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OUR CLOSET TO CLIMATE CHANGE: AN ANALYSIS ON FAST FASHION AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

Climate change and sustainability are concepts that resonate and reflect from the dusk of the twentieth to the twenty-first century. It is a widely accepted opinion among scholars that sustainability is the lifestyle that could slow down its advantageous opponent- climate change. Though the sustainability strategy is familiar, what are its most effective tactics and placements that could slow down the doomsday clock? Furthermore, there is ambiguity in 'sustaining' sustainability in the long run. The entire sustainability lifestyle is too vast to explore and cover. Accordingly, the paper focuses on one particularly impactful aspect of everyday life irrespective of political, economic, cultural or social background.

Every human being needs food, clothes and shelter. That is a fact. The paper distinctly analyses the problematic relationship between our closet and the climate crisis. It is simply reductive to say that the textile and fashion industries were long on the watch list of sustainability crusaders. More than 300 million workers depend on the textile and clothing industry globally. And they are one of the most liberal contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, emitting 10% of the world's greenhouse gases. The recent fast fashion trend has only added fuel to the forest fire by being the literal poster child of unsustainability. The paper tries to understand the impact of fast fashion on the environment and the current developments in the industry to counteract fast fashion, such as the connect4climate campaign, slow fashion movement and thrifting. It also establishes the corporate social responsibility of the 2.4 trillion dollar industry. In addition, it holds the industry accountable to an ethical fashion code. Consumers must also

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shop ethically and sustainably to make a global difference. After all, they collectively control the supply chain.

KEYWORDS- climate change, climate crisis, consumer responsibility, ethical fashion code, ethical consumer, fast fashion, fashion industry reforms, sustainability, sustainable fashion industry, sustainable development goals.

INTRODUCTION

In the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, the concepts of climate change and sustainability have emerged as paramount concerns shaping global discourse. Scholars widely acknowledge sustainability as the strategic lifestyle capable of mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. As General Sun Tzu astutely noted, "Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory; tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat." However, while the strategy of sustainability is well-known, the effective tactics and implementations necessary to stall the impending doomsday clock remain a subject of inquiry.

Within the vast realm of sustainability, one critical aspect transcends political, economic, cultural, and social boundaries: the essentials of everyday life—food, clothing, and shelter. This paper meticulously dissects the intricate yet problematic relationship between our closets and the climate crisis. While it may seem reductionist to solely focus on the textile and fashion industries, these sectors have long been under scrutiny from sustainability advocates.

Globally, over 300 million workers rely on the textile and clothing industry for their livelihoods, making it one of the largest employers worldwide. It stands as one of the most significant contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for 10% of the world's total emissions. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a UNEP partner, has estimated that a truckload of abandoned textiles is dumped in landfills or incinerated every second. It is also estimated that people are buying 60 per cent more clothes and wearing them for half as long. Plastic fibres are polluting the oceans, the wastewater, toxic dyes, and the exploitation of underpaid workers. Fast fashion is big business, and while the environmental costs are rising, experts say there is another way: a circular economy for textiles. The proliferation of fast fashion in recent years has exacerbated this issue, epitomizing the epitome of unsustainable practices.

This paper seeks to explore the profound impact of fast fashion on the environment while also

delving into current initiatives within the industry aimed at combating its deleterious effects. Initiatives such as the Connect4Climate campaign, the slow fashion movement, and the resurgence of thrifting represent pivotal steps towards sustainability. Furthermore, it addresses the imperative of corporate social responsibility within the \$2.4 trillion fashion industry, advocating for the establishment of ethical fashion codes and practices.

However, sustainability in fashion extends beyond industry reforms; consumers wield significant influence over the supply chain. Thus, the paper underscores the importance of ethical and sustainable consumer choices as a collective force for global change. In essence, this paper endeavours to shed light on the critical nexus between our closets and the climate crisis, emphasizing the urgent need for transformative action within the fashion industry and among consumers alike.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The core characteristic distinguishing sustainable fashion lies in the production of high quality, long-lasting items, coupled with a manufacturing process devoid of harmful chemicals². Despite this, a minority of consumers globally demonstrate a willingness to pay a premium for sustainable fashion. For instance, in a survey³ conducted by Fashion Summit and backed by HSBC and KPMG China in Shanghai, only 22% of participants expressed such a disposition. Interestingly, the majority of respondents prioritize the attributes of the product itself (46%) over the reputation of the brand (11%) when making sustainable fashion purchases.

To augment the attractiveness of sustainable fashion, potential strategies include providing extensive labelling or information regarding a product's sustainability, thereby encouraging consumers to factor in its environmental impact. Furthermore, companies could endeavour to establish themselves as reliable and reputable sustainable brands, shifting the focus from individual products to the overall brand image.

Regarding clothing disposal practices, a majority of respondents in London and New York typically opt to donate their clothing to those in need or other charitable causes. Comparable trends are observed in Hong Kong, although respondents in Shanghai and Tokyo exhibit less

² Fashion Summit, HSBC and KPMG China, "Sustainable fashion: A survey on global perspectives" (2019)

³ Supra

inclination toward such actions. While this survey yields valuable insights into consumer attitudes across these five cities, it is crucial to acknowledge and account for cultural variations that may influence behaviour.

The research paper focuses on *“Ethical fashion consumer- Consumer behaviour with regards to sustainable fashion”*. The study analysed 100 respondents' consumer behaviour while purchasing clothes in the city of Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The study examined the following research objectives-

- Consumer behaviour during clothes shopping
- Difference between consumers' shopping goals during online and in-store shopping experiences
- Impact of fast fashion and over-consumerism on the environment
- Consumer responsibility to shop ethically and its impact
- Comparative analysis of lifetime and durability of fast fashion clothes, sustainable clothes and tailored clothes
- Common disposal practices and their impact on the environment
- Exploring sustainable options like thrift or second-hand stores
- Customers' approach to greenwashing
- Legal developments in the field of the sustainable fashion industry

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The paper aims to investigate the detrimental impact of fast fashion on the environment, analyse current initiatives aimed at countering fast fashion, such as the connect4climate campaign and the slow fashion movement, and explore the role of corporate social responsibility in the textile and fashion industries. Additionally, the paper aims to emphasize the importance of ethical consumer behaviour in promoting sustainability within the fashion supply chain.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has aimed to understand the fast fashion phenomenon and its impact on global sustainability goals. The fast industry has recently been in the hot waters with climate change

activists as it is notorious for its negative climate change impact. From climate activists crashing the 2023 Coach runway with signs like ‘Coach: Leather kills’ to protesters joining the Dior runway in 2021 with ‘We are all fashion victims’ placards, it has become an anticipated staple of every fashion season recently. With the technological advancements and cheap outsourced labour in the fashion industry, it is no surprise that cheaper brands replicate the runway pieces in a fraction of the cost and time than the original pieces. Fast fashion is a sector of the apparel industry that was developed in Europe to meet the rapidly changing preferences of primarily young women who want to follow trends in fashion but at a fraction of the cost⁴.

