

Consumer Behavior on Sustainable Clothing

Introduction:

Literature Review : Recent studies indicate that both environmental protection and philanthropic awareness can influence clothing consumer behaviors through consumption attitudes, which means when young people have a positive attitude on consuming clothes, and also would like to dispose of their unwanted clothes in a sustainable manner (Wai Yee et al., 2016). Yang et al. (2018) suggest that the shopping atmosphere in advertising is negatively influencing the consumer's sustainable consumption, the environmental concern is positively affecting the consumer's choice during shopping in terms of sustainability. According to Ciasullo et al. (2017), the research is about the investigation of university students' consumption attitudes towards sustainability. The results show that the sample students are facing ethical, environmental and social concerns which promote them to reward sustainable fashion brand in consumption choice. The results also reveal that sample consumers are totally willing to consume sustainable fashion brands in order to promote environmental concerns and protections.

Aims:

In this study, we are focusing on the aspects which may influence consumer decisions towards to sustainable products. The aim of this study is to investigate the factors of sustainable clothing that may affect consumer behavior within young people. We will collect data from Vantage college student, and concluding their viewpoints and concerns towards sustainable products to university students.

Research Question: How Materials and Quality or Other Factors of Sustainable Products Affect the University Students' Consumer Behavior in Terms of Sustainable Consumption?

Methods

Design: In a within subjects design, the interview took about 20 minutes to finish interview questions. Participants would be able to join the interview through applying by email and the interview will take in Skype, and would be audio recorded. Participants would be asked some questions about sustainable consumption behaviour and a demographic question about gender identity.

Participants: 8 participants with 18 and over were required in this research, and they had to be the students from Vantage College and are taking VAN149 course. Moreover, they need to have a purchasing clothing experience within 3 months.

Material: Three forms would be sent in the whole research which are information, consent, and debrief forms. And researchers used Skype to do the interview. Audio recorders were used to record the interview in order to transfer into transcripts. Then we used Google Docs and Google Sheets to analysis our data and results. Interview questions will be seen below in the Appendix.

Procedure: Volunteered Vantage College students who met the research eligibility criteria need to read the full research information, consent forms carefully and sign for them. Participants who agree with and already signed for the consent form received the video live chat link to connect with us and start the interview. The audio was recorded by researchers once interview begin. Participants would be asked about their experiences about sustainable consumption and their knowledge and consideration of sustainable clothes. Participants would share their viewpoints, concerns and reasons for their choice during the interview. After the interview done, interviewees will receive the debrief form for the further appreciation and reemphasize their rights. After the research project finished, all the data will be deleted after a period of one year.

Results:

Participants will consider sustainable materials such as "degradable", "reused" and "recyclable materials" mentioned by the participants and suitable style of sustainable clothes, and whether the price is acceptable for them when they consider purchasing sustainable products. We find that all participants are willing to pay for sustainable clothes even though they have to purchase for a high price if the clothes are suitable and comfortable. As show in the pie chart (Figure 1.1), sustainable materials, suitable style and acceptable price occupied 20.0%, 17.0% and 19% respectively, which are the three most important factors to affect sustainable consumer behavior. Also, they care about environmental problems as well, which accounted for 12% of total (Figure 1.1). Participants highly hope the sustainable products/clothes can have positive protection for the environment. They would like to buy clothes which are "environmental friendly", "production process can produce less waste" and "not harmful for human health". We also find out that 7 out of 8 participants may feel hard for the public to make sustainable consumption due to the fast fashion trends. They thought now we have "pursued fashion trends", "worried about high price of sustainable products" and "not familiar with sustainable clothing". The 8th student thought that "we have more developed technology so that we are easier to produce sustainable clothes". Most participants are feeling uncertain about whether a brand is sustainable or not. From the interview data, participants are likely to purchase sustainable clothes if the products can meet their sustainable criteria.

