Problems, Consumption and Sustainability of Fast Fashion Industry

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Abstract

The main purpose of the scientific article is to present problems, consumption and sustainable of fast fashion industry. The methods used in writing the scientific article are descriptive-analytical method, systematic approach, study of the works of authors, comparative analysis, method of observation, induction, deduction. The development of sustainable practices and policies of fast fashion industry is important for overcoming the identified problems, the study of the questions related to consumption reducing the harmful impact of textile waste and achieving the main economic, environmental and social goals of sustainability.

Keywords: sustainability, fast fashion, fast fashion industry, textile industry

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Introduction

The concept of fast fashion is a new concept which changed the way consumers buy goods. Consumers knows that, fast fashion is cheap, trendy, and disposable clothing, which is updated their regularly with latest models of clothes at the good prices. For business, fast fashion is producing large amounts of clothing in a short period of time at the low production costs to maximize profit. The growth of fast fashion industry is drive for produces of fast clothing of low price (Tran, 2021).

The clothes of "fast fashion" are garments made at low quality and price, produced for the mass consumers from machine made and have a short useful life. Fast fashion is a term used by designers and retailers when the product is lower quality and lowest price range for mass market (Aishwariya, 2019).

The fast fashion as part of textile industry is characterised by the combination of high speed production, rapid high volume consumption. The aim of fast fashion is to design garments which transform new trends into low price textile products and drive up purchases by consumers. The change in textile industry about fast fashion has been manifested in price reduction of garments on the European market by 26% during the twenty-first century. The use of large quantities of fast fashion by consumers leads to trend to consequently to jeopardizing environmentally which creates prerequisites for the development of sustainable practices (Zamani, 2016).

Excessive consumption of textile products is one of the negative effects of "fast fashion". Over 80 billion clothing are produced globally for a year, but only one-quarter is recycled and the remaining textile products are discarded as waste and pollute the environment. Consumers' growing demand for fast fashion products leading to increase environmental degradation leading to serious ecological problem for population. The fashion (fast) industry is widely considered the second most disruptive industry after oil. Fast fashion product is the number one enemy of sustainable fashion product. The companies create and strengthen the concepts of the fast fashion economy, which makes the entire fashion industry face a difficult choice about to balance sustainability and fashion. Sustainable design of textile product is a way to meet economic and social needs to consumers (Fan and Chang, 2023).

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1. The problems related to fast fashion industry

The problems related to the fast fashion industry are systematized and presented in the following few points:

1) *Fast fashion produces pollution to the environment* - the fast fashion as part of textile industry produces huge waste and causes serious pollution to the environment. Textile waste from fast fashion, such as textiles and chemical dyes, impose environmental damages, water resource pollution and contribute to climate change (Liu, et al., 2021);

2) *Fast fashion products use less than 10 times* and change in life style last years lead to encouraging so-called *"throwaway fashion"*(Liu, et al., 2021);

3) *Excessive use to consumer of fast fashion products* lead to burned or land-filled, *environmental damage*, *waste of resources* and irrational distribution of textile goods (Liu, et al., 2021);

4) The fast fashion industry uses a large quantity of water and *produces amounts of wastewater containing toxic chemicals which may to pollute the entire ecosystem*. Averaging an estimated 200 tons of water is used during the production of one ton of textile products (Liu, et al., 2021);

5) The clothes (including fast fashion products) that consumers buy are made of fibres that range as wool, cotton, polyester, and nylon. These fibres break down and become *microfibers*, they have an enormous impact on the planet. After washed textile fibres enter the environment through wastewater. Researchers proposed that a single load of laundry has the potential to release lots microfibers into the water supply, which eventually reach the ocean. Accumulation of microfibers can lead to ingesting the fibres in marine animals and the fibres moving up the food chain to human organ, which may cause various diseases. Washing of clothes (including fast fashion products) releases microfibers into wastewater enter aquatic environments including lakes, rivers, seas and oceans (Ruggiero, et al., 2021);

