing market in Chennai if brands address these factors effectively. Implications for sustainable fashion retailers are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Key words: - Recycled cloths, sustainable fashion, environmentally friendly and buying attitude.

Introduction

The fashion industry is one of the largest contributors to environmental degradation, producing millions of tons of textile waste each year and consuming vast amounts of water and energy. Fast fashion's cycle of rapid production and disposal has intensified these issues, with harmful chemicals from dyes and finishes polluting water bodies globally. *Köksal, D (2024).* As awareness grows, sustainable fashion is gaining popularity as a countermovement, advocating for eco-friendly production and the use of recycled materials to mitigate the industry's impact. *Global Fashion Agenda (2024).* Recycled clothing has emerged as a promising solution, converting discarded fabrics into new garments to reduce resource consumption and waste. This trend is especially appealing to younger generations, who are increasingly eco-conscious *Ngo, T. T. A (2024).* In India, sustainable fashion is gaining traction, yet recycled clothing remains a niche market in cities like Chennai. Understanding Gen Z's attitudes toward recycled fashion in this region is essential for promoting sustainable choices and expanding market potential *Chaturvedi, P., (2020)*

The fashion industry has a significant environmental footprint, contributing to pollution, resource depletion, and waste on a massive scale. Globally, fast fashion's rapid production and disposal cycles result in over 92 million tons of textile waste annually *European Parliament (2019).* Landfills are overburdened by this tendency, which also pollutes the waters and emits microplastics that damage aquatic ecosystems. Fabric dyeing alone is responsible for a significant amount of the world's water pollution and the production process uses enormous amounts of energy and water (*Kerrice Bailey, 2022).* The fshion industry is among the most detrimental to the environment because of the carbon emissions it generates, which exacerbate climate change (*Kirsi Niimimaki, 2020).* Concerns about the environmental impact of fashion are also present in Inda, particularly in areas like Chennai where consumption and tourism are growing. Fast fashion's growth, which promotes frequent purchases and disposal, makes this issue worse and contributes to pollution and regional waste management problems (*Hina Kausher, 2023).*

In reacton to these environmental problems, a solution-focused movement that encourages environmentally responsible behaviour has emerged: sustainable fashion. Recycled clothing is a significant part of this movement, as it reduces waste and resource dependence by reusing old materials to make new apparel (*Jaheer Mukthar, K.P, 2024).* This tactic is gaining popularity all around the world, especially with younger, eco-aware consumers. Sustainable fashion initiatives are also becoming more popular in India, where brands and designers are beginning to use recycled materials in their collections *(Anjali Awasthi, 2023).* In general, recycled clothing is a niche market in cities like Chennai, where the concept is still relatively new. Examining how Gen Z views recycled fashion can help India expand sustainable practices and promote eco-friendly decisions *(Elora Basumatary, 2023).*

Problem Statement

Even while sustainable apparel is becoming more and more popular worldwide, Chennai has relatively low acceptance rates for recycled clothing, particularly among Gen Z consumers. This group is crucial to the growth of sustainable fashion because they are generally known for their environmental sensitivity and progressive views. But a number of things, such as price sensitivity, brand perception, product availability and stylistic fit, might affect their decisions to buy.

Despite the worldwide movement toward more environmentally friendly design practices, Chennai currently has poor acceptance rates for recycled clothing, particularly among Gen Z consumers. Known for its progressive values and environmental awareness, this association is crucial to the growth of sustainable apparels. Price sensitivity, brand perception, product accessibility and stylistic fit are some of the factors that could affect their decisions to buy.

Despite increased awareness of environmental risk, may Chennai Gen Z customers still favor fast fashion since it is reasonably priced and in style. This decision highlights a disconnect between sustainable values and actual purchasing behaviours. In the order to close this gap, it is necessary to comprehend the factors influencing Gen Z's opinions and purchasing choices about recycled apparel. With information about these elements, companies, policymakers and marketers may be able to create targeted strategies to encourage eco-friendly purchasing habits and expand Chennai's market for recycled clothing.

Objectives of the Study

The study attempts to investigate Chennai's Gen Z consumers' awareness, attitudes and buying habits regarding recycled apparel, as well as the variables affecting these behaviours.

To investigate how much Chennai's Gen Z shoppers know about recycled apparel.

To determine what influences their decision to buy recycled apparel.

To examine what motivates and deters Chennai's Gen Z to buy recycled apparel.

