Literature Review

Consumer perception towards sale of second-hand clothes in the localities of Odisha, State of India

Santosh Tarai,[1] K Shailaja[2]

[1]Associate Professor, Department of Fashion Management of Studies, NIFT, India
[2]PG student, Department of Fashion Management of Studies, NIFT, India

Correspondence: Dr. Santosh Tarai, Associate Professor, NIFT, Bhubaneswar & K. Shailaja, PG students, Department of Fashion Management of Studies, India, Tel +916742305706, Email santsh.tarai@nift.ac.in

Abstract

Objective: The objective of this paper is to understand the perception of local people of Odisha specifically Bhubaneswar city towards the sale and purchase of second-hand clothes. This paper also highlights the importance of garment reuses for environmental benefits and how to promotion of the sale of second-hand garments.

Methodology: The research methodology consisted of quantitative analysis from the data obtained through the distribution of questionnaires through online mode to the residents of Bhubaneswar city and a qualitative approach by interviewing them on their perception towards sale and purchase of second-hand clothes.

Results: Consumers' level of awareness regarding the implications of textile wastes on the environment is quite low. Perception of others on a customer purchasing second-hand clothes mattered a lot. Since that perception was mostly negative, customers always stepped back in making the purchase. Moreover, it was also associated with poor hygiene and quality which was a major turn off for them. Surprisingly, they didn't mind paying a good amount if the garment was good in quality & hygienic which is a positive sign as their mindset can be changed with a proper approach.

Limitations: The survey was conducted with less sample size. Hence, more accurate and precise data can be obtained by increasing the sample size.

Keywords: circular economy, garment reuse, post-consumer textile waste, contemporary lifestyle

Introduction

With time, the industrial revolution has changed the core of textile and apparel production. The rise in demand for cheaper and fast produced industry-made textile products also led to the rise of production to meet that demand but they forgot something very important–disposing capacity of these products and their impact to the environment which led to the adoption of wasteful behaviour both by the consumers as well as the producers. There has been a steep rise in Fast Fashion which mainly promoted change and obsolescence of styles and products resulting in overconsumption. The impact of these wastes was realized much later with the modern environmental movement in 1962 where people realized the seriousness of widespread pollution.[1] The following years marked a new era of investigation and probing into the effects of these industrial activities products revealed the reasons for various forms of pollution, emission of greenhouse gases and also a scarcity of resources.

The global annual consumption of textiles per person has increased from 7 to 13kgs per person in the last two decades reaching a total of 100 million tonnes out of which two-thirds end up in landfills.[2] In India, annual consumer expenditure is around 68 billion dollars on clothing and footwear.[3] Narrowing it down to Odisha, there is no statistical data on the amount of textile waste generated per state which is a concern as there should be state-wise impartial and accurate data for textile waste generated along with the sources to understand the root cause of it and deal with it accordingly.

The use of second-hand clothes is a simple Re-use technique that aims at controlling textile waste and checking on overproduction. Since garments have a longer life than the span in which they are usually discarded, putting them to use instead of producing something new goes a long way in preventing them from ending up as a textile waste right away. Oxfam, a U.K. based company developed its own recycling and reusing facility centre called "Wastesaver" which handles 12000 tonnes of textiles every year.[4] Brands like H&M group, Zara, Levi's, Reformation, Madewell etc. have launched programs that involve collection of used clothes for reuse as their contribution to environmental cause. ThredUp, Rebelle, Nordstrom, The RealReal, etc. are some of the brands which have ventured into the field of second-hand clothing sales. Sale of second-hand designer luxury clothes has also been possible by the efforts of brands like Fashionphile, Vestiaire Collective, Rebag, StockX, The Outnet, The Luxury Closet etc. India is also venturing into the sale of second-hand clothes with the help of brands like Kiabza, Etashee, Elanic, Coutloot, Vintagedesi, Zapyle, Spoyl etc. Even in Odisha, brands like Rustic Hue Jugaad, Ladyben and Galang Gabaan have picked up garment recycling as the key driver for running their business on sustainable terms.

However, there have been no studies to analyse the behavioural patterns of the people of Odisha towards second-hand clothes. Thus, this research aims at understanding the behaviour of local people of Odisha towards acceptance of apparel re-use along with key aspects that may promote such behaviour among them to increase the circularity of the Fashion economy.

