

FFECTS OF PERCEIVED SYMBOLIC MEANINGS ON CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS GREEN CLOTHING: EVIDENCE FROM GENERATION Z IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

Gunasinghe, M.M.R.L.* and Rathnasiri, M.S.H.

*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya, Sri Lanka.*

**rasadilakshika97@gmail.com*

1. Introduction

Textiles and apparel have emerged as pivotal industries within the Sri Lankan economy, significantly influencing international commerce. However, some significant environmental ramifications exist in the textiles and apparel industry, such as the utilization of hazardous chemicals, the generation of waste, and the depletion of finite natural resources. Hence, this study investigates how perceived symbolic meanings impact consumers' attitudes towards green clothing among Generation Z in Colombo District, Sri Lanka.

2. Research Methodology

This research employs signaling theory as the main theoretical lens. The study adopts a positivist research philosophy, employing a deductive approach and a survey strategy. 284 usable responses were gathered from Generation Z consumers in the Colombo district using the purposive sampling method. The data was collected using structured questionnaires and then analyzed using simple and multiple regression analyses using SPSS 21.0 software.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings revealed that perceived symbolic meanings, status symbol, innovation symbol, and environmentalism symbol positively influence Generation Z consumers' attitudes towards green clothing in the Colombo District. Notably, the fashion symbol has a significant negative impact on attitudes towards green clothing among Gen Y consumers.

4. Conclusion and Implications

The study helps clothing firms' management to understand the most impactful symbolic meanings that lead to forming positive attitudes within consumers' mindsets. The results found that consumers expect innovative designs in green clothing, but do not expect those to be fashionable and stylish. Likewise, this study offers valuable insights for apparel and textile marketing managers to formulate effective targeting, positioning, and communication strategies that align with consumers' attitudes. Moreover, this study contributes to the limited research on the effects of different symbolic meanings on attitudes toward green clothing.

Keywords: Consumer attitude, Green clothing, Generation Z, Perceived symbolic meanings, Sustainable fashion.