Significance of the Study

To promote sustainable fashion in Chennai, fashion businesses, marketers and lawmakers will find this research to be quite informative. Gen Z consumers, known for their unique purchasing patterns and environmental awareness, are the focus of this study, which looks at the key factors their opinions. Understanding Gen Z's motivations and challenges is essential as businesses increasingly incorporate sustainable practices in order to align products with customer values. Fashion brands require a deep understanding of Gen Z's goals, which include cost, fashion and brands ethics in order to develop appealing clothing and advertising campaigns. By utilizing these result , fashion marketers may promote apparel which appeal to Gen Z, emphasize sustainability without compromising style and boost the demand for recycled clothing. From social effect to price sensitivity, marketers can use this information to create customized advertising that address Gen Z's particular concerns around recycled fashion. Marketers can more effectively reach younger consumers by emphasizing the environmental benefits of recycled clothing and presenting these products as fashionable, unique and reasonably priced clothing.

Lawmakers can also use these findings to encourage eco-friendly apparel sector activities in Chennai. Polices that support eco-friendly products, consumer education and inexpensive sustainable alternatives can be crafted by considering the obstacle to sustainable consumption. Overall, this study promotes environmental conscious behaviors among a generation that will shape future consumer trends in addition to supporting sustainable development in Chennai's fashion industry.

Literature Review

Previous studies highlight the growing popularity of sustainable fashion, particularly among younger consumers, with Gen Z increasingly aware of environmental impacts. However, barriers such as price, style, and limited availability often hinder their adoption of recycled clothing. Understanding these factors is crucial to promoting sustainable fashion effectively.

The Indian apparel industry has long been a well-established sector, and as time has gone on, the idea behind apparel has evolved to target different generations. Although there are numerous perspectives on the global generational nomenclature, there are primarily three groups that are still being discussed today: Generation X, Y, and Z. Generation Z is the most recent generation, comprising individuals born between 1995 and 2015; Generation X, the baby boomer generation's successors, refers to those born between 1965 and 1979; and Generation Y, also known as millennials, refers to those born between 1980 and 1994.(Balon, 2023).

There is a lot of potential to be realized in the area of sustainability for these generations, since the Indian apparel sector is predicted to grow by 67.9% by 2025 compared to 2020 (MarketLine, 2021). India has a very significant apparel sector. In addition to producing financial income, it offers a wide range of job options. Nearly 2.3% of India's GDP comes from it, and 12% of its foreign exchange profits come from textile exports. This sector employs

almost 45 million people directly or indirectly Avoiding contamination and using natural resources responsibly are crucial. These practices, which include utilizing organic fabric, recycling clothing, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and using less color dyes, are linked to preventing environmental pollution. Examples of consumer awareness practices include the eradication of the consumer throwaway culture, the introduction of eco-labels, and a decrease in fast fashion (Vishwakarma et al., 2021).

Additionally, this shift in pandemic purchasing will have an impact on post-pandemic purchasing. Perhaps even considering a pandemic, the circular fashion economy becomes a significant concern for Generation Z customers, and this perspective can impact (the form, manner, and ultimate choice of items) following the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Economic Research-EKONOMSKA ISTRAŽIVANJA (2024). Customers also discovered alternative ways to purchase clothing throughout the pandemic. Buying during a pandemic typically has an impact on the circular fashion industry and sustainability perceptions in general. Customers' unable to purchase generally caused them to wear older or borrowed apparel, which altered the area's general perception (Vladimirova et al., 2022).

Additionally, customers began wearing clothing that we had purchased but hadn't yet worn. These factors made us more receptive to the concept of "other" lifestyle fashion. Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, consumers did not place much value on services like apparel repairability, reuse (or lack thereof), or recycling (Zhu & Liu, 2021). For the past five years, this tendency has continued, and when Generation Z shoppers are selecting a shopping centre, they consider the incorporation of contemporary technologies (Ameen et al., 2021).

