

# Driving Factors for Consumers Behaviour to Buy Slow Fashion

LENKA ŠVAJDOVÁ

Department of Marketing and Trade,  
VSB Technical University Ostrava,  
17. listopadu 2172/15. 708 00 Ostrava-Poruba,  
CZECH REPUBLIC

*Abstract:* - The fashion industry plays a significant role in the global economy but is also a major contributor to environmental and ethical issues. Fast fashion has been dominant but has brought about various sustainability challenges and ethical considerations, such as labor exploitation and environmental degradation. In response to these issues, the slow fashion movement has emerged, advocating for ethical and sustainable practices in fashion. The present paper aims to identify driving factors for consumer behavior to buy products of slow fashion, using methods of primary marketing research and evaluating results using advanced statistical methods.

*Key-Words:* - Alternative design, Consumer Behavior, Driving factors, Fast fashion, Slow fashion, Sustainable clothing, Sustainable fashion.

Received: June 12, 2023. Revised: March 13, 2024. Accepted: April 1, 2024. Published: April 25, 2024.

## 1 Introduction

The fashion industry and the garment industry as such are among the biggest polluters of the environment. It is a fast-growing sector that consumes energy, water, and chemicals and produces large amounts of emissions and waste. This amounts to up to 16 million tonnes of waste in Europe annually. In particular, based on the constant production of new collections according to current trends, the fast fashion sector is responsible for a significant part of the production of textile waste and greenhouse gases. These negative environmental impacts are mainly the result of the production of new materials, which are resource-intensive and are also accompanied by environmental pollution by the chemicals used in textile dyeing.

The fashion industry is often criticized for these negative environmental impacts. At the same time, the issue is also being addressed at the level of institutions such as the European Union, and consumer demand for more sustainable products is also growing in general. In connection with this, fast fashion (fashion chains) representatives have also begun to change their strategy and implement sustainable activities and practices to reduce their negative environmental impact. At the same time, to meet the higher demand for sustainable products.

One of the ways clothing chains can become more sustainable is through the use of recycled materials in the production of clothing. Recycling

and using recycled textile material in clothing production creates a lower burden on the environment and can lead to cost savings. Several chains have already successfully implemented these practices along with other sustainable activities and are thus achieving the effects above. These days, environmental problems are increasingly becoming the focus of attention of many parties. This includes the public, as shown in their purchasing and consumption behavior patterns. Consumers who pay attention to environmental issues will be careful in their consumption patterns. Their concern for green value is the basis for the importance of green marketing, [1].

## 2 Slow Fashion and Consumer Behaviour

The slow fashion movement is relatively young; so far, relatively little relevant research deals with the issue of motivational factors that lead consumers to shift their preference from fast to slow fashion. Due to its topicality, the issue of slow fashion has been addressed by many authors in the recent past; a short analytical approach is followed, approximating various authors' views. However, everyone agrees on the essential characteristics and principles of why slow fashion will gain in importance.

## 2.1 Slow Fashion Movement

The slow fashion movement has gained momentum as consumers increasingly become aware of the negative impact of fast fashion on the environment and human rights. It emphasizes fair working conditions, sustainable business models, organic and environmentally friendly materials, certifications, and traceability.

The slow fashion movement offers a more conscientious approach to fashion consumption, prioritizing ethical production processes, low environmental impact, garment durability, and recyclability. This shift in consumer behavior is influenced by the desire to reduce rapid fashion consumption's environmental and social consequences, [2]. Additionally, consumers are motivated by the desire to support local and independent designers and artisans who hand-make their products.

The slow fashion movement is based on principles of sustainability, sustainable, eco-friendliness, and ethical fashion, focusing on the well-being of workers, communities, and the environment.

It aims to slow down consumption and production processes and at the same time challenge the current economic models, and encourage consumers to think of their consumption habits, [3]. The motivations for consumers to implement slow fashion to their consumer habits can vary. However, some common factors like a response to injustices in fast fashion supply chains together with the aim of raising awareness and practicing sustainability while advocating for ethical production processes and low environmental impact is driving their behaviour.

This also covers the questioning of established practices, worldviews, and economic models that underpin fashion production and consumption.

