

Abstract

Through content analysis research and surveys, we studied the misuse of water and natural resources in today's fashion industry. Through the survey we found that there are many consumers who are aware of this excessive use that the industry has taken part of. With negative perceptions, there were also neutral feelings about fashion trends, cost efficiency, along with being eco-friendly. With that being said, consumers are aware that companies should start to take initiative and begin to change their manufacturing processes. From the survey responses, more than half of the people who participated were unaware of the effects that the industry has on the environment. If fashion forward companies could commit to sustainable efforts, the environment we live in would be able to last longer than the foreseen years to come.

Objectives

The overall objective of our project was to answer the following questions:

- How do fashion students feel about the excessive water use in the fashion industry?
- Does the industry's excessive water use impact the amount of cotton apparel products that fashion students purchase?
- How can knowledge in sustainability drive consumers to put an emphasis on purchasing sustainable fashion?

By finding the answers to these questions by analyzing customer comments and conducting surveys, we were able to understand how students feel about "green" companies. This also provided us with insight on the issues of excessive water use in the industry.

Background/Literature

Research has shown that as the fashion industry evolves, the more scarcity water and natural resources become. The fast-fashion trend and the excessive use of natural assets has continued to take a toll on our environment with costs and sustainability issues. To achieve awareness, more surveys and questionnaires should be conducted about the issues that the industry is negatively adding to. Marketing strategies should also be provided to fashion companies on how to implement and successfully use sustainable business practices. Veering towards sustainable efforts and ethical solutions to reduce the waste of water and natural resources will show larger companies the importance of reusing and saving precious raw materials for future years to come.

Methods

We analyzed and coded comments that were found on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, & Online Articles. Obtaining different thoughts about certain textual comments, we were able to finalize them into the negative, neutral, and positive categories effectively. Based on the comments left by consumers, we were able to further analyze the data to see how consumers felt about the topic.

Next, we conducted a survey based off of our previous research about excessive water use in the fashion industry. Using Snowball Sampling we were able to see how aware consumers are of sustainability in the fashion industry, how they feel about it, and if it effects their purchasing decisions.

Results & Discussion

Figure 1 shows the detailed results of each category in a stacked bar chart. From the chart we are able to see that a lot of the categories such as Water Use, Other, and Global Warming had more negative results than any other comments. While there are some positive and neutral comments as well, they just don't come close to how many negative comments were made. From this information we can gather that a lot of consumers have a very negative perception on how much water the fashion industry uses up. The Other category also had many neutral comments about solutions that they think would help the industry. This shows that even though many people have a negative perception about this issue, they are able to see that there are solutions to the problem.

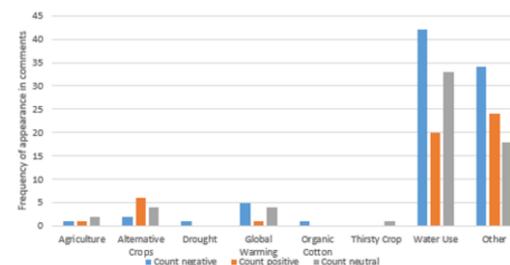


Figure 1: Detailed frequency distribution of positive, negative, and neutral comments in each category

Figures 2 and 3 both come directly from our survey. The survey was conducted to create an understanding awareness to consumers about the misuse of natural resources in the fashion industry. From the results show in Figure 2 it is clear that more than half of the people survey are either not aware of the effects the fashion industry has on the environment or are just not sure. Then, when asked "how important is sustainability to you?", Figure 3 shows that the majority of people said moderately important. From the results from both Figure 2 and Figure 3, it is possible that sustainability is not extremely important to some people because they are not fully aware of sustainability and effects on the environment directly from the fashion industry.

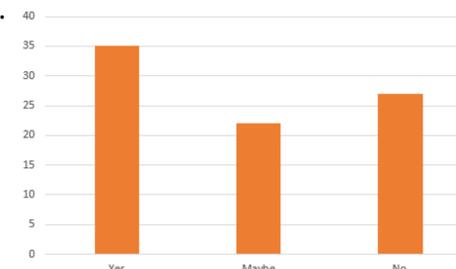


Figure 2: Detailed results from the survey asking the question: "Are you aware of the effects the fashion industry has on the environment?"

Results & Discussion Cont.

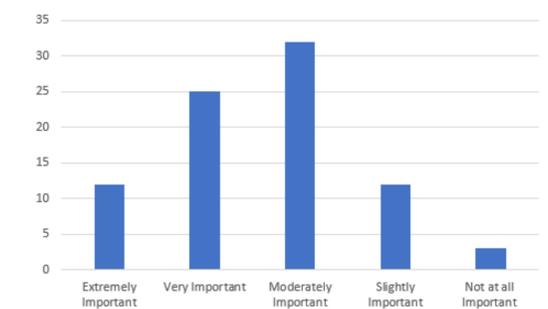


Figure 3: Detailed results from the survey asking the question: "How important is sustainability to you?"

Conclusion

Based on the content analysis, it appears that Water Use and Other were the biggest concerns that people commented on. Overall, the water use in the fashion industry is a very noticeable problem. This issue can be fixed by companies switching to more sustainable practices in manufacturing. Many comments were made about solutions for the water use problem, such as switching from cotton to alternative crops such as Hemp. In conclusion, from our results from comments found on social media, we were able to see how consumers feel about the growing problem of water use in the fashion industry.

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