Fashion Forward: A Deep Dive into Collaborative Consumption and Disposable Clothing Trends

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Abstract

Sustainability in fashion is going to require transformative changes in the practices of all involved designers, manufacturers, marketers, and consumers. But consumers especially need a vision for sustainable fashion practice through collaborative consumption and disposal behaviour which is the need of hour as people are blindly following fast fashion. This study directs attention toward a new type of fashion practice based on transformative acts in the consumption process. The research objective of the study was to examine the consumers of Jaipur concerning the acceptance towards collaborative consumption and their clothing disposal habit. This research was conducted based on a self-structured questionnaire. The results of the survey were administered to a sample of hundred female consumers of Jaipur under the age group of 22 – 45 years. Convenient sampling was done to get an adequate result. The outcome of the result revealed 70% of respondents does not prefer clothes on rent, 88% of the respondents would not prefer clothes on rent due to hygiene factor, 82% do not resell their used clothes. 80% of respondents dispose their clothes by giving it to the charity. Consumers prefer donating clothes to charity without any post-follow-ups. The key for this research is to explore how collaborative consumption may impact social aspects, such as community building, peer-to-peer interactions, the sense of belonging and to analyse factors influencing decisions to donate, resell, recycle, or discard clothing. Further it helps to investigate the effectiveness of existing disposal options and their impact on reducing clothing waste. Therefore, consumers should be environmentally conscious to adopt sustainable practices i.e. collaborative consumption and disposable of clothes to save our depleting resources, enhance societal living and transforming into Circular Fashion.

Keywords: Awareness; Collaborative consumptions; Disposable habits; Environment; Renting; Sustainable.

Introduction

Sustainability is viewed as "a joint product of marketing actions and consumer behaviour" and it can be achieved through the mutual effort of both companies and consumers (Sheth, 2011). Collaborative consumption is a socio-economic model, based on swapping, trading, or renting products and services, enabling access over ownership and a focus on using rather than owning (Reimers et al., 2015). It is considered as a new trend in sustainable consumption. Fashion leadership positively affects intention to clothing renting and swapping. Though the Indian market still seeks for fast fashion with minimum norms of reselling and reusing or a collaborative consumption of clothing. Correspondingly, consumers play a vital role in the market therefore effective communication is necessary. Moreover, the disposal behaviour is also a matter of concern as many do not consciously dispose which leads to disposal into the garbage and landfills. This will increase the ways for producers to design high-quality products that last longer instead of products with a short lifetime (Laitala, 2014). Even the producers also are responsible for the disposal and recycling of the product and hence they would get better incentives for designing in a way that facilitates the disassembling and recycling of the different materials or components (Ghisellini, 2016). Even those consumers who express strong concern about environmental and social issues admit that they continuously engage in the consumption of fast fashion products due to their desire for updated fashion (Moore, 2015). In response to these challenges, designers and activists have proposed different strategies, one of which use growth through collaborative consumption (Laitala, 2016).

Rationale of the Study

Consumerism is one of the highly influential factor in any business which inspired to examine methodically, the consumers of Jaipur in terms of adaptiveness towards sustainable practices. The study helps to understand consumers' current psyche regarding clothing behaviour, its consumption pattern and disposal pattern which will directly or indirectly help the fashion designers and industries to analyse the market trend to make an investment related to varied sustainable practices. Besides, the result of disposal behaviour will also inspire the state government to act for collecting garments through textile bins, the industries, and the local designers to improve their take back of worn-out clothes or by giving post purchase services. These data would be helpful for resale-focused start-ups, clothing retailers, and other enabling organizations that are a part of this.

To get the information related to collaborative consumption and disposal behaviour towards clothing following objectives were formulated:

- To examine the consumers preference towards collaborative consumption in terms of clothing.

- To study consumers' clothing disposal behaviour towards clothing.