6) *Pollution from wastewater* containing chemical dyes for textile, which can be detrimental to the environment and to forming risk for the health of living organisms. Producing cotton fibres requires large amounts of water and pesticides. Traditional processing takes more than 20,000 litres of water to produce a single kilogram of cotton (required for a t-shirt and a pair of jeans) (Figure 1) (Ruggiero, et al., 2021; Yoon, et al., 2020);
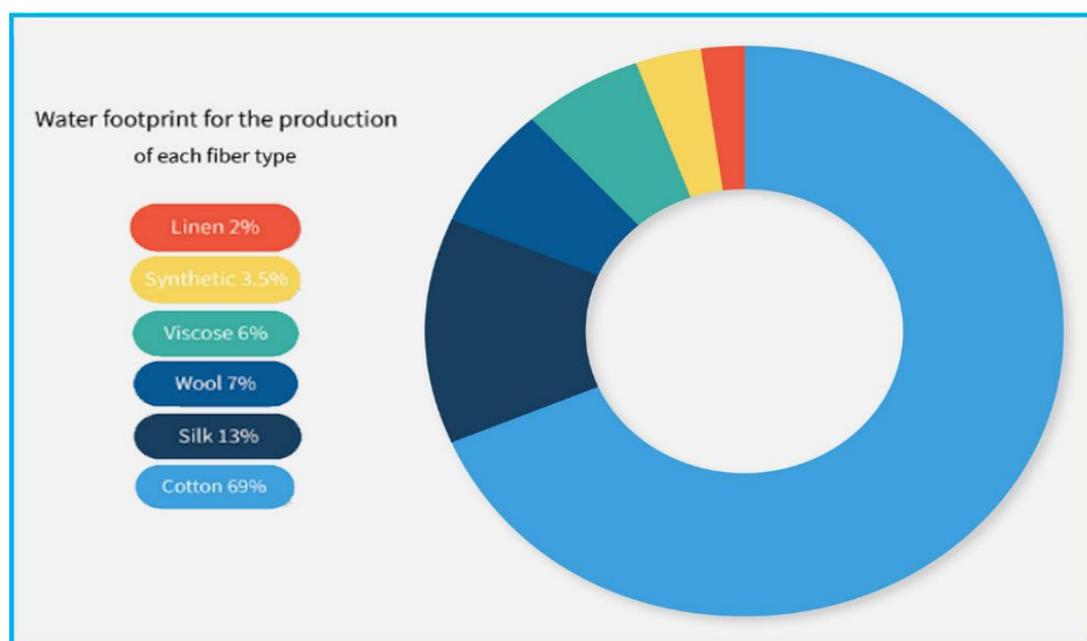
Figure 1. Water footprint for the production of each fiber type (Ruggiero, et al., 2021)

7) In textile manufacturing, innumerable greenhouse gases are generated, which increases the *carbon footprint*. The reports claim that the (fast) fashion industry is genesis 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In many countries, the main source of energy to textile industry is coal energy, which their use in textile manufacturing give larger carbon footprint. In the garment life cycle especially in the context of the fast fashion industry, energy use and CO_2 emission is highest during initial fibre extraction (especially for synthetic fibres). Natural textile fibres have less carbon emission than man-made fibres, so it may be a solution for fast fashion industry to low the carbon emission in the environment (Grewal, et al., 2022).

8) Fast fashion industry produces *new styles textile products with cheap prices* and the new clothes should be offered in stores every week. This can be achieved by *employing workers in underdeveloped nations, using cheap and hazardous materials* (Yoon, et al., 2020).

9) *The overconsumption of fast fashion* has had adverse effects on the earth's natural resources and also raises *social and ethical problems* (Yoon, et al., 2020).

10) Producers of fast fashion depend on low-wage workers in underdeveloped countries to keep *costs low, make clothes in less time, and meet the lead time* (Yoon, et al., 2020).

11) The fast fashion industry consumes a large amount of natural and chemical textile materials. Around 90% of clothes manufactured by fast fashion industry are made with cotton or polyester, both textile materials associated with environmental harm and the ecosystem due to releasing *toxic chemical pollution and emitting carbon dioxide during processing* (Yoon, et al., 2020).