Despite contributing 10% of global carbon emissions, the sustainable fashion industry was an elusive topic at COP28. Marchionni states that decarbonising the fashion industry “is an intricate endeavour”, given that more than 70% of its greenhouse gas emissions come from upstream activities, with current operations predominantly reliant on non-renewable energy sources⁵. Therefore, it is highly relevant to discuss and analyse the impact of fast fashion on the global sustainability goals, leading to climate change.

METHODOLOGY

The paper studies the impact of fast fashion on climate change using a variety of methods available to the authors. The researchers conducted non-doctrinal research with both primary data such as survey findings and secondary data such as statutes, case studies and other literature materials collected. A research methodology, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, was used to extract proper analysis. The study used a record of literature review to analyse the existing research material and provide a comprehensive understanding and improvement regarding the research theme and topic. The study also used quantitative analysis such as an online survey and questionnaire. Online surveys and questionnaires help understand the mindset and mentality of a sample group while making them accessible and friendly to use. The paper considers a limited non-probable sample group of 100 respondents purchasing clothes mostly in Chennai. The respondents' sample had an equal male-to-female

⁴ Annie Radner Linden, “An Analysis of the Fast Fashion Industry An Analysis of the Fast Fashion Industry” 14 Senior Projects Fall (2016)

⁵ Polly Bindman, “Sustainable fashion has a marketing problem”, Energy Monitor, *available at*: <https://www.energymonitor.ai/finance/reporting-and-disclosure/sustainable-fashion-has-a-marketing-problem/?cf-view&cf-closed> (last visited: January 15, 2024).

ratio from below 20 to 40 years of age. The paper primarily relied on the inductive method of data analysis since the research hypothesis was developed after data collection. Hence, the paper's findings have been strengthened by data triangulation. Various statistical tools and techniques were used to interpret data.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

The respondents of the online survey and questionnaire sample were male and female students and workers residing and shopping in Chennai. The study selected 100 respondents in the study area. The sample group has 50% male and 50% female respondents. The age groups of the sample ranged from below 20 to 40 years of age. Google form surveys and Questionnaires were used for collecting data from respondents. The respondents that participated in the study were diverse in age, gender and nativity.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Surveys and questionnaires were used in primary data collection for the paper. The paper also relied on secondary data like previous works of literature, published sources, online databases and records were used. The researcher chose to do an online survey for its accessibility, ease and time constraints. The survey used only closed-end questions to gather proper, non influenced data.

SOURCES OF THE STUDY

The authors conducted non-doctrinal research using both primary data such as survey findings and secondary data such as statutes, case studies and other literature materials collected. The study used both primary and secondary sources. The paper used primary sources to collect data from the respondents who answered Google forms and questionnaires. The secondary sources used were data available in the form of public surveys, journals, reports, questionnaires, newspaper articles, and government websites.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions attract significance to be probed and answered to fulfil the research objectives. Hence, the questions were circulated in a survey and questionnaire to the 100 respondents purchasing mainly in the metropolitan city of Chennai.

1. Which of the fast fashion clothing stores do you shop in most frequently? a) Reliance

- trends b) Zudio c) Max d) Pantaloons e) Zara f) H&M g) Prefer only online shopping
h) Prefer only small businesses
2. How much do you spend on average during clothes shopping?
 - i. On the scale of Rs. 1000 to Rs. 10,000
 3. Do you read the label or product description (online) of clothes and does it influence your decision to purchase?
 - a. a) Always b) Mostly c) Sometimes d) Never
 4. Do you consciously prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion?
 - a. a) Yes b) No c) Maybe
 5. What are the factors that influence your decision to purchase clothes? Overall cost, Textile quality, Brand loyalty, Sustainable or climate conscious or ethical brand claim, Discount or sale or coupons, Fitting of product
 6. How long does your clothes last?
 7. How do you dispose of your old clothes?
 - a. a) Burn b) Donate c) Throw them with garbage
 8. Would you purchase second-hand clothes if there were more thrift shops available?
 - a) Yes b) No c) Maybe
 9. Do you believe that you, as a customer, have an impact on the brand's claims to be sustainable?
 - a. a) Yes b) No c) Maybe
 10. In your recent experience, do you think clothing brands are honest with their sustainability claims?
 - a. a) Yes b) No c) Depends on the brand
 11. Does 'Greenwashing' as a trend stop you from approaching sustainable fashion? a) Yes b) No c) Maybe

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The detrimental impact of fast fashion on the environment is significant and multifaceted, contributing substantially to greenhouse gas emissions. However, through strategic interventions coupled with enhanced corporate social responsibility and adherence to ethical fashion codes within the textile and fashion industries, there exists potential to mitigate these adverse effects. Furthermore, consumer participation in ethical and sustainable shopping practices can play a pivotal role in effecting positive change throughout the supply chain, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of sustainability and climate resilience. The paper

hypotheses that the fashion industry has a detrimental impact on the climate crisis.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Abdelsalam Busalim, Grace Fox, Theo Lynn, 2022⁶

The purpose of this paper is to systematically review and critically assess the studies on consumer behaviour in shopping fashion sustainably to identify the research gap in this context and inform a future research agenda. A descriptive analysis was performed to examine the research methods, research trends, and theoretical underpinnings

Lisa McNeill, Rebecca Moore, 2015⁷

This study explores the attitudes of fashion consumers toward sustainable products, ethical fashion purchasing and their subsequent behaviour. The research applies the developmental theory model to a fashion context, finding fashion consumers can be categorised into one of three groups: 'Self' consumers, concerned with hedonistic needs, 'Social' consumers, concerned with social image.

Kerri Byrd, Jin Su, 2020⁸

The purpose of this study is to investigate consumers' perceptions of and consumer behaviour towards apparel labels and environmental, sustainable and social apparel. Findings indicate that consumers expressed positive sentiments towards apparel sustainability, yet they lacked knowledge about social and environmental practices within the apparel industry.

Kirsi Niinimäki, 2010⁹

This paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of eco-fashion consumption and consumer purchase decisions while constructing one's self with external symbols, such as appearance, clothing and fashion items. This study approaches sustainable clothing from grounding in design research to the meanings of material culture.

⁶ Abdelsalam Busalim, Grace Fox, Theodore Lynn, "Consumer behaviour in sustainable fashion: A systematic literature review and future research agenda" 46 Int. J. Consum. Stud. (2022)

⁷ Lisa McNeill, Rebecca Moore, "Sustainable fashion consumption and the fast fashion conundrum: Fashionable consumers and attitudes to sustainability in clothing choice" 39 Int. J. Consum. Stud. (2015)

⁸ Kerri Byrd, Jin Su, "Investigating consumer behaviour for environmental, sustainable and social apparel" IJCST (2020)

⁹ Kirsi Niinimäki, "Eco-Clothing, Consumer Identity and Ideology" 18 Sustainable Development (2010)

Yongdan Liu, Matthew Tingchi Liu, 2020¹⁰

The findings enrich the past literature on ethical fashion that trusting belief is a salient determinant of consumers' attitudes toward ethical fashion and purchase intention of ethical fashion products. The findings also supported the applicability of KAB and TPB in the domain of ethical consumption in the context of a developing country.