Review of Literature

Sczkya (2020) & Gajjar (2021) has revealed in their study the possibilities of user-oriented services for sustainability and to determine motives for renting clothes from a consumer perspective. A Semi-structured interview was conducted and a systematic behaviour observation with subsequent questioning of the practitioners was originally planned. The result revealed that majority consume clothes as per their needs and some have changed their consumption pattern with age and focus. Whereas, based on clothing rentals for daily wear was not accepted by any of the interviewees which also includes some intimate sportswear and underwear's and other intimate wears. On the contrary, they prefer renting expensive garments especially made for occasions.

Bianchi & Birtwistle (2010) explained in their study that worn-out textiles and clothes are sold, given away or donated by the consumers. This study investigates the way the female consumers from two different countries(Scotland and Australia) deal with fashion and textile disposal. The methodology used was both quantitative and qualitative. To test the hypothesis and analyse the outcome, descriptive statistics and factor analysis & multiple linear regression analysis is conducted through SPSS 16.0. On the other hand, qualitative analysis was made by conducting a survey consisting of three open-ended questions. Finally, the quantitative findings complemented the qualitative findings that the most common method of disposing clothing in both countries is donating to charities followed by giving to family members or friends.

Gajjar(2021) stated in his study that more than half (58%) of the respondents had not been interested in purchasing second-hand clothing, whereas 37% had been interested in buying.

Sahil (2016) has mentioned in his article that the renting model in India has picked pace over the last few years with splurge in demand and invest-

ment. While some of these models are operated on virtual stores (online marketplaces), there are quite a few that have a physical retail presence.

Methodology

For the research only female consumers were selected, falling under the age group of 22 - 45 years. The sample size for the study was 100 females and those were selected based on education and employment. A Convenience sampling method was used to get the required data. During the survey self-structured questionnaire were distributed to 100 females to get the responses in relation to study with an intention to determine disposal behaviour and acceptance towards collaborative consumption. The questionnaire was related to preferences towards rental clothing, factors which influences not to opt for rental clothing, attitudes towards unused clothes, reason for not disposing old clothes etc. The primary data collected through the structured questionnaire were analysed through frequency distribution and percentage in Excel sheet. The secondary data was collected through books and research articles.

Results & Discussion

Figure 1 reveals that 70% of respondents does not prefer clothes on rent whereas 30% would prefer clothes on rent. As a result, most of respondents would not prefer rented garment for a variety of reasons, including hygiene problem, worn out, or faded apparel, being used by many of consumers. Rent on garments are mostly sold over the online portal which may be difficult for the people who have the least knowledge regarding online shopping.
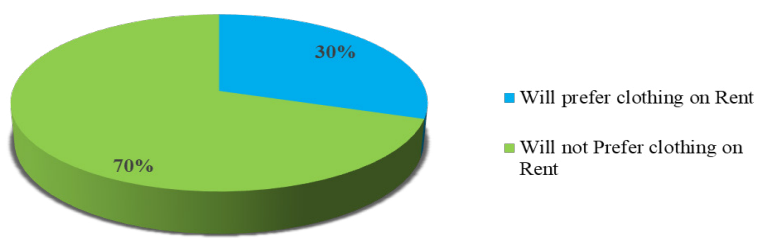

Figure 1. Consumer's preference towards rental clothing *(n=100)*

Figure 2 reveals that 88% of the respondents would not prefer clothes on rent due to hygiene factor, 25% would love to own clothes, 17% indicated