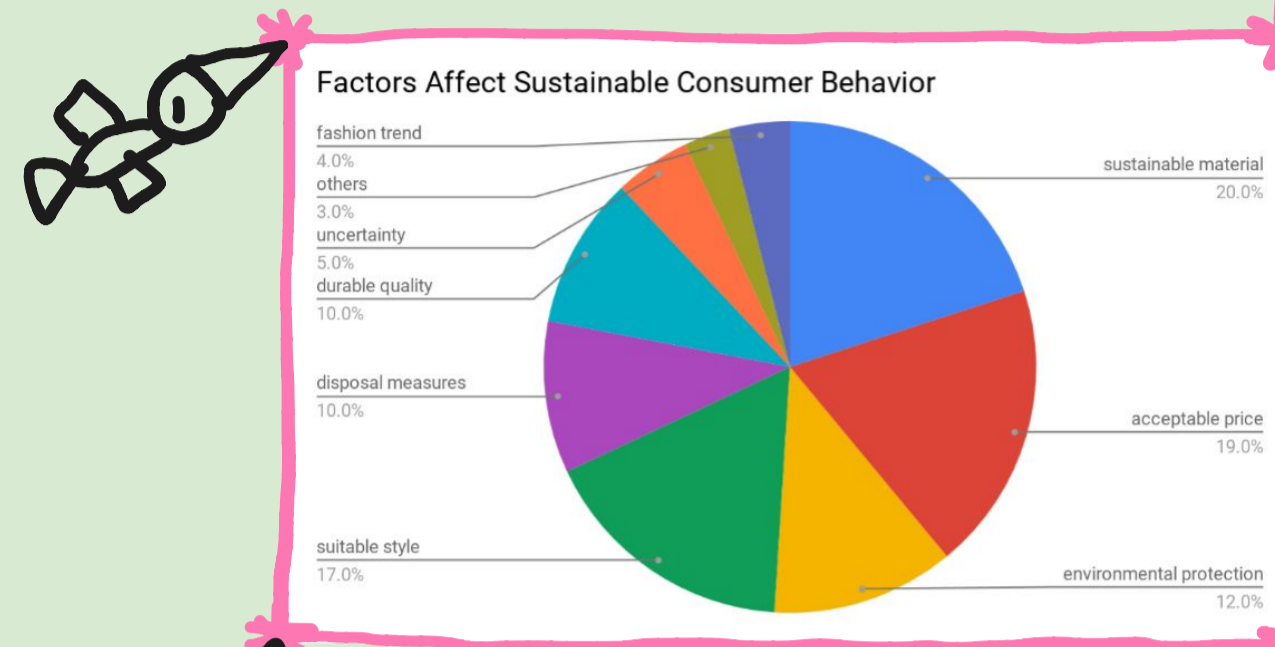


Figure 1.1 Factors Affect Sustainable Consumer Behavior

Discussion

The study aim is to investigate whether the material, quality or other factors of sustainable products may affect university students' consumer behavior in terms of sustainable consumption. Participants have talked about their viewpoints on sustainable consumption, and especially raised their expectation of sustainable clothes before purchase. They mainly focused on the material, quality and price of the sustainable, and also hoping to help improve environmental protection. From analyzing the research results, we can find that consumers of university students would have sustainable consumption of the material of the product is recyclable and environmental friendly, the quality of product is durable and the price is acceptable. Previous studies have found the environmental concerns as external elements have influenced consumer behavior on sustainable products, our research also support this evidence. In addition, we also find out that the participants would also consider the cost-effective of sustainable clothes for internal reasons when determining a sustainable consumption.

Conclusion, scholarly contribution and future research:

We have found that university students are willing to initiate sustainable consumption from environmental protection perspective, but most of them will highly look at the sustainable and environmental friendly material, durable quality and acceptable prices as well beforehand. The previous studies have supported the environmental concerns as external elements, but we find that the internal elements would be taken into consideration as well. Our results contribute some current university students' ideas about sustainable clothing designing, material, quality and price to fashion brand companies, and clothing companies can adjust their products from that. Especially, our research is studying on university students, so fashion brands companies can more easily adjust clothing products to meet their fashion and sustainable criteria. Our research will be able to encourage and inspire participants and audiences rethink the importance of sustainability and their consumer behaviors on clothes. Moreover, the public can benefit from this study because purchasing sustainable clothing will help protect the environment. Especially, our research is studying on university students, so they can more easily buy clothes that meet their tastes and are sustainable. However, our research only involve the perspectives and sustainable consumer behavior within university students. The groups of participants that we analyze may be limited. Future research will determine a larger social groups of public to determine whether they have the same sustainable criteria as university students, or other factors they may take into consideration.

References:

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Sustainability

sustainable clothes