Hakan Karaosman, Gustavo Morales Alonso, Mercedes Grijalvo and Alessandro Brun, 2015¹¹

This study examines consumer behaviour and ethical fashion by focusing on the fast-fashion retailing industry through Spanish consumers. Hence, it contributes to the ethical fashion and consumer behaviour literature and provides noteworthy data for practitioners. The findings are further supported by the quantitative analysis of surveys conducted with 462 Spanish consumers.

Mirella Soyer and Koen Dittrich, 2021¹²

In this study we investigate how consumers in The Netherlands can be persuaded to adopt sustainable practices when purchasing, using and disposing of clothes. This study investigates the attitude-behaviour gap for the sustainable choices for the purchase, use and disposal of clothes.

Laura Valtanen, 2021¹³

The main objectives of this study were to research sustainable fashion consumers to identify and explore consumption motivations, as well as value creation. The results can assist businesses in knowing their consumers better and consequently being able to implement sustainability into their business model more effectively.

¹⁰ Yongdan Liu, Matthew Tingchi Liu, "Big Star Undercover: The Reinforcing Effect of Attenuated Celebrity Endorsers' Faces on Consumers' Brand Memory" 49 *JA* (2020)

¹¹ Hakan Karaosman, Gustavo Morales Alonso, Mercedes Grijalvo, Alessandro Brun, "The impact of ethical fashion on Spanish consumers" 57 *DYO* (2015)

¹² Mirella Soyer and Koen Dittrich, "Sustainable Consumer Behaviour in Purchasing, Using and Disposing of Clothes" 13 *Sustainability* (2021)

¹³ Laura Valtanen, *Consumer motivations and Value Ccreation from Sustainable fashion consumption* (2021) (Unpublished Bachelor's thesis, School of Business, Aalto University)

Małgorzata Koszewska, 2013¹⁴

The paper discusses Polish consumers' behaviours in the market for sustainable textiles and clothing. It analyses the need for more studies on socially responsible consumption in so called new consumer countries characterized by slowly developing ethical consumer movement, few studies analysed consumer behaviour compared with the volume of literature exploring sustainable development and corporate social responsibility of textile and clothing manufacturers.

Kirsi Niinimäki, 2013¹⁵

While sustainability strategies are multifaceted and diverse, the paper offers only a selection of approaches to sustainable fashion.

Helena M. de Klerk, Madelein Kearns, Mike Redwood, 2018¹⁶

The purpose of this paper is to report on the role of luxury value perceptions and ethical concerns in consumers' environmentally significant behaviour and purchase intent for genuine leather products. The study determined that South African consumers' strong functional and individual luxury value perceptions drive their above-average purchase intent for genuine leather products.

Maarit Aakko, Ritva Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2013¹⁷

A theoretical model drawing together the elements of sustainability and fashion design was presented in the paper. The data have been gathered from various sources, mainly academic literature, and qualitative analysis has been carried out by following the principles of the grounded theory method: the data is analysed by identifying and categorizing relevant concepts by using a constant comparative method, i.e. examining the internal consistency of each category.

¹⁴ Małgorzata Koszewska, "A typology of Polish consumers and their behaviours in the market for sustainable textiles and clothing" 37 *Int. J. Consum. Stud.* (2013)

¹⁵ Kirsi Niinimäki, *Sustainable Fashion: New Approaches* (Aalto Arts Books, 2013)

¹⁶ Helena M. de Klerk, Madelein Kearns, Mike Redwood, "Controversial fashion, ethical concerns and environmentally significant behaviour: The case of the leather industry" 47 *IJRDM* (2018)

¹⁷ Maarit Aakko, Ritva Koskennurmi-Sivonen, "Designing Sustainable Fashion: Possibilities and Challenges" 17 *RJTA* (2013)

Bo Zhang, Yaozhong Zhang, Peng Zhou, 2021¹⁸

This paper attempts to provide an up-to-date depiction and analysis of the consumer's attitude towards the sustainability of fast fashion products in the UK. Four related strands of literature are reviewed to establish a tri-component model of attitude (ABC), i.e., Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive. A wide set of determinants for attitude is identified, including income, price, gender, culture, religion, age, etc.

Sanjukta Pookulangara, Arlesa Shephard, 2013¹⁹

The exploratory study analysed consumers' perceptions of purchasing slow-fashion garments using focus groups. Yet, due to the economic crisis worldwide, disposable incomes are on the wane and clothes at disposable prices are losing their appeal. There is a growth of a new movement counteracting the demand for fast fashion—the “Slow Fashion” movement.

Ruth Marciniak and Marwa Gad Mohsen, 2016²⁰

The paper explores how sustainability may be used as a form of self-expression, and whether it can endow individuals with an identity associated with ethical consumption at the post purchase consumption stage. Exploratory research was undertaken to investigate sustaining decisions and sustainability practices

Thabet Muhammad, Sally Majid; Al-Dabbagh, Maha Abdullah, 2023²¹

This study aims to identify the concept of ethical consumption of sustainable fashion to achieve sustainability in Saudi Arabia's fashion industry Ethical fashion consumers are essential for growing the ethical fashion sector as their purchasing decisions and experiences are influenced by ethical concerns. Reducing excess packaging and materials is where ethical consumerism and business ethics intersect.

¹⁸ Bo Zhang, Yaozhong Zhang, Peng Zhou, “Consumer Attitude towards Sustainability of Fast Fashion Products in the UK” 13 *Sustainability* (2021)

¹⁹ Sanjukta Pookulangara, Arlesa Shephard, “Slow fashion movement: Understanding consumer perceptions— An exploratory study” 20 *Jour. Of Retail. And Cons. Serv.* (2013)

²⁰ Ruth Marciniak and Marwa Gad Mohsen, *Fashion: Tyranny and Revelation* (Inter-disciplinary press, 2016)

²¹ Thabet Muhammad, Sally Majid; Al-Dabbagh, Maha Abdullah, “Exploring the Influence of Ethical Consumption on Sustainable Fashion Choices in Saudi Arabia” 7 *AISRP* (2023)

Sonali Diddi, Ruoh-Nan Yan, Brittany Bloodhart, Vickie Bajtelsmit, Katie McShane, 2019²²

Overconsumption is a growing global phenomenon with serious effects on the environment and society. Huge amounts of textile waste end up in U.S. landfills due to unsustainable clothing consumption patterns. With the conceptual underpinnings of Behavioral Reasoning Theory, the purpose of this study was to explore sustainable clothing consumption behaviours (SCCBs) that young consumers were most and least likely to engage in and to understand specific reasons for their decisions to engage in a variety of SCCBs.

Shuai Yang, Yiping Song and Siliang Tong, 2017²³

This study aims to identify the main perspectives of research on sustainable retailing in the fashion industry. The content analysis results indicate that the most prominent areas in the field are sustainable retailing in disposable fashion, fast fashion, slow fashion, green branding and eco-labeling; retailing of secondhand fashion; reverse logistics in fashion retailing; and emerging retailing opportunities in e-commerce.

William Young, Kumju Hwang, Seonaidh McDonald, Caroline J. Oates, 2009²⁴ This paper investigates the purchasing process for green consumers concerning consumer technology products in the UK. Data were collected from 81 self-declared green consumers through in-depth interviews on recent purchases of technology products

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- The major limitation of the research is the sample frame. The sample frame collected is from the general public ranging from 20 to 30 year olds mostly.
- The sample size is another limitation, as the responses collected are only from a group of people and not the entire population. Even with a wide age range, realistically the survey sample was dominated by students (20- 30 year olds).
- Another limitation is the sample size of 100 which cannot be used to assume the

²² Sonali Diddi, Ruoh-Nan Yan, Brittany Bloodhart, Vickie Bajtelsmit, Katie McShane, "Exploring young adult consumers' sustainable clothing consumption intention-behavior gap: A Behavioral Reasoning Theory perspective" 18 *Sustainable Production and Consumption* (2019)

²³ Shuai Yang, Yiping Song and Siliang Tong, "Sustainable Retailing in the Fashion Industry: A Systematic Literature Review" 9 *Sustainability* (2017)

²⁴ William Young, Kumju Hwang, Seonaidh McDonald, Caroline J. Oates, "Sustainable Consumption: Green Consumer Behaviour when Purchasing Products" 18 *Sustainable Development* (2009)

thinking of the entire population of Chennai city.

- The physical factors have a larger impact, thus, limiting the study.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Fast fashion

The term refers to ‘cheaply produced and priced garments that copy the latest catwalk styles and get pumped quickly through stores to maximise on current trends’²⁵. The fast fashion paradigm is characterized by its expeditious cycle of design, production, distribution, and marketing of clothing. It enables retailers to swiftly offer vast quantities and a diverse array of products, affording consumers heightened fashion accessibility and product differentiation at competitive prices. Coined in the early 1990s, the term "fast fashion" gained prominence with the arrival of Zara in New York, as noted by the New York Times. Zara's operational ethos epitomised this model, striving to reduce the garment lifecycle from design conception to in-store availability to a mere 15 days. Key entities within the fast fashion domain include Zara, UNIQLO, Forever 21, and H&M, each wielding significant influence in shaping and perpetuating this industry paradigm.

The level of pollution that is generated as a direct result of the textile and clothing industry presents a dilemma given the fact that many individuals value fashion over the protection of the environment. Industrialization has paved the route to the fast fashion industry. The increased generation of waste is of warranted environmental concern. The fast fashion industry has profoundly confounded the problematic issue of clothing production and pollution. More often than not landfills constitute the final destination for clothing. The fast fashion industry contributes towards the significant depletion of natural resources. Issues of resource depletion begin at the onset of textile production, throughout the lifecycle of the clothing, to the point in time at which the products are wasted or disposed of entirely, “When used apparel products are disposed of in a landfill, large quantities of valuable materials and resources are lost”²⁶.

²⁵ Rashmila Maiti, “Fast Fashion and Its Environmental Impact” *Earth.org*, Jan 5th 2024

²⁶ Gam, H.J., Cao, Hl, Bennett, J., Helmkamp, C., & Farr, C, “Application of design for disassembly in men’s jacket” *International Journal of Clothing Science and Technology*, 83-94 (2011)

Current developments in the fashion industry to counteract fast fashion

Connect4climate campaign

Connect4Climate is a World Bank Group program aimed at raising global awareness about climate change and inspiring climate action. The objectives of Connect4Climate involve connecting with existing climate initiatives and activities and amplifying the global dialogue on climate change. This helps advance the global climate movement, generates innovative solutions, brings together thought leaders on climate change, and enables new audiences to be inspired. Connect4Climate fosters connections between organizations to create strong, active networks. Above all, the initiative seeks to reach new, untapped audiences who may never have heard about climate change. Through all these efforts, Connect4Climate aims to create the social currency and political capital that will result in effective and enforceable policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation at the highest governmental levels.

Slow fashion

The term is used to identify sustainable fashion solutions and strategies for design, production, consumption, use and reuse as well as to offer a more sustainable and ethical way of being fashionable²⁷. Slow Fashion has also been defined as something durable, made from recycled or organic materials²⁸. The Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature explains that Slow Fashion is for fashionistas what slow food is for gourmets, less but with a higher quality and with less environmental impact. They point out that fashion needs to be long termed, to create a sustainable fashion industry.

Thriftig

Indian households have always been an ally for sustainable living. A longstanding example of this is the household habit of buying pre-owned clothes, which now has a moniker: thrifting. By repurposing and sharing clothes, you not only sort your wardrobe and reduce textile waste but also ease the burden on your pocket while channelling your inner fashionista. Thrifting pre-owned, and hand-me-down clothes help consumers make informed and ethical choices about how they consume clothes. It also helps foster a sense of community by forming a deeper connection with garments and the people behind the creation.

²⁷ Clark Hazel, "Fashion Theory", 12 Issue4, DOI:10.2752/175174108X346922, Berg 427 (2008)

²⁸ Holt Tim, "Is the time right for Slow Fashion?", Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor (2009).

