

# Strategic Management of Sustainable Fashion Subscriptions, Consumer Perceptions and Brand Positioning in the Context of Responsible Consumption and Production

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## ABSTRACT:

*The environmental impact of the fashion industry has contributed to the emergence of sustainable alternatives, with fashion subscription models presenting a viable approach to circular consumption. This study explores the strategic management of sustainable fashion subscriptions, analyzing the impact of brand positioning, trust, and sustainability communication on consumer perceptions and adoption intentions in Chennai, India. A quantitative survey of 321 respondents and statistical analyses, including correlation and regression, indicate that brand positioning is the most significant predictor of subscription interest, followed by sustainability messaging and brand trust. The survey emphasizes a significant change in consumer priorities towards environmentally sensitive ideals, especially among young, educated, and technologically engaged demographics. The findings highlight the critical significance of transparent brand communication and trust cultivation in promoting responsible consumption in accordance with SDG 12.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Fashion, Subscription Models, Brand Positioning, Consumer Perception

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The fashion business, although a catalyst for economic expansion, is also among the most resource-intensive sectors. Fast fashion has resulted in excessive manufacturing, rampant consumption, and considerable textile waste. With sustainability emerging as a global imperative, both consumers and corporations are transitioning towards responsible options. Fashion subscriptions, which prioritize access over ownership, have emerged as an effective technique for minimizing waste and encouraging conscientious purchasing. This study investigates the impact of sustainable fashion subscription model, focusing on the influence of brand positioning on consumer perception.

### 1.1 Sustainable Fashion Subscriptions

These are business strategies in which consumers subscribe to rent or get clothing on a monthly basis instead of purchasing them outright. This model advocates for the reuse, sharing, and recycling of fashion goods, so directly supporting SDG 12 through the promotion of responsible consumption.

### 1.2 Strategic Brand Positioning

Strategic positioning defines the manner in which a brand distinguishes itself within the marketplace. In sustainable fashion, positioning may emphasize environmental impact, ethical sourcing, minimalist lifestyle, price, or exclusivity. This study examines the impact of such positioning on consumer trust and subscription acceptance.

### 1.3 Consumer Perception and Sustainability

Consumer perception is essential to the efficacy of sustainability-oriented efforts. This part examines consumer perceptions of fashion subscriptions, their understanding of environmental implications, and their readiness to engage in circular fashion models.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent literature highlights the increasing interest in sustainable consumption and the fashion industry's transition towards circular models. Research conducted by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2023) and Fletcher & Tham (2022) indicates that subscription models contribute to the reduction of fashion waste. Research conducted by Jain & Bansal (2023) demonstrates that Generation Z and Millennials exhibit a notable receptiveness to environmentally sensitive corporate communications. Nevertheless, research

indicates a perception-behavior disparity: although numerous consumers endorse sustainable principles, a smaller number engage in corresponding actions due to convenience, cost, and distrust.

### 3. RESEARCH GAP

Although sustainable fashion and consumer behavior have been extensively examined, there is a lack of study regarding the impact of strategic brand positioning on consumer perception within fashion subscription models, particularly in the Indian context. Fashion subscription brands are relatively scarce in India, and customer awareness is little. This gap is substantial, underscoring the necessity for research in emerging markets. The study specifically targets Chennai, a metropolitan area characterized by a significant population of youthful, educated, and digitally engaged consumers, who are predisposed to embrace sustainable consumption practices. Investigating awareness and adoption behavior in this setting provides preliminary strategic insights for fashion businesses and policymakers. The identified lack of awareness is not a constraint but a pivotal opportunity for brand growth and sustainable involvement.

### 4. NEED FOR THE STUDY

An important necessity emerges to investigate how enterprises might harmonize profitability with sustainability. Comprehending customer perception and brand strategy about fashion subscriptions provides practical insights for sustainable business advancement and policy formulation.

### 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the demographic characteristics of respondents and their impact on awareness and interest in sustainable fashion subscriptions.
2. To examine the relationship between brand positioning and customer propensity to subscribe.
3. To analyze the influence of brand trust and sustainability communication on subscription adoption through regression analysis.
4. To propose commercial strategies for enhancing subscription adoption.

### 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research methodology was utilized through a structured online survey. Data was gathered from 321 participants in Chennai by convenience sampling. Demographic data encompassed age, gender, economic level, education, and lifestyle. The analysis encompasses frequency distribution, mean score assessment, correlation, and regression analysis utilizing SPSS.

