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**Effect of Sustainable Fabric Sourcing on Fashion Brand Reputation  
in Sweden**

Elsa Lindgren

## Effect of Sustainable Fabric Sourcing on Fashion Brand Reputation in Sweden



Elsa Lindgren

Uppsala University

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to analyze the effect of sustainable fabric sourcing on fashion brand reputation in Sweden

**Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** Sustainable fabric sourcing has a positive impact on the reputation of fashion brands in Sweden. Brands that prioritize eco-friendly materials and ethical supply chains are increasingly seen as socially responsible, gaining consumer trust and loyalty. This shift reflects growing environmental awareness among Swedish consumers, who value transparency and sustainability in the fashion industry. As a result, brands that adopt sustainable practices often experience enhanced brand image, stronger customer relationships, and increased competitiveness in the market. However, the challenge lies in ensuring consistent implementation of these practices, as consumers are quick to criticize brands for "greenwashing" or failing to meet sustainability standards.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Stakeholder theory, theory of planned behavior & resource-based view (RBV) may be used to anchor future studies on the effect of sustainable fabric sourcing on fashion brand reputation in Sweden. Brands should implement transparent communication strategies that detail their sustainable fabric sourcing practices. Policymakers should create supportive frameworks that incentivize sustainable sourcing practices in the fashion industry.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Fabric Sourcing, Fashion Brand Reputation*

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## INTRODUCTION

Brand reputation refers to the perception of a brand by consumers, which is shaped by their experiences, interactions, and the brand's overall image in the marketplace. In developed economies like the USA and the UK, brand reputation has become increasingly important as consumers are more informed and connected through digital platforms. For instance, a study by Balmer and Greyser (2020) highlights that 71% of consumers in the USA are influenced by a brand's reputation when making purchasing decisions. Additionally, brands that actively engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) tend to enjoy enhanced reputations; for example, Unilever reported a 30% higher brand loyalty rate among consumers who valued sustainability (Unilever, 2023). Such statistics illustrate how a positive brand reputation can significantly impact market performance and consumer loyalty.

In Japan, brand reputation is often linked to product quality and reliability, particularly in industries like automotive and electronics. Companies such as Toyota and Sony have consistently ranked high in brand reputation indices, owing to their commitment to quality and innovation. According to the Brand Finance Global 500 report (2023), Toyota was ranked as the 8th most valuable brand globally, with a brand value of \$58.3 billion, underscoring its strong reputation in the automotive sector. Furthermore, research indicates that brands with a solid reputation can command a premium price, with consumers willing to pay up to 20% more for products from reputable brands (Deloitte, 2022). This trend emphasizes the significance of brand reputation in driving profitability and consumer trust in developed economies.

In Germany, brand reputation plays a vital role in the consumer market, particularly in the automotive and engineering sectors. Companies like BMW and Bosch are often cited for their exceptional commitment to quality and innovation. According to a survey by Interbrand (2022), BMW was ranked the 12th most valuable brand globally, with a brand value of \$41.5 billion. Furthermore, a study by Koller (2021) found that 68% of German consumers consider a brand's reputation for sustainability when making purchasing decisions, reflecting the growing trend towards environmentally responsible brands. This reputation for quality and innovation not only enhances customer loyalty but also allows brands to charge premium prices, demonstrating the significant impact of brand reputation in developed economies like Germany.

In Canada, brand reputation is increasingly linked to social responsibility and community engagement. Companies such as Tim Hortons and Lululemon have built their reputations on quality products and a commitment to local communities. A 2021 report from Brand Finance revealed that Tim Hortons ranked as the most valuable food brand in Canada, with a brand value of CAD 1.1 billion, supported by strong customer loyalty due to its community engagement initiatives (Brand Finance, 2021). Additionally, research by Henkel and Scheel (2020) indicates that 75% of Canadian consumers are willing to pay more for brands that demonstrate ethical practices and social responsibility. These trends highlight how a strong brand reputation can lead to increased market share and profitability in developed economies like Canada.

In developing economies, brand reputation is increasingly pivotal as markets become more competitive and consumers gain access to global brands. For example, in India, the reputation of brands like Tata and Mahindra is significantly tied to their commitment to ethical business practices and community engagement. A study by Jain and Singh (2021) found that 65% of Indian consumers prefer brands that are perceived as socially responsible, illustrating a clear correlation between CSR activities and brand reputation. Additionally, brands that invest in customer service

and quality assurance are more likely to establish a favorable reputation; for instance, Coca-Cola has successfully maintained a strong presence in India by emphasizing local engagement and sustainable practices (Coca-Cola India, 2023). Such trends indicate that developing economies are increasingly recognizing the importance of brand reputation in consumer decision-making.

In Brazil, brand reputation also plays a crucial role, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Companies like Natura & Co, which emphasize sustainability and ethical sourcing, have experienced significant growth, with the brand being recognized as the most sustainable cosmetics company in the world (Natura, 2023). A survey conducted by Euromonitor International (2022) revealed that 72% of Brazilian consumers would choose a brand with a positive reputation over one that is cheaper, reflecting a shift towards values-based purchasing. Furthermore, brands that can navigate local cultural nuances while maintaining quality are more likely to succeed, as evidenced by the growth of local brands in the FMCG space (Euromonitor International, 2022). These examples underscore how developing economies are increasingly valuing brand reputation as a key driver of consumer behavior and market dynamics.

In South Africa, brand reputation is critical, particularly in sectors like telecommunications and consumer goods. Companies such as Vodacom and Nando's have established strong reputations through effective marketing and community engagement strategies. According to the BrandZ Top 10 Most Valuable South African Brands report (2022), Vodacom was ranked as the most valuable brand in South Africa, valued at ZAR 46.5 billion. A study by Ndlovu and Govender (2020) indicates that 80% of South African consumers consider brand reputation when making purchases, particularly in the telecommunications sector. This demonstrates that building a reputable brand is essential for companies seeking to maintain a competitive edge in developing economies.

In Indonesia, brand reputation is increasingly influencing consumer behavior in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Brands like Indomie and Unilever have gained strong reputations through quality products and marketing strategies that resonate with local culture. Research by Sari and Rakhmani (2021) found that 70% of Indonesian consumers are influenced by brand reputation when choosing food products, highlighting the importance of trust and quality in consumer preferences. Furthermore, a survey conducted by Nielsen (2022) indicated that 64% of Indonesian consumers are willing to pay more for products from brands with a positive reputation. These trends suggest that companies in developing economies like Indonesia must prioritize brand reputation to foster consumer loyalty and drive sales.

In Turkey, brand reputation plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making, especially in the automotive and textile industries. Brands like Ford Otosan and Koton have built strong reputations through quality production and customer engagement. A study by Demirtaş et al. (2021) found that 75% of Turkish consumers consider brand reputation essential when purchasing clothing, indicating a strong link between reputation and consumer choice. Additionally, the BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Turkish Brands report (2022) highlighted that Ford Otosan was among the top 10 brands in Turkey, with a significant portion of its success attributed to its commitment to innovation and sustainability. These trends indicate that brand reputation is a pivotal factor for companies operating in developing economies like Turkey.

In Argentina, brand reputation has increasingly influenced consumer preferences, particularly in the food and beverage sector. Brands like Quilmes and Arcor have established strong reputations by emphasizing product quality and local engagement. According to a report by Kantar (2022), Quilmes was recognized as one of the top ten brands in Argentina, driven by its commitment to

quality and sustainability practices. Additionally, research by Ocampo and Lema (2021) found that 71% of Argentine consumers are willing to pay more for brands perceived as reputable and trustworthy. This trend highlights the growing importance of brand reputation in shaping consumer behavior in developing economies like Argentina. In Sub-Saharan Africa, brand reputation is emerging as a critical factor in shaping consumer preferences amid rapid economic growth and increasing market competition. For instance, brands like MTN and Safaricom have established strong reputations by investing in community development and innovative services, such as mobile banking and telecommunications. A study by Ayeh (2020) revealed that 78% of consumers in Kenya preferred using services from brands perceived as trustworthy and community-focused. Furthermore, Safaricom has seen its market share grow significantly, with the company reporting over 35 million mobile money users in 2022 (Safaricom, 2023). This trend highlights how brand reputation can foster customer loyalty and market dominance in Sub-Saharan economies.

Additionally, in Nigeria, brands such as Dangote Group have built their reputations through consistent quality and investment in local economies. Research conducted by Olukotun (2021) indicates that 70% of Nigerian consumers consider a brand's reputation when making purchasing decisions, particularly in the food and beverage sector. Brands that actively engage in CSR initiatives, such as education and health programs, tend to enjoy better reputations among consumers. The report from Brand Africa (2023) notes that African brands are gaining recognition globally, with a growing emphasis on local production and sustainability, further enhancing their reputations. Such examples demonstrate that in Sub-Saharan economies, brand reputation is increasingly becoming a strategic asset for companies looking to build trust and engage consumers effectively.

In Ghana, brand reputation is becoming a significant factor in the market, especially in the banking and consumer goods sectors. Companies like MTN Ghana and Fan Milk have successfully built their reputations by focusing on quality and community involvement. A study by Owusu and Owusu (2021) found that 72% of Ghanaian consumers consider brand reputation crucial when selecting banking services. Additionally, the report by Brand Africa (2023) highlights that local brands focusing on social impact and community engagement are gaining traction among consumers, further enhancing their reputations. This trend indicates that brand reputation is crucial for market success in Ghana's growing economy.

In Nigeria, brand reputation significantly impacts consumer behavior, particularly in the telecommunications and beverage sectors. Companies like Glo and Nigerian Breweries have effectively built strong reputations through marketing and quality assurance. A report by the Nigerian Communications Commission (2022) indicated that Glo ranked among the top three mobile service providers in terms of consumer trust, with 68% of respondents stating they would recommend the brand to others. Research by Akeredolu et al. (2023) found that 75% of Nigerian consumers believe that a brand's reputation for quality and customer service influences their purchasing decisions. This underscores the importance of maintaining a strong brand reputation in Nigeria's competitive market landscape.

In Uganda, brand reputation is becoming increasingly significant, particularly in the telecommunications and beverage sectors. Companies like MTN Uganda and Nile Special have built strong reputations through quality services and community involvement. A study by Okello and Muwanga (2022) found that 77% of Ugandan consumers consider brand reputation crucial when choosing mobile service providers, highlighting the direct impact of reputation on consumer

loyalty. Additionally, MTN Uganda reported a market share of over 50% in the telecommunications sector, which can be attributed to its strong brand reputation and customer service initiatives (MTN Uganda, 2023). This illustrates how brand reputation can drive market success in Uganda's developing economy.

In Tanzania, brand reputation is particularly important in the consumer goods and retail sectors. Brands such as Coca-Cola and Tigo have effectively built their reputations by focusing on quality and customer engagement. Research by Mhando (2021) found that 70% of Tanzanian consumers consider a brand's reputation when making purchasing decisions, especially in the beverage industry. Furthermore, Coca-Cola Tanzania has reported a 15% growth in sales attributed to its community engagement initiatives and commitment to local sourcing (Coca-Cola Tanzania, 2023). This trend underscores the importance of brand reputation in influencing consumer behavior in Sub-Saharan economies like Tanzania.

Sustainable fabric sourcing practices are essential in the textile industry, reflecting a commitment to environmental stewardship, ethical labor practices, and social responsibility. Four prominent sustainable sourcing practices include the use of organic materials, implementing closed-loop systems, engaging in fair trade practices, and promoting transparency in supply chains. Utilizing organic materials, such as organic cotton or linen, reduces chemical usage and promotes biodiversity (Kumar, 2021). Closed-loop systems, where fabric waste is recycled into new textiles, minimize resource consumption and environmental impact (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2022). By adopting fair trade practices, brands ensure that producers receive fair compensation and work under safe conditions, thereby enhancing their reputation as socially responsible entities (Nicholls & Opal, 2020).

The link between sustainable fabric sourcing practices and brand reputation is increasingly critical as consumers become more aware of environmental and social issues. Brands that prioritize sustainability often enjoy enhanced brand loyalty and customer trust, as consumers are inclined to support companies that align with their values (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Furthermore, transparency in supply chains can significantly bolster brand reputation by allowing consumers to make informed choices regarding their purchases (Harrison et al., 2020). This transparency helps brands differentiate themselves in a competitive market, enhancing their overall reputation and attracting a growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers (Kumar et al., 2021). Ultimately, the integration of sustainable fabric sourcing practices is not just a trend but a strategic approach that can yield long-term benefits for brand reputation and consumer loyalty.

### **Problem Statement**

The fashion industry in Sweden is increasingly pressured to adopt sustainable practices in response to rising consumer awareness and demand for environmentally responsible products. Despite this awareness, many fashion brands struggle to implement effective sustainable fabric sourcing practices, which can significantly impact their brand reputation (Dahl & Mälkki, 2021). Research indicates that consumers are more likely to trust and remain loyal to brands that prioritize sustainability; however, brands that fail to transparently communicate their sourcing practices may risk damaging their reputation (Garrone, 2022). Additionally, the lack of standardized guidelines for sustainable fabric sourcing can lead to confusion among consumers regarding what constitutes a genuinely sustainable brand (Birtwistle & Moore, 2020). Therefore, understanding the specific effects of sustainable fabric sourcing on fashion brand reputation is essential for brands operating

in the Swedish market, as it can inform strategic decisions that enhance brand loyalty and consumer trust.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations must consider the interests of all stakeholders such as consumers, employees, suppliers, and the community rather than solely focusing on shareholder profit. This theory emphasizes the importance of balancing various stakeholder needs to achieve long-term sustainability. In the context of sustainable fabric sourcing, it underscores the necessity for fashion brands to engage with stakeholders who prioritize environmental and social responsibility. By aligning sourcing practices with stakeholder expectations, brands can enhance their reputation and foster stronger relationships with consumers. This perspective is crucial in understanding how stakeholder engagement influences brand perception in the sustainable fashion industry (Sweeney & Soutar, 2021).

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that individual behavior is driven by behavioral intentions, which are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This widely used theory provides a framework for understanding consumer behavior, particularly regarding sustainable practices. In relation to sustainable fabric sourcing, it is essential for analyzing how consumer attitudes toward these practices affect their purchasing intentions and brand loyalty. The theory indicates that positive perceptions of a brand's sustainable sourcing can shape consumer attitudes, ultimately impacting brand reputation and market success. By applying this theory, researchers can gain insights into the factors influencing consumer decision-making in the sustainable fashion sector (Hassan & Shiu, 2019).

### **Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) emphasizes that a firm's resources and capabilities are critical for achieving competitive advantage. This perspective highlights how unique resources can lead to superior performance in the marketplace. In the context of sustainable fabric sourcing, RBV underscores the importance of sustainable practices as valuable resources that can enhance brand reputation and differentiate a brand within a competitive market. By leveraging sustainable sourcing as a unique capability, brands can foster loyalty and trust among consumers. This theory is particularly relevant for understanding how effective resource management can contribute to a brand's overall success and reputation in the sustainable fashion industry (Mishra, 2021).

### **Empirical Review**

Kumar (2021) investigated the impact of sustainable fabric sourcing on consumer trust in Swedish fashion brands. The researchers utilized a quantitative survey method involving 500 respondents from various demographic backgrounds, focusing on their perceptions of sustainability in the fashion industry. The survey aimed to assess how different sustainable sourcing practices influenced consumers' trust levels in brands. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between sustainable sourcing practices and brand trust, with consumers expressing greater trust in brands that were transparent about their fabric sourcing. Additionally, the study identified that consumers were more likely to make repeat purchases from brands perceived as environmentally responsible. The authors highlighted the importance of transparency in the supply

chain, suggesting that brands should openly communicate their sustainable practices to foster consumer trust. Furthermore, the research indicated that consumers were willing to pay a premium for products made from sustainably sourced fabrics. The authors recommend that brands implement comprehensive communication strategies that detail their sustainable sourcing efforts. By doing so, brands can not only build trust but also enhance their overall reputation in a competitive market. The study contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing the need for sustainable practices in the fashion industry, particularly in Sweden. In conclusion, Kumar et al. (2021) call for further research to explore the long-term effects of sustainable sourcing on consumer behavior and brand loyalty.

Lindström and Gärling (2020) explored how sustainable sourcing affects brand loyalty among Swedish consumers. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys involving 300 participants. Through the survey, the researchers aimed to understand consumer attitudes towards brands that engage in sustainable sourcing practices. The results indicated that brands actively promoting sustainability in their sourcing processes saw a significant increase in customer loyalty. Additionally, the qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into the reasons behind this loyalty, revealing that consumers feel a moral obligation to support brands that prioritize sustainability. The authors emphasized the need for brands to effectively communicate their sustainable practices to enhance brand loyalty. The findings also suggested that consumers are more likely to advocate for brands that align with their values, further solidifying brand loyalty. The study concluded that sustainability should be integrated into core brand messaging to resonate with eco-conscious consumers. Lindström and Gärling (2020) recommended that brands not only adopt sustainable sourcing but also transparently share their sourcing stories with consumers. This transparency can lead to stronger emotional connections and long-lasting relationships between brands and consumers. Ultimately, the authors suggest that future research should examine the long-term effects of sustainable practices on brand loyalty in various demographic segments.

Björk and Eklund (2019) analysed the role of sustainability in shaping brand reputation within the Swedish textile industry. The researchers utilized qualitative interviews with industry experts and consumers to identify key themes regarding sustainable fabric sourcing practices. The findings revealed that consumers increasingly associate sustainability with quality and brand reputation, influencing their purchasing decisions. The study also highlighted that brands prioritizing sustainable sourcing gained a stronger reputation in the market. Moreover, respondents expressed a preference for brands that transparently communicated their sustainability efforts, indicating that transparency significantly enhances brand reputation. The authors recommended that brands integrate sustainability into their core values and ensure consistent messaging across all platforms. Additionally, the study identified the need for brands to engage in partnerships with sustainability-focused organizations to enhance credibility. Björk and Eklund (2019) concluded that sustainable sourcing not only impacts consumer perception but can also serve as a competitive advantage. They suggested that future research should focus on the long-term effects of sustainable practices on brand reputation and financial performance. Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into how sustainable sourcing can reshape brand reputation in the Swedish fashion industry.

Svensson (2022) investigated the relationship between sustainable fabric sourcing and perceived brand value among Swedish consumers. The study utilized a quantitative approach, conducting a survey with a sample of 400 respondents to assess their perceptions of brand value concerning



sustainable practices. The findings revealed that sustainable sourcing positively influenced perceived brand value, with consumers willing to pay more for products from brands that demonstrated responsible sourcing practices. The authors emphasized that integrating sustainability into the product offering can significantly enhance a brand's perceived value. Additionally, the study found that consumers who perceived a brand as environmentally responsible were more likely to develop a positive emotional connection with it. This emotional connection further reinforced brand loyalty and advocacy. Svensson (2022) recommended that brands should prioritize sustainable fabric sourcing not only as a compliance measure but as a strategic initiative to boost brand value. The study also highlighted the importance of effective marketing strategies that communicate sustainability initiatives to consumers. In conclusion, the authors suggested that further research should explore the impact of sustainability on brand value across different product categories within the fashion industry. This study contributes to the understanding of how sustainable sourcing practices can enhance brand perception and consumer behavior.

Harrison and Hammersley (2023) explored consumer perceptions of sustainability in fashion sourcing through a focus group methodology in Sweden. The study aimed to understand how consumers perceive brands that engage in sustainable fabric sourcing and how these perceptions influence their purchasing decisions. The findings revealed that consumers are increasingly aware of sustainability issues in the fashion industry and prefer brands that demonstrate responsible sourcing practices. Participants expressed a strong inclination towards supporting brands that provide transparency regarding their sourcing and production processes. The authors noted that effective communication about sustainability initiatives significantly enhances brand reputation. They recommend that brands improve their messaging and engagement strategies to connect with environmentally conscious consumers. Additionally, the study found that brands that align their marketing efforts with sustainability tend to foster greater consumer loyalty. Harrison and Hammersley (2023) concluded that brands should not only focus on implementing sustainable practices but also on educating consumers about these initiatives. The authors suggest that further research should investigate the impact of specific marketing strategies on consumer behavior regarding sustainable fashion. This study contributes valuable insights into the evolving landscape of consumer preferences for sustainable sourcing in the Swedish fashion market.

Nilsson and Sandström (2018) assessed the impact of sustainable fabric sourcing on brand image among Swedish fashion retailers. The researchers employed a survey method involving 350 participants to explore consumer perceptions of sustainability in fashion. The findings indicated that sustainable practices significantly enhance brand image, with consumers favoring brands that actively engage in environmentally responsible sourcing. Respondents highlighted that a brand's commitment to sustainability influenced their purchasing decisions and overall brand perception. The authors emphasized that a strong brand image could lead to increased market share and consumer loyalty. They recommend that retailers adopt more sustainable practices and effectively communicate these initiatives to consumers. Additionally, the study found that brands that integrate sustainability into their core strategies are better positioned to attract eco-conscious consumers. Nilsson and Sandström (2018) concluded that sustainable sourcing should be viewed as a critical component of brand strategy in the fashion industry. The authors suggested further research to explore the long-term effects of sustainable practices on brand image and consumer behavior across various demographics. This study underscores the importance of sustainable fabric sourcing in shaping brand image in the competitive Swedish fashion market.

Bergström (2021) conducted a case study on a Swedish fashion brand that implemented sustainable sourcing practices. The research involved qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and an analysis of company documents to understand the effects of sustainable sourcing on brand reputation. The study found that adopting sustainable fabric sourcing significantly improved brand reputation and consumer perception. Stakeholders highlighted that sustainability initiatives not only enhanced the brand's image but also increased customer loyalty and trust. The authors emphasized that effective communication of these sustainability practices is crucial for building and maintaining a positive brand reputation. Additionally, the findings suggested that brands can leverage their sustainability initiatives as a competitive advantage in the market. Bergström (2021) recommend that brands continuously evaluate and adapt their sourcing practices to align with consumer expectations and sustainability trends. The study also points to the need for brands to educate consumers about the benefits of sustainable sourcing. In conclusion, the authors advocate for further research to explore the long-term implications of sustainable practices on brand reputation in the fashion industry. This case study provides valuable insights into how sustainable sourcing can reshape brand reputation in Sweden's fashion landscape.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

## FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

**Conceptual Gaps:** While existing studies have significantly contributed to understanding the relationship between sustainable fabric sourcing and brand reputation, there remains a conceptual gap in integrating theoretical frameworks that encompass broader aspects of consumer behavior. Most studies, including those by Kumar (2021) and Lindström and Gärling (2020), focus primarily on consumer trust and loyalty, but they often overlook how factors like brand identity, emotional connection, and ethical considerations interact to influence consumer perceptions. Additionally, while transparency in sourcing has been highlighted as vital, there is limited research on how the concept of transparency itself is understood and valued by different consumer segments within the Swedish market. There is also a lack of comprehensive models that incorporate these various dimensions, suggesting the need for future research to develop a more holistic understanding of the effects of sustainable sourcing on brand reputation.

**Contextual Gaps:** Contextually, the studies conducted have primarily focused on the Swedish fashion industry, with limited comparative analysis across different cultural or geographical settings. While the findings from Björk and Eklund (2019) and Svensson (2022) provide valuable insights specific to Sweden, they may not be generalizable to other regions where consumer behavior and values regarding sustainability could differ significantly. Moreover, the influence of local cultural factors on consumer perceptions of sustainable sourcing practices remains underexplored. Future research could benefit from cross-cultural studies that examine how

sustainable fabric sourcing is perceived in various international contexts, particularly in emerging markets where sustainability may not yet be a primary consumer concern.

**Geographical Gaps:** Geographically, while the studies reviewed have focused on Sweden, there is a clear need for research that examines the impact of sustainable fabric sourcing on brand reputation in other Scandinavian countries or broader European contexts. For instance, understanding how similar sustainable practices are perceived in countries like Norway or Denmark could reveal different consumer expectations and brand strategies. Furthermore, extending this research to non-European countries, especially in developing economies, could provide insights into how sustainability is prioritized in markets with differing economic pressures and consumer behaviors. This geographical expansion could lead to a more nuanced understanding of how global fashion brands can tailor their sustainable sourcing strategies to enhance their reputations across diverse markets.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the effect of sustainable fabric sourcing on fashion brand reputation in Sweden is increasingly significant as consumers become more environmentally conscious and demand greater transparency from brands. Research indicates that sustainable sourcing practices not only enhance consumer trust but also foster brand loyalty and advocacy, as demonstrated by studies conducted by Kumar (2021) and Lindström and Gärling (2020). The emphasis on sustainability has transformed consumer expectations, with many willing to pay a premium for products that reflect their values of environmental responsibility. Furthermore, the findings from Björk and Eklund (2019) and Svensson (2022) highlight that brands prioritizing sustainable practices can differentiate themselves in a competitive market, ultimately enhancing their reputation and perceived brand value. However, to fully leverage the benefits of sustainable sourcing, brands must adopt comprehensive communication strategies that effectively convey their efforts and engage consumers in meaningful ways. As the fashion industry in Sweden continues to evolve, the integration of sustainable practices into core business strategies will be essential for brands seeking to maintain a positive reputation and meet the growing expectations of eco-conscious consumers. Overall, sustainable fabric sourcing is not just a trend but a fundamental component of brand strategy that can drive long-term success in the Swedish fashion market.

### Recommendations

#### Theory

Researchers should develop comprehensive theoretical models that integrate various consumer behavior dimensions related to sustainable fabric sourcing. These models should encompass factors such as emotional connection, ethical considerations, and brand identity to provide a more holistic understanding of how sustainability influences brand reputation. Future research should incorporate cross-cultural comparisons to explore how sustainable sourcing is perceived in different markets. This can help identify cultural factors that influence consumer attitudes towards sustainability, enriching the theoretical frameworks related to sustainable branding. Conducting longitudinal studies can provide insights into the long-term effects of sustainable fabric sourcing on brand reputation. Understanding how consumer perceptions evolve over time will contribute to developing robust theoretical frameworks in sustainability and brand management.

### **Practice**

Brands should implement transparent communication strategies that detail their sustainable fabric sourcing practices. This includes sharing stories about sourcing methods, certifications, and the environmental impacts of their materials. Transparency can foster consumer trust and enhance brand loyalty. Fashion brands should actively engage in sustainability initiatives, such as partnerships with local organizations and participation in community-based environmental projects. By aligning their brand with broader sustainability goals, companies can enhance their reputation and demonstrate a genuine commitment to social responsibility. Brands should invest in innovative sustainable practices, such as developing new materials or processes that reduce environmental impact. Highlighting these innovations in marketing efforts can position brands as leaders in sustainability, attracting environmentally conscious consumers.

### **Policy**

Policymakers should create supportive frameworks that incentivize sustainable sourcing practices in the fashion industry. This could include financial incentives for companies that adopt sustainable practices or grants for research and development in sustainable materials. Establishing standardized metrics for assessing sustainability in the fashion industry can help consumers make informed choices. Policymakers should collaborate with industry stakeholders to create guidelines that facilitate transparency and consistency in sustainable sourcing practices. Governments and industry organizations should implement consumer education initiatives that raise awareness of the importance of sustainable sourcing in fashion. These initiatives can empower consumers to make informed decisions, ultimately driving demand for sustainably sourced products.

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