

Novelty of eco-friendly bamboo garments lures consumers—if the price is right, study shows

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Consumers who plan to buy eco-friendly bamboo apparel are attracted if the price is right, but their next consideration is the novelty of the product, according to a new study by Baylor University researchers.

Bamboo has been championed by many as friendly to the environment, although the Federal Trade Commission issued a 2009 consumer alert noting that some pollutants are released in production from [bamboo](#) stalks.

When it comes to product consumption in general, consumers are influenced by emotion, price, functionality, social image and curiosity, said lead researcher Jay Yoo, Ph.D., an assistant professor of family and [consumer sciences](#) in Baylor's College of Arts & Sciences.

In the case of bamboo, "if I have it and you don't, there's novelty – and curiosity can make something more appealing," Yoo said.

The study, based on an online questionnaire of 122 participants, is published in the *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*. The University of Minnesota's department of design, housing and apparel was co-researcher.

Social considerations – such as whether bamboo reflects social status—and function, such as whether bamboo wrinkles easily, had the

least bearing on whether participants planned to buy it, the study showed.

Meanwhile, when it comes to buying "green," consumers who believe that one individual can make even a small difference in impacting the environment were more likely to buy bamboo.

From an environmental standpoint, bamboo is touted as a product for the same reasons it is vilified by anyone who has tried to eradicate it from a yard: It is renewable, shooting to maturity in a mere four years, boasting a vast root system and clinging tenaciously even to steep hills, Yoo said.

While the fashion industry seeks to earn profits, it is increasingly trying to do so in ways that do not harm the environment, such as using organic or recyclable materials, he said. From the industry's standpoint, bamboo is desirable because it dyes well, feels silkier than cotton and is less expensive than silk.

Producers of bamboo textiles maintain their products are antimicrobial, processed without chemicals, non-pollutant, biodegradable and recyclable.

Yoo noted that the majority – nearly 84 percent – of those participating in the study were female college students with an average age of 21. He said further research of a wider sample should be done.

Provided by Baylor University

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