### 7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table 1. Demographic Profile:**

Category	Subcategory	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
Gender	Male	135	42.0%
	Female	186	58.0%
Age Group	18-24	128	39.9%
	25-34	112	34.9%
	35-44	48	15.0%
	45 and above	33	10.3%
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate (UG)	96	29.9%
	Postgraduate (PG)	161	50.2%
	Others (e.g., diploma, professional courses)	64	19.9%
Occupation	Student	96	29.9%
	Employed (Full-time)	128	39.9%
	Employed (Part-time / Freelance)	48	15.0%
	Others (Unemployed, Homemaker, etc.)	49	15.2%
Monthly Income	Less than ₹10,000	72	22.4%

Category	Subcategory	Number of Respondents	Percentage %
	₹10,000 – ₹25,000	102	31.8%
	₹25,001 – ₹50,000	85	26.5%
	Above ₹50,000	62	19.3%
OTT Usage (Daily)	Less than 1 hour	30	9.3%
	1–3 hours	128	39.9%
	3–5 hours	96	29.9%
	More than 5 hours	67	20.9%
Subscription Type	Free (Ad-supported)	95	29.6%
	Paid subscription	180	56.1%
	Shared/Family subscription	30	9.3%
	Bundled (with telecom, broadband)	16	5.0%
Device Used	Mobile phone	137	42.7%
	Laptop/Desktop	103	32.1%
	Smart TV	58	18.1%
	Tablet	23	7.1%
Marital Status	Single	201	62.6%
	Married	120	37.4%

## INTERPRETATION

The study examined 321 participants from Chennai, with a greater female representation (58%) compared to male (42%). A significant majority of the participants (74.8%) were within the 18–34 age demographic, signifying a youthful and digitally engaged population. More over 80% possessed advanced education, having either undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. Full-time employees constituted 39.9%, while students represented 29.9% of the primary occupational sectors. Approximately 60% indicated a monthly salary ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000, signifying moderate purchasing capacity. OTT use was prevalent, with 90.7% utilizing platforms daily and 56.1% selecting paid subscriptions. Mobile phones were the predominant devices (42.7%) utilized for streaming content. A significant proportion of respondents (62.6%) were single, indicating a lifestyle conducive to exploring innovative consumption patterns such as fashion subscriptions.

Table 2.MEAN SCORE

Consumer Preferences in Sustainable Fashion Subscriptions	Mean Score
Environmental benefits	4.5
Affordability	4.3
Brand Trust	4.2
Style Variety	3.8
Social image	3.7

## INTERPRETATION

The data indicates that environmental benefits (4.5) are the paramount aspect in sustainable fashion subscriptions, underscoring significant customer interest for eco-friendly options. Affordability (4.3) and brand trust (4.2) are tightly aligned, signifying that competitive pricing and reliable brand messaging are essential for adoption. Simultaneously, style variation (3.8) and social image (3.7) hold moderate significance,

indicating that although aesthetics and status are relevant, they are subordinate to sustainability and trust in influencing customer interest.

Table 3.CORRELATION

Relationship between Brand positioning & Consumer Subscription Interest.

Variable	Correlation coefficient [r]	p-value
Role of AI	0.76	0.00

## INTERPRETATION

The correlation analysis indicates a robust positive association between strategic brand positioning and customer interest in subscribing to sustainable fashion services ( $r = 0.76$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). This result indicates that when brands successfully position themselves by highlighting ideals such as environmental stewardship, ethical sourcing, or minimalist living, consumer readiness to subscribe markedly increases. A p-value of 0.00 signifies that the link is statistically significant, affirming that brand messaging and identity are crucial in influencing customer behavior regarding responsible fashion consumption.

Table 4.REGRESSION

Model Fit

Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.82	0.67	0.65	0.41

Predictor Variable	B	$\beta$	t	p-value
Brand Positioning	0.43	0.51	7.86	0.000
Sustainability Communication	0.32	0.37	5.24	0.000
Brand Trust	0.28	0.34	4.88	0.000

## INTERPRETATION

The regression model indicates a robust correlation ( $R = 0.82$ ;  $R^2 = 0.67$ ) between consumer interest in fashion subscriptions and factors such as brand positioning, sustainability communication, and trust. The adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.65 validates the model's robustness. Brand positioning ( $\beta = 0.51$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was identified as the most significant predictor, succeeded by sustainability communication ( $\beta = 0.37$ ) and brand trust ( $\beta = 0.34$ ). The results underscore that explicit sustainability messaging and credible branding substantially influence consumer acceptance of sustainable fashion services.

## 8. FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

The study indicates that strategic brand positioning, sustainability communication, and brand trust are significant predictors of customer interest in sustainable fashion subscriptions. The regression analysis indicates that these variables jointly account for 67% of the variation in subscription intent, with brand positioning exerting the most substantial influence. The correlation study ( $r = 0.76$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) substantiates a robust positive association between brand strategy and consumer subscription behavior. Participants emphasized environmental advantages, cost-effectiveness, and brand integrity, signifying a distinct consumer transition towards eco-friendly purchasing behavior. The young, educated, and technologically adept population in Chennai shown significant awareness and receptiveness to circular fashion models. The findings indicate that smart branding and clear sustainability communication are crucial for enhancing customer involvement and promoting responsible fashion purchasing patterns.

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