12) Fast fashion industry is the main culprit with the negative impact on the environment due to the nature of mass-production and mass-consumption of fast fashion products. Fast fashion industry *imitating haute couture and copying ready-to-wear world famous designs* from around the world to keep up with trends and fashionable styles on a daily basis. The copying enables fast fashion industry to reduce the time of the creative process and design planning to *the distribution of merchandise within a few weeks*. Consumers are not only buying new styles but *disposing of outdated fashion at a rapid rate* (Yoon, et al., 2020).

The correct identification and systematization of problems is extremely important and necessary to create sustainable practices and models related to the fast fashion industry. The main problems related to the fast fashion industry are fast fashion products pollution to the environment; fast fashion products use less than 10 times and forming textile waste, increase environmental

damage and waste of resources and irrational distribution of textile goods; fast fashion industry uses a large quantity of water (20,000 litres of water to produce a single kilogram of cotton) and produces amounts of wastewater containing toxic components which may to pollute the ecosystem; use of fast fashion products create conditions of increasing levels microfibers, they have a negative effect in the lakes, rivers, seas and oceans of the planet; in fast fashion manufacturing, innumerable greenhouse gases are generated, which leading to increases the carbon footprint; fast fashion has had adverse effects on the earth's natural resources and leading to social and ethical problems; fast fashion products keep costs low, make clothes in less time; fast fashion industry lead to environmental harm and releasing toxic chemical pollution and emitting carbon dioxide during processing; fast fashion industry imitates world famous brands and reduce the time of produce and distribution up to a few weeks, consumers buying new clothes but increasing textile waste generated form fast fashion products.

2. Consumption in fast fashion industry

The overproduction and overconsumption of fashion goods are important critical questions, as part of manufacturers and consumers of textile goods feel that the purchase and consumption of this goods do not create any harmful effects on society and economics. Consumer demand has been a leading of development fast fashion market. Unsustainable and fast consumption of fast fashion textile products poses is the greatest challenge for promoting the green economy politics and achieving of the sustainable development goals (Rosely and Syed Ali, 2023).

In India fast fashion is important and growing category in garment retail. Fast fashion brands (Zara, Gap, H&M, and Forever 21) have entered India's retail market in the last few years. Fast fashion industry has fast fashion cycles, which motivates consumers to feel pressure to buy e new textile products and update their wardrobes. The uncontrolled purchase by consumers of fast fashion products leads to the formation of an international phenomenon related to the overconsumption of textile products, which spreads throughout the world. The large part of consumers qualifies as "excessive shoppers" who show traits of compulsive shopping behaviour with social, economic and environmental importance. Understanding the values and psychographics of consumers (Figure 2) would help and enable the adoption of the correct positioning strategy by apparel or clothing marketers. In the research that the knowledge gap exists in understanding the role of psychographics as an intervening variable between values and purchasing frequency of fast fashion products. The psychographic traits of innovativeness, fashion-consciousness and fast fashion involvement are variables which in turn affect compulsive purchase behaviour in fast fashion brands (Jain, 2016).
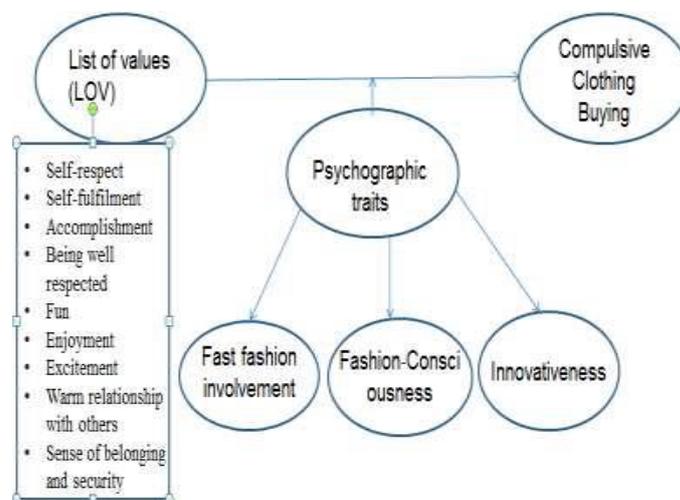