Furthermore, slow fashion is also about protecting workers' well-being and valuing local economies and labor over the global dominance of fast fashion, [4]. In contrast to the fast fashion industry, slow fashion focuses on quality over quantity and longevity over trends. The preference of sustainable materials and ethical production methods presents a viable alternative to the prevalent culture of disposable clothing in other words the fast fashion.

The slow fashion trend corresponds with environmental protection and responsible consumerism by asking consumers to change their consumption habits and opt for durable, timeless pieces, [5]. This characteristic is in contrast with the fashion industry based on fast fashion because in the

fashion industry, products follow a linear life-cycle and are usually disposed to landfill rather than reused or recycled. Indeed, this linearity becomes even more critical in the fast-fashion sector. Fast fashion satisfies consumers demand for quality and style keeping prices low and reducing the time cycles from production to consumption. This retail culture shrinks the product life-cycle and encourages consumers to keep garments for a very short period due to their lower prices. The combination of increased consumption and shorter garment longevity has led to an increase in global textile waste and the generation of high amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and water, which is detrimental to the environment and causes pollution that may put human health at risk, [6].

Slow fashion critics argue that artisanal and handmade products, may not be accessible and affordable to all consumers due to their higher price level. They argue that this type of exclusivity is contradicting the movement's aspiration for social and environmental equality. And also the fact that this kind of fashion is not for all because it's not something that will be preferred by the majority of customers, [7].

## 2.2 Slow Fashion and Consumer Behaviour

The sector of textile industry is of great importance however is characterised by substantial losses, due to the production excesses on the one hand, and the „throw away“ culture on the other, [8]. Global warming is arguably one of the most serious dangers facing the world today. People are becoming increasingly concerned about environmental protection. The global population is growing, together with technological advancements, has developed a set of standards for the improvement of living circumstances. Consumers are increasingly aware of environmental concerns and want to take ecologically responsible actions in their behavior, [9].

The clothing industry as one of the oldest and largest markets in the world, estimated at 1,5 trillion dollars annually (2018) is also reacting to the current situation and is adapting business models to meet environmental awareness and demand for sustainable clothing. Specially, it addresses how fashion consumers consider sustainability when selecting and purchasing clothes contrasting slow and fast fashion approaches, [10].

The slow fashion movement offers a more conscientious approach to fashion consumption which means that fashion companies and consumers are prioritizing ethical production processes together with low environmental impact, garment durability,

and recyclability. This shift in consumer behavior is influenced by the personal desire to reduce fast fashion consumption's which is bringing environmental and social consequences. That is why slow fashion emerges in this scenario with the spirit of changing so the companies and customers become more aware of their actions and the damage they can cause, [11]. Additionally, consumers are motivated by the desire to support local and independent designers and artisans who hand-make their products.

The driving factors for consumer behavior to buy slow fashion can have a relation with the increasing environmental awareness among consumers and their desire to support sustainable and ethical practices in the fashion industry.

Consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental impacts and fashion designers are responding to this demand. To facilitate the shift towards sustainability, new concepts of design have emerged. Arising out of the ideas of „alternative design“, „attitudinal design“ and „design for need“, eco-design became a key concept for those advocating for the ecologically responsible design of products, [12].

The typical consumer of slow fashion is motivated to have high-quality, long-lasting clothes, as slow fashion is based on durability and timeless style, [13]. Additionally, consumers may be drawn to slow fashion because of its focus on fair labor conditions and supporting local artisans and small businesses, which could be considered also a disadvantage. Slow fashion products consumers value individuality and authenticity, they are seeking unique, handcrafted pieces that stand out from the mass-produced clothing typically associated with fast fashion production, [14].

Slow fashion is not just about the clothes themselves but also the stories and values behind them and it's something the current marketing trends work with. The movement is for consumers that like to invest in pieces that have a meaningful and lasting impact on style and sustainability. By opting for slow fashion, consumers consciously move away from the throwaway culture perpetuated by fast fashion and instead embrace a more thoughtful and deliberate approach to their wardrobes.

The clothing industry is the second largest polluter of the environment. This sector is characterized by high consumption of water and chemicals and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, textiles make up a significant proportion of the municipal waste produced, [15]. Therefore, it is necessary to apply the principles of slow fashion to

a greater extent and to know the motives of consumers for its purchase.

