

Eco-Friendly Clothing Market in Bangladesh

Subjects: Business

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Organic cotton clothing development in the fashion industry could play an important role in textile and environmental pollution and create new business opportunities for green clothes. Consumer environmental concerns and consumer attitudes positively impact the OCC purchase willingness of Bangladeshi consumers. Also, the authenticity and fashionable of OCC products have a significant impact on Bangladeshi consumer purchase intention. Product Performance found an indirect effect on Bangladeshi consumers' intention.

Keywords: organic cotton clothing (OCC) ; purchase willingness ; sustainable clothing

1. Introductions

Different types of unsustainable consumption patterns in today's world face several environmental problems such as pollution, greenhouse gas, global warming, etc. It's now become a global issue ^[1]. The textile and fashion industry is one of the environmental polluters in the industrial sectors ^[2]. For covering our bodies from weather and other social purposes, human beings use natural materials found in the environment. Nowadays, these natural materials are used in different products and have different types of applications. Cotton is the most widely recognized fiber as well as widely used raw material in this textiles industry. Except for a few artificial fibers, this industry is based on different types of cotton. People get cotton through agriculture system. In the modern days, many things are involved in the agriculture system that has serious effects on the environment. Cotton consumption increases every year, with world cotton consumption growing 2.66 percent in the 2021-22 seasons ^[3]. Naturally grown cotton does not harm the environment unless fertilizers, pesticides, and other harmful chemicals are used ^[4]. But now, the use of fast-growing cotton and the production of traditional cotton fiber using various chemicals harms the soil, water, and air, resulting in pollution of the environment ^[5]. Organic agricultural practices advance a more secure, eco-friendly and do not harm living creatures; organic fertilizers, natural pesticides, and insecticides are used ^[6]. So, organic cotton is much better for farmers, consumers, and all living things.

According to the US Census Bureau, the current world population is 7.8 billion ^[7], and UN DESA predicted 8.5 billion by 2030 and 9.7 billion by 2050 ^[8]. According to current solutions, people need to have cloth and cotton consumption, and demand will increase. One of the most challenging issues is global warming and climate changes directly connected with CO₂ emissions ^[9]. 1.22 to 2.93 billion tonnes of CO₂ are added to environment by textile industries. The carbon footprint of cotton is a remarkable top, around 2–4 t per hectare. On the other side, compared to traditional cotton, organic cotton has 40% less "global warming potential" and suggests a 91% reduction in natural water consumption ^[10]. In this situation, scholars strongly believe Organic cotton clothing practice can be one of the great solutions for this industry, making it more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Not only in western developed countries but also in developing countries like Bangladesh. Because many recent studies on sustainable development and the green movement are based on western developed countries while less intention on developing countries such as Bangladesh ^[5]. Sustainable fashion practice offers a way to solve many environmental problems related to production and fashion consumption ^[11].

Recent studies on consumer willingness to purchase behavior find that growing awareness and environmental concerns influenced consumer purchase decisions on organic clothing cotton ^[12]. Scholars believe that consumers can influence the transformation of fashion companies towards sustainability through their purchasing decisions ^[13]. Also, the fashion industry should be aware of environmental safety, human safety, and other remarkable corporate social responsibilities. A study on European consumers believed that fashion brands should take the challenge this climate change and environmental protection ^[5]. In many developed countries, fashion retailers focus on organic clothing products to increase their market share ^[14]. Many renowned brands and retailers were making a profit from organic clothing. Brands like Nike, H&M, C&A, and Wal-Mart have introduced 100% organic materials ^[15]. '2025 Sustainable Cotton Challenge' from May 2017 textile industry motivate clothing brands and retailers to make 100% of the cotton they use come from sustainable sources by 2025 ^[16]. Clothing Companies should reduce their environmental carbon footprint; in many ways, ethical sales

are growing but not enough categories in the market ^[12]. Consumer willingness depends on many things; relevant literature from previous research summarizes that high product costs, less choice, aesthetic difficulties, the credibility of information, and uncertainty about the actual environmental benefits were the main limitation for consumers to purchase eco-friendly products, including clothing ^[12]. Consumer demand for green products is also connected with price and income strategies, especially green products on the market sold at a higher price than regular products (Wilson and Iltis, 2010) ^[17]. However, nowadays, environmentally concerned consumers are growing and they are shown to pay a premium price for eco-friendly products ^[18]. Boks And Stevels indicate that consumers are willing to buy green products when their income and budget increases ^[19]. A study on organically grown products (OGPs) already proved that monthly household income is statistically significant and positively influences the consumer purchase intentions of organically grown food products ^[20].

2. Eco-Friendly Clothing Market in Bangladesh

Economic growth changes rapidly, and most manufacturing units are developed in underdeveloped countries. Environmental issues are not a priority in developing countries, but they are a significant threat to the world ^[4]. World population ranking Bangladesh is now world rank 8 ^[21], besides Bangladesh also 2nd largest clothing manufacture whole over the world ^[5]. According to the world bank, this COVID-19 limitation Bangladesh's economic growth rates pick up to 6.9 percent in the year 2021, and last decade fastest-growing economy in the world ^[22]. According to overall economic growth, Bangladesh's domestic market size is also increasing, and some global brands are already active in the Bangladeshi market. This includes the German leading sports brand Puma, and the popular Japanese brand Uniqlo which started their retail business in Bangladesh a few years ago ^[23]. Similarly, in the last decades, several local brands have had strong positions in the Bangladeshi market like 'sailor', 'yellow', 'Aarong' and other brands which are doing well, and these brands are also undertaking sustainable initiatives. For example, 'sailor' and 'Aarong' are introducing natural cotton examples: organic cotton, Bamboo fiber and Jute fiber products. Therefore, organic products and their impact on the environment has always been an important research topic.

Consumers have a positive attitude toward purchasing organic products. The study suggests that retailers create consumer attitudes towards organic clothing products and increase consumers' purchase intention for organic clothing products ^[14]. Hae Jin Gam also studies mothers' willingness to purchase OCC for childrens' product segment. The result found that mothers' environmental concerns significantly impact their involvement in OCC, significantly influencing mothers' willingness to purchase OCC ^[12]. In a case study on organic cotton clothing in Hawaiian consumers, Lin's also discussed and found that consumers are willing to pay more when consumers are more concerned about protecting the environment or involved in environmental issues ^[24]. Gwendolyn Hustvedt ^[25], has shown that consumers are motivated by their belief in the benefits of buying organic clothing. It is clear that it explains how organic cotton clothing supports organic farming; it is another way to promote the environmental benefits of buying organic cotton clothing. Previous studies on similar topics, green eco-friendly marketing, and consumer purchase behavior mentioned that intricacy of information, product advantages, functional benefits and positioning of green products, and the celerity of environmental effects benefits were the crucial barriers to purchasing eco-friendly products ^[26].

Consumer purchasing power and economic growth are also important factors in their purchase decision, especially organic clothing, as many researchers mentioned that green products are usually available in the market at a higher price, and when consumers' income increases, their shopping budget also increases. Researchers point out that consumers are more interested in purchasing green products when their income and budget increase ^[27]. Consumers are willing to pay more for green and renewable products when they are aware of the environmental advantages ^[28].

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