Sustainable Fashion and Recycling in Textiles

Studies on sustainable fashion highlight a global shift toward reducing environmental impacts by using recycled materials in textiles. Researchers emphasize the importance of recycling to reduce textile waste and resource consumption *(de la Motte & Ostlund, 2022)* Many fashion brands are now integrating recycled fabrics into their collections, driven by consumer demand for eco-friendly options and regulatory pressure. Recycled clothing is shown to lower carbon footprints and mitigate waste, though its adoption varies by region and demographic, necessitating a closer look at local attitudes and behaviours -Gen Z Consumer Behaviour *Jaheer Mukthar, K.P (2024).* Research on Gen Z reveals a generation that values environmental responsibility and sustainability. Studies show that this demographic is more likely to support brands that align with their ethical and environmental values, making them a key target for sustainable products *Ko, J.-H., & Jeon, H.-M. (2024).* Their buying slectins are frequently influenced by their style preferences and price sensitivity. The necessity for readily available and stylish recycled option is highlighted by the fact that despite their environmental knowledge, Gen Z consumers oftentimes place a higher emphasis on pricing and trends than sustainability *(Tran K, 2022).*

Cultural and Economic Context in Chennai

Modern and traditional features coexist in Chennai's fashion culture, with fast fashion growing in popularity due to its affordability and accessibility. Gen Z buyers in college typically prioritized price above sustainability because they have limited disposable resources *(Petr Simek, 2024).* However, as environmental issues acquire more attention, there is a market for sustainable fashion if businesses consider local tastes and financial constraints. To

effectively promote recycled fashion in this market, it is essential to understand Chennai's unique economic and cultural traits *(Kumar N, 2021)*.

Research Methodology and Design

Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. This approach allow for a comprehensive examination of Gen Z consumers' understanding, attitudes and purchasing behaviours about recycled apparel by providing both quantitative and qualitative data.

Population and Sample

The target demographic for this study is Chennai's Gen Z customers, particularly those who are 18 to 25 years old. For the quantitative survey, a sample size of 200 respondents has been gathered to ensure statistical significance. For in-depth qualitative interviews, 20 participants have been selected to gain a deeper understanding of their beliefs and motivations. In both data collection methods, convenience sampling has been used to recruit participants through offline tactics (such as college campuses and community events) and online platforms (such as social media and survey websites).
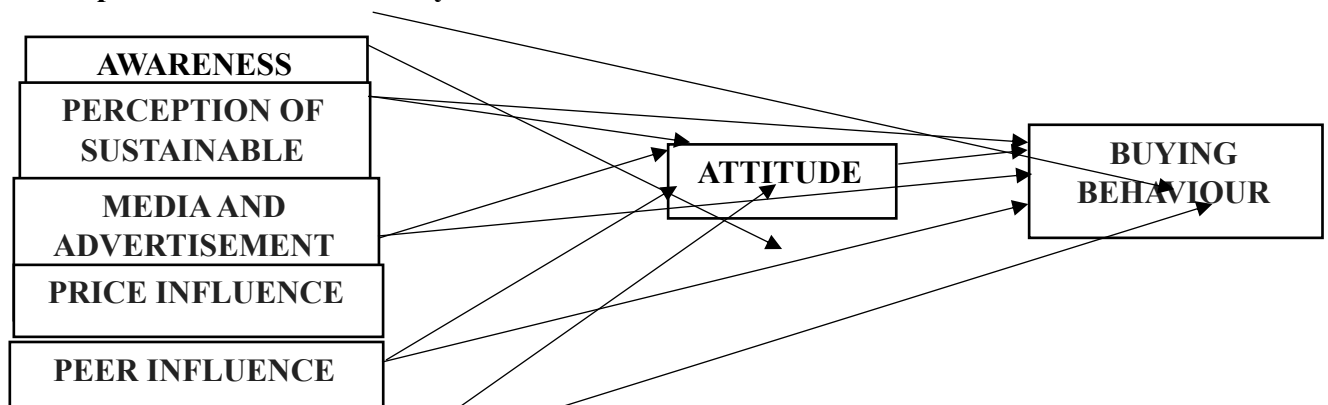
Conceptual Model for the Study

Figure 1: Model for Effect of 3PAM on BB with ATT.

HYPOTHESIS

H1-Awareness Levels positively influence to Attitude.

H2-Awareness Levels positively influence to Buying Behavior.

H3- Perception of Sustainable Fashion positively influence to Attitude.

H4- Perception of Sustainable Fashion positively influence to Buying Behavior.

H5- Media and Advertisement positively influence to Attitude.

H6- Media and Advertisement positively influence to Buying Behavior.

H7- Price Influence positively influence to Attitude.

H8- Price Influence positively influence to Buying Behavior.

H9- Peer Influence positively influence to Attitude.

H10- Peer Influence positively influence to Buying Behavior.

H11- Attitude positively influence to Buying Behavior.

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Validity for Indirect Effects.

CONSTRUCTS	ABB	CRON-ALPHA	COMP-RELIA.	COMP-RELIA	AVER- VARI-EXT
Awareness Levels	AL	0.815	0.836	0.876	0.586
Perception of Sustainable Fashion	PSF	0.810	0.823	0.863	0.565
Media And Advertisement Influence	MAI	0.820	0.823	0.887	0.656
Price Influence	PRI	0.805	1.346	0.803	0.566
Peer Influence	PEI	0.732	0.777	0.795	0.544
Attitude	ATT	0.780	0.786	0.872	0.693
Buying Behaviour	BB	0.892	0.929	0.895	0.554

Table 1 shows the constructs analysis reveals robust internal consistency and reliability across the variables. Awareness Levels (AL), Perception of Sustainable Fashion (PSF), Media and Advertisement Influence (MAI), Price Influence (PRI), Peer Influence (PEI), Attitude (ATT), and Buying Behavior (BB) demonstrate acceptable to excellent Cronbach's Alpha values (ranging from 0.732 to 0.892), confirming the constructs' reliability. Composite reliability values for most constructs exceed the threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency, with MAI having the highest reliability (0.887). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.5, reflecting adequate convergent validity, with ATT showing the highest AVE (0.693). Notably, while PRI has an unusually high composite reliability (1.346), this may indicate a need to reassess the construct's dimensionality.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity for Indirect Effect.

	AL	PSF	MAI	PRI	PEI	ATT	BB
AL	0.769						
PSF	0.804	0.754					
MAI	0.873	0.835	0.810				
PRI	0.714	0.736	0.605	0.740			
PEI	0.711	0.869	0.716	0.786	0.744		
ATT	0.505	0.836	0.587	0.615	0.665	0.836	
BB	0.585	0.527	0.456	0.696	0.766	0.294	0.745

Table 2 shows the correlation matrix demonstrates significant relationships among the constructs, with most correlations showing moderate to strong associations. Awareness Levels (AL), Perception of Sustainable Fashion (PSF), and Media and Advertisement Influence (MAI) display strong interrelationships, evidenced by correlations exceeding 0.8, indicating these constructs are closely linked in influencing perceptions of sustainability. Price Influence (PRI) and Peer Influence (PEI) also show moderate to strong correlations with other constructs, particularly with PSF (0.736 for PRI and 0.869 for PEI). Attitude (ATT) correlates strongly with PSF (0.836) but shows weaker associations with Buying Behavior (BB) (0.294),

suggesting its limited direct influence on purchase decisions. Lastly, Buying Behavior (BB) correlates most strongly with Peer Influence (PEI) (0.766), highlighting the role of social factors in sustainable purchasing decisions.

Table 3: Total Relationship.

Relationship	Beta Values	P values	Decision
AL-> BB	0.670	0.000	Accepted
AL-> ATT	0.819	0.000	Accepted
ATT -> BB	0.837	0.000	Accepted
PSF-> BB	-0.175	0.000	Accepted
PSF-> ATT	-0.213	0.000	Accepted
MAI-> BB	0.249	0.000	Accepted
MAI-> ATT	0.284	0.000	Accepted
PRI-> BB	0.112	0.000	Accepted
PRI->ATT	0.143	0.000	Accepted
PEI-> BB	-0.073	0.015	Accepted
PEI-> ATT	-0.094	0.015	Accepted

Table 3 shows the analysis indicating significant relationships between the constructs, with all pathways showing statistically significant beta values and p-values. Awareness Levels (AL) strongly influence both Buying Behavior (BB) ($\beta = 0.670$, p = 0.000) and Attitude (ATT) ($\beta = 0.819$, p = 0.000), underscoring the importance of awareness in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Attitude (ATT) significantly impacts BB ($\beta = 0.837$, p = 0.000), emphasizing its critical role as a mediator. Conversely, Perception of Sustainable Fashion (PSF) negatively affects both BB ($\beta = -0.175$, p = 0.000) and ATT ($\beta = -0.213$, p = 0.000), suggesting possible barriers or skepticism toward sustainable fashion. Media and Advertisement Influence (MAI) positively influences BB ($\beta = 0.249$, p = 0.000) and ATT ($\beta = 0.284$, p = 0.000), highlighting its promotional effectiveness. Price Influence (PRI) also has a positive effect on BB ($\beta = 0.112$, p = 0.000) and ATT ($\beta = 0.143$, p = 0.000), indicating the relevance of price sensitivity. Peer Influence (PEI) also has a negative but significant effect on both BB($\beta = -0.073$, p = 0.015) and ATT ($\beta = -0.094$, p = 0.015), indicating the peer perceptions may sometimes hinder the adoption of sustainable apparel. These observations demonstrate the dynamic interaction of attitudes, awareness, and outside variables in determining sustainable buying patterns.

Discussion

According to the research, Chennai's Gen Z population has a notably positive attitude and awareness of recycled clothing, which is consistent with global trends showing younger consumers are becoming more interested in sustainable fashion. Despite the fact that international surveys often indicate a strong commitment to sustainability at all costs, Chennai's Gen Z respondents exhibit a high price sensitivity, which may restrict their purchasing choices. This discrepancy highlights how crucial its is to take local economic circumstances into account when analyzing attitudes toward sustainable practices. In contrast to certain western marketplaces where customers may place a higher value on sustainable than

price, Chennai's youth demonstrate that affordability is still a significant consideration for them. Purchase behaviour is influenced by income level, particularly for responders who are enrolled in college. Numerous participants indicated that their limited budgets hinder investment is sustainable fashion, underscoring the challenge of providing recycled clothing at affordable prices for these consumers. Consumers, even those who prioritize environmental concerns, would choose price when making purchases, a conclusion that aligns with recent studies emphasizing the correlation between economic factors and consumer behaviour. These financial problems need to be fixed to improve the market potential for recycled clothing among Gen Z in Chennai.

Style and brand loyalty are big parts of the fashion scene in Chennai. The interviews showed that people are more likely to buy recycled apparel if it is linked to well-known names. This shows that brand recognition can help customers trust the quality of recycled goods. Furthermore, the focus on style suggests that Chennai's Gen Z consumers are unwilling to forgo aesthetics in favour of sustainability. This result is consistent with global patterns that show younger customers are drawn to eco-friendly, fashion-forward products. This group is likely to be interested in brands that can effectively combine sustainability with modern design.

Gen Z people in Chennai are more likely to wear recycled clothes if brands try a few different things. To attract shoppers on a tight budget, it will be important to make line of product that are affordable without sacrificing style or quality. A brand can also boost its reputation and appeal by working with famous people or people who have a lot of impact in the fashion industry. Additionally, advertising initiatives that emphasize the environmental benefits of recycled clothing might appeal to Gen Z's values and advance sustainability. By addressing financial constraints and aligning product offerings with the interests of this audience, brands may effectively promote the adoption of sustainable fashion in Chennai's evolving market.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined Chennai's Gen Z consumers' attitudes and buying patterns about recycled apparel, yielding numerous important conclusions. First, although may people are aware of and have favourable opinions about sustainable fashion, adoption is hampered by this group's high price sensitivity. If recycled clothing were reasonably priced, many participants said they would be more inclined to buy it. A crucial element that also surfaced was brand impression, as respondents indicated a preference for well-known brands linked to recycled fashion. Finally, the study emphasized Gen Z's strong environmental values, showing that they are eager to support sustainable activities provided financial restrictions are handled. Several useful suggestions can be made in light of these findings to increase Chennai's market uptake of recycled apparel.

Brands should investigate ways to lower the price of recycled apparel, possibly by using effective sourcing and production techniques, so that consumers on a tight budget can purchase these items.

Gen Z ideals can be aligned with the implementation of focused marketing efforts the highlight the distinctive features and environmental advantages of recycled apparel. This audience can be further engaged by showcasing actual sustainability and environmental impact tales.

Increasing legitimacy and apparel can be achieved by collaborating with well-known and renowned fashion brands. Recycled materials used in collaborative collections can draw in customers who might otherwise be reluctant to try sustainable solutions.

Future studies could think about extending the focus beyond Chennai's Gen Z population to include other demographic groups, such millennials or senior citizens, to provide a more comprehensive picture of sentiments toward recycled apparel. Furthermore, similar research might be carried out in various parts of India to shed light on the various cultural and economic elements that affect the adoption of sustainable fashion. This would add value to the body of current research and help create more potent plans for encouraging eco-friendly garment sector practices.

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