Figure 2. Conceptual model for values and psychographics traits (Jain, 2016)

Despite rapid growth of fast fashion industry is still considered as an under-researched field. Researches related to fast fashion are rare to be found in academic aspects. The study shows *fast fashion industry and consumer behaviour in fast fashion industry in Coventry*. The students have their own fast fashion brand's preference, following their friends. The research establishes facts about cultural and social factors do influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decision in fast fashion industry in Coventry. It is also found that their preferences are split by gender and the preferences each gender chooses also follows the norms of male and female's habits in fashion in their culture. There is not much research about regarding consumer behaviour in fast fashion industry or researches regarding factors influencing purchasing decision in fast fashion. It is important to conduct a further research about the style preference and price range of consumers coming from different nationalities. In this way the marketers will be able to determine what kind of product that will the satisfaction of consumers (Sari and Hanifah, 2018).

Most research about consumer behaviour focuses on the reasons why people choose certain products and brands. Research related to non-consumption emphasises is to *explore reasons behind the rejection of different fast fashion products and brands*. The important issue is to knowing what consumers do not want is at least as important as knowing what they do want. The results shows to the five categories of brand of fast fashion avoidance – experience avoidance, identity avoidance, moral avoidance, deficit value avoidance and advertising. The use of multidimensional scaling for analysing the aspects of brand of fast fashion avoidance is also good solution. Its main added value is to provide to variables which "stand together" in shaping brand avoidance behaviour of consumers related to fast fashion. In addition, the clustering of respondents shows on the dominant features of those variables, in case of the brand avoidance consumers behaviour of Gen Z (Vajkai and Zsóka, 2020).

In the study is to investigate the level of *knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour of customers about sustainability in fast fashion industry*. The article is present empirical results that focuses about investigating consumer awareness, and their behave about fast fashion brands in the context of sustainability in fast fashion industry. In the study further explores consumers' knowledge about fashion and it is established is not sufficient to evoke to purchases of environmentally textile products. The descriptive analysis is received by 97 consumers shows that although most consumers claim to be knowledgeable about sustainability in fast fashion industry, they haven't precise and accurate knowledge about aspects related to the sustainable in supply chain, fabric, materials, recycling and etc. Women are more knowledgeable consumers about this topic than men. Men are willing to pay a higher price for fast fashion brand (Papasolomou, et al., 2023).

In the study presents research about *sustainable problems related in the fast fashion industry*. The obtained results about sustainability are contradictory, because on the one hand, some scientists consider that sustainability does not positively of affect consumers' preferences, revealing an incompatibility between sustainable products and fashion products. On the other hand, is established that sustainability have an important role dealing with the harmful effects of in the fast fashion industry. This necessitates the creation of sustainable textile products from recycled textile materials, which influence of positively consumers' purchase intentions. The research gives light about the positive effect of sustainability on consumers' purchase intentions. The study shows that the role of sustainability in the fashion industry and quality of sustainable products positively affect consumers' purchase intentions. Moreover, this paper shows the main role increasing consumers' purchase intentions toward sustainable fast fashion products (Grazzini, et al., 2021).

Consumption in fast fashion industry is an important aspect regarding the field of fast fashion. The scientific literature examined did not identify a large number of in-depth studies on consumption in the fast fashion industry. The studies are related with fast fashion industry and consumer behavior in fast fashion industry in Coventry; the explore reasons behind the rejection of different fast fashion products and brands; the investigate to the level of knowledge, attitudes, and

behaviour of customers about sustainability in fast fashion industry and the problems related sustainability in the fast fashion industry.

