

## Young Consumer's Sustainability Knowledge and Concerns about Sustainable Clothing: A Perspective from Chinese Post-90s' College Students

Jin Su, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA

Jianheng Zhou, Donghua University, China

Kittichai Watchravesringkan, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA

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### Research Background

With the significant achievements of economic development from over 30 years of rapid urbanization and industrialization, China is facing serious environmental deterioration. As China is a major powerhouse of global apparel production, it is undeniable that awareness of environmental and social problems, including pollution, and labor issues and working condition, has grown in recent years in China. However, academic research attention to consumer sustainable consumption behavior in China has been very limited so far (Kolk, 2010). This study aims to fill the literature gap by examining Chinese post-90s' college students' perceptions of sustainable clothing. Specifically, drawing on the theoretical work of theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and apparel sustainability perspective (Dickson, 2010), we investigated how Chinese college student's sustainability knowledge and their concerns about sustainable apparel impact their attitude (see Figure 1). There are three reasons that motivate us to study Chinese post-90s' college students' perspective. First the current Chinese college students have been growing up with China's rapid economic growth, a fact which affects their daily lives. Second, Chinese young people are technologically connected to the global marketplace. They highly regard the power of economic freedom, even social freedom, and are aware of emerging global issues. Third, given the current vibrant retail environment in China, they are considered one of the most important market segments for apparel products (O'Cass & Choy, 2008). As such, understanding their perspectives offers valuable insights to global sustainable apparel marketers.

### Research Method

A structured questionnaire was designed based on a careful review of pertinent literature. Specifically, 6 items measuring consumer's sustainability knowledge about apparel products were obtained from Park and Kim (2016). Measures of value concern (2 items), quality concern (3 items), psychological concern (3 items), social concern (3 items), and fashion concern (3 items) were adapted from literature (Dickson 2000; Kang & Kim, 2013). These items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). Measures of consumer attitude were adapted from Chan (2001) on a 5-point semantic differential scale. The survey was first developed. A translation and a back-translation of the questionnaire were performed by two researchers who are fluent in both Chinese and English. A sample of current college students from a large comprehensive Chinese university in Shanghai, China was recruited during late February and early March, 2017. A total of 194 valid responses were

collected. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 23 years (47% between 18 - 20; and 52% between 21 - 23). Sixty-six percent were female.

### Data Analysis and Results

Data was analyzed using a structural equation modeling approach. Evaluation of the measurement model was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis. Multiple fit indexes were used to examine the model fit. A satisfactory fit is achieved for the measurement model (see Table 1). The analysis of structural equation model (see Figure 1, which includes standardized parameter estimates and t-values) shows the significant negative linkage between quality concern and consumer attitude, demonstrating that the quality concern negatively and strongly affect Chinese young consumer's attitude towards sustainable apparel products. However, significant support is not found for other linkages in the model. There is some evidence of the positive impact of sustainability knowledge on consumer attitude, but the evidence is not statistically significant. Thus, for sustainable clothing, the Chinese college students' concern about quality is the contributing factor impacting their attitude; while other concerns, including value concern, psychological concerns, social concern, and fashion concern, do not show statistically significant impact on consumer attitude. Future investigation is needed for those insignificant relationships.

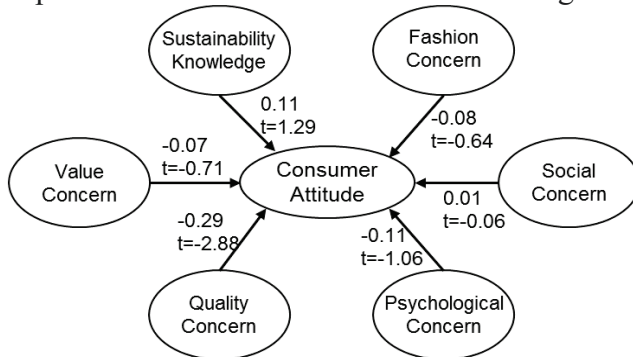


Figure 1. Research model

Fit Indices	Value
Chi-square / degrees of freedom	2.43
Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation	0.087
Normed Fit Index	0.87
Nonnormed Fit Index	0.90
Comparative Fit Index	0.92
Composite Reliability	
Sustainability Knowledge	0.856
Value Concern	0.601
Quality Concern	0.849
Psychological Concern	0.821
Social Concern	0.890
Fashion Concern	0.877
Consumer Attitude	0.889

Table 1. Fit indices of the measurement model

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