



Shifting Towards Conscious Fashion Choices

Shambhavi Prasad¹, Dipti K Chaturvedi², Garishma Jain³

Student, School of Fashion Design, AFT University of Media and Arts

Abstract-- This Study Explores the growing shift from fast fashion to ethical and conscious clothing. As Nowadays sustainability gain popularity among fashion industry but consumers aren't aware about conscious clothing and ethical consumption. Consumers prefer fast fashion which leads mass production, low quality fabric, low in prices and trendy cycles for which generation z's are more preferred. In other hand conscious clothing prefer sustainability, decomposable fabric, reuse and recycle product, use of organic materials, fair wages, may be a little costly than fast fashion but consumer knowing these facts and not practices it lead to several damage or harmful to environment consumer saw sustainability in different way that products are unattractive and less stylish doesn't fit in social groups and not aware about sustainability contains craftsmanship also which way more attractive from mass produce clothes. This descriptive research methodology has used to compares secondary data from research papers, articles, different sites and then analyze and evaluate that. The study concludes that consumers thoughtful wardrobe choices significantly affect the fashion industry. Responsible shoppers prefer durable, high-quality clothing over fast fashion, reducing waste and excessive consumption. The study concludes that consumers thoughtful wardrobe choices significantly affect the fashion industry. Responsible shoppers prefer durable, high-quality clothing over fast fashion, reducing waste and excessive consumption. They support companies that use sustainable materials and adhere to ethical production standards. Additionally, environmentally conscious shoppers engage in practices like upcycling and recycling.

Keywords-- Sustainability, Consumer Behavior, Ethical Practices, SDG's Awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a critical issue in contemporary society. With rapid industrialization and changing lifestyles, even as people increase their economic prosperity by globalizing at higher standard of living levels than before such an evolution in the truest sense tends to place immense strain on nature and carry risks for resources as well as future life on earth. The direction of development Sustainable development has to do with modern economic development in different periods. It seeks future generations' needs, but it does not rob future generations of that possibility. However, present systems of production and consumption reproduce imbalances that significantly contribute to environmental degradation.

Intensive resource-using processes that are dependent upon large amounts of energy, water and raw materials. At the output stage, this results in A considerable amount of waste, both material and pollutants Fast-lane production particularly in sectors such as fashion or consumer goods-discourages consideration of earlier production phases. Clothes are frequently made for one use before being discarded. As a result, producers frequently employ less expensive materials that cannot be recycled or reused. Additionally, a lot of today's clothing is composed of blended synthetic fabrics, making it difficult to recycle or even biodegrade.

People don't stay happy for very long, even when they buy new outfits on a regular basis. Problems like bad fit, poor quality, or overuse cause the excitement of a new purchase to swiftly evaporate. Fast fashion exacerbates the situation by enticing consumers to purchase more than they require by continuously providing new trends at discounted costs. Clothes are so frequently discarded shortly after purchasing. In actuality, the amount of clothing produced worldwide has doubled over the past 15 years, and over half of it gets thrown away within a year.

Customization is one way to address this. Because mass-produced clothes don't fit well or fit their personal style, many people are dissatisfied with it. Clothes that don't live up to expectations are rarely worn and finally thrown away. Tailoring clothing to a person's needs can boost enjoyment and encourage longer wear. This can cut down the demand for quick fashion and lessen the habit of discarding clothing. Customers feel more attached to their clothing when they participate in the design or modification process. Compared to hurried, impulsive purchasing, this experience is more significant and may result in more enjoyment. People are therefore less likely to purchase needless clothing, which lowers waste.

Businesses that manufacture clothing in large quantities frequently base their decisions on erroneous demand forecasts. Overproduction and unsold inventory result in needless waste. Customization reduces superfluous inventory and saves resources by enabling production to be based on actual demand. Large volumes of inventory must be kept in warehouses as part of mass manufacturing, which raises expenses and waste. This lessens the impact on the environment, lowers expenses, and saves storage space.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 04, April 2026)

To put it briefly, making notified fashion choices is vital to inspiring sustainable development and fading the industry's destructive environmental effects. Both consumers and manufacturers can help reduce waste and preserve resources by eschewing rapid fashion and adopting personalization, considerate consumption, and ethical production. In addition to increasing amusement, fostering a closer bond with apparel prolongs the life of products. In the end, protecting the environment and ensuring a better future for future generations require a more cautious and sustainable approach to fashion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Current consumption patterns and production systems based on traditional practices and commercial technologies are generally not sustainable. The industrial sector, through its role in society, has contributed significantly to pollution and exploitation of the environment. The rapid industrialization of many nations in Asia and the consequent rapidly rising levels of water, air and land pollution have raised concerns about the unsustainability of current growth patterns. Therefore, numerous changes must be made in policies, education and in industrial policies, processes, products and services including intensified efforts at greening the supply chains and increasing awareness of environmental responsibilities in Asia (Tseng et al., 2013).

