

## Global Textile Sustainability Consumer Research

To celebrate its 25th Anniversary, OEKO-TEX® commissioned a global survey of consumer attitudes about textile sustainability. The ground-breaking study is the first to focus on global consumers and examined their views and behaviors regarding climate change overall, as well as their knowledge, perceptions, and concerns about textile sustainability and certification. A 25-minute survey with over 11,000 clothes and home textile purchase decision-makers in ten countries was conducted between June 24 and July 11, 2017.

1

### Climate change is a serious issue for people worldwide

- › Climate change ranked third on a list of sixteen worrisome issues
  - More than 4 in 5 people globally say that it is “a real and very serious problem” and
  - Almost 3 in 4 say it “is largely due to emissions from human activities”
- › Consumers are motivated by concerns that are both close to home, like “keeping me and my family safe and healthy”, and global in scope, like “keeping the earth safe for future generations”

2

### People want to live more sustainably

- › Most people the world over want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem
  - Most (66%) feel that “the actions of an individual like myself can reverse climate change” and 7 in 10 indicate that they are “committed to living a sustainable, environmentally friendly lifestyle”
  - They are learning how to do so – eating more naturally, adapting their means of transportation, checking on recyclability, learning more about brands they buy
  - They aspire to purchase fewer clothes however, de-consumption’ is difficult
- › People hold brands, companies, and organizations accountable and look to them for help to live better and more responsibly
  - About 4 in 10 consumers “Like to know the values and principles of brands of clothing they buy” and “Like to know what small steps brands have taken to be more sustainable, even if they’re not fully green”

3

### Concerns about the textile industry are growing

- › About 40-50% of people state that they “don’t know much about the way clothes or other textiles are produced”

- People in countries that produce textile products consider it the third worst polluter. People farther away from the epicenters are starting to hear the facts.
- Nevertheless, 4 in 10 people globally are concerned about harmful substances in clothes and home textiles
  - Textiles are catching up with food (59% are concerned), home care/cleaning products (50%) or cosmetics (53%), and other personal care products (49%)
- Safety from harmful substances and environmentally and socially responsible production is very important to about 6 in 10 people globally
  - However, only 3 in 10 feel that the textile industry is doing a good job providing clothes and home textiles that meet these criteria
- Most consumers (80-90%) are aware of eco-friendly, sustainable clothes and home textiles
  - 32% have purchased eco-friendly home textiles, 36% have purchased eco-friendly clothing, and 54% have purchased items for babies or young children made with organic cotton or other sustainable fibers
  - Parenthood substantially increases interest in sustainable, healthy lifestyles.

## 4

### People want to buy the right products

- 60% of global consumers want to know if their clothing and home textiles are certified to be safe from harmful substances and responsibly produced
- 31% indicate that they have purchased certified clothing
  - Purchasers were concerned about harmful substances (49%), environmental impact (47%), and the safety of textile workers (37%)
- Two-thirds of people who buy eco-friendly textile products indicate that they check if these claims are true at least some of the time
- Brands and certifiers can provide assurances of responsible production
  - About half of consumers who check if claims are true look for a certification label or check the fiber content and about one third checks on their brand's sustainability practices
  - Those who rarely or never check sustainability claims are most likely to "trust the brand" or indicate that "a label certifies that the claims are true"

## 5

### Consumers who learn about the textile industry think differently about their purchases

- People are learning more 'facts' about the textile industry, particularly those related to working conditions and the treatment of textile workers; some note that they have read articles or seen documentaries
- Consumers who read ten statements frequently reported in the media about chemical/pesticide use, environmental impact and waste, and treatment of workers were "shocked". Worldwide, they were inspired to purchase eco-friendly products, favor brands that responsibly make safe products, become better informed about the brands they buy and the treatment of textile workers, and check for independent certification labels

- > 43% of people already recognize the OEKO-TEX® label and 21% have purchased OEKO-TEX® certified clothing
- > Once people learn about the textile industry and the work done by OEKO-TEX®, 9 in 10 indicate that they would be likely to look for OEKO-TEX® labels in the future with 4 in 10 being very likely to do so
- > 9 in 10 global consumers indicate that an OEKO-TEX® label would give them more confidence in the textile products they buy due primarily to its:
  - Testing for harmful substance
  - Monitoring and managing environmental and social impact
  - Objectivity and scientific methodology
- > People recognized OEKO-TEX® certified products as an easy way to help do the right thing for themselves, their families, and the planet, society, and future generations
  - Looking for an OEKO-TEX® certification label is easy
  - OEKO-TEX® certification reassures that products are safe and responsibly made
  - OEKO-TEX® certification makes doing the right thing easier

## – Summary –

### A few statements from around the world.

**I have bought certified clothing in the past because it made me confident that my health wouldn't be at risk and that there might be a more natural and healthy environment for everyone.**

Brazil

**I want to know if the brands or manufacturers I buy cause less pollution than other manufacturers.**

China

**I want to buy products certified by OEKO-TEX® because I am trying to reduce my carbon footprint in this world and do my part to keep it beautiful for my children, my grandchildren and on and on.**

Canada

**How we produce what we produce is more important than how much we produce. And wearing something that is safe against your largest organ is just as important as ingesting safe produce. So buying clothes with this label would give me the satisfaction of knowing that I was doing the right thing.**

Australia

**I don't want the environment to be harmed and poisoned in another part of the globe just so I can buy a cheap pair of trousers. The world is one big cycle and harm done to it somewhere else will catch up to my country eventually. For that reason, now I only want to buy clothing that has this label.**

Germany

**For 25 years this company has offered selfless service in this field so that if they certify clothes to be safe, I can be 100% confident about buying them.**

India

**It shocked me to learn that the clothing industry is bad for the environment and that I could get sick from harmful substances in textiles. I'll now consciously look for clothes that are environmentally friendly.**

Japan

**I don't eat anything with additives or artificial colors or anything that was exposed to pesticides. I only use organic cosmetics without petrochemicals or carcinogens. And now it occurs to me that I don't even consider my clothes, which are always in contact with my skin. I only have one body and it has to last my whole life. They should really ban harmful substances in clothes.**

Switzerland

**I think every little bit helps. I can't personally change the world but if we all just do better each year, it will have a huge impact. I feel that buying certified clothing is one small step I can make to help preserve the earth.**

USA

**OEKO-TEX® is a credible organization because their work is done by independent teams of scientists. They can help us all play a part in creating a better world.**

Spain

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We hope you enjoyed this report from  
**The Key to Confidence: Consumers and Textile Sustainability.**

Look for the next issue in January.

- > We'll be attending these upcoming industry events and would enjoy talking with you there:
- WEAR in Toronto
  - Home and Textiles Today's Leadership Conference in NYC
  - Heimtextil in Frankfurt
  - Ethical Fashion Show in Berlin
  - Texworld USA in NYC
  - Outdoor Retailer in Denver
  - India International Garment Fair in New Delhi

Please join us again in January for the next round of insights from **The Key to Confidence.**