



## CONSUMER MOTIVATIONS FOR PURCHASING APPAREL FROM SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES

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Understanding how consumer behavior is influenced by a company's impact on society and/or the environment has been the focus of a number of studies throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Lacking from the growing body of knowledge are studies that explore the topic from a qualitative perspective. The purposes of this study were to (1) identify the range of consumer motivations for purchasing apparel from socially responsible businesses (SRBs) and (2) determine which factors motivate the largest number of consumers to shop from SRBs.

A mail survey was conducted with 2,000 adult male and female consumers from across the U.S. Respondents were asked to explain whether or not they would buy clothing from an SRB in the upcoming year. Qualitative data were analyzed with grounded theory methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Respondents included 188 females, 158 males, and 53 who did not indicate their sex (N=399). Nearly 95% of the females and 85% of the males indicated that they would buy from an SRB. Four major themes explaining the consumer behavior were identified and include Principles for the Workplace, The Consumer's Role, The Role of Business and Government, and Consumer Needs. The largest number of consumers used Principles for the Workplace when explaining their decision. How these themes contribute to existing knowledge and development of theory on socially responsible consumer behavior is discussed.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.