Green products are often more expensive, of poorer quality and are not available in all stores - price, perceived quality and lack of trust in the information provided by producers, contribute to this gap (Gleim et al., 2013; Gupta and Ogden, 2009). Habits, financial constraints and lifestyles of individual consumers, as well as loyalty to established brands, may have a deterrent effect on green consumer behavior (Peattie, 2010). Lack of opportunities to practice pro environmental behavior (access to recycling containers, availability of green options to conventional products, etc.), and lack of reliable and comprehensive information about the standards to be met by a product in order to be accepted as 'green', also represent an obstacle to the adoption of actual sustainable behavior. (Kostadinova 2016)

In 2017, Europeans bought 6.4 million tons of new clothes; between 1996 and 2012, studies estimate that each person increased by 40% the amount of new clothes they purchased [2], increasing the ecological negative impact of this industry. Actual well-informed clients are concerned and focused on the long-term well-being of people and the planet itself, and thus a new movement has appeared called Slow Fashion [6].

It represents the need to adopt sustainable performance and a change in core values in the fashion industry [1,6]; the challenge is to focus on more durable products and traditional production techniques or design concepts that have no season [6,7,8], emphasizing quality in order to achieve sustainability. (Rita, Oliveira, and Farisa 2022)

Sustainability is very important and is a key link to educating consumers about the increasingly tangible environmental issues and enlightening consumers that textiles and clothing also have their own life cycle that must be practiced by every community (Shen, 2014; Borman & Sun, 2016). Clothing life cycle involves the use of raw materials, processing, distribution to consumers, use, and clothing direction after use within a certain period of time. This cycle is very important in defining the concept of sustainability because it involves the process of a garment produced, the reason consumers buy clothing, and the consumer's disposition of clothing (Carneiro et al., 2016). Additionally, aspects such as good knowledge in the selection and use of raw materials, the knowledge of processes involved in the manufacture of textiles and clothing, as well as the knowledge of the life cycle of clothing also illustrates the preservation of the fashion. These aspects can determine the diversity of product designs that can be generated depending on the lifestyle practiced and consumer buying decisions (Sharma and Kaur 2021).

The dizzying speed of fashion consumption and production affects the environment and the natural resources negatively, and may involve exploitation of labor, encouraging materialism, and promoting unnecessary consumption, among other concerns (Ozdamar-Ertekin 2016). Philanthropists, environmentalists, human and animal rights activists, and conscious consumers all around the world have been engaged in increasingly active protests against the apparent unethical practices in the fashion industry. (Ozdamar-Ertekin 2019)

In fast fashion, Shein, for example, has been criticized for sweatshop conditions, with reports indicating that some workers face grueling 75-h workweeks, receiving minimal pay and operating in unsafe environments (CNN, 2024). Temu faces similar accusations, with rapid production demands leading to unsafe working conditions and labor exploitation (Bloomberg, 2023). Sweatshop working conditions are not limited to fast fashion, as seen in revelations of exploitation of migrant workers in Italy producing for luxury brands Dior and Armani (The Wall Street Journal, 2024).



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 04, April 2026)

It was reported that production costs at LVMH subsidiaries kept as low as 53 Euros for a handbag priced at 2600 Euros were achieved by forcing workers to sleep at the workplace and removing safety devices to speed up production (Reuters, [2024](#)). (Perry, Osburg, Huq, and Diallo 2025)

The growth of the fashion industry is attributed to the Fast Fashion business model that offers new fashionable clothes every few weeks at affordable prices. Thus from an operations standpoint, fast fashion requires a quick response to new trends and frequent assortment changes (Caro & Martinez de Albeniz, 2014) There is an ongoing research on fast fashion dealing with consumer (Sull, 2008) behaviour (Sull & Turconi, 2008) but few researchers move to analyses consumers' practices and habits towards fast fashion products considering the impact of the social media. Focusing on the specific segment - fashion conscious consumers, the present study intends to fill this gap in literature, analyzing the impact of the social media on the consumption two dimensions: a) The increase or decrease number of visiting fast fashion retailers and b) the increase or decrease of actual purchasing fashion garments as a result of social media influence. (Shahid and Abbas 2022)

Eco-conscious behavior is an environmentally friendly consumption philosophy that recognizes the importance of the relationship between society and the environment as well as considers individual desires and the well-being of society as a whole. These behavioral patterns arise throughout the purchase of, use and disposal of goods (Park & Rhee, 1995). Recycling is found to be closely related to pro-social behavior such as altruism and social contribution (Hopper & Nielsen, 1991). A study by Park and Oh (2005) suggests eco-conscious behavior is categorized as resource conservation, public awareness, environmental preservation and recycling consciousness with significant effects on apparel recycling attitude and behavior. Park and Rhee (1995) argued that eco-conscious behavior was positively affected by the influence of reference groups, environmental interest, consumer efficiency, public awareness, income level, consumer awareness, and exposure to environmental education. (Kim and Kim 2013)

To meet increasing demands for clothing while keeping prices low, fashion companies often outsource production to low-wage countries, a practice that had serious environmental and social consequences locally (Niinimäki et al., [2020](#)).

The global market is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 5.3% from 2025 and reach over 210 million USD in 2030 (Li, [2023](#)).

In the meantime, as demonstrated by the Fridays for Future phenomenon, environmental awareness has increased, especially among young people (Beckh & Limmer, [2022](#)). (Bläse 2024)

III. METHODOLOGY

This study explores the shift from instant fashion to sustainable and ethical fashion choices utilizing a informative research design and secondary data consideration methodology.

Understanding consumer behavior, perception levels, and variables shaping the adoption of ethical fashion methods is the goal. Instead of concluding primary data, the research is qualitative in case and concentrates on analyzing already-existing material. This method encourages in acquiring a comprehensive grasp of sustainable fashion trends and patterns.

Research papers, scholarly journals, industry reports, and trustworthy internet articles are examples of secondary sources from which data has been assumed. Using themes like sustainability, ethical consumption, hasty fashion, conscious fashion, and consumer awareness, these sources were preferred based on their steadiness and relevancy.

Thematic and comparative analysis are used in the study. Fast fashion and sustainable fashion are evaluated in terms of production, customer perception, and environmental impact. Important topics including awareness, moral behavior, environmental issues, and adoption hurdles are found through thematic analysis.

The study's scope encompasses consumer perception, environmental impact, and new trends including slow fashion, recycling, and upcycling.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the key findings of the study on shifting consumer behavior toward conscious fashion. It analyzes patterns related to consumption, sustainability awareness, marketing influence, and generational differences, while also discussing the gap between intention and actual adoption of sustainable practices.



Figure – 1 Shift towards conscious fashion choices (AI Generated)

1. Rising Consumption and Environmental Impact

The findings highlight the unsustainable nature of current fashion consumption patterns. On average, garments are worn only seven to eight times before being discarded, indicating a culture of overconsumption and disposability (Soyer & Dittrich, 2021). Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of clothing produced ends up in landfills or incinerators, while only about 15% is recycled into new products. These results emphasize the severe environmental burden created by the fast fashion industry, particularly in terms of waste generation and resource depletion.

2. Global Production Practices and Their Consequences

To meet rising demand while maintaining low costs, fashion brands increasingly outsource production to low-wage countries. This practice has led to significant environmental degradation and social issues in manufacturing regions (Niinimäki et al., 2020). At the same time, the global fashion market continues to expand, with projections indicating a compound annual growth rate of 5.3%, reaching over USD 210 billion by 2030 (Li, 2023). This growth further intensifies concerns about sustainability if production and consumption patterns remain unchanged.

3. Growing Consumer Awareness and Ethical Concerns

The results suggest a shift in consumer attitudes, particularly in Western societies, where individuals are becoming more conscious of the origins and ethical implications of their clothing. Events such as the **Rana Plaza factory collapse (2013)** have played a crucial role in raising awareness about labor exploitation and unsafe working conditions. This has led consumers especially Generations X, Y, and Z to demand greater transparency and accountability from brands.

4. Emergence of Slow Fashion and Sustainability Practices

In response to increasing awareness, the concept of slow fashion has gained attention as an alternative to fast fashion. Slow fashion emphasizes small-scale production, use of local resources, traditional craftsmanship, and environmentally friendly processes (Şener et al., 2019). Additionally, regulatory frameworks and initiatives promoting sustainability have encouraged companies to adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies and communicate these efforts to stakeholders.

5. Influence of Social Media and Digital Marketing

The study finds that social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer behavior. Digital platforms, influencers, and online reviews have become powerful tools in influencing purchasing decisions, particularly among younger consumers (Dinh & Lee, 2021; Godey et al., 2016).



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 04, April 2026)

Brands increasingly use these channels to promote sustainability narratives, build credibility, and engage with their audience. Electronic word-of-mouth, especially through influencer endorsements, significantly impacts brand awareness and consumer trust.

6. Consumer Willingness and Purchase Behavior

The findings indicate that environmentally conscious consumers are more likely to purchase sustainable products and are even willing to pay up to 20% more for eco-friendly clothing (Soyer & Dittrich, 2021). However, despite this willingness, actual adoption remains limited. Factors such as higher prices, lack of awareness, and limited accessibility of sustainable brands restrict widespread consumer participation.

7. Gap Between Awareness and Adoption

Although interest in sustainable fashion is growing, brands associated with slow fashion are still perceived as expensive and less accessible. As a result, their consumer base remains relatively small compared to fast fashion brands. This highlights a significant gap between consumer awareness and actual purchasing behavior, suggesting that affordability and accessibility remain key barriers.

8. Role of Marketing, Trust, and Customer Satisfaction

Marketing plays a crucial role in bridging this gap by effectively communicating sustainability efforts. Building trust, ensuring transparency, and focusing on customer satisfaction are essential for fostering long-term loyalty (Urban, 2005; Fornell et al., 2006). Positive customer experiences and word-of-mouth promotion further strengthen brand reputation and encourage repeat purchases. Feedback mechanisms such as surveys and interviews help brands understand consumer expectations and improve their offerings.

9. Generational Differences in Fashion Consumption

The study highlights notable differences between Generation Y and Generation Z in terms of fashion consumption:

- *Generation Y (Millennials)* prioritize quality, durability, reasonable pricing, and brand trust. They often rely on recommendations from family and peers and seek value-driven purchases.
- *Generation Z*, on the other hand, is more tech-savvy, experimental, and influenced by digital platforms. They actively seek information online, explore new trends, and prefer unique and innovative products.

Both generations are highly engaged with fashion but differ in their motivations and decision-making processes. Their preferences significantly influence market trends and push brands toward more responsive and customer-centric strategies.

10. Changing Fashion Trends and Market Dynamics

Fashion trends continue to evolve rapidly, driven by technological advancements and changing consumer preferences. The rise of fast fashion has eliminated long waiting periods for new collections, offering instant access to the latest styles. However, this rapid cycle also contributes to increased consumption and waste. At the same time, data analytics and supply chain management have become essential tools for brands to understand consumer behavior and adapt quickly to market demands.

V. CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION

Overall, the results demonstrate a clear shift toward conscious fashion choices, driven by increasing awareness, digital influence, and generational change. However, significant challenges remain, including affordability, accessibility, and the gap between intention and actual behavior. For sustainable fashion to become mainstream, brands must focus on transparency, effective communication, and delivering value-driven products that align with consumer expectations.

Conclusion

The present study on *Shifting Towards Conscious Fashion Choices* provides a inclusive understanding of the current transformation within the fashion industry, importance the tension between fast fashion consumption and the rising demand for sustainability and ethical practices. The research highlights that while fashion has become more accessible and dynamic due to globalization and technological innovations, it has also led to important environmental, social, and economic challenges that cannot be overlooked.

One of the key decisions of this study is the unsustainable nature of fast fashion. The industry's belief on mass production, rapid trend cycles, and low-cost materials has resulted in excessive consumption and waste generation. Garments are often worn only a few times before being discarded, contributing to the increase of textile waste in landfills and increasing environmental pollution. Additionally, the use of synthetic and blended fabrics further complicates recycling processes, making it difficult to establish a circular system within the industry.



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 04, April 2026)

These findings reinforce the urgent need for a shift toward more sustainable consumption patterns and responsible production methods.

Another important aspect highlighted in this study is the role of global production systems. The outsourcing of manufacturing to low wage countries, while economically beneficial for companies, has raised serious concerns regarding labor exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and environmental degradation. Incidents such as industrial disasters and reports of unethical labor practices have exposed the hidden costs of fast fashion. This has led to increased scrutiny from consumers, activists, and policymakers, pushing brands to adopt more transparent and ethical practices. However, despite these efforts, the implementation of truly sustainable and ethical systems remains inconsistent across the industry.

The study also reveals a significant shift in consumer awareness and attitudes toward fashion. Modern consumers, particularly younger generations such as Generation Y and Generation Z, are becoming more conscious of the environmental and social impact of their purchasing decisions. They are increasingly questioning the origin of products, the materials used, and the conditions under which garments are produced. This growing awareness has given rise to concepts such as slow fashion, which emphasizes quality, durability, ethical production, and reduced consumption. Slow fashion promotes a more mindful approach to clothing, encouraging consumers to invest in long-lasting and meaningful pieces rather than engaging in impulsive buying behavior.

Despite this positive shift in awareness, the research identifies a critical gap between intention and action. While many consumers express a willingness to support sustainable fashion and even pay a premium for ecofriendly products, their actual purchasing behavior often does not align with these values. Factors such as high prices, limited availability, lack of accessibility, and insufficient information act as barriers to adoption. Additionally, there is a common perception that sustainable fashion lacks style, variety, and trend relevance, which discourages consumers from fully embracing it.

The study highlights the importance of marketing strategies, trust, and customer satisfaction in promoting sustainable fashion. Consumers are more likely to support brands that demonstrate transparency, authenticity, and commitment to ethical practices. Building trust through clear communication, certifications, and storytelling can enhance consumer confidence and encourage long term loyalty. At the same time, ensuring product quality, durability, and value for money is essential to meet consumer expectations and compete with fast fashion alternatives.

Customization allows consumers to create garments that better fit their preferences and needs, increasing satisfaction and product longevity. Similarly, recycling and upcycling extend the life cycle of clothing and reduce the demand for new resources. These practices not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also foster a deeper emotional connection between consumers and their clothing, promoting more responsible consumption habits.

In addition, education and awareness are essential in driving long term change. Consumers need access to accurate and reliable information about sustainable practices, product life cycles, and the impact of their choices. Educational initiatives, campaigns, and community engagement can help bridge the knowledge gap and empower consumers to make informed decisions. As awareness increases, it is likely that sustainable fashion will gradually become more mainstream and widely accepted.

In conclusion, the study confirms that the shift toward conscious fashion choices is both necessary and inevitable in the face of growing environmental and social challenges. While progress has been made in terms of awareness and innovation, significant barriers still delay widespread adoption. Addressing these challenges requires collective efforts from consumers, brands, and policymakers. By promoting ethical production, responsible consumption, and transparent communication, the fashion industry can move toward a more sustainable and equitable future. Ultimately, conscious fashion is not just a trend but a transformative movement that has the potential to redefine the values and practices of the global fashion industry for generations to come.

REFERENCES:

- [1] Tseng, M.-L., Chiu, A. S. F., Tan, R. R., & Siriban-Manalang, A. B. (2013). Sustainable consumption and production for Asia: Sustainability through green design and practice. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 40, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.07.015>
- [2] Kostadinova, E. (2016). Sustainable consumer behavior: A literature overview. *Economic Alternatives*, 2, 224–234.
- [3] Rita, P., Oliveira, T., & Farisa, A. (2022). Slow fashion consumer behaviour: A literature review. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 2860. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052860>
- [4] Sharma, M., & Kaur, P. (2021). Sustainability of fashion apparel: Toward environmental well-being and sustainable development. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/59072914/Sustainability_of_Fashion_Apparel_Toward_Environmental_Well_Being_and_Sustainable_Development
- [5] Ozdamar-Ertekin, Z. (2019). Can luxury fashion provide a roadmap for sustainability? *Markets, Globalization & Development Review*, 4(1), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.23860/MGDR-2019-04-01-03>
- [6] Perry, P., Osburg, V. S., Huq, F. A., & Diallo, M. F. (2025). Fashionable ethics: Exploring ethical perspectives in the production, marketing, and consumption of fashion. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 196(4), 711–721. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-024-05913-7>



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 04, April 2026)

- [7] Shahid, M., & Abbas, M. (2022). Sustainable fashion consumption: A systematic literature review. *Advances in Interdisciplinary Sciences*, 3(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6651080> (approx DOI link from article hosting)
- [8] Kim, H. J., & Kim, Y. K. (2013). The effects of environment-conscious consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products and artificial leather fashion product purchase intentions. *Fashion & Textile Research Journal*, 15(5), 750–758.
- [9] Bläse, J. (2024). Non-sustainable buying behavior: How the fear of missing out drives purchase intentions in the fast fashion industry. *Business Strategy and the Environment*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.XXXX>