that there are no renting stores available and the least number of the respondents that is 11% would prefer wearing branded new clothes. Consequently, the maximum number of respondents would not buy garments on rent due to hygiene issues. However, the garments are dry washed after each wearer wears it, in fact they are chemically cleaned to get rid of germs and other particles, inspite of that minimum trust among consumers and providers is evident. The result is in accordance with the findings of Sczkya (2020), who has found in her studies that hygiene is an essential topic, but all respondents would trust the providers to clean the rented garments adequately.
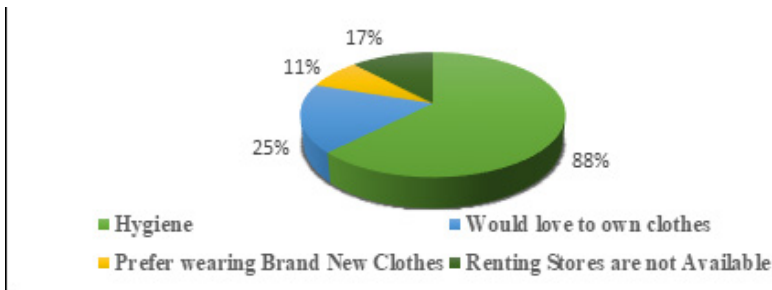

Figure 2. Factors influencing for not renting clothes *(n=100)*

Figure 3. indicates that 83% of respondents would prefer clothes on rent which are especially for occasions, 7% preferred seasonal clothes, and 4% of the respondents would prefer sportswear clothes and daily wear clothes. And the least number of respondents would prefer outdoor clothes for rent. As a result, most of the respondents chose to rent occasion-specific clothing. The result is in accordance with the findings of Sczkya (2020) in which the respondents assume that renting special occasion pieces for a short period would be cheaper than buying all the garments.
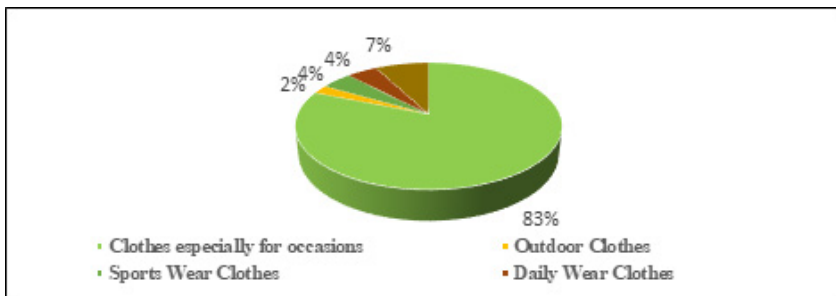

Figure 3. Consumer's Preference on type of clothes on rent *(n=100)*

Figure 4 shows that 80% of respondents dispose of their clothes by donating them to charity, followed by 47% who reuse them for other purposes, 34% who gave it to relatives, 30% gave it for recycling or upcycling, 12% kept their clothes in their wardrobe for a longer period of time, 10% who exchange or swap clothes with their friends, 8% who place it in recycling bins and give it in exchange for household goods and 7% sold it to second hand clothes. Consequently, the maximum number of respondents give their clothes to the charity. The result is in accordance to Kamis, (2019) with the fact that donating clothes to welfare bodies helps to reduce the burden of the needy people and also helps in space management at disposal sites and solving environmental problems.
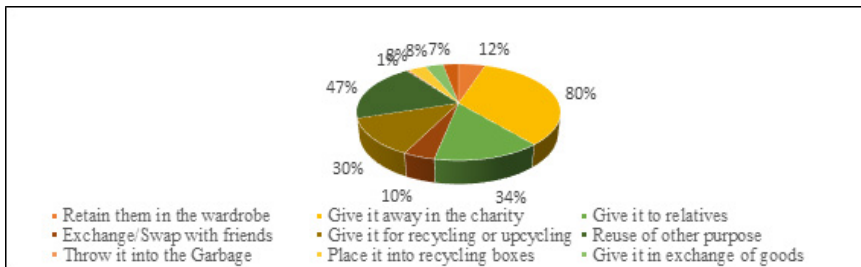

Figure 4. Consumer attitude towards disposal of unused clothes (n=100)

Figure 5 depicts that 42% of the respondents have come across the recycle bin installed by charity or NGO, 28% have come across the clothing recycle bin installed by Government bodies and 20 % have come across the clothing recycle bin installed by a specific brand or store and the least number of respondents are not aware about recycle bin. It can be further concluded that the providers of the recycle bin must promote actively so that consumer gets awareness through word of mouth of donating clothes.
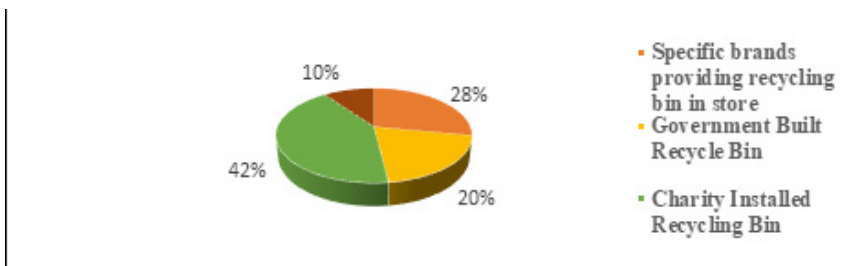

Figure 5. Availability of pick-up services for the old clothes at door step. (*n=100*)

Figure 6 reveals that 64% of respondents indicated that the store recycle bin contains all kinds of textiles followed by 21% indicating that the store recycle bin takes in-house products and the least number of respondents that is 15% indicated that they take any unwanted clothes. Therefore, it can be further concluded that maximum picked the option of installed store bins takes any textile products. Furthermore, in recent years, several fashion companies have been launching programs to collect used clothing from customers. The collected items are resold or donated as second-hand clothing, or are recycled into fibers or fuels, depending on their conditions. Some fashion retailers, such as H&M, provide a trade-in take-back collection system, where consumers can deposit their clothing in a collection box located inside their stores to get a discount voucher to use for their shopping. The result is in accordance with the findings of Turunen (2020) in which he has indicated that Eco TLC monitors mainly the outlets that collect unsorted clothing and shoes, such as on-street containers, charities, authorised recycling organisations, H&M, charity shops etc.
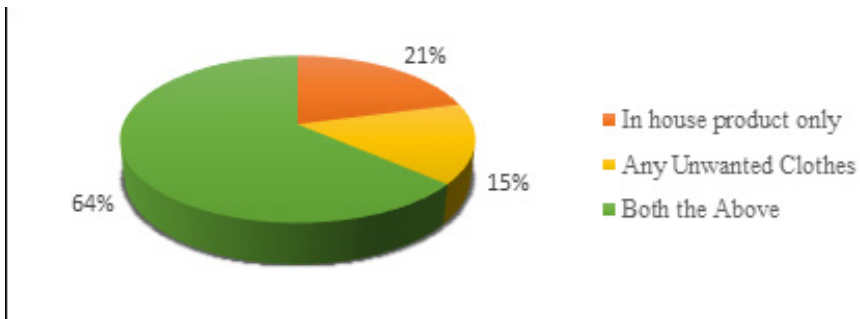

Figure 6. The product type taken by the Store. *(n=100)*

Figure 7. revealed that 82% do not resell their used clothes while 10% sell their garments to the store located in the city and the least number of respondents sell over an online portal where reselling is done. Therefore, it can be concluded consumers have limited access to second hand selling stores as the sustenance of physical stores is less. Nonetheless, online portals like eBay and Poshmark have generated the podium to the consumers where the unused clothes can be sold but under certain criteria like the product should be undamaged with its trim, colour and texture intact. The result is in accordance with the findings of Gajjar (2021) in which his survey found that 82% of the respondents had not sold their second-hand

clothing before, whereas the remaining 18% had sold their clothes.

Figure 7. Consumers in reselling their old clothes. *(n=100)*

Figure 8. reveals that 42% of respondents retain unused clothes for less than six months, followed by 29% who retain unused clothes at least for three years, 17% retain unused clothes for five years and the least number of respondents that is 12% retain their unused clothes for life long. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the respondents retain unused clothes not for more than six months and they are majorly the fast fashion garments which are of great style and often cheaper in price. The fast fashion garments do carry a minimum value as a result consumers get rid of the same easily and buy more which are in current trend.

The result is in accordance with the findings of Tripa (2014) in which she has explained in her studies that the big fast fashion brands like H&M, Gap, Zara, C&A, and United Colours of Benetton etc. have made clothing so affordable that it has led to an overconsumption of unsustainable clothing. In the case of fast fashion, clothes are often discarded due to not being fashionable anymore.
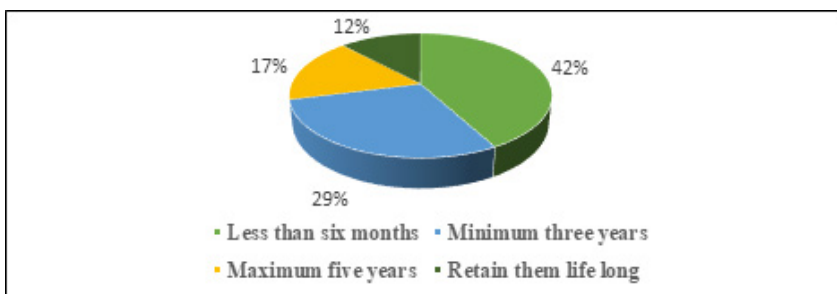

Figure 8. Number of years for retention of old clothes. *(n=100)*

Figure 9 reveals that 39% of respondents indicated that there are no recycle bins available around the city, 33% indicated that there is no specific organization that takes unwanted clothes, 32% indicated that they like to keep unwanted clothes for household purposes, 24 % indicated that there is lack of awareness and 19% indicated for both the reasons firstly, they want a pickup service for unwanted clothes and secondly, lack of interest in disposing holds them back to dispose consciously. Therefore, it can be concluded that consumers want a very convenient, less time consuming and hassle-free way of disposing of their unwanted clothes.
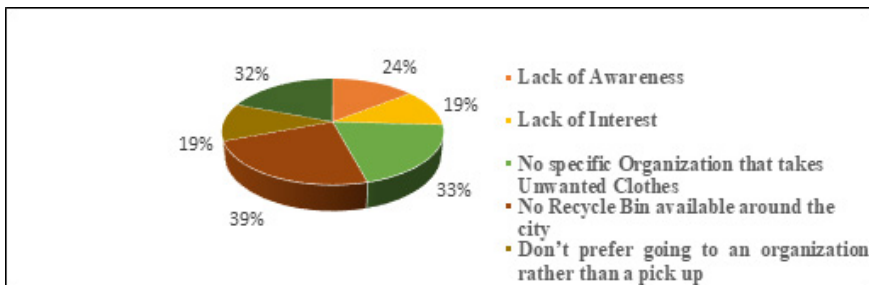

Figure 9. Factors responsible for not able to dispose old clothes (*n=100*)

Conclusion

Consumers engagement in collaborative consumption in terms of clothing is minimum and will not like to engage into such activity like renting due to hygiene issues. There are minimum number of consumers who would like to rent on garments for occasions only where the garments worn by consumer is minimal. However, Promotion of second-hand selling stores might motivate the consumers to buy apparels but limited number of reselling stores are available in Jaipur. Consumer decisions on clothing disposal are also an important issue from an environmental point of view, considering that consumers dispose clothes in an unconscious manner ignoring the climatic crisis that we are facing in current scenario. Most of the garments are donated to the charity by the consumers of Jaipur and the reason behind this is also an easy way to get rid of clothes. Consumers of Jaipur are more prone to get rid of clothes rather than swapping or reselling clothes though they retain clothes for a small span of time in their wardrobe. This depicts that they are engaged in low-cost fast fashion clothes which they easily get rid due to frequent change in style and trends. Therefore, the reason behind unconscious disposal behaviour is due to lack of proper awareness and limited amount of clothing recycle bin available across the city. By exploring these aspects , researchers can

contribute valuable insights that may inform sustainable practices in the fashion industry and support the development of policies promoting responsible consumption and disposal of clothing. Hence, people should care for our planet, society, and economy to design a beautiful future for

the coming generation.

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