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## **Research of the customer behaviour towards eco-label in Kazakhstan**

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### **Abstract**

The paper presents research on the customer behaviour of residents of Kazakhstan regarding eco-label on clothing. The objective for this research is to find whether eco-label plays a role in consumer behaviour in Kazakhstan. At the beginning of the paper, the authors study the trend of sustainable development in fashion in the world and in Kazakhstan.

In the main part of the paper, for the purpose of achieving the objective of the research, a survey among the residents of Kazakhstan in Google Forms was done. Based on the collected data, the authors analysed the consumer behaviour in Kazakhstan towards eco-labelled clothing. And additionally, based on the analysis, they offer recommendations regarding marketing and promotion of eco-friendly clothing.

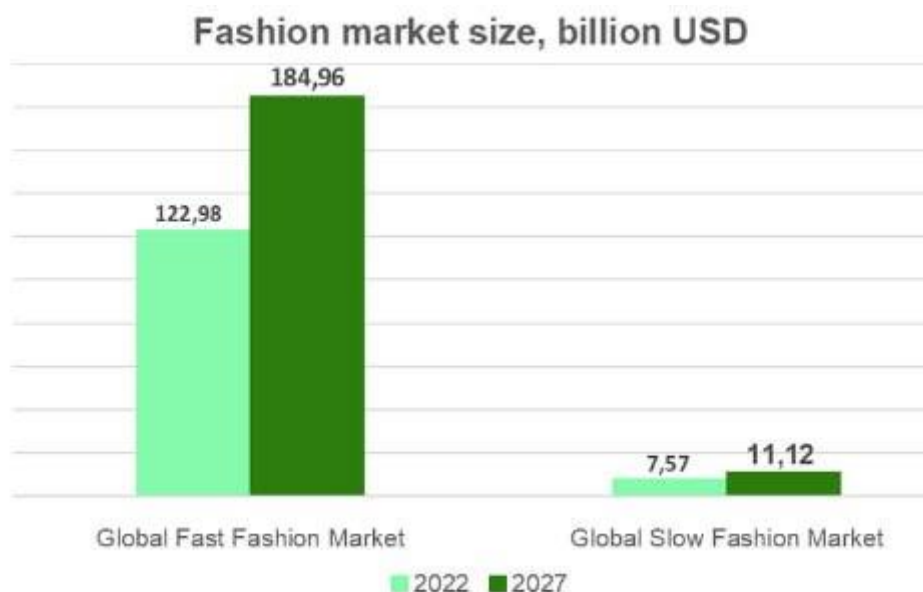
In the paper's conclusions, the authors describe the ways to promote the growth of the sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan. They provide insight into customer behaviour and what specific actions need to be taken to increase the demand for eco-friendly clothing.

**Key words:** eco-label, Kazakhstan, customer behaviour, sustainable fashion.

Fashion is the planet's third biggest polluter after food and construction. Ethical brands have already realized this, so they have bet on sustainable development, green manufacturing, "slow" fashion.

**Sustainability in fashion as a trend**

According to Research and Markets [1], the fast fashion market is expected to grow to \$184.96 billion in 2027 at a compound annual growth rate of 10.7%. Whereas, the sustainable fashion market will maintain a growth rate of 8% and from \$7.57 billion in 2022 to reach \$11.12 billion by 2027 (picture 1).



Picture 1 – Fashion market size, billion USD

### **The 3Rs of Fashion: Rewear, Repair, Resel**

The 3Rs of Fashion, often promoted as a sustainable approach to the fashion industry, are "Rewear, Repair, and Resell." These principles encourage consumers and fashion brands to reduce waste and minimize the environmental impact of the fashion industry.

#### **Rewear**

According to statistics (EDGE,2022), one in two people in the world throw their unwanted clothes straight into the trash. Less than 1% of all clothing is recycled into new clothes. Whereas 95% of the textiles that end up in landfills each year can be recycled [2].

#### **Repair**

According to statistics [3], extending the life of a garment from 1 to 2 years reduces its carbon footprint by 24% (picture 2). Many eco-friendly brands, such as Patagonia with its Worn Wear initiative or the Scandinavian brand Nudie Jeans offer repair of garments.



Picture 2 - Reduced carbon footprint as a result of Repair

### Resell

According to a report by Thredup [3], the global fashion resale market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 127% by 2026 (picture 3). There are many online platforms where you can sell your used (or new) clothes, such as eBay, Gumtree and Facebook. Second hand clothing is big business, as evidenced by the success of apps such as Depop.



Picture 3 – Global fashion resale market

Beyond the principles of the 3Rs of Fashion, there are other ways to contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly approach to clothing consumption.

### Rental Market

Rental stores are growing around the world, and many designers are partnering with them to allow customers to wear their pieces for a fraction of the cost. For example, Devout is a sustainable fashion rental platform.

### Alternative materials

60% - 70% of clothing is made from synthetic fabrics.

1/3 of microplastics in the world's oceans are from washing synthetic fabrics.

To solve this problem, brands and manufacturers are exploring the creation and production of new smart fabrics that eliminate waste. For example, Pangaia uses fast-growing plants instead of cotton, and Ganni uses grape skin.

### **Vegan fashion**

More and more environmentally conscious people are choosing clothing that does not include animal components. They recognize that clothing can be fashionable, high quality, inexpensive and cruelty-free to animals.

By embracing these sustainable fashion trends, consumers can make a positive impact on the planet while still enjoying stylish and high-quality clothing.

## **Sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan**

One of the main trends in today's fashion world is the so-called sustainable fashion. Many countries are producing eco-friendly clothes, and Kazakhstan is no exception. Sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan is still in its early stages, but there is a growing movement of designers, brands, and consumers who are committed to making the fashion industry more environmentally and socially responsible.

One of the pioneers of sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan is Aigerim Akenova, the founder of the brand AIKEN. AIKEN is known for its timeless, gender-neutral designs made from sustainable fabrics such as organic cotton, hemp, and recycled polyester. Akenova is also a vocal advocate for sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan, and she is working to educate consumers about the importance of making ethical and sustainable fashion choices [4].

Another notable sustainable fashion brand in Kazakhstan is AGES&AGES. AGES&AGES was founded by Tomas Akynov, who was inspired to start the brand after learning about the environmental impact of the fashion industry. It is a brand that creates clothes made from hemp. The brand is also committed to ethical manufacturing practices, and it works with fair trade suppliers. AGES&AGES targets an older audience who are in their 30s and older, who can afford more expensive clothes. Industrial hemp, which brand uses to create clothing, is more environmentally friendly to produce. It doesn't require huge amounts of water and acts as a fertilizer and does not need pesticides or chemicals to grow [5].

As another example of the brand that produces sustainable clothes is Pieper. Pieper is a brand that sells shoppers, t-shirts, sweatshirts, stickers, jewellery and accessories. They are made exclusively from recycled plastic. It takes an average of 6 used plastic bottles to make 1 meter of plastic fabric. The bottles are cleaned, cut, granulated and heated to a certain temperature. They are then melted down into thread-like fibres. It is also possible to add cotton or spandex to them [6].

In addition to these two brands, there are a number of other emerging sustainable fashion brands in Kazakhstan. And all these brands are working to create sustainable and ethical fashion that is also stylish and affordable.

### **Initial data of the survey**

The objective for this research is to find whether eco-label plays a role in consumer behaviour in Kazakhstan.

For the purpose of achieving this goal, a survey in Google Forms was done.

In addition to that, participants of the survey were split into two groups (A, B). To the first half was shown an image of the T-Shirt without eco-label. To the second half an image of the T-Shirt with eco-label (picture 4).



Picture 4 – Images of the T-Shirt with and without eco-label shown in the survey

The total number of participants in the survey is 39, 32 of them being females and 7 males. The average age of participants equals 22, those aged from 18-21 are 68%, and those aged from 22 to 45 are 32%. It is also known that the average budget of respondents is 221 euro, 23% of the total amount of participants have a budget ranged from 0-100 euro, 26% from 261-650 euro and most people, 49%, have a budget from 101 to 250 euro. Regarding the occupation of the respondents, students make up 80% of the total number of people, and the others are employed or freelancers, each of them being 10%.

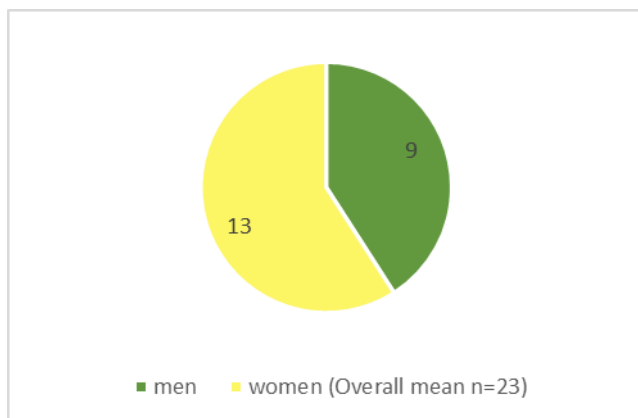
For analysing the data of the survey, an SPSS/PSPP program was used. The participants were asked to share their point of view regarding the following factors: quality, design, fashion, functionality and social acceptance of the T-shirt with and

without eco-label, and additionally their willingness to buy aforementioned T-shirt and their willingness to spend on it.

### Analysis of the results of the survey

The authors of the paper prior to the collection of the data and conduction of the survey had several hypotheses regarding the customer behaviour in Kazakhstan towards eco-label.

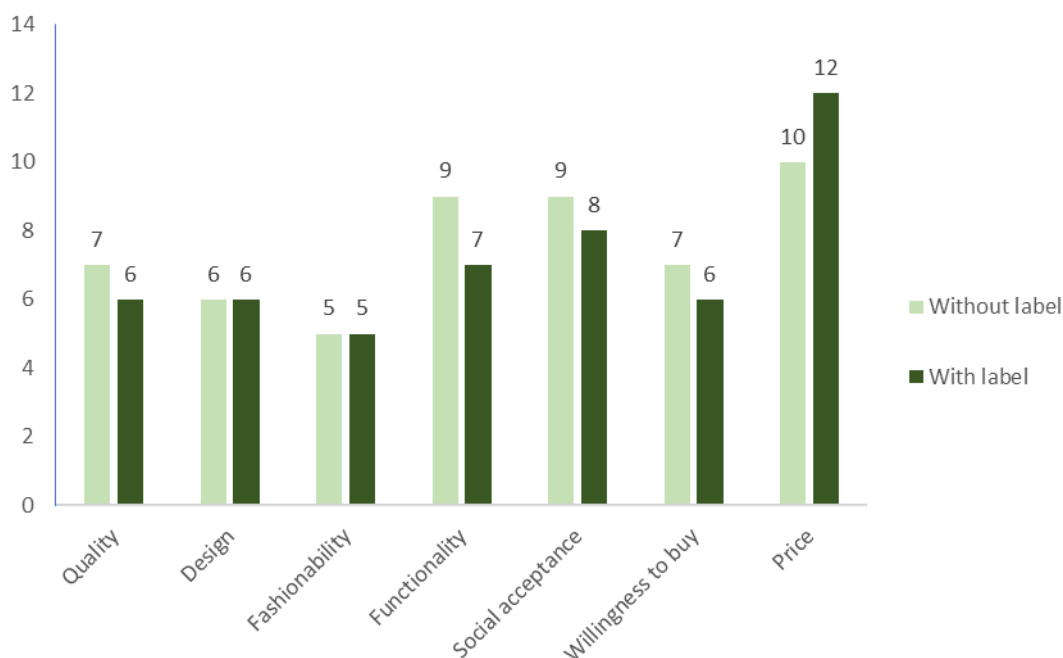
The first assumption was that women are more willing to spend money on the T-shirt with eco-label than men. To prove or disprove the statement T-test, divided by label, was used (picture 5).



Picture 5 – Willingness to spend divided by Gender

From the conducted T-test, no significant differences can be found, for the reason that the p value equals 0.114, which is greater than the standard p value of 0.05. Therefore, it shows that the gender does not play a notable role in the willingness to spend. However, whilst the gender does not have a significant impact on the factor, a tendency that women are willing to spend more on the T-shirt with eco label than men can be nonetheless observed. As a conclusion for marketing in Kazakhstan, it is advised, that the eco-labelled T-shirt with a higher price should be advertised for women, rather than men.

The second hypothesis was that for the residents of Kazakhstan the T-shirt with eco-label will be more attractive in the following factors: quality, design, fashion, functionality, social acceptance, willingness to buy and willingness to spend. To prove or disprove the assumption, T-test was used (picture 6).



Picture 6 – Perception of respondents towards labelled/non-labelled T-shirt

The p values of the factors are shown in the table below (table 1).

