

Development Of Fashion Accessories Through Up-Cycling Of Fabric Wastes From Boutiques

Dr. Neha Singh¹, Dr. Rashika Kashyap², Abhilasha Garg³, Kamyapa Pandey⁴

¹(Assistant Professor), Department of Fashion and Textile Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, 250005 U.P. India, neha93svsu@gmail.com

²(Assistant Professor), Department of Fashion and Textile Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, 250005 U.P. India, rashikakashyap20@gmail.com

³(Lecturer), Department of Fashion and Textile Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, 250005 U.P. India, abhilasha.fashiondesign@gmail.com

⁴(Research Scholar), Department of Fashion and Textile Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, 250005 U.P. India, Kamyapandey03@gmail.com

Abstract

This research explores the innovative use of fabric waste from boutiques in the creation of eco-friendly fashion accessories, specifically belts and necklaces. Conducted in Meerut City, the study examined consumer preferences, design considerations, and the cost-effectiveness of developing accessories from discarded textile materials. A total of 90 respondents, aged between 19 to 25 years, were surveyed using purposive random sampling. The study found that respondents preferred accessories made from up-cycled materials, especially for their aesthetic appeal, environmental benefits, and affordable pricing. The results indicate a strong market potential for sustainable fashion accessories made from fabric waste from boutiques, which can reduce environmental pollution while providing consumers with unique and cost-effective products.

Keywords: Recycled textiles, eco-fashion, fabric waste from boutiques, belt, necklace, consumer preferences, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, design.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The fashion industry is one of the largest producers of fabric waste from boutiques, contributing significantly to environmental pollution. This waste, which is often discarded into landfills, poses a major challenge for sustainability efforts in the modern world. In response, the recycling and repurposing of fabric waste from boutiques have emerged as critical solutions to minimize the environmental footprint of fashion. Accessories, such as belts and necklaces, made from up-cycled fabric waste from boutiques, offer an innovative and sustainable alternative that addresses the issue of fabric waste from boutiques while appealing to eco-conscious consumers.

1.2 Problem Statement

Textile waste has been identified as one of the major environmental challenges associated with the fashion industry. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that textiles represent a significant portion of landfill waste globally. This problem is exacerbated by fast fashion cycles that encourage consumers to frequently discard garments and accessories. In India, fabric waste from boutiques management is still in its developmental stages, and the reuse of fabric waste from boutiques, particularly in fashion accessories, remains underexplored. This research focuses on the use of fabric waste from boutiques to create belts and necklaces, which can help reduce the burden on landfills while promoting sustainable fashion practices.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the feasibility of creating fashion accessories through up-cycling, specifically belts and necklaces, from fabric waste from boutiques. The study aims to assess consumer preferences, the aesthetic appeal of recycled products, and the commercial viability of producing these accessories at scale.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the consumer preferences for belts and necklaces made from up-cycled fabric waste from boutiques?
2. What design features are most appealing in eco-friendly belts and necklaces?
3. How cost-effective is the production of belts and necklaces from recycled textiles?

4. What is the potential market acceptance of fashion accessories through up-cycling made from waste materials?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of research on sustainable fashion by focusing on the potential of repurposing fabric waste from boutiques into accessories. The findings could help fashion designers, entrepreneurs, and businesses explore the use of discarded fabrics to create innovative, environmentally friendly products. Additionally, the study highlights the role of consumer preferences in promoting eco-fashion, which could influence future product development strategies in the fashion industry.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Textile Waste and Recycling

Previous research has established the negative environmental impact of fabric waste from boutiques, with discarded fabrics contributing significantly to global pollution. According to Hawley (2008), fabric waste from boutiques includes both pre-consumer and post-consumer waste. Pre-consumer waste refers to materials discarded during the manufacturing process, while post-consumer waste includes used garments and textiles. Recycling fabric waste from boutiques not only reduces environmental harm but also provides an opportunity to create new products with reduced resource consumption (Gupta & Gupta, 2016).

The reuse of fabric waste from boutiques has been explored in various contexts, including the creation of new fabrics, clothing, and accessories. Kaur and Kaur (2015) found that jewelry made from fabric waste from boutiques was highly appreciated for its aesthetic appeal and low cost. Similarly, Pandya (2001) highlighted the potential of pre-consumer fabric waste from boutiques to create value-added products such as bags and belts. These studies underline the commercial viability of recycling fabric waste from boutiques, particularly in the creation of fashion accessories.