COP27 'Circular Systems for a Net Positive Fashion Industry' event

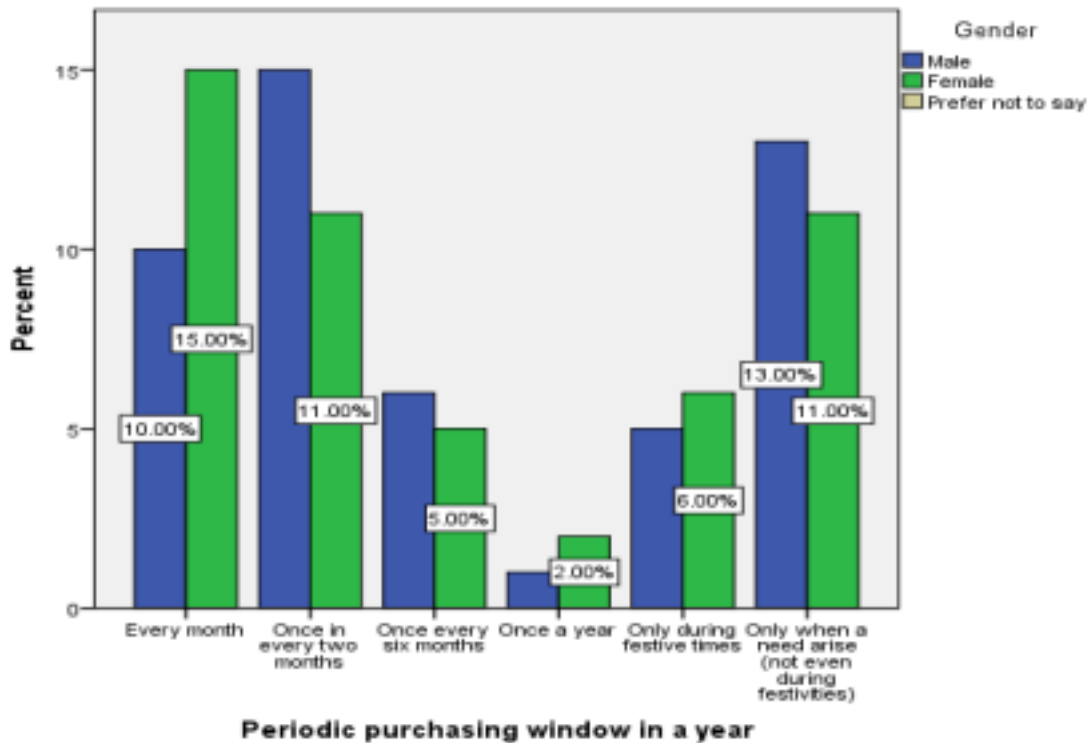
The COP27 was held last week from November 6 to 18. The event, which took place in the city of Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt, brought together around 90 heads of state and representatives from more than 190 countries to achieve the climate goals agreed under the Paris Agreement and the Convention itself. The non-profit organization Global Fashion Agenda (GFA), formerly the Copenhagen Fashion Summit, organized during the event a trio of talks aimed at addressing how the fashion industry can become net positive, how it can reduce its carbon footprint and the actions needed to encourage and promote circular systems. In addition, it announced its collaboration with UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) to conduct an online consultation on the fashion industry's environmental targets. The "Fashion Industry Targets Consultation" will identify and merge existing industry targets. The targets are set with five priorities: respectful and safe working environments, better wage systems, resource stewardship, smart material selection and circular economy. The Better Cotton initiative issued a warning to world leaders attending the COP27 climate summit to do more to protect the world's farmers and farm workers. An alliance of companies including H&M, Inditex, Stella McCartney and Kering, among many others, have pledged to buy more than half a million tons of low-carbon, low-footprint alternative fibres produced from textile and agricultural waste instead of forest fibres, for use in both fabrics and packaging. According to the NGO Canopy, responsible for the alliance, each ton of clothing produced with these alternative fibres will save between 4 and 15 tons of carbon per ton of product.

Policy, Legislative and Other Initiatives

1. European Union-
 - Proposal for a Directive on Green Claims
 - Unfair Commercial Practices Directive
 - Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation
 - Corporate sustainability due diligence
2. United States of America-
 - The FABRIC Act
 - The Fashion Act
 - The Fashion Workers Act
3. Japan Sustainable Fashion Alliance (JSFA)
4. Singapore Fashion Council (SFC)
5. UK's 10-Year Fashion Industry Sustainability Change Programme

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

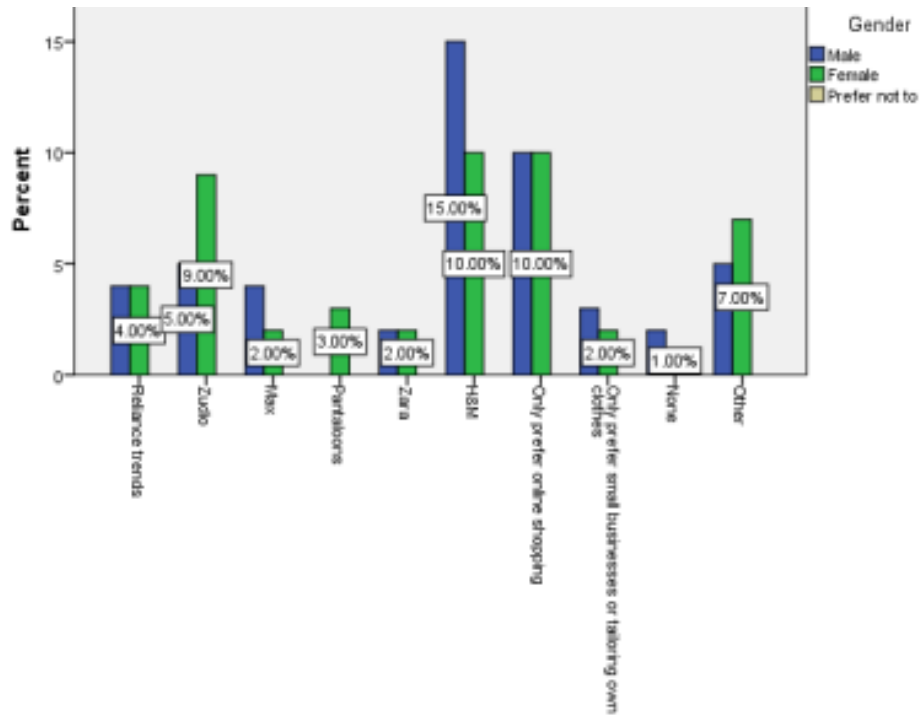
The periodic purchasing window in a year



Source: Survey

Out of 100 respondents, 25% shop every month, 24% shop once every two months, 11% shop once every six months, 3% shop once a year, 10% shop during festive times or when sale happen, 24% shop when a need arise and the remaining 3% shop impulsively. It is striking to note the difference between male and female consumers. It is much more important to recognise that while 49% of the mostly young respondents shop regularly, a countering 24% shop only when clothes are needed. From the analysis, we can extrapolate that there is an overconsumption trend currently increasing. It looks like there is a huge wave of over consumers who are drowning the modest minimalists.

Popular clothing store among respondents



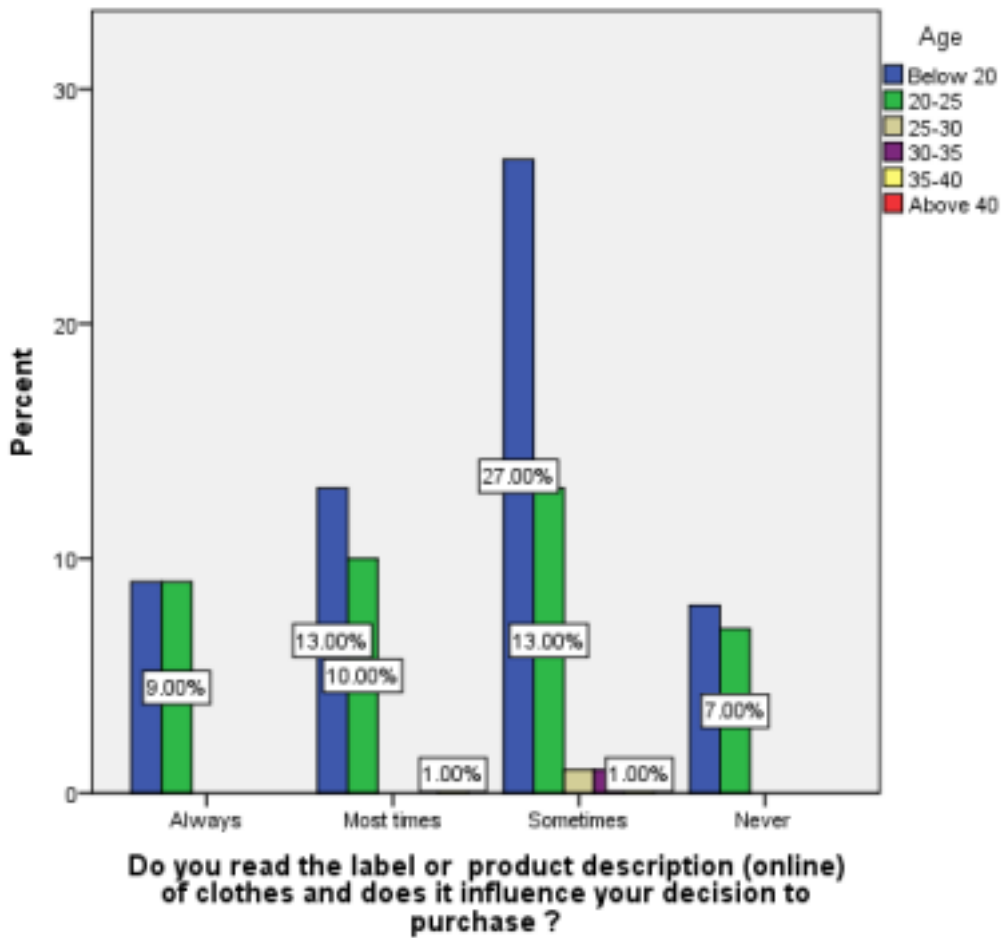
Fast fashion clothing stores you frequent (in-store shopping)

Source: Survey

Among the 100 respondents, men highly prefer H&M while both H&M and online shopping are popular among women in Chennai. 25% of the 100 respondents frequent H&M and 20% of the 100 respondents frequent online stores. In total, there is a landslide of 62% of 100 respondents who frequent fast fashion stores.



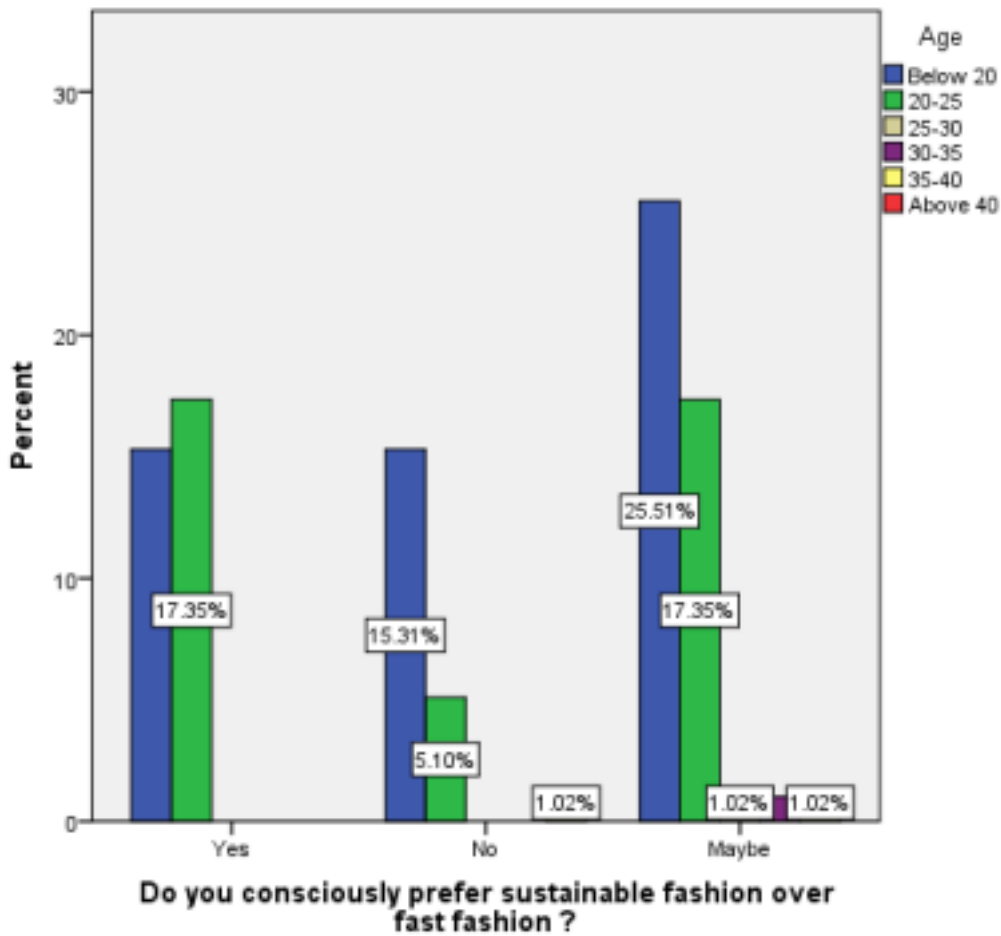
Influence of labels and product description on purchase



Source: Survey

Among the 100 respondents, 43% only sometimes read the label on clothes, 24% read it most of the time, 18% always read it and 15% sometimes read it. So the content on the label sometimes affects consumers' purchases and more people must be aware to read the label and shop consciously.

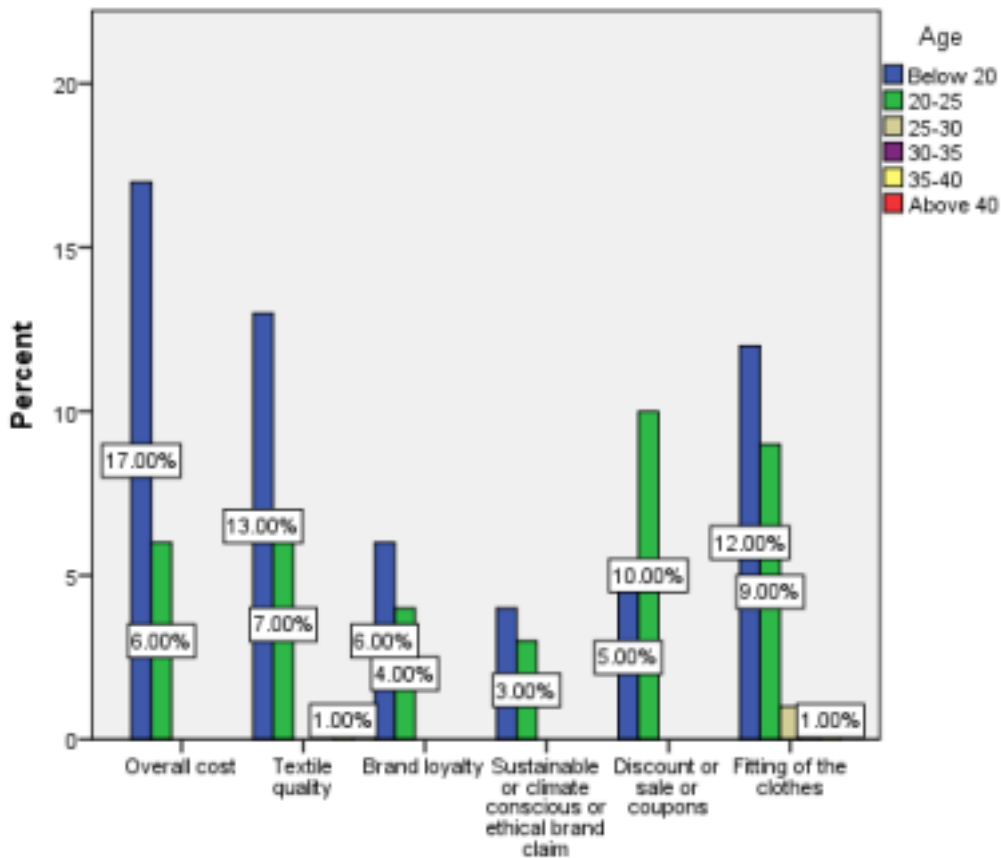
Do respondents prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion?