Literature review

Generation and impact of textile waste globally

With advancements in technologies and Industrial revolution, there has been massive rise in production quantity which is always associated with some or the other form of pollution.[5] It has been reported that 2% to 10% of environmental impact is associated with clothing and footwear after food and drink, transport and housing

that constitute 70% to 80% of impact due to overconsumption.[6] Contemporary lifestyle along with the problem of overconsumption as well as rapid change in fashion with easy and cheap availability of textiles; lack of consumer awareness about eco-friendly apparel and also the lenient government policies have led to generation of textile wastes. A lack of classic designs and low popularity of second-hand clothing along with poor knowledge of consumers about textile care and lack of a systematic pipeline of textile recycling are the reasons for textile waste generation.[5] Textiles that are not recovered for reuse or recycling are destined to end up in landfills or are occasionally incinerated. The long life of all textiles in landfills contributes to greenhouse gasses, including Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) and Methane (CH_4) to a great extent.[1]

Textile waste generation in India

The population of India summing up to 1.33 billion and textiles being 4 percent of India's gross domestic product (GDP), 68 billion dollars was an annual expenditure of consumers on clothing and footwear. Currently, the short lifecycles of apparel product due to rapid fashion cycles with increased buying power of Indian consumers in urban areas has resulted in a significant amount of post-consumer textile waste (PCTW). Post-consumer textile waste arise from sources like households which consist of garments or textiles that are no longer needed by the owner.[3]

Managing textile wastes through second-hand clothing

In a study on consumer clothing disposal behaviour,[7] found that donation to charities has been one of the most popular forms of clothing disposal shared with friends and family. This suggests that reuse is a preferred method for waste reduction by many consumers. The recycling of textile waste improves all the three aspects that define sustainability: economic, social and environmental while solving numerous ecological problems and also boosting new economy sectors.[8] Apparently, many cloth shops that deal with used garments have been set up now which offers another alternative to used clothes, without having them to be disposed off as it can be used again with the added advantage of being sold at cheaper prices.[9]

Second-hand clothes for textile waste management in indian context

Recycling of textiles has been a domestic craft in India and it was done at both industrial as well as household levels. There are a lot of ancient art and crafts that have been based on recycling. Clothing has a very important socio-cultural significance in India. It is hardly discarded, in fact there have always been various ways to recycle clothing for both the domestic and the global market.[10] Jain & Gupta[5] have cited an old method in their article that promoted selling second-hand clothing where people of certain communities collected old clothes in exchange of utensils and sold them after minor repairs. Resale of pre-owned clothing has been another channel that developed in India which operates through online apps and brands websites.[3]

Indian consumer behaviour towards second-hand clothes

In the research paper, it was observed that more than half of the respondents of the survey in India preferred to dispose off their clothes which were no more useful. People who wished to donate their clothes didn't know of the channels to make their donation. A small percentage of young people in India also preferred to resale their used branded clothes and buy second-hand clothing through online applications and websites like Elanic, Spoylin, Etashree.in, Stylflip.

com. The author has also stressed on the development of different channels of recycling throughout the country to make it easier for the consumers for sale and purchase of second-hand clothes.[3] Under the influence of price or perceived quality and value, purchase intention of a consumer may get changed. Also, the consumers were affected due to several internal and external motivators while purchasing second-hand garments.[11] The statistical results of the research paper by Kapoor and Khare[12] showed that Indian consumers placed a relatively high level of importance on functionality, convenience and hygiene whereas a low level of importance was placed on attitudinal factors like personal and societal factors in their intention to purchase second-hand clothing.

Research methodology

Considering the issue of second-hand clothes and its importance in present age, this paper has attempted to understand the perception of local people of Bhubaneswar, Odisha towards the sale and purchase of second-hand clothes. Although studies related to second-hand clothes are available largely in a global context, it is relatively weak in Indian context and specifically to Odisha. Therefore, the data required to fulfil the objectives of the study was not readily available from the secondary sources, pertaining to understand the perception, awareness, attitudes and opinions etc. Both primary and secondary sources of information have been used in this study. Data pertaining to second-hand clothes and consumers attitude, various published research articles from secondary sources purposefully have been discussed as per the requirement.

The primary data collection was done through online and offline mode using structured questionnaires and personal interviews. The sample respondents consist of residents of Bhubaneswar city and respondents who were visiting the shopping mall. For this, we have adopted the simple random sampling method and the total sample size is restricted to 103 due to non-cooperation of the respondents and lack of time. To assess the perceptions of potential respondents on various parameters appropriate assessment scales including dichotomies, Likert scale of measuring qualitative information (1 being the least and 5 being the most) have been used. The study was conducted in the month of February, 2020 to obtain the required data to perform statistical analysis. The major questions asked to respondents were related to frequency of their purchase of fresh clothes, second-hand clothes, their disposal tendencies and price range offered, comfort level for purchasing second-hand clothes and their willingness towards to it.