2.2 Consumer Preferences for Eco-Fashion

Consumer interest in eco-friendly products has grown significantly in recent years, driven by increasing awareness of environmental issues. According to a study by Brown (2013), consumers are more likely to purchase products that are both environmentally sustainable and aesthetically pleasing. In the context of fashion accessories, Kaur and Kaur (2015) reported that 66.67% of respondents were interested in purchasing jewelry made from solid waste, with many valuing the uniqueness and creativity of such products.

The aesthetic value of fashion accessories through up-cycling plays a crucial role in consumer preferences. Research by Mitra (2001) found that color, design, and embellishment were key factors influencing the purchase of household articles and accessories made from up-cycled materials. This suggests that consumer acceptance of fashion accessories through up-cycling depends not only on their environmental benefits but also on their design and appeal.

2.3 Market Potential of Recycled Fashion Accessories

The market for fashion accessories through up-cycling has shown significant growth in recent years, with increasing demand for products that are both sustainable and affordable. Several studies have demonstrated the profitability of recycling fabric waste from boutiques into new products. For example, Sunidhi (2004) found that accessories made from finger-weaving techniques using waste fabric could yield a profit margin of up to 35%. Similarly, Bawa (2006) showed that handbags made from waste fabric were highly appreciated by consumers and could be sold at a profit of 25%.

2.4 Contemporary Developments in Up-Cycled Fashion Accessories

Recent advancements in sustainable fashion emphasize up-cycling as an effective solution to reduce post-consumer and boutique-generated fabric waste. According to Niinimäki et al. (2020), up-cycling adds creative value to discarded textiles by transforming them into aesthetically appealing and marketable products. This aligns with Kozlowski et al. (2021), who emphasize the systemic redesign of fashion to accommodate circularity through up-cycled accessories and garments.

Studies such as that of Pal and Gander (2021) suggest that up-cycled accessories not only help mitigate environmental damage but also cater to the growing segment of conscious consumers who prefer meaningful consumption over mass-produced fashion. Furthermore, Bick et al. (2022) highlight that

integrating up-cycling practices within boutique-level operations helps establish a micro-level circular economy, reducing textile discard at source.

Another study by Muthu (2023) outlines various methods of reusing fabric waste, including braiding, patchworking, and beading, which are particularly suited to accessory design. These processes not only diversify the product range but also lower production costs and improve artisanship.

In addition, Gupta and Verma (2024) analyzed consumer responses to fashion accessories made from boutique scraps and found that the perceived authenticity and uniqueness of such products significantly influenced purchase intention, especially among urban youth.

This growing body of research demonstrates a clear shift in both industry practices and consumer behavior, pointing to an increasingly favorable market for up-cycled fashion accessories created from boutique fabric wastes.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection to assess consumer preferences for fashion accessories through up-cycling made from fabric waste from boutiques. The research was conducted in Meerut City, targeting young adults aged 19-25 years. The purposive random sampling technique was used to select 90 respondents from various colleges in the city.

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected using an interview schedule, which was divided into three parts. The first part collected demographic information about the respondents, including their age, education, and family background. The second part focused on the respondents' awareness of fashion accessories through up-cycling and their preferences for belts and necklaces made from up-cycled materials. The third part of the interview schedule assessed consumer preferences for specific design features, such as color, material, and embellishments.

3.3 Development of Belts and Necklaces

Textile waste was sourced from local boutiques and tailors in Meerut City. The waste materials included fabric scraps, small fabric pieces, and discarded garments. A total of 15 sketches were prepared for belts and 15 for necklaces, incorporating various design elements such as patchwork, lace, and beads. The sketches were evaluated by a panel of 10 judges, including fashion design faculty members and students from Nandlal Bose Subharti College of Fine Arts & Fashion Design. Based on the panel's feedback, the most preferred designs were selected for production.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages and weighted mean scores. Chi-square tests were used to assess the association between demographic factors and consumer preferences. The cost-effectiveness of each accessory was evaluated by comparing the production costs with the expected selling price, and profit margins were calculated.

1. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Consumer Awareness and Preferences

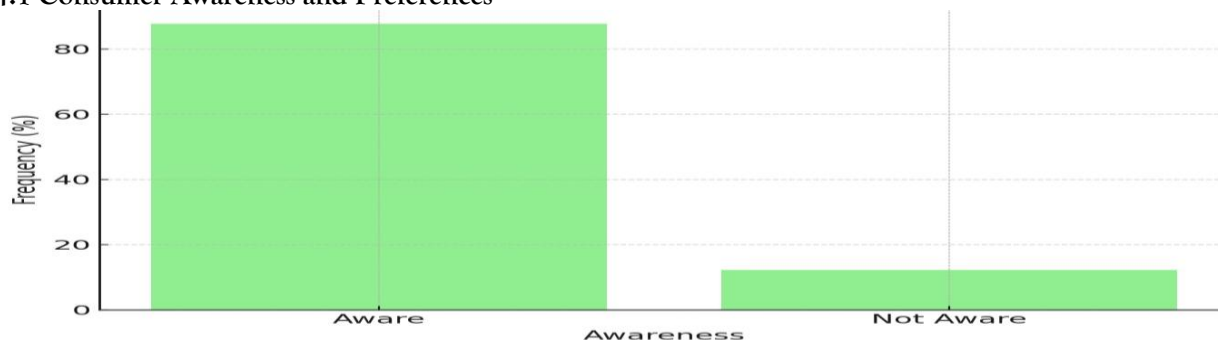


Figure 1. Consumer Awareness and Preferences for Eco- Fashion Accessories

The majority of the respondents (87.78%) were aware of fashion accessories through up-cycling made from fabric waste from boutiques, indicating a growing interest in sustainable fashion. When asked about

their preferences for specific accessories, 30% of respondents expressed a preference for belts, while 14.44% preferred necklaces. These results suggest that belts, in particular, hold significant market potential as fashion accessories through up-cycling.

4.2 Design Preferences

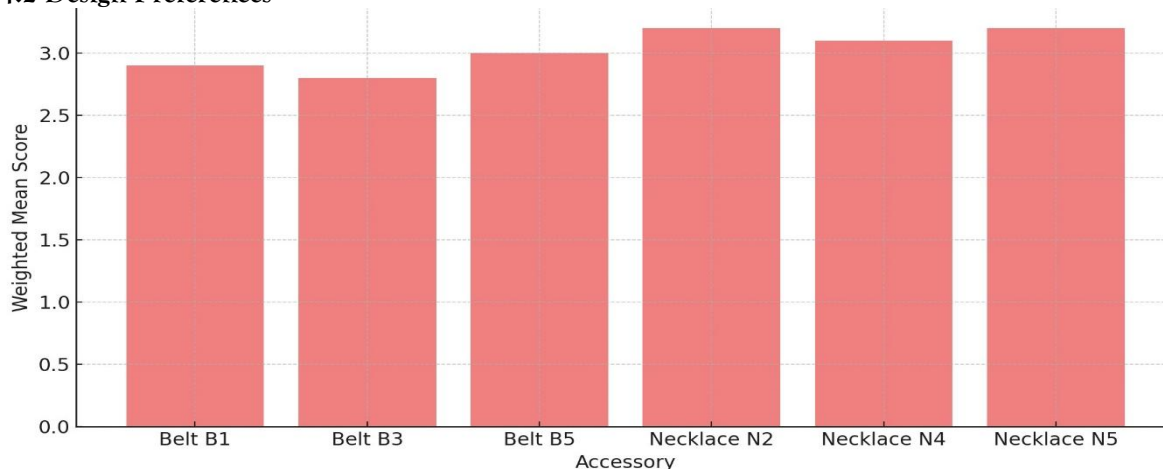


Figure 2. Design Preferences for Belts and Necklaces

Respondents were presented with a variety of belt and necklace designs incorporating different materials and embellishments. The most preferred designs for belts were B1, B3, and B5, which featured creative use of lace, patchwork, and recycled fabric. For necklaces, designs N2, N4, and N5 were the most popular, with respondents appreciating the use of bold colours and intricate detailing. Overall, respondents favoured accessories with multi-colour combinations, which were rated higher than two-colour or single-color designs.



