Almost 90% of all donated clothing in the United States is sent overseas and sold in bulk at a significant discount. This negatively impacts the local fashion industry in nations such as India and Haiti, as well as their economy as a whole. In order to help America’s fashion trade, United States retailers need to find a way to recycle secondhand cotton garments. The purpose of this research is to find what method of recycling second hand cotton garments would be the most sustainable and cost effective for a large retailer when creating new products. Research methods that will be used include consumer surveys, analyses of retailers who use recycled cotton in their production process and how they perform among companies who don’t, and interviews with industry professors who specialize in fashion and sustainability on a global scale. Companies opt out of using the current methods of creating new fabrics from recycled cotton because they are expensive and use high volumes of water. Advancements in technology are opening doors to lessen the cost and resource usage while also simplifying the process to make recycled cotton fabrics the industry norm. A positive outcome of this research would be to inform companies about alternative recycling and production methods that are cost effective for them and also benefit the environment.
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