Source: Survey

Among 100 respondents, 45.9% of the respondents are conflicted about their preference while 32.7% of the respondents prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion. So there is a great margin of people who are on the fence about sustainable fashion. It is effective to analyse the incentives that may push them to prefer sustainable fashion.

Factors that influence consumers' purchase



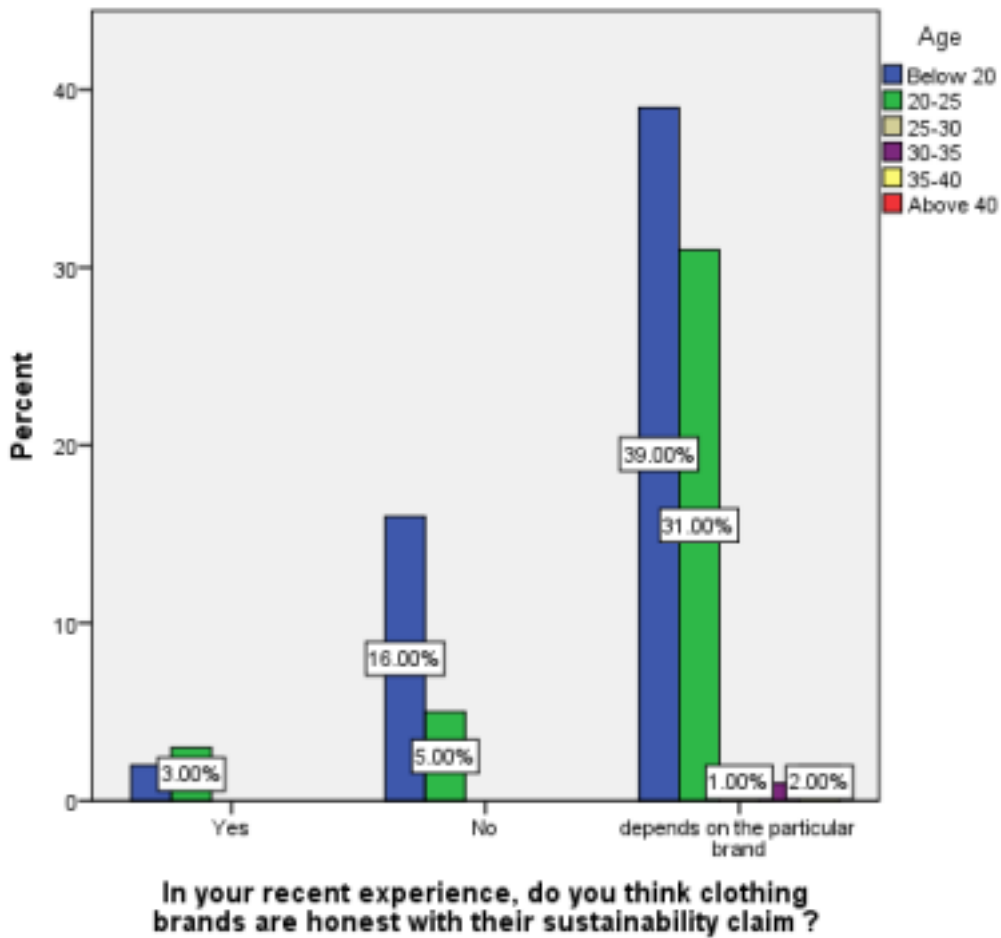
What are the factors that influence your decision to purchase clothes ?

Source: Survey

Among 100 respondents, 71% of them are influenced by the way the clothes fit. If it is properly fitted, they are more inclined to buy it. Almost 59% of the respondents are influenced by the quality of clothes, 55% of the respondents are influenced by cost of the clothes. Only 20% of the respondents are influenced by sustainability claims to purchase clothes.

Among the age group, it is expected that the overall cost of the clothes are the major influencing factor for youngsters' purchases. And it is common to find cheaper clothes from fast fashion brands. Hence we can conclude that cheaper options are the appeal to fast fashion among young people.

Consumer opinion on brands honesty regarding sustainability claims



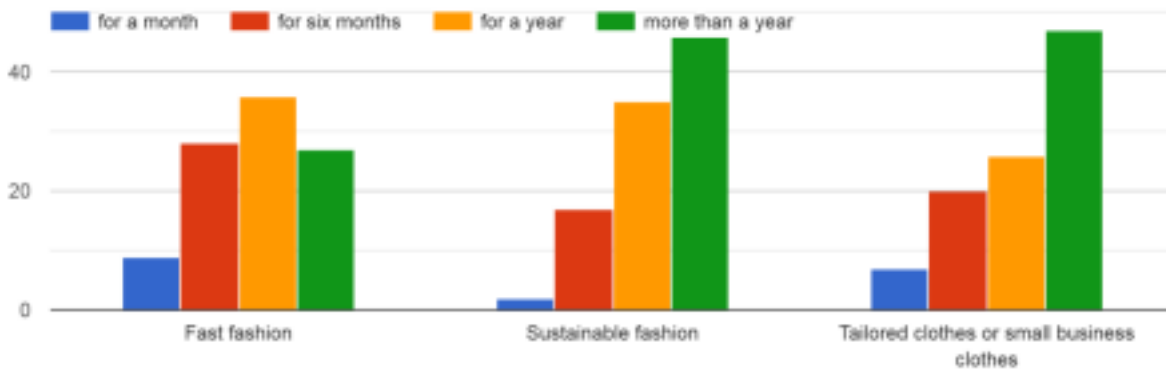
Source: Survey

Among 100 respondents, 44% of the respondents believe that can impact brands' claims while 22% said no.



How long do respondents' clothes last?

How long does your clothes last ? (average shelf life of your clothes) (clarification: 'by last' the survey means that the clothes are destroyed to the point of throwing or donating them)



Source: Survey

Sustainable fashion clearly has clothes that last longer than fast fashion.

How do respondents dispose of old clothes?

How do you dispose your old clothes ?