3. Sustainable practices of fast fashion industry

The term *sustainability* is coined in 1987 and its original meaning is "satisfying the current needs without compromising the future generation's needs". Over the years sustainability is extended to encompass three main aspects: environmental, economic and social (Figure 3). Sustainability is related with different groups of people of society and involves complicated and dynamic interactions between humans and the environment. Production of textile products in textile industry (including fast fashion industry) impose use many protective practices about sustainability related there is a large amount of energy use and water consumption, greenhouse gas emission, hazardous waste generation, and discharge of toxic effluent containing dyes, which pollute our ecosystem (Zhang, et al., 2021).
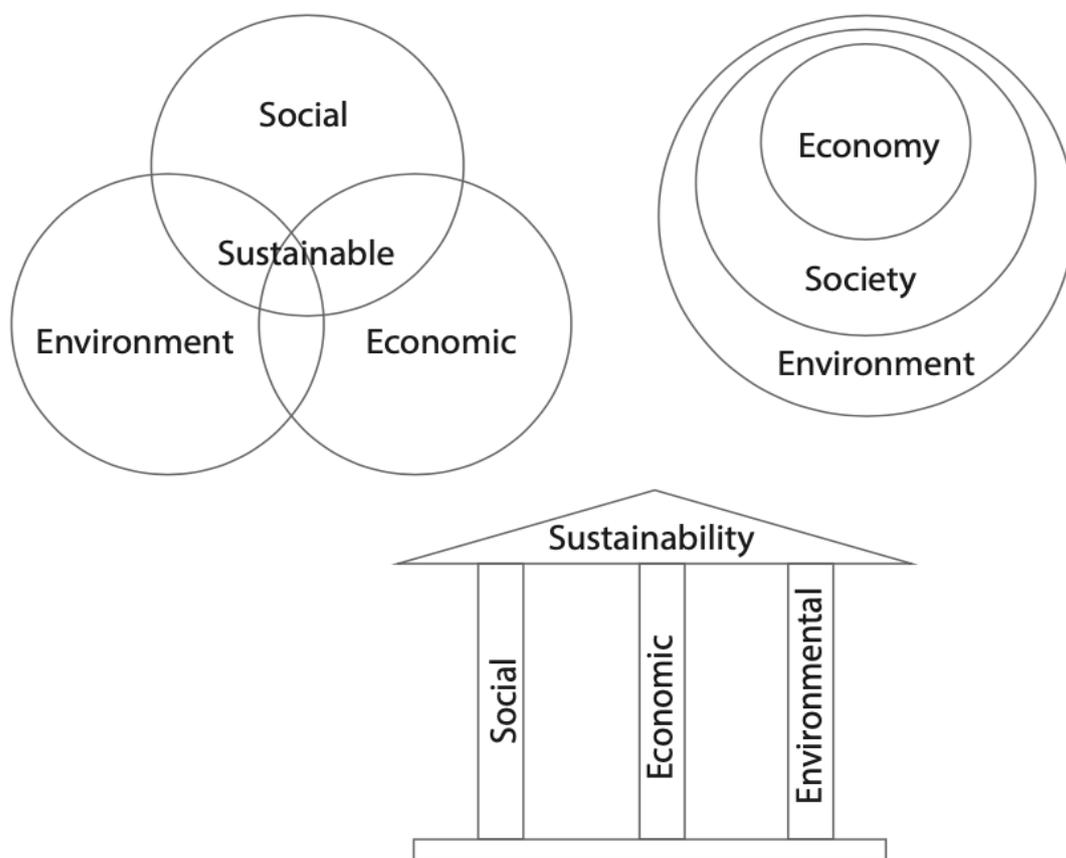

Figure 3. Main concept of sustainable practices of fast fashion industry (Carvalho, 2021)

Sustainable fashion industry as part of the slow fashion industry movement is often described as the opposite of fast fashion industry. Slow fashion industry is based on sustainability values, such as good working conditions and reducing environmental pollute. Sustainable fashion industry rather considers the social, natural, and economic aspects of the fashion production. The slow fashion industry is a response to fast fashion industry and "unsustainable" business growth. Slow fashion as part of sustainable fashion industry seek to empower workers throughout the supply chain, utilise upcycling, recycling, and traditional production techniques, and incorporating renewable and organic raw materials. Sustainable fashion industry is a balanced approach to fashion production, which fosters long-term relationships, builds local production, and focuses about *sustainable practice* (Henninger, et al., 2016).