When purchasing clothing, factors such as quality, brand, price, whether the garment corresponds to current trends, and whether the clothing is made with respect for the environment can be considered, [16]. However, the question remains how essential this factor is in purchasing decisions because even the consumer's concern about the state of the environment does not necessarily have to be reflected in their purchasing behavior, [17].

### 3 Problem Solution

The research was carried out as part of the research project Determinants of Consumer Behaviour and their Influence on Typology registered under SP2023/052 at VSB-Technical University Ostrava. The research's primary objective of the submitted article was to identify driving factors for consumer behavior to buy slow fashion.

#### 3.1 Methodology

Primary data was collected through the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing) method designed by the questionnaire. It consisted of a total of 18 questions, all of which were mandatory. In terms of type, these were closed-ended, semi-closed-ended, multiple-choice, and questions with answers expressed on a scale.

#### Population and Sample

The primary sample consisted of women and men aged 15 to 57 (inhabitants of the Czech Republic) who visited fashion chains and, at the same time, noticed clothes made from recycled materials. The age restriction for respondents aged 15 to 57 was due to the chosen method – online interviewing. The sample size was planned to be 385 respondents. The quota sampling method was chosen as a technique for selecting respondents. This method makes it possible to achieve representativeness of the sample by setting quotas for selected characteristics (e.g. age or gender).

#### 3.2 Data Collection and Processing

Data collection took place from 5.1.2023 to 10.2.2023, online using the Vypĺnto.cz service. The generated link was shared via the Facebook social network or by email. A total of 419 respondents participated in the questionnaire survey. However, 47 answered "no" to the first filter question and terminated the questionnaire. The response rate of

the questionnaire was 70.9%. The data were processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29 and Microsoft Office Excel. In addition to the first and second-level classification, other analyses were used to evaluate the data. Factor analysis was used for selected variables. In addition, selected statistical tests (chi-square test, t-test and ANOVA) were applied to verify the interdependence of individual variables.

### 3.3 Research Results

It was found that out of a total of 372 respondents who visited fashion chains, 68.6% of them noticed the offer of these clothes, and less than 18% bought them purposefully. Thus, these respondents are influenced by the offer of recycled fashion when buying. The remaining 31.5% (117 respondents) did not register the offer of recycled clothing in the chains, and the questionnaire was terminated for these respondents.

Respondents were also asked what factors they consider when buying fashion.

According to the survey results, the most important factors for respondents when buying clothing are quality (83.1%), price (76.1%), and current trends with 34.7% are relatively more important. "Environmentally friendly production" is a factor considered by 21.2% of those surveyed. The answers "appearance", "fits/suits", and "comfort" was added after the respondents' answers were processed. Even in this case, the test did not reveal any dependence of selected factors on identification questions (gender, age, education, income). Quality and price are the most critical factors for both women and men. However, in third place are current trends for women (32.9%) and for men's brands (38.6%), which are taken into account by 10.3% of respondents. Depending on age, quality, price, and trends are also the most considered.

Regarding the differences in answers by education, while respondents with primary and secondary education mainly considered price (almost 95%), quality was the dominant factor among respondents with university and higher professional education (82.6%). Quality is the most essential brand for respondents with an income of CZK 50,000 (55.3%). According to the answers obtained, this factor is the least important for the income group of CZK 40-49 thousand and CZK 10,000 and less.

Respondents were also asked about the reasons and motives for buying fashion from recycled materials.

Respondents were the most likely to agree with the statement that the motive is "Wearing clothes

made from recycled materials is trendy." The average consent value was 2.25. For respondents, the reason for buying fashion made from recycled materials is not the fact that it is timeless, as the least respondents agreed with the statement that "Clothing made from recycled materials is timeless (not subject to trends)." In this case, the average consent value was 3.4. An important factor in purchasing is that the production of recycled garments is environmentally friendly (average value 2.37). At the same time, its disposal is environmentally friendly (average value 2.58), which indicates a higher approval rate. It is also clear that, on average, respondents tended to agree with all of the statements, or their position was closer to a neutral point. Both men and women were the most likely to agree that wearing clothes made from recycled materials is trendy (an average of 2.1 for women and 2.36 for men). Men disagreed with the statement that clothes made from recycled materials are not subject to trends (average value 3.6), