

Organizational Mindfulness: A Transformational Approach Towards Social Sustainability

Mr. Diwakar Chaudhary¹, Dr. Rashi Baliyan²,
Ms. Shweta Singh³, Mr. Mukul Pratap Singh⁴, Mr. Vipluv Pathak⁵

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Studies, GL Bajaj Institute of Technology & Management, Greater Noida.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Studies, GL Bajaj Institute of Technology & Management, Greater Noida.

³ Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Studies, GL Bajaj Institute of Technology & Management, Greater Noida.

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Studies, GL Bajaj Institute of Technology & Management, Greater Noida.

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Management
Studies, GL Bajaj Institute of Technology & Management, Greater Noida.

Abstract

In today's complex environment companies are expected to improvise and deal with current and upcoming demands. Studies of mindfulness are making a new buzz in the management field and also making an impact on the organizations. This trend of research on mindfulness paves a way for transforming people's motivation towards sustainability. Although, prior research has recognized various factors that contribute to sustainability in the apparel industry, there is little focus on organizational mindfulness as a catalyst agent for sustainable apparels. Post Covid 19 the consumers have become more humanly towards animal cruelty and protection of the environment. This is a literature review paper that directs the role of organizational mindfulness in achieving sustainability in apparel industry. This is an exploratory paper based on primary and secondary research methods. We develop a conceptual model that shows the relation between mindfulness and sustainable behavior, which in turn leads to sustainable consumption. Sustainability has become a wider concept in intense competitive world by focusing on 3 P's i.e. People, Profit and Planet. Apparel Industry has adopted this Triple Bottom Line approach by using eco friendly products from raw materials to final disposal of clothing. Findings of the research paper provide that organizational mindfulness has brought a change in the consumption patterns of consumers, which resulted in a rise for the demand of vegan and sustainable products in India in the coming future. This paper

is a sincere effort of the authors to identify how organizational mindfulness acts as a catalyst post pandemic for sustainable apparels.

Keywords: Organizational Mindfulness, Vegan apparels, Sustainable apparels, TripleBottom Line, COVID 19.

Introduction

Mindfulness, was previously studied only as an aspect of organizational science by 20th century and in Buddhist traditions. But now various studies have been done in this regard (Good et al, 2016). Individual mindfulness shows a positive impact on employees performance like more resistant towards stress (Hulsheger et al., 2013), more creative and flexible (Ie et al., 2012) and even more productive (Langer, 2016). This led to the creation of a new concept organizational mindfulness (Weick and Sutcliff 2001). This concept is basically gaining popularity in High Reliability Organizations where companies detect subtle signs of approaching problems or try avoiding it. In other words, one of the main principle of organizational mindfulness is ability to adapt, improvise and gain knowledge from unexpected conditions (Sutcliffe et al., 2016).

Over the past 20 years various studies have been done that shows mindfulness affects sustainability (Jacob et al. 2009; Ericson et al. 2014; Siqueira and Pitassi 2016; Fischer et al. 2017; Wamsler et al. 2017; Wamsler 2018). O'Brien 2018; Wamsler 2018, 2019; Ives et al. 2019 clearly stated that for a successful transformation of the society towards sustainability, one needs to transform his individual self.

The fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world and contributes approx. 10% of the world's carbon emission (Conca, 2019). Hence, it requires more research to achieve sustainability. According to the Inter Press Service news agency, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany, are the countries investing hugely in the vegan market; in the United Kingdom, people are witnessing a 75% rise in vegan products year over year, while in the United States, there has been an 11 percent increase. According to Grandview Research, the women's vegan fashion market globally stands at the worth of US \$396.3 billion in 2019 and is predicted to rise at a CAGR of 13.6 percent between 2020-27.

When we take into consideration not only the aspects of animal welfare but also the harm the environment is facing from the fur trade and animal agriculture, it is obvious that vegan fashion is becoming increasingly relevant. There are many Vegan apparel Brands in India like DeChevalerie for Apparels and Home décor in Shahpur Jat (Delhi), Lake Peace for Women Apparels, Hoomanwear for Men & Women Apparels

in Mumbai and many more.... Similarly, sustainable fashion is primarily concerned with decreasing the environmental impact of clothes alone, finding biodegradable or recycled fibers, and minimizing carbon emissions. There are quite a few sustainable brands that work on the triple bottom line approach like Kalamargam for Women wear in Mumbai, House of Anita Dongre in Delhi for Men & Women wear and Save The Loom in Kerala for Handlooms.

Being sustainable and earning profits has become a new trend post pandemic. Elkington (1997) made a huge contribution by developing a model of Triple Bottom Line (TBL) which shows that companies consider environmental, social and economic dimensions. He gave a definition that proved companies have shifted their focus from short-term goals (Sustainable Development and Corporate Social Responsibility) to Long-term goals (TBL). In apparel Industry, from production of raw materials to the final disposal of clothing a multi faceted approach is to be followed for TBL (Kim 2017). Due to the prolonged impact of COVID 19 globally, there has been a rise in awareness of triple bottom line approach and demand of eco-friendly and vegan products that has given a boost to this category of Apparel products too. However, there seems to be limited research on the impact of pandemic on organizational mindfulness towards sustainable fashion in India. Keeping in mind the above stated problems, the study aims to understand organizational mindfulness as a change agent for highlighting sustainable fashion post pandemic.

Literature Review

Organizational Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a unique and creative process of noticing new things during present times in order to increase their sensitivity to the context (Langer, 2016). It can be achieved through exercise or meditation (Sutcliffe et al., 2016). It is because of the benefits of mindfulness that this concept was adopted in organizational domains too (Dane, 2011). Organizational mindfulness is a process of executing day-to-day task with detailed understanding of the context (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2012). It is made up of 5 basic principle i.e. Pre occupation with failure (Ray et al., 2011), Reluctance to simplify (Sutcliffe et al., 2016), Sensitivity to operations (Weick et al., 1999), Commitment to resilience (Sutcliffe et al., 2016) and Deference to expertise (Ray et al., 2011).

Organizational mindfulness is studied in high-risk organizations like aircraft carriers (Weick et al., 1999), air traffic control centers (Roberts, 1990), nuclear submarines (Spender, 1995). There are very few research works done on organizational mindfulness in the corporates by Eastburn (2018) in banking, Vogus and Wellbourne (2003) in IPO, Ray et al., (2011)

in business schools, N Isirimah (2020) in hospitality firms.

Vegan Brands

Choi and Lee in 2019 outline the vegan-fashion-consuming phenomenon as "an apparel intake extra special sample wherein the idea of vegetarianism is carried out to clothes in particular due to the boom in attention approximately animal care and surroundings that don't sell the use of animal leather-based or fur. Most vegan style brands, consistent with Choi and Yoh (2013), hire green or recycled substances which include cotton canvas, natural cotton, fake leather-based or suede, and recycled fiber.

Sustainability and Triple Bottom Line

Elington (1997) said that reporting on 3 notions (People, Profit and Planet) has become the main goal of sustainability. Its main perspective is that for an organization to be sustainable it should be it financially secured (profitability), it must remove negative environmental impacts and must follow social obligations.

COVID 19

When 2019 was about to end, an outbreak was caused by a novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China that quickly spread throughout the globe, prompting fears of a pandemic. The microbe for this pneumonia is known as 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) after infection differentiating proof and seclusion and it is declared as a serious intensive respiratory disorder by the WHO. The WHO declared the covid outbreak a Global Health Emergency on January 30, 2020. SARS-CoV-2, in contrast to the SARS-CoV that produced a SARS outbreak in 2003, has a more grounded bandwidth.

After doing systematic Literature Review, the researchers found that there is a dearth of study on organizational mindfulness in the apparel industry. Furthermore, post pandemic there has been an urgent need to study mindfulness at various levels in order to adapt and sustain. Hence, this study contributes to finding the role of organizational mindfulness in achieving sustainability pre and post pandemic in apparel Industry.

Objectives-

1. To study the conceptual view of organizational mindfulness in sustainability innovations of Indian fashion industry
2. To analyze the impact of COVID 19 on the organizational mindfulness towards sustainable fashion

Research Methodology- Undergoing the key aspects of the pandemic that is changing the scenario of Apparel Industry, the main aim of the paper is to explore and understand the impact of organizational mindfulness in promoting a sustainable society.

Analytical Overview of Research Design

At the initial phase of descriptive analysis, pilot study was done via cloud computing software tools like Dropbox, twitter, websites, AI tools etc... Once sufficient data was collected then expert opinion, phone interviews were conducted of brand owners and magazines authors to understand the designers view at national level. To check the validity of the data and feedback of interviews, we discussed with corporate designers and academicians.

Hence, face validity indicates that organizational mindfulness is a strong factor for sustainable apparels post COVID 19.

Data Analysis

Objective 1: There are many recent strategies that have been adopted by fashion companies in lieu of sustainability innovations in the industry.