In the research is presents *sustainable approach about fast fashion industry*. This approach includes designing, sourcing, manufacturing, and selling of clothing. It's can increase the benefits to the consumers and minimizing the negative aspects on the environment. In the textile industry there is a need to invest in clean technology, create of new business models, change of consumption habits of consumers and legislation in the area. The key role is create sustainable practices about fast fashion industry, which will lead to reducing textile waste, promoting a circular economy and using sustainable textile fibres and technology (Rukhaya, et al., 2021).

Fast fashion industry allows firms to react quickly to changing consumer demand by replenishing inventory and introducing more fashion brands and fashion styles. The results of the research show that a *main key factor is low quality of fast fashion product* of is the firm's incentive to offer variety to hedge against uncertain fashion changes and trends. Increasing fast fashion industry capabilities leads to higher negative environmental impact and for this reason it was made assess the effectiveness of *three environmental initiatives - waste disposal regulations, consumer education and production tax schemes*. The policies waste disposal and production taxes are effective in reducing the firm's leftover inventory. It may lead to lowering quality of fast fashion product, their quick disposal which worsen the firm's environmental impact. In the course of the study find that education campaigns that increase consumers' sensitivity to quality strictly benefit the environment for the longer period of time. In the research is establishes the link between the fast fashion business model and its environmental consequences (Long and Nasiry, 2019).

The companies are realizing that the environmental, social and ecological impacts of the fast fashion industry are too high to ignore. In the paper is examines the state of *sustainability* efforts and current trends in the *(fast) fashion industry*, the state of sustainability efforts and current trends in the textile industry, as well as consumer perceptions and their buying behaviours. In the research are present sustainability practice in fashion, sustainability in the consumer perspective, sustainability of noteworthy companies, sustainability of noteworthy Initiatives and The Return on Sustainability Investment (ROSI) framework and the relationship between sustainable practices and financial performance in the context of fashion companies. For more innovative practices and large-scale investments are needed to make a long-term impact (Kirpalani, 2022).

In the paper is to present the concept related of *fast fashion industry about influence on climate change through an observational analytic comparative study*. The target groups of the study are from Portugal and Croatia. In the research is created and applied questionnaire was conducted, and additional data were collected from the analysis of waste different reports and the results were evaluated with IBM SPSS Statistics program through the Chi-Square independence test. The research shows that Portugal has more textile waste which influence negative on the environment is higher. One of the main reasons related with the higher production of textile waste is the increase use and consumptions of fast fashion products from fast fashion industry. The important importance for reducing the problem related to environmental protection and the disposal of textile waste generated by the consumption of textile products from the fast fashion industry is the creation of sustainable policies, models, technologies and productions, sustainable consumption related to the use of *recycled textile materials in context of circular economy* (Kalambura, et al., 2020).

The research, creation, development of sustainable practices of fast fashion industry is important for reducing the harmful impact of textile waste from fast fashion textile products and better environmental protection for a cleaner Earth. Sustainable practices are opposite of fast fashion industry and for this reason it is necessary to develop them continuously in order to limit the harmful impact of fast fashion products on the pollution of environmental. Sustainable practices promote the use of green production technologies, the use of recycled textile materials discarded from the use of fast fashion products, the development and application of business models in the fast fashion industry in the context of the circular economy. In this way, the economic, environmental, and social aspects of sustainability in the textile industry will be achieved.

Conclusion

The identification and systematization of problems related to fast fashion industry is necessary to create sustainable practices and politics, which be help of reduce negative aspects of textile waste from fast fashion industry.

Consumption in fast fashion industry is an important aspect regarding the field of fast fashion. The scientific literature examined did not identify a large number of in-depth studies on consumption in the fast fashion industry. Further research can be done about the consumption of fast fashion products.

The development of sustainable practices and policies of fast fashion industry is important for overcoming the identified problems, the study of the questions related to consumption reducing the harmful impact of textile waste. Sustainable practices promote the use of green production technologies, the use of recycled textile materials discarded from the use of fast fashion products, the development and application of business models in the fast fashion industry in the context of the circular economy. In this way, the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability in the textile industry will be achieved.

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