

PRACTICES TOWARDS POST TEXTILE CONSUMER CLOTHING WASTE

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The consumption patterns of consumers have changed. The consumers are more detached from their clothing and are disconnected from environmental and social impact. Unfortunately conventional modes of production, using and disposing off apparel have significant adverse impact on environment as well as on people and communities. Growing amount of textile waste has become a serious concern. The purpose of the study is to find the behavior of the consumers towards the amount of textile waste generated. Studying consumers buying behavior and the way they discard apparel and other products could be very useful in dealing with this challenge.

Objective: The aim of this research was to study the consumers clothing practices regarding post-consumer textile waste.

Methodology: The present study was conducted in Jaipur city. The sample for studying post consumers textile waste was 100 girls in the age group of 18 to 21 years. An interview schedule was designed to study the clothing practices related to recycling and reuse. The data was collected from the consumers and analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages.

Results: The study reveals behavior regarding discarding, recycling and disposing off apparel. It was found that recycling has become popular around the world, but majority of valuable processed material is still thrown away rather than reused or recycled, leaving room for significant improvement and opportunities.

Key words: *Clothing practices, consumer behavior, post consumer textile waste*

Introduction

With the growing affluent lifestyle and purchasing power, the fast-fashion trend in which fashion styles become quickly obsolete the phenomena of the throw away culture has increased. Unused clothes are being thrown away as waste, which is causing harm to the environment. Hence, there is a need to study consumer's behavior of clothing disposal. Chun (1987) explained clothing disposition practice as "discontinued wear and disposal off a clothing item by giving it to others, throwing it away, using it for another purpose than wearing apparel, or selling it at used clothing stores or garage sale."

Every 2 or 3 weeks new fashion lines are being produced at very low prices by famous fashion retailers. This strategy encourages the consumers to purchase (Foroohar and Stabe, 2005). As a result, young consumers buy the latest garments to keep up with latest fashion trends. This leads to excess clothing consumption, and hence the overconsumption results to the disposal of surplus clothing. Therefore, as the phenomenon of fast fashion is growing rapidly, it becomes very important to explore the methods young consumers are using in disposing of their seasoned clothes because the constant change in fashion leads to overconsumption of clothing.

Clothing disposal behavior

When consumers sort their clothing to reorganize, they separate the clothes into three parts: discarding, restoring and donation (Ha-Brookshire and Hodges, 2009). According to Cooper (2004), people do not desire to keep products for the long term even though the products could be reusable when repaired or maintained well. Consumers make decisions on keeping or discarding the traditional designed clothing based upon the attachment towards clothing, durability, or storing. They discard casual clothing because they lack the same affection for it that they maintain for expensive designer clothing (Cooper, 2004).

Discarding of clothing

Consumers throw out most of their clothing in trash bins that is dumped into landfills; donate a very small portion of their purchased clothing. As consumers buy more clothing, they need more space to stock up new apparel items. They discard pre-owned clothing more often because of the inconvenience of dropping them off at donation centers. Clothing discarding behaviors depend upon the physical condition of the clothing. Consumers prefer to discard worn-out clothing in trash bins. More often, consumers like to dispose of low-quality fashion, fad, trendy, fast fashion and special occasion clothing (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009). Forty-three percent of consumers use old clothing as rags (Koch and Domina, 1999) eventually discarded in trash bins like trash. Consumers also prefer to discard clothing in trash bins when they possess low sentimental value (Ha-Brookshire and Hodges, 2009). Hence a study has been planned to find out the clothing practices of girls towards post-clothing disposal.

Methodology

For the present study a sample of 100 girls studying in colleges of Jaipur city belonging to the age group of 18 to 21 years was selected. An interview schedule was designed to study the clothing practices related to discarding, recycling and reuse. The data was collected and analyzed in terms of the frequency and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to reasons for recycling

Reasons for recycling	Respondents (n=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Saves energy	100	100%
Reduces landfill	80	80%
Protect environment	100	100%
Good for economy	90	90%

Responses on the reasons for recycling are given in table 1. As can be seen in the above table, all respondents indicated the reason to save energy and to protect the environment followed by a belief that it is good for the economy (90%) and to reduce landfills (80%).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to reasons of discarding apparel

Reasons of disposing clothes	Respondents (n=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Technical	40	40%
Psychological	60	60%
Fit	70	70%
Impulsive buying	50	50%
Functional	40	40%