From buddhist standpoint, fashion is a classic example of human suffering. Cosette M (2020) proposed a model for mindful clothing consumption and to understand the relationship between clothing and individual mindfulness. This practically holds true as what we wear is purely a reflection of how we want to be seen and also if people tend to buy less it leads to sustainability in the environment. Big apparel companies like Apparel Retailer and Franchiser have started using mindful information technology management for improving their logistics operations. Siqueira and Petassi (2016) said that mindfulness can be carry forwarded to organizations via sustainability innovations and creative leadership. Biocouture, a new trend in fashion industry, which means fashion built from more environmentally friendly materials, has become popular in large companies. To manufacture such textiles, companies are diligently attempting to employ waste from natural wood and fruits, and other such elements. Others are also experimenting with techniques of coloring their fabrics or looking for materials that can decay more quickly once they are discarded. Clothing recycling is a brand new fashion for lots of fabric specially cotton and polyester apparel are recycled into new garments and different products. Few massive manufacturers have started applying recycled textiles, yet it is hard for clients to discover venues to donate their antique apparels. Also, increasing the use of used products has become fashionable in recent years. It is one of the most effective solutions to the problem of overconsumption. Organizational mindfulness paves a way for the corporations to become adaptive until the need is understood (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003) and its practical implications were visible with the advent of vegan brands. These have become a part of lifestyle and entered all domains of the industry like fashion, foods, cosmetics, Home Decor etc... Designers in

India like Anita Dongre, owner of Brown Boy have also started their online stores to cater to masses, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) has been working with PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) to promote vegan fashion for several years, asking companies and designers to commit to this cause etc.. This year's fashion also followed the same trend by introducing a new vegan fashion lookbook starring supermodel and actor Milind Soman and his wife, Ankita Konwar, to coincide with FDCI and the Lakmé Fashion Week's Sustainable Fashion Day, themed on leather-free fashion.

Objective 2: COVID 19 has given an option to organizational mindfulness in fashion industry to move towards sustainable innovations. On the other hand, purchase intentions of consumers are also motivated towards such sustainable products.

Evidences clearly show that the pandemic has negatively affected the mental health of human beings. Mindful meditation is a low cost intervention to mitigate the effects of COVID 19. Ericson (2014) was the first to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on mindfulness and sustainability, identifying and organizing some of the arguments for a potential link between both the concepts. He advocated that as mindfulness is shown to be associated broadly with increased subjective well-being, pro-social behaviors, awareness of one's own intrinsic values, hence, these qualities might help to strengthen pro environmental behavior. The choice of many human beings nowadays is to steer an animal-pleasant way of life because of the destruction caused by pandemic. Some industries have end up a lot fluctuating like beef (and leather) industry, that are expected to absolutely disintegrate by approaching 2030.

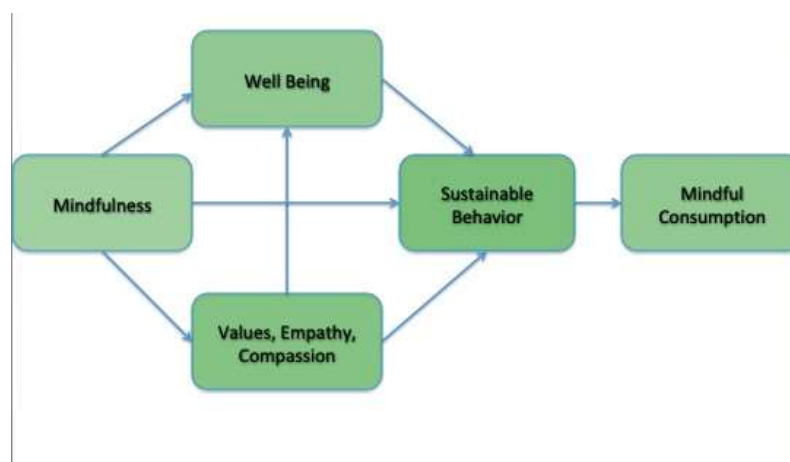


Fig (1)

The fig (1) above shows the relationship between mindfulness, value/empathy/compassion, well being and sustainable behavior (Ericson et al., 2014) which furthers leads to mindful consumption of

the consumer. In other words, mindfulness has been associated with increased subjective knowledge, well being, awareness of intrinsic values and pro social behavior, which helps to strengthen pro environmental behaviors.

Several studies have shown that Connectedness with Nature has become an important aspect in environmental psychology. According to the report of PETA India released on April 10, 2021 there are many innovations in vegan fashion industry that will come up like Fleather, Vegan wool, Bio Based faux fur etc which are going to increase the purchase intentions of the consumers. Lyst stated that searches for "vegan leather" had jumped 69 percent year over year in April of 2020, while retail intelligence platform Edited suggested that the pandemic could also be to blame for the increased demand for vegan commodities.