100 responses



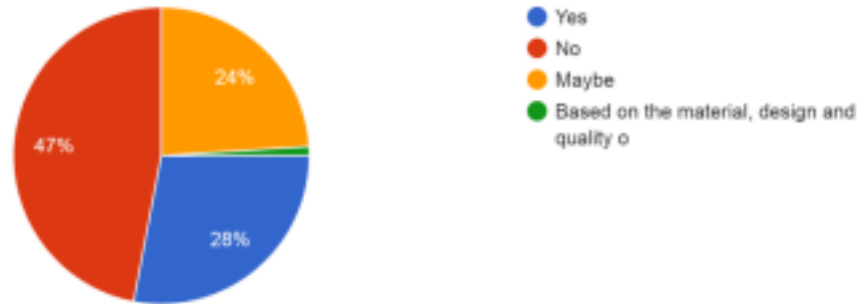
Source: Survey

Nearly 90% of the respondents donate their clothes in Chennai. It is expected since donating or giving old clothes to your siblings is culturally ingrained in Indians.

Thrifting

Would you purchase second-hand clothes if there are more thrift shops available ?

100 responses



Source: Survey

Among 100 respondents, 47% of the respondents will not purchase second-hand clothes from thrift stores. Thrifting is a popular sustainability practice in the West. In India, there are cultural references to give our old clothes to younger siblings. Hence it is a foreign concept to pay for those old clothes.

Chi-square test:

Table 1

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender * How do you dispose your old clothes ?	100	10.0%	899	90.0%	999	100.0%

Gender * How do you dispose your old clothes ? Crosstabulation

Count

		How do you dispose your old clothes ?			Total
		donate	throw them with garbage	sometimes donate tem or use as rags	
Gender	male	45	3	2	50
	femle	44	1	5	50
Total		89	4	7	100

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.297 ^a	2	.317
Likelihood Ratio	2.386	2	.303
Linear-by-Linear Association	.551	1	.458
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 4 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.152	.317
Cramer's V	.152	.317
Contingency Coefficient	.150	.317
N of Valid Cases	100	

Table 2

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Occupation * Do you consciously prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion ?	98	9.8%	901	90.2%	999	100.0%

Occupation * Do you consciously prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion ? Crosstabulation

Count

		Do you consciously prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion ?			Total
		yes	no	maybe	
Occupation	1.0	1	0	1	2
	2.0	28	19	40	87
	3.0	3	2	4	9
Total		32	21	45	98

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.641 ^a	4	.958
Likelihood Ratio	1.043	4	.903
Linear-by-Linear Association	.001	1	.980
N of Valid Cases	98		

a. 6 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .43.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.081	.958
	Cramer's V	.057	.958
	Contingency Coefficient	.081	.958
N of Valid Cases		98	

Table 3

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age * Fast fashion clothing stores you frequent (in-store shopping)	100	10.0%	899	90.0%	999	100.0%

Age * Fast fashion clothing stores you frequent (in-store shopping) Crosstabulation

Count

		Fast fashion clothing stores you frequent (in-store shopping)										Total
		reliance trends	zudio	max	pantaloons	zara	H&M	only prefer online shopping	only prefer small business or tailoring on clothes	none	waves	
Age	school student (till 12th)	4	7	5	3	3	16	10	2	2	5	57
	college student (UG & PG)	4	7	1	0	1	7	9	2	1	7	39
	Salaried worker	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Retired	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total		8	14	6	3	4	25	20	5	3	12	100

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24.761 ^a	36	.921
Likelihood Ratio	21.317	36	.975
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.270	1	.260
N of Valid Cases	100		

a. 43 cells (86.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal Phi	.498	.921
Cramer's V	.249	.921
Contingency Coefficient	.445	.921
N of Valid Cases	100	

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Out of 100 respondents, 25% shop every month, 24% shop once every two months, 11% shop once every six months, 3% shop once a year, 10% shop during festive times or when sales happen, 24% shop when a need arise and the remaining 3% shop impulsively. It is striking to note the difference between male and female consumers. It is much more important to recognise that while 49% of the mostly young respondents shop regularly, a counterung 24% shop only when clothes are needed. From the analysis, we can extrapolate that there is an overconsumption trend currently increasing. It looks like there is a huge wave of over-consumers who are drowning the modest minimalists.
- Among the 100 respondents, men highly prefer H&M while both H&M and online shopping are popular among women in Chennai. 25% of the 100 respondents frequent H&M and 20% of the 100 respondents frequent online stores. In total, there is a landslide of 62% of 100 respondents who frequent fast fashion stores.
- Analysing the same question based on the age group reveals the expected findings. There is a popular consensus for fast fashion retail stores among respondents in their early twenties. It further raises the question: what is the appeal of fast fashion among youngsters?

- Among the 100 respondents, 43% only sometimes read the label on clothes, 24% read it most of the time, 18% always read it and 15% sometimes read it. So the content on the label sometimes affects consumers' purchases and more people must be aware to read the label and shop consciously.
- Among 100 respondents, 45.9% of the respondents are conflicted about their preference while 32.7% of the respondents prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion. So there is a great margin of people who are on the fence about sustainable fashion. It is effective to analyse the incentives that may push them to prefer sustainable fashion.
- Among 100 respondents, 71% of them are influenced by the way the clothes fit. If it is properly fitted, they are more inclined to buy it. Almost 59% of the respondents are influenced by the quality of the clothes, and 55% of the respondents are influenced by the cost of the clothes. Only 20% of the respondents are influenced by sustainability claims to purchase clothes. Among the age group, it is expected that the overall cost of clothes is the major influencing factor for youngsters' purchases. And it is common to find cheaper clothes from fast fashion brands. Hence we can conclude that cheaper options are the appeal to fast fashion among young people.
- Among 100 respondents, 44% of the respondents believe that can impact brands' claims while 22% said no.
- Sustainable fashion clearly has clothes that last longer than fast fashion. • Nearly 90% of the respondents donate their clothes in Chennai. It is expected since donating or giving old clothes to your siblings is culturally ingrained in Indians. • Among 100 respondents, 47% of the respondents will not purchase second-hand clothes from thrift stores. Thrifting is a popular sustainability practice in the West. In India, there are cultural references to give our old clothes to younger siblings. Hence it is a foreign concept to pay for those old clothes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the imperative of addressing climate change through sustainable practices has never been more urgent. While sustainability is widely acknowledged as a crucial lifestyle to combat climate change, effective tactics must be employed to slow down the doomsday clock. This paper has shed light on the critical role of the textile and fashion industries in contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, with fast fashion emerging as a significant driver of environmental degradation. By analyzing initiatives such as the connect4climate campaign,

the slow fashion movement, and thrifting, it becomes evident that efforts to counteract fast fashion are underway. Moreover, the establishment of corporate social responsibility standards and ethical fashion codes within the industry are steps in the right direction. However, the responsibility does not solely lie with industry stakeholders. Consumers also play a pivotal role in driving change through their purchasing decisions. By choosing to shop ethically and sustainably, consumers can exert influence throughout the supply chain. In essence, this paper underscores the interconnectedness of individual actions and systemic change in the pursuit of sustainability. By collectively addressing the problematic relationship between our closets and the climate crisis, we can strive towards a more sustainable future for all.

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