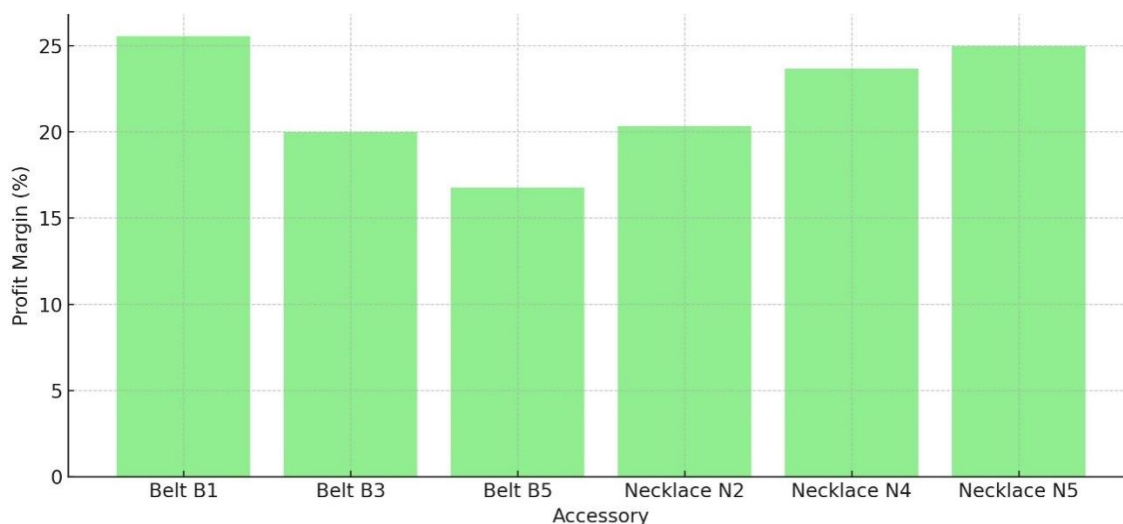


Figure 9. Cost-Effectiveness of Belts and Necklaces

The cost analysis revealed that belts and necklaces made from up-cycled fabric waste from boutiques could be produced at a low cost, with significant profit margins. For instance, the cost of producing belt B1 was ₹95, while the average selling price was ₹120, resulting in a profit margin of 25.55%. Similarly, the production cost of necklace N5 was ₹90, with an average selling price of ₹112, yielding a profit margin of 25%. These findings suggest that fashion accessories through up-cycling made from fabric waste from boutiques are not only environmentally sustainable but also commercially viable.

4.4 Consumer Acceptance

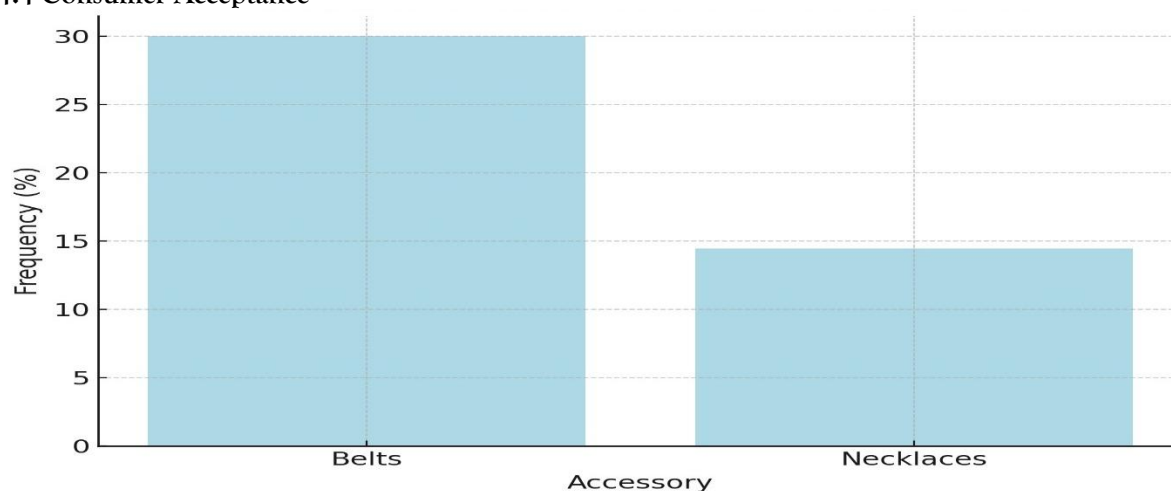


Figure 10. Consumer Acceptance for Belts and Necklaces

The consumer acceptance of fashion accessories through up-cycling was overwhelmingly positive. Over 60% of respondents found the quoted prices for belts and necklaces to be adequate, while 23.33% felt that the prices were low. Additionally, 75% of respondents expressed willingness to purchase fashion accessories through up-cycling made from fabric waste from boutiques, citing their unique designs and environmental benefits as key factors in their decision.

5. CONCLUSION

This study conclusively demonstrates that repurposing fabric waste from boutiques to create fashion accessories through up-cycling, such as belts and necklaces, is a viable and promising strategy for reducing environmental impact while addressing consumer demand for sustainable fashion. The data collected from 90 respondents aged 19-25 years shows significant consumer interest and acceptance of accessories made from up-cycled materials. With over 87.78% of respondents aware of eco-fashion and 75% willing to purchase such products, it is evident that consumers are increasingly drawn to products that offer both environmental benefits and unique, creative designs.