Dagogo and Gublin (2020) concluded that collective sense of knowledge and consciousness, or organizational mindfulness which if implemented in every day task of the organization can meet the environments shifting needs and demand. It is predicted that demand patterns would be shifted towards brands that are sustainable and would be more concerned about ethical manufacturing. The New Indian express states that various designers like Mandeep Negi (Design director, Shades Of India), Manjula Gandhi (Head of design and merchandizing, Numero Uno) have declared that post pandemic sustainability will be a driving factor rather than an additional element. According to a current survey record given via way of means of Sustainable Apparel Coalition members, the agencies that duly achieve preserving the consistency of sustainability programs & commitments on this disaster will really benefit as soon as the pandemic ends.

Conclusion

From the study done above, it is clearly visible that there is a relationship between organizational mindfulness and decision-making. And this relation is also visible in the apparel industry due to which consumer behavior has drifted towards vegan and sustainable apparel brands. The pandemic has showed us the repercussion of animal cruelty and harm done to the nature by mankind. Hence, before a premonition of immediate disaster organizational mindfulness gave a rapid response by moving towards sustainability. During these days, the essence of sustainability is measured in terms of Triple Bottom Line including profitability, shareholders value and social, human, environmental capital. Vegan brands are a subset of sustainable brands and the current trends are showing us the way for such products in future.

References and Citations

1. Armstrong, C. M. (2020, April). Fashion and the Buddha: What Buddhist economics and mindfulness have to offer Sustainable Consumption. SAJE journals .
2. Arowoshegbe, A. O. (n.d.). Sustainability and Triple Bottom Line: An Overview of Two Interrelated Concepts. Shodhganga .
3. BCG report. (2020). Weaving a better future- Rebuilding a more sustainable fashion industry after COVID 19. <https://apparelcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Weaving-a-Better-Future-Covid-19-BCG-SAC-Higg-Co-Report.pdf>
4. Connell, K. Y. (2017, December). Introduction to special issue on sustainability and the triple bottom line within the global clothing and textiles industry. Researchgate .
5. Coulter, A. W. (2021, April). What we wear is a reflection of how we want to be seen. Retrieved from mindful.org: <https://www.mindful.org/what-we-wear-is-a-reflection-of-how-we-want-to-be-seen/>
6. Choi, Y. (2021). Ethical Consumers' Awareness of Vegan Materials: Focused on Fake Fur and Fake Leather. MDPI journal. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13010436>
7. Denuwara, N. (2019, November). Sustainability Benefits of RFID Technology in the Apparel Industry. Shodhganga.
8. Diwan, P. (Sept, 2020). The Changing Scenario of Business Ecosystem in Virtual World. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.4030574
9. Forbes. (2020). Corona virus will force fashion to a sustainable future. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pamdanziger/2020/05/10/coronavirus-will-force-fashion-to-a-sustainable-future/?sh=5ba68f055292>
10. Grand view research. (2020). Vegan women's fashion market size , share & trends analysis report By product, By region, and segment forecasts (2020- 2027). <https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/vegan-womens-fashion-market>
11. Hsu, S. Y. (2019). Triple bottom line model and food safety in organic food and conventional food in affecting perceived value and purchase intentions. British Food Journal , 121, 333-346.
12. Kelemen, P. (2020, May). Theorizing on the connection between organizational and individual mindfulness. Economic Research .
13. León, Y. L. (2021, August). Organizational Mindfulness Assessment and

Its Impact on Rational Decision Making. MDPI .

14. N., I. N. (2020). ORGANIZATIONAL MINDFULNESS AND CORPORATE RESILIENCE OF HOSPITALITY FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA . IJAAR , 6 (11).
15. Paljor, A. (2020). Sustainable fashion is now a necessity. The New Indian Express.
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2020/may/06/sustainable-fashion-is-now-a-necessity-2139799.html>
16. PETA India. <https://www.petaindia.com/living/fashion/introducing-our-peta-approved-vegan-logo-for-easy-shopping/>
17. Vegan fashion week. (2020). Vegan fashion vs Sustainable fashion.
<https://vegan-fashion-week.com/news/2020/1/16/vegan-vs-sustainable-fashion-all-you-need-to-know>
18. Wong, C.W.Y. and Lai, K.-h. (2008), "Organizational Mindfulness and the Development of Information Technology for Logistics Operations: The Experience of an Apparel Company", Research Journal of Textile and Apparel, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 30-37. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RJTA-12-03-2008-B003>
19. Thiermann, U. B. (2021). The Way Forward in Mindfulness and Sustainability: a Critical Review and Research Agenda. Journal of Cognitive Enhancement , 118-139.
20. Zhu, J. L. (2021, May). Mindfulness practice for protecting mental health during the COVID 19 pandemic.