It is evident from Table 2 that the most common reason for discarding and no longer using clothes because they do not fit well, which was reported by 70% of the respondents. Sixty percent respondents discard clothes because of the psychological reason i.e they get tired of the style. Fifty percent of the respondents reported that they had never worn the garments which they had bought on impulse because they did not like it later. However 40% of the respondents discard apparel because of functional reasons i.e they feel they have garments which are available in better styles.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to mode of clothing disposal behavior

Mode of Disposal	Respondents (n=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Passes on (family/friends)	80	80%
Charity organizations	100	100%
Used as rags	80	80%
Resale/second hand clothing	40	40%

It is clear from table 3 that all the respondents disposed off clothing to charity organizations. This was followed by passing off clothes to family/ friends and using apparel as rags (80%). The least popular (40%) mode was resale of apparel/ second hand clothing.

Table 4: Factors influencing change in clothing consumption behavior

Factors influencing sustainability in consumer consumption behaviour	Respondents (n=100)			
	Use longer		Buy less	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
If clothes were made of better quality	90	90%	10	10%
If clothes wouldn't change their shape in wash	80	80%	20	20%
If clothes were more resistant to colour	70	70%	30	30%
If clothes fit better and or/size was adjustable	90	90%	10	10%
If clothes were more expensive		-	10	10%
If I had less desire to buy something new	40	40%	60	60%
If I was better at repairing or making clothes	50	50%	50	50%

The results of table 4 reveals the factors influencing sustainability in clothing consumption of respondents to use clothing for longer and buy less clothing were related to both the quality of the clothing and to social and psychological mechanisms. The respondents reported that they would be more likely to use their clothes longer if there is an improvement in the quality of clothing and if their sizes were adjustable (90%). This was followed by if their clothes did not change (80%), clothes were colour resistant (70%), if the respondent were better at repairing or making clothes (50%) and had less desire for something new. They would be more likely to buy less if they had less desire to buy something new (60%) and if they were better at repairing or making clothes (50%). It was followed by colour resistance (30%), retain shape (20%), and of good quality and better sizes and expensive (10%).

Table 5 Average speed, scale and waste of respondents (n=100) clothing by garment type

No. of garments →	Summe r Tops	Winte r Tops	Cas ual Dre sses	Form al Dress es	Casu al Pants	Form al Pants	Sh ort s	Skir ts	Swea ters Light outer wear	Jacket s Thick outer wear
Owned	38	22	19	10	10	6	5	4	11	12
Used in last 6 months	25	13	14	6	7	4	4	2	6	6
Disposed off per year	12	6	7	3	5	2	2	2	4	4
Bought per year	13	6	7	5	6	4	4	3	6	5

Results of table 5 reveal that out of total garments owned by the respondents nearly half of them were worn in the last 6 months and less than one third were disposed off per year and nearly the same or more number of garments were bought per year for various types of clothes such as summer tops, winter tops, casual dresses, formal dresses, casual pants, formal pants, shorts, shirts, sweaters and jackets. One-third of the apparel are not worn by consumers at all. They discarded less number of garments compared to garments bought per year, indicating that consumers were involved in excessive buying of clothing which ultimately led to more disposal of clothing.

Table 6: Opinion of respondents regarding convenience for recycling

Convenience in recycling	Respondents (n=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Very Convenient	10	10%
Convenient	50	50%
Neutral	40	40%

The respondents reported that recycling was convenient but unfortunately they did not follow this practice quite often. This results in the rapid increase in waste production which is a major environmental problem affecting environmental quality and life of the people. Recycling is considered to be one of the solutions to this problem. It was found that there is a gap between consumer's attitude toward recycling and their actual behavior and practices. It was also reported that some of the obstacles to people's participation in recycling was not finding enough recycling bins on centers and the long distance to those makes it inconvenient. It was also felt that the message for recycling has not reached in some sections of the society.

Conclusion

The buyers should decide to practice the sustainable method of clothing disposal to protect the environment. It is highly recommended that the number of clothing collection points, such as home collection services, recycle box, drop-off and pick-up services, should be increased which will ultimately boost the clothing-recycling rate. Textile recycling will also result to better economics since it will provide job opportunities for people. People should be made aware to reuse, reduce and recycle these products instead of throwing them away. Since most of these are non-biodegradable, they clog drainage and waterways. So, it is the time to use recycled products to reduce the environment pollution.

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