Table 1 - p values of the factors

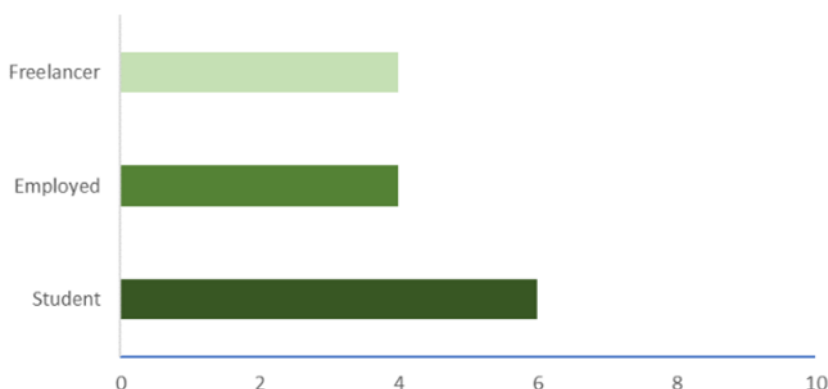
Factors	p value
Quality	0.311
Design	0.888
Fashion	0.938
Functionality	0.008
Social acceptance	0.172
Willingness to buy	0.062
Willingness to spend	0.378

From the conducted T-test, 1 out of 7 significant differences can be found, in the factor of functionality of the T-shirt. For the reason that the p value of functionality is 0.008, which is less than the standard p value of 0.05. Consequently, T-Shirt

without the eco label is valued more than the T-Shirt with eco label. And the most significant difference is being shown in the factor of functionality. In addition to that, this trend can also be found in the following factors: quality, social acceptance and willingness to spend. It can be seen that despite the fact, that the residents of Kazakhstan are willing to pay more money for the T-Shirt with eco label, they notwithstanding that prefer the T-Shirt without the eco label. As a recommendation for marketing, it is advised that to increase the demand for the eco-friendly clothes in Kazakhstan, the companies require to develop marketing campaigns, for raising awareness regarding the advantages of eco-friendly clothes.

To increase demand for eco-friendly clothing in Kazakhstan, marketing efforts should focus on promoting the benefits of sustainable fashion and educating consumers on the environmental impact of their clothing choices.

The third supposition was that students are more willing to buy the T-shirt with eco-label in comparison to the employed or freelancers. To test the supposition, ANOVA, divided by label, was used (picture 7).

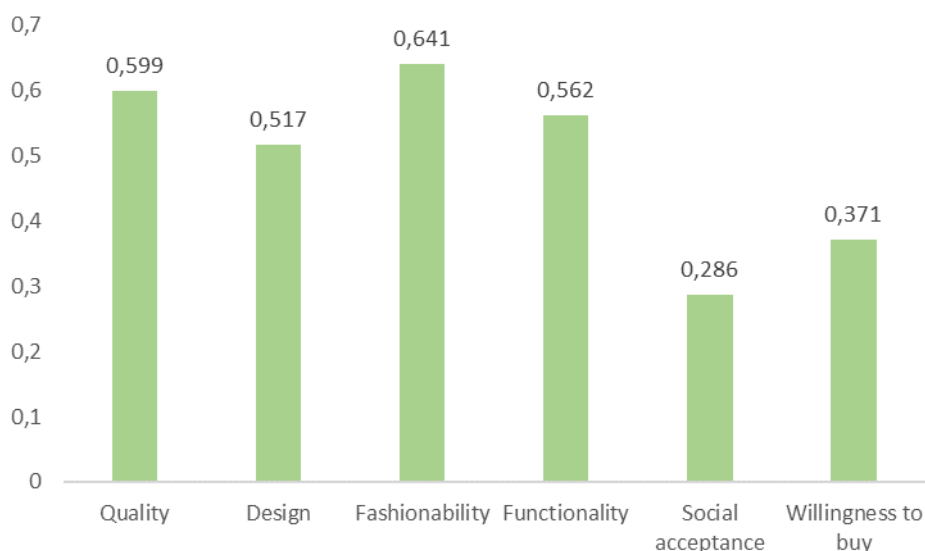


Picture 7 – Willingness to buy divided by Occupation

From the conducted ANOVA test, no significant differences can be found, for the reason that the p value equals 0.634, which is higher than the standard p value of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the occupation does not play a notable role on the willingness to buy to the respondents. But despite the fact that the occupation does not have a significant impact on the factor, a tendency that students are more willing to buy the T-shirt with eco label than the employed or freelancers can be noted. As a conclusion for marketing, it is recommended for the eco-labelled T-shirt to be advertised on the social media platforms, that are often used by students, such as: TikTok and Instagram.



