Fashion & Natural Resources: *Water Usage*

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Abstract

Shifting consumers' perception of cotton textiles from wary to supportive is critical to the livelihood of the cotton industry. Water conservation presents the opportunity for these environmentally conscious changes to transpire. The fashion industry can be redeemed both environmentally and socially.

Objectives

1- Collect information, a minimum of 175 comments and reviews pertinent to water conservation and sustainable fashion, posted by consumers from multiple online outlets

2- Perform analysis of consumers' comments and reviews on water conservation in fashion and sustainable clothing to comprehend their perceptions so we can formulate education and marketing that improves their knowledge of transparent clothing and promotes its value to customers, so they make green purchases

Literature

We need to address the excessive use of water in the fashion industry because if we do not issues such as water scarcity, water pollution from dangerous chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, and dyes), soil depletion, low farmer incomes and even forced child labor will persist if we continue to fuel the present fashion industry because of lack of knowledge (Chua, 2018). Currently, it takes approximately 40 gallons of water to make basic denim jeans (Zargani, 2010). That is an excessive amount of water for only one garment especially when new technology exists that makes it possible to use way less water for production (Zargani, 2010).
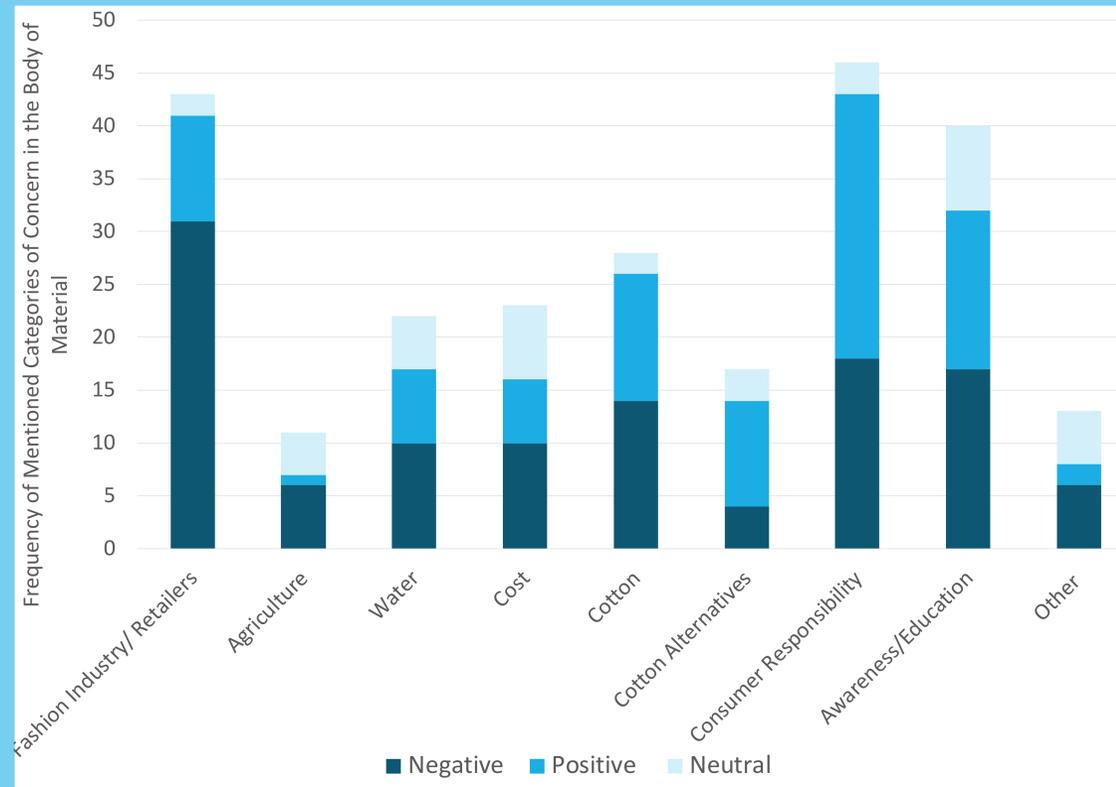

Figure 1: Visual display of negative, positive, and neutral comments across the categories

Methods

To answer our questions, we utilized content analysis. This method required us to comb through consumer comments which supplied us with their feedback. The body of material we studied comprised of customer reviews and discussion on cotton, water usage and sustainability which we pulled from various media outlets. The majority of data stems from YouTube comments; however, we also selected material from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, blogs, online articles and a discussion post forum. This system is an example of stratified sampling. Our chosen social media sources are the strata of this report.

We also administered a survey to explore and understand consumers' knowledge and attitude towards water conservation and cotton in regards to the fashion industry. Participants answered twelve questions.

Results & Discussion

In Figure 1, the 'Fashion Industry/Retailers' (22%) and 'Consumer Responsibility' (19%) are the most frequently discussed categories. The 'Fashion Industry/ Retailers' category is 72% negative. The 'Consumer Responsibility' category is 54% positive. A majority of reviewers expressed frustration over retailers' practices in our body of material. While some reviewers blamed themselves for the current state of the fashion industry, more detailed their sustainability efforts.

Our survey results showed that the participants prefer cotton at 82%. These consumers also deem eco-friendly apparel moderately important. The majority would also spend a moderate amount on an item of organic or Fairtrade cotton clothing compared to the same item of clothing that is not.

Conclusion

We will appeal to consumers who want their habits to be transparent and dispel the need for a cotton alternative. By conducting research, we attained knowledge of what our consumers value. With this information, we will try to tailor our product to fit their needs and address their concerns. Our goal is to make more companies and consumers care about sustainability.

References

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Our research could:

- help offer solutions to conserve water
- offer retailers knowledge on how to become more transparent
- promote the sales of greener products
- enlighten consumers on the importance of making and maintaining sustainable choices when shopping

Retailers need to change their core sourcing structures and seek out sustainably grown cotton suppliers.

Consumers knowledge and support for green clothing does not always translate at the register (Friedman, 2016).

New marketing tactics and education at the retail and consumer level is critical.

If fashion brands realized all the actualized benefits of making minor changes to their production and supply chain processes . . .

more transparent clothing would positively impact the world globally.

The key to reluctant retailers is a demand for eco-friendly apparel from consumers (Clark, 2010).