The commercial potential of these accessories is equally promising. With profit margins ranging from 12.5% to 25.55%, belts and necklaces made from up-cycled fabric waste from boutiques present a lucrative opportunity for businesses and fashion entrepreneurs. The ability to produce these accessories

at low cost while achieving significant profits demonstrates that eco-fashion can compete in the mainstream market, offering both sustainability and profitability. These findings are consistent with previous research. For example, studies by Pandya (2001) and Bawa (2006) emphasized that eco-friendly accessories, such as handbags and other fashion items, made from fabric waste from boutiques, can yield profit margins as high as 30%. This reinforces the idea that recycling textiles into fashionable products can be a sustainable and economically viable practice.

Moreover, this study highlights the importance of design in influencing consumer preferences. Accessories such as belts (B1, B3, and B5) and necklaces (N2, N4, and N5) received high marks for their unique aesthetics and functionality. Previous studies, such as Kaur and Kaur (2015), also underscore the significance of design in consumer acceptance of eco-friendly fashion items. These findings suggest that combining sustainability with innovative design can lead to broader market acceptance of products made from up-cycled materials.

Additionally, the findings align with Brown's (2013) research on consumer preferences for sustainable products, which shows that the market for eco-friendly accessories is growing rapidly. Consumers are not only willing to pay for such products but also value their uniqueness and contribution to environmental preservation. This shift in consumer behavior indicates that there is room for expanding the market for fashion accessories through up-cycling, especially among younger, environmentally conscious buyers.

As awareness of sustainable fashion continues to rise, particularly among younger generations, there is significant potential for the eco-fashion market to expand. The integration of sustainability into fashion accessories addresses both environmental concerns and the growing demand for affordable, fashionable products. Furthermore, as the fashion industry faces increasing pressure to adopt environmentally responsible practices, the use of up-cycled fabric waste from boutiques for creating accessories can help brands differentiate themselves and attract eco-conscious consumers.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the potential for fabric waste from boutiques to be repurposed into fashionable, commercially viable accessories. By addressing environmental concerns and tapping into consumer demand for unique, affordable, and sustainable products, fashion businesses can leverage up-cycled materials to create innovative accessories. These findings suggest that the development of fashion accessories through up-cycling, particularly belts and necklaces, can play a significant role in promoting sustainable practices within the fashion industry and reducing the environmental impact of fabric waste from boutiques. Given the positive consumer reception and potential for profitability, the findings of this study strongly advocate for further exploration and development of fashion accessories through up-cycling as a mainstream market segment.

2. REFERENCES

- Bawa, M. (2006). Creation of handbags for youngsters (Unpublished master's thesis). Punjab University, Chandigarh, India.
- Bick, R., Halse, A., & Ekenga, C. C. (2022). The global environmental injustice of fast fashion. *Environmental Health*, 21(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-021-00824-3>
- Brown, S. (2013). *Refashioned: Cutting-edge clothing from upcycled materials*. Laurence King Publishing.
- Gupta, M., & Gupta, D. (2016). Development of textile products from post-consumer waste. *Textile Trends*, 59(14), 32–35.
- Gupta, R., & Verma, S. (2024). Consumer perception towards boutique-level textile waste upcycling. *Journal of Sustainable Fashion Research*, 6(1), 22–33.
- Hawley, J. (2008). *Earth talk: Recycling worn-out clothing*. The Good Human. <http://www.thegoodhuman.com>
- Kaur, G., & Kaur, D. (2015). Development of jewelry from solid waste. *Asian Journal of Home Science*, 10(2), 190–195.
- Kozłowski, A., Searcy, C., & Bardecki, M. (2021). The redesign of fashion: Transforming the production-consumption system for sustainability. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 279, 123–145. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123456>
- Mitra, A. (2001). Preferences of women for design and color of household articles (Unpublished master's thesis). Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India.
- Muthu, S. S. (2023). *Textiles and clothing sustainability: Recycled and upcycled textiles*. Springer Nature.
- Niinimäki, K., & Karell, E. (2020). Fashion, sustainability, and social change. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*, 16(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1780917>
- Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1(4), 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9>
- Pal, R., & Gander, J. (2021). Modelling consumer behavior for upcycled fashion using extended theory of planned behavior. *Fashion and Sustainability*, 3(2), 45–60.
- Pandya, N. (2001). A study on recycling of pre-consumer cotton waste and designing value-added products (Unpublished master's thesis). The M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat.