

The Roles of Mass Media on Sustainable Fabric Choices and Employment Opportunities among Undergraduates in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

As global demand for sustainable products rises, there is a growing need for professionals who are knowledgeable about sustainable materials and practices. The mass media's serves as a powerful channel through which ideas about sustainability are disseminated, this study aimed to investigate the influence of mass media on sustainable fabric choices among undergraduates at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education and its impacts on their career choices in the fashion industry thereby creating entrepreneurship and employment opportunities. This study adopted a quantitative method. A closed and open-ended questionnaire was designed. The study consisted of 150 undergraduate students from the departments of Home Economics, Agricultural Science, and Technical Education. Descriptive statistics was presented using counts, proportions (%), and charts whenever appropriate. This study concludes that, undergraduate students utilize mass media platforms and channels, mostly the online based ones. They are not aware of sustainable fashion or fabric hence, they lacks knowledge on the industry. And they have no desire in a career path either as an employee or employer in the sustainable fabric sector also resulting from their lack of awareness and knowledge. Thus, it is recommended that publicity should be done on students' online communities such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups among others, educating and promoting sustainable fashion or fabric.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Employment, Mass media, Sustainable fabric, Undergraduate students

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Introduction

In the fast-paced world of today, fashion choices are influenced by wider societal trends, and the media is a major factor in determining these tastes. Mass media has a significant impact on the fashion sector, especially when it comes to employment and sustainability. Social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter have revolutionized the fashion industry by giving designers new channels for customer interaction and inspiration. These platforms are effective at raising public awareness of sustainable fashion practices in addition to being tools for networking and creating a web presence. Mass media plays a crucial role in raising consumer knowledge and encouraging the adoption of eco-friendly materials and processes, especially among college students, as the fashion industry places a greater emphasis on sustainability.

This move toward sustainable fashion is more than just a fad; it has a big impact on jobs in the textile and fashion sectors. Professionals with understanding of sustainable materials and procedures are becoming more and more necessary as the demand for sustainable products increases globally. Understanding these trends can help undergraduates, especially those attending schools like Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, find new career paths in fields that prioritize sustainability. A competitive advantage in the employment market is being provided to students by the fashion industry's shift towards sustainability, which is increasing need for knowledge of sustainable fabric selections (Joyner Armstrong, 2021; Niinimäki et al., 2020).

Mass media serves as a powerful channel through which ideas about sustainability are disseminated, influencing students' attitudes and behaviors toward fabric selection. Historically, Nigerian clothing reflected cultural values and traditions, but globalization and media influence have shifted preferences towards Western styles (Akindele & Lamidi, 2014). Mass media significantly influences student behavior and decision-making, particularly in the context of fashion and lifestyle choices.

Cultivation theory states that audiences' attitudes and behaviors can be influenced by repeated exposure to particular media content (Bryant et al., 2022). Therefore, this study explores how mass

media affects undergraduates at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education's decisions on sustainable fabrics and how it affects their career choices in the fashion business, opening doors for them to pursue entrepreneurship and employment. This is in an effort to add to and expand the corpus of research already available on how mass media affects young people and sustainable fashion, especially with regard to students and the opportunities it offers.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this investigation,

- 1) What types of mass media do undergraduate students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State, frequently consume?
- 2) What is the extent of awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics among undergraduate students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State?
- 3) How does Emmanuel Alayande University of Education undergraduate students' awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for them?

Literature Review

Mass media platforms consumed by undergraduate students

Information, news, entertainment, and messages are spread to a wide audience through mass media platforms and channels. Undergraduate students are not an exception to the use of social media platforms, which currently dominate the media landscape and are quickly replacing more conventional forms of mass communication. In a quantitative study, Tayo et al. (2019) investigated the impact of social media on the academic performance of undergraduate students at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. WhatsApp (97%), Facebook (85%), Instagram (65%), YouTube (62%), Twitter (25%), LinkedIn (21%), Google Plus (15%), Snapchat (10%), and Skype (7%), according to the findings, are among the social media networks that undergraduates utilize. Additionally, undergraduates use social media for an average of two to three hours every day, and they cite socialization (83%), information (74%), academic (73%), business

(68%), and entertainment (61%). The study also found that the effects of social media on undergraduate studies included Internet addiction (45%), distraction (32%), anti-social behavior (6%), cyberbullying (4%), and a lack of writing and spelling skills (24%).

Ogedengbe & Quadri (2020) examined undergraduates' use of social media in a larger study that involved 20 faculty members from Bowen University and Olabisi Onabanjo University, both in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study found that undergraduates are aware of social media tools because the majority of students from both institutions use Facebook, WhatsApp, and blogs, YouTube, and Flickr on a weekly basis. Additionally, the study highlighted issues that both institutions face when using social media tools for educational purposes, including cyberbullying, privacy invasion, time waste, addiction, and distraction.

According to a study by Wickramanayake and Jika (2018), social media was widely used by students for communication, entertainment, and education. It was further demonstrated that students preferred educational and informational communities on social media platforms over other social media communities. The study further found that efficient social media usage among students increased their many types of talents including learning. The investigation was conducted using a quantitative methodology. These findings supported undergraduates' acceptance and use of mass media in Nigerian universities.

Awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics among undergraduate students

In light of the recommendations of United Nations on sustainable development (United Nations, year), global businesses drift towards the application of sustainability hence, the creation of sustainable fabrics. By encouraging more ethical and ecologically sensitive fashion, sustainable textiles seek to lessen the detrimental consequences of the fast fashion industry. These textiles or materials are made with recycled or renewable resources, less water, less energy, and fewer hazardous chemicals in order to reduce their negative effects on the environment and to support moral manufacturing methods. Given the aforementioned, implementing

sustainability policies in the fashion business depends heavily on the awareness and expertise of undergraduate students, who are significant customers of the sector.

According to Mariyam & Banu (2024), a significant percentage of undergraduate students recognized the importance of sustainable fashion and were aware of its sustainability, according to a survey conducted by the researchers to investigate awareness and willingness to adopt sustainable fashion. Similarly, Alsaati et al. (2020) found that while a high percentage of students had heard the term "sustainability" from educational sources, they lacked knowledge about sustainability, particularly when it came to recognizing recycling materials or renewable materials and energy consumption measures, and the majority of students were not involved in any kind of recycling anywhere. These results were established when the researchers investigated the level of sustainability awareness among university students in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. The studies were in confines of a quantitative study methodology.

On the other hand, Tama et al. (2017) found that around half of the students at Ege University in Izmir, Turkey, are unaware of environmental sustainability, and about 80% of them lack sufficient understanding and awareness of slow or sustainable fashion. As a result, research indicates that while students are typically aware of the concept of sustainability in the fashion industry (with the exception of certain locations), they lack a thorough understanding of sustainable fabric. And undergraduates primarily use mass media outlets and platforms on a regular basis to raise awareness of this.

Entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in sustainable fabric industry

According to Sudhakar (2024), the global textile industry is witnessing a significant transition away from environmentally damaging techniques and toward sustainable, eco-conscious alternatives. There are plenty of opportunities in the textile sector for businesspeople who want to enter the fashion industry. There are countless opportunities, such as launching an e-commerce site selling bespoke prints, opening a fabric store, creating a garment line, or

offering consulting services to assist companies go green. Eco-friendly and sustainable textiles are in great demand due to increased environmental concerns (Aiman, 2024). According to his research in Anambra state, Nigeria, Emeka-Okafor (2018) found that graduates of clothing and textile programs have access to 18 business opportunities in the field of fabric and clothing construction, and 26 business opportunities in the fields of household article production, costume making, and jewelry making. As the population grows and fashion preferences shift, the centuries-old textile sector will only expand (Aiman, 2024).

According to the forgoing examined literatures, undergraduate students in Nigeria actively use mass media channels and platforms, supporting both the students' acceptance of these platforms and their ability to influence their decisions. Although there are conflicting research on students' understanding of sustainability, studies have also indicated that students are somewhat aware of sustainability in the fashion business. Additionally, students generally don't know much about sustainable fabric. Therefore, this study adds to the body of evidence already available on how the media affects undergraduate students and how it influences their career choices in the fashion business, resulting in opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative method – Primary data would be collected for analysis in answer to the research questions raised. A survey would be conducted among undergraduate students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo Town, Oyo State. The survey questionnaires would be administered in person and online using google form. This study also adopted a positivism philosophy. This philosophy methodical approach results from positivism's emphasis on a well-defined framework for research, which includes data analysis and empirical experimentation. Positivism's rigorous approach allows for study replication and cross-context comparison, it facilitates the formulation of trustworthy and broadly applicable conclusions.

A closed and open-ended questionnaire was designed. The study consisted of 150 undergraduate students from the departments of Home Economics, Agricultural Science, and Technical Education at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education. 50 undergraduate students each was selected from each of the three departments. The hardcopy survey questionnaire was administered through student leaders and lecturers in each selected department. And the softcopy online was administered directly by the researchers.

Primary data was collected through the survey questionnaire designed in reflection of the research questions. The material consisted of sections on types of mass media do undergraduate students, awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics among undergraduate student, and how undergraduate students' awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities . Data to be collected includes information that will be helpful in satisfying the research questions and aim of this study.

Every appropriate approval was requested and was granted. The knowledge of the senior colleagues was sought prior to the primary data gathering exercise through interviews. Then all recommended corrections were implemented. The inclusion, exclusion criteria and every other necessary terms and conditions were stated in the preamble of the survey questionnaire for participants consent. Also, participants' autonomy, informed consent and confidentiality would be maintained. Data will be anonymized and securely stored to protect participants' identities during data collection.

The data was entered into a spreadsheet of the Microsoft Excel and exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform descriptive analyses on the various study variables based on the research questions. Descriptive statistics was presented using counts, proportions (%), and charts whenever appropriate.

Presentation of Results

Types of mass media undergraduate students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State, frequently consume

Mass Media	Frequency (n=150)	Percentage (%)
Television	20	13.3
Radio	16	10.6
Newspapers	10	6.6
Magazines	7	4.6
WhatsApp	100	66.6
Facebook	80	53.3
Instagram	80	53.3
X (Twitter)	60	40
Tik Tok	65	43.3
Linked In	20	13.3
Telegram	48	32
Youtube	70	46.6
Others	10	6.6

The table above shows that undergraduate students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education dominantly consume modern mass media platforms and channels which are online based. 66.6% of the respondents utilize WhatsApp for communication and information sharing, followed by Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok at 53.3% and 43.3% each. The lowest mass media platform usage among the students was magazines at 4.6% followed by Newspapers at 6.6%. The results evidenced the declining low patronage of conventional media platforms of the last three decades which are Newspapers, Magazines, Radio, and Television platforms.

Figure 1: Extent of awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics among undergraduate students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education

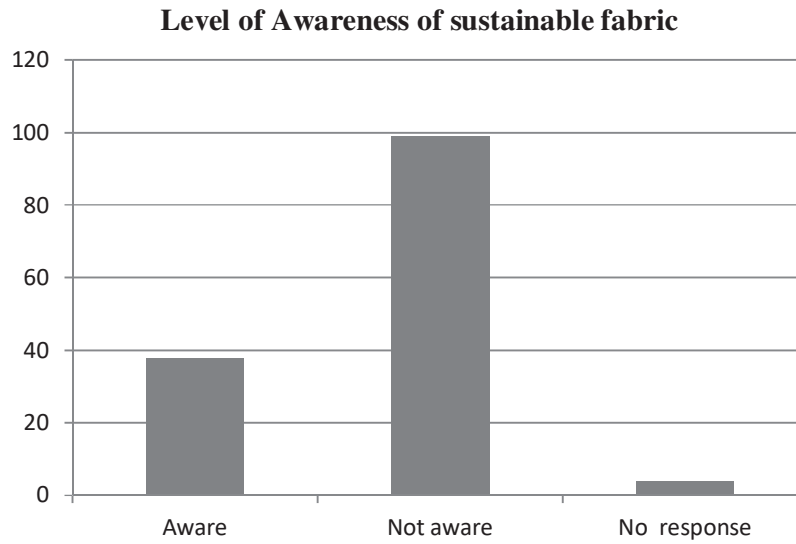


Figure 2: Level of Knowledge of sustainable fabric

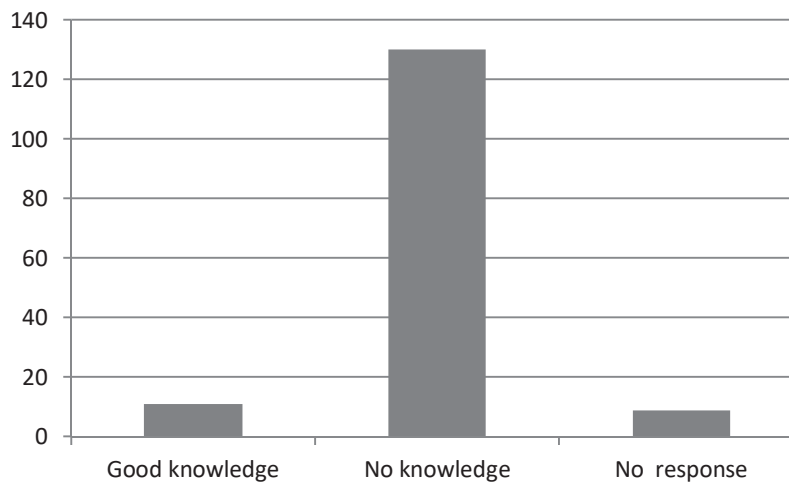
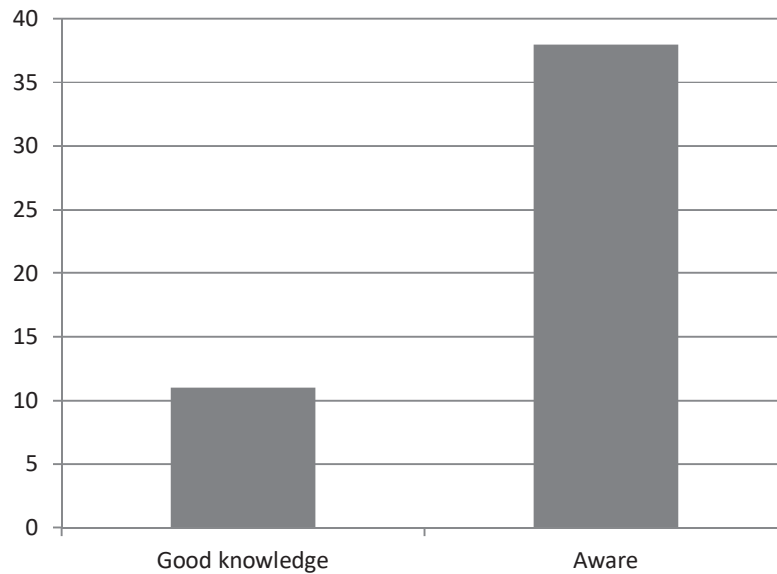


Figure 3: Comparing the level of knowledge and awareness among undergraduates



The results above showed that majority of undergraduate students in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo state are not aware of sustainable fabric despite their high usage of mass media platforms mostly online based platforms. When the level of awareness compared to level knowledge, it showed that most students are aware of sustainable fabric more that those that have knowledge on sustainable fabric. According to the results, 66% of the total number of participants was not aware of sustainable fabric while 25.3% are aware. And 86% of the total participants do not have knowledge on sustainable fabric while 7.3% do have knowledge on sustainable fabric.

Table 1: Students' awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabrics create entrepreneurship and employment opportunities

Response	Frequency (n=11)	Percentage (%)
Desire for job in sustainable fabric	4	36.4
Desire to be an entrepreneur in sustainable fabric	6	54.6
No desire	1	9
Total	11	100

Among the students with good knowledge on sustainable fabric, the results showed 36.4% of them desire to have a job in the sustainable fabric industry, which is just 2.6% of the total undergraduate students that participated in the survey. And it showed 54.6% of students with good knowledge of sustainable fabric desired to be an entrepreneur in the industry, which is 4% of the total participants in the study. Additionally, the results showed 9% of those with good knowledge expressed no desire or interest either in getting a job or being an entrepreneur in the sustainable fabric industry, which 0.06% of the total participants.

Discussion of Findings

The undergraduate students of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, which are all part of the generation Z (Gen Z) utilize mass media platforms dominated by online based ones such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, Instagram, Youtube, among others. There is a decline of the traditional use of television, radio, and newspapers when compared to three decades ago. The findings of this study establishing the use of online based mass media platforms by undergraduate students corroborates with the findings of Tayo, et al. (2019) which found a usage of WhatsApp (97%), Facebook (85%), Instagram (65%), YouTube (62%), Twitter (25%), LinkedIn (21%), Google Plus (15%), Snapchat (10%), and Skype (7%) among undergraduate students. Also, the present findings conform to the results of Ogedengbe & Quadri, (2020) which revealed that undergraduates are aware of the social media tools as majority

frequently use Facebook, WhatsApp, on daily basis and Blog, YouTube, Flickr were used on weekly basis.

On awareness and knowledge of sustainable fabric, the findings of this study revealed that most of the students are not aware and do not have knowledge of sustainable fabric. This is despite their use of mass media platforms and channels daily. It shows that these platforms do not influence undergraduates in respect of sustainable fabric. This present findings corroborates with the findings of Tama, et al. (2017) which revealed that approximately 80% of the Ege University, Izmir, Turkey students do not have enough knowledge and awareness about slow or sustainable fashion and approximately half of them are not informed about environmental sustainability. And the results of Alsaati, et al. (2020) that showed high percentages of students have heard the term “sustainability” from educational sources, but they lack the knowledge of sustainability.

The findings of this study also revealed that minimal number of undergraduates students desire a career path in the sustainable fashion industry despite the opportunities it presents. This is could be a result of their lack of knowledge in the industry as revealed in this study.

Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the influence of mass media on sustainable fabric choices among undergraduates at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education and how it impacts their career choices in the fashion industry. Thereby creating entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for undergraduate students who utilize mass media platforms and channels, mostly the online based ones. They are not aware of sustainable fashion or fabric hence, they lack knowledge on the industry. And they have no desire in a career path either as an employee or employer in the sustainable fabric sector also resulting from their lack of awareness and knowledge. This also buttress that mass media does not influence choices of undergraduate students in Emmanuel Alayande University of Education in respect of sustainable fashion.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study the following are suggested,

- 1) Sustainable fashion highlights should be publicized in departments of Home Economics, and Technical Education. This publicity should also be done on students' online communities such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups among others. Also, it could be extended to the general student community of Emmanuel Alayande University of Education through student leaders and online platforms.
- 2) Opportunities in the sustainable fabric sub-sector should be promoted through lectures and online media communities. By promoting these entrepreneurship and employment opportunities, students may develop and make decision in having a career path in the sub-sector after graduation or during their time as an undergraduate.

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