Further, a qualitative approach was adopted to gain a deeper understanding of the residents regarding their perception and reasons for acceptance or rejection of second-hand clothing. This was done by conducting interviews with them for at least 15-20 minutes per participant. They were asked regarding their perception of second-hand clothes, positive and negative attributes associated with them and also regarding the reaction of their peers on purchasing second-hand clothes. Their demographic profile was also recorded to analyze its impact on their behaviour towards the second clothing which is presented in Table 1. We have used SPSS 20 version software tool for analysis.

Data analysis

The descriptive analysis on demographic profile of sample is presented in Table 1. In this table, the frequency distribution was analysed in order to obtain the magnitude of maximum occurrence for a particular category. This distribution helped in understanding

the tendency of the sample. To know the difference between two independent categorical (Ordinal) variables, we have used Mann Whitney U test. Further, Chi Square Test was performed in order to test the independence between the categorical variables. Spearman Correlation was used to establish a relation between two non-parametric data to establish a non-linear relationship between them. Although these tests were used, the results showed in this research paper consist of those tests only which gave significant test results.

Table 1 Demographic profile of sample

Profile of sample		Frequency (%)	
Gender	Male	50	48.54%
	Female	53	51.46%
Age	18-22	20	19.42%
	23-27	61	59.22%
	28-35	15	14.56%
	36-50	7	6.80%
Qualification	Intermediate	4	3.88%
	Graduate	35	33.98%
	Post-graduate	51	49.51%
	PhD	12	11.65%
Profession	Student	39	37.86%
	Private employee	55	53.40%
	Govt employee	3	2.91%
	Unemployed	1	0.97%
	Others	5	4.85%
Income	<Rs. 300,000	49	47.57%
	Rs. 300,000-Rs.500,000	24	23.30%
	>Rs. 500,000	30	29.13%

Results and discussion

The descriptive statistics have been used to know about the consumers attitudes towards second hand clothing. From the analysis, it could be inferred that only 38.84% of the sample saw the positive aspects of second-hand garments (like a useful, environment-friendly option) whereas the majority of the respondents associated second-hand clothes with negativity, i.e., out of style or unhygienic. A majority of the sample did not have a proper idea of garment recycling which constitutes 70.87% of the sample whereas only 29.13% of the respondents in the sample knew about it in Table 2.

Table 2 Knowledge of consumers on garment recycling

Knowledge on garment recycling	No of respondents	Percentage
Yes	73	70.87%
No	30	29.13%
Total	103	

From the data, the obtained rank of features that would encourage people to purchase second-hand clothing was 1-Hygiene, 2-Quality, 3-Fit, 4-Style, 5-Price. This signified that people considered second-hand clothes to be very unhygienic and felt that they were of poor quality. Surprisingly, the price factor was found to be less demanding as compared to other factors, in fact the last priority.

We have adopted Chi-square test of independence to know whether there was any dependence of customers' decision to buy second-hand garments on the opinion of others.

In this context, our null hypothesis was that consumers purchase of second-hand garments didn't depend on others' opinion. Alternatively, consumers buying of second-hand garments depended on the opinion of others.

Table 3 Opinion of others with purchase decision for Second-hand clothes

Chi-square test of association			
	Yes	No	Total
Flattered	15	33	48
Unflattered	26	29	55
Total	41	62	103
Chi square test	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance
Pearson Chi Square	15.288	3	0.004
Likelihood Ratio	15.527	3	0.004
N of Valid Cases	103		
Phi Value=0.385	Cramer's V Value=0.272		

The computed Chi-square (χ^2) value is 15.827 with P=0.04<0.05. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected which signified that there is an association between other's opinions towards customers' purchase of second-hand clothes and their decision.

Moreover, the value of association was, Cramer's V=0.272. This value signified that there is a strong association between both the variables, i.e., others opinion strongly affects customers' decision to purchase second-hand clothes.

From the interview, it was evident that the purchase decision of the consumers was greatly affected by their knowledge of textile wastes produced in the country which 61.17% of the sample was not aware of. The majority of the sample preferred to donate the garments after use to charity (71%) while the ones who threw them away constituted 26% of the sample. The minority who preferred to redesign and use the garments again constituted 4% of the sample only. When asked about the mode of purchase of second-hand clothes, the more people who were willing to purchase second-hand clothes preferred to shop offline (58.25%) rather than online (41.75%) as they preferred to physically check the product before making any decision.

Conclusion

There is enough scope for marketing and enhancing the second-hand garments in the low-income states like Odisha in India. Over the years, young consumers are getting attracted towards buying second-hand clothes in the second-tier cities of India. In some pockets of Bhubaneswar city of Odisha state, some vendors are selling second-hand clothes and the business is gaining momentum. Young people

having environmental awareness are more interested to buy second-hand clothes provided these are perfectly cleaned and washed.

One of the major factors affecting consumers' decision to buy second-hand clothes was the reaction of others towards a customer's sale and purchase of second-hand clothes. This is a major problem that needs to be tackled with thorough awareness campaigns and a boost in the purchase and sale of recycled garments. Transparency of the supply chain along with making people aware of the positive aspects of second-hand clothes would play a major role in increasing sales as more people start accepting the idea.

Considering fashion needs, the demand of a huge chunk of the sample required hygiene and quality of the product to be the major aspects whereas fit, style and price played a relatively weaker role in influencing the customers to buy second-hand clothes. Thus, increasing the value of second-hand garments is necessary so that a customer would reject the orthodox ideas of second-hand clothes.

The selling of Second-Hand Clothes can also be encouraged by providing discount coupons, free trial options and exchange possibilities after use. Revamping the design of the product shall also help in attracting the customer to buy these products.

The notion that people have about second-hand clothes is that they are substandard due to their availability in thrift stores majorly. This notion needs to be tackled by increasing the sale and purchase options of second-hand clothes in mainstream retail stores. Adoption of these options by the mainstream brands would aware a huge chunk of the customers regarding the positive aspects of garment reuse and break the shame associated with the purchase of second-hand clothes.

Government aid

Help from the Government will also upscale the idea of sale of second-hand clothes to a great extent. It can be done by:

a. Providing tax benefits to the companies that venture into the sale and purchase of second-hand clothes so that more people are encouraged to take it up as a profitable business option.

b. Promoting second-hand garments sale by tying up with businesses that produce second-hand garments and use them as uniforms for all government employees as a "Physical Evidence" to show people its importance.

c. Setting up Garment-Collection Bins in every locality along with bio-degradable and non-biodegradable wastes to encourage people to segregate old clothes.

d. Providing people with benefits in the form of cash and kind on giving away a certain amount of old clothes at second-hand garment collection shops. For example, a free meal coupon at a local restaurant for giving 5 Kgs of old clothes.

Limitations

In spite of all sincere efforts in preparing this research article, certain limitations are prevalent that cannot be ignored. The formulation of this research aim has been restricted particularly to the fashion consumers of Odisha. The participation of most of the residents was not possible resulting in a comparatively low sample size. The survey can be extended further to increase the sample size including more participants for getting more accurate data. The literature available is too little that targets the fashion needs of the local

communities which made the research objective too narrow. The data used in the analysis was mostly non-parametric and the hypothesis was only framed based on available literature in a national context. A deeper delve into the practical aspects of the research objective could help frame better hypotheses throwing light on other possible factors affecting the research topic. The factors that were considered to affect the purchase behaviour of consumers were mostly individual factors keeping demography, environment and government factors to be constant. Proper research in the effect of these factors could provide a broader view of the analysis of the influencers.

There is always scope for more improvement in the research which can be enhanced through better analysis tools and more parametric interpretation of data which could help in arriving at a more accurate and precise conclusion.

Acknowledgments

Funding

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

1. Newell AS. Textile waste resource recovery: a case study of New York State's textile recycling system. New York; 2015.

2. Shirvanimoghaddam K, Motamed B, Ramakrishna S. Death by waste: fashion and textile circular economy case. *Science of the total environment*. 2018:1–2.

3. Bairagi N. Recycling of post-consumer apparel waste in India: channels for textile reuse. *Journal of Textile Science and Engineering*. 2017:1.

4. Roberts-Islam B. Second-hand is the answer to sustainable fashion, says Oxfam. 2019.

5. Jain P, Gupta C. Textile recycling practices in India: a review. *International Journal of Textile and Fashion Technology*. (2016;6(6):21–36.

6. Hawley J. Digging for diamond: a conceptual framework for understanding reclaimed textile products. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*. 2006;24:262–275.

7. Bianchi C, Birtwistle G. Consumer clothing disposal behaviour: a comparative study. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. 2012:335–341.

8. S C. Environmental and Socioeconomic Sustainability through textile recycling. TEX TH IV Conference, Textile Research; 2011:23–24.

9. Joung H, Poaps HP. Factors motivating and influencing clothing disposal behaviours. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. 2013:105–111.

10. Norris L. Recycling Indian clothing. global contexts of reuse and value. 2010.

11. Gogoi BJ. Study of antecedents of purchase intention and its effect on brand loyalty of private label brand of apparel. *International Journal of Sales & Marketing*. 2013:73–86.

12. Kapoor A, Khare AK. Understanding purchase intentions of pre owned clothing in India. *Journal of Management*. 2019;6(6):9–22.