The fourth hypothesis was that the buying decision of T-shirt with eco label is most influenced by social acceptance. Method used to prove or disprove the hypothesis was Correlation divided by label. The coherence of willingness to buy with the following factors: quality, design, fashion, functionality, social acceptance and willingness to spend was researched (picture 8).



Picture 8 – Correlation between willingness to buy and factors (Pearson r)

The p values of the factors are shown in the table below (table 2).

Table 2 - p values of the factors

Factors	p value
Quality	0.003
Design	0.012
Fashion	0.001
Functionality	0.005
Social acceptance	0.186
Willingness to spend	0.081

From the conducted Correlation, 4 out of 6 significant differences can be found, in the following factors: quality, design, fashion, functionality. In the view of the fact that the p values of the said factors are lower than the standard p value of 0.05. It

was discovered that quality, design, fashion, functionality show high correlation with willingness to buy. However, contrary to the assumption, the social acceptance does not play a significant role in buying decision. And the highest correlation is found between fashion and willingness to buy, therefore it can be concluded that the more fashionable the shirt is, the higher is the chance of people making a purchasing decision. As a recommendation for marketing, it is advised that in the marketing campaigns the emphasis should be put on how fashionable and functional the eco-labelled T-shirt is and also on the quality of the said product.

## Conclusion

For the development of sustainable fashion in Kazakhstan it is necessary to

- eliminate the information gap;
- make eco-clothing more fashionable and attractive. Eco-friendliness and social acceptance are not a priority when buying clothes in Kazakhstan. As most respondents follow fashion and focus on attractive design, a trend towards conscious consumption needs to be developed;
- position sustainable fashion as an investment. Consumers need to understand that sustainable fashion is profitable and that sustainability makes the product quality and prolongs its lifespan;
- attract not just customers, but committed like-minded individuals. Focus on creating a unique product.

By addressing these issues, Kazakhstan can develop a more sustainable fashion industry that benefits both consumers and the environment.

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### Резюме

## **Исследование поведения потребителей по отношению к эко-маркировке в Казахстане**

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В статье представлено исследование потребительского поведения жителей Казахстана в отношении эко-маркировки на одежде. Цель данного исследования: выяснить, играет ли эко-маркировка роль в поведении потребителей. В начале статьи авторы исследуют тенденции устойчивого развития моды в мире и в Казахстане.

В основной части статьи для достижения цели исследования был проведен опрос жителей Казахстана в Google Forms. На основе собранных данных, авторы проанализировали поведение потребителей в Казахстане по отношению к одежде с эко маркировкой, а также на основе анализа предлагают рекомендации по маркетингу и продвижению экологически чистой одежды.

В выводах статьи авторы описывают пути содействия развитию устойчивой моды в Казахстане. Они дают представление о поведении клиентов и о том, какие конкретные действия необходимо предпринять, чтобы увеличить спрос на экологически чистую одежду.

**Ключевые слова:** эко-маркировка, Казахстан, поведение покупателей, устойчивая мода.

### Түйіндеме

## **Қазақстандағы эко таңбалауға қатысты тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқын зерттеу**

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Мақалада Қазақстан тұрғындарының киімдегі эко таңбалауға қатысты тұтынушылық мінез-құлқын зерттеу ұсынылған. Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – эко таңбалау тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқында рөл атқаратынын анықтау. Мақаланың басында авторлар әлемдегі және Қазақстандағы сәннің тұрақты даму тенденцияларын зерттейді.

Мақаланың негізгі бөлігінде зерттеу мақсатына жету үшін Google Forms-те Қазақстан тұрғындарына сауалнама жүргізілді. Жиналған деректер негізінде авторлар Қазақстандағы тұтынушылардың эко таңбаланған киімге қатысты мінез-құлқын талдады. Сондай ақ талдау негізінде олар экологиялық таза киімдерді сату және жылжыту бойынша ұсыныстарды береді.

Мақаланың қорытындысында авторлар Қазақстанда тұрақты сәннің дамуына жәрдемдесу жолдарын сипаттайды. Олар тұтынушылардың мінез-құлқы туралы және экологиялық таза киімге сұранысты арттыру үшін қандай нақты әрекеттер жасау керектігі туралы түсінік береді.

**Түйінді сөздер:** эко таңбалау, Қазақстан, сатып алушылардың мінез-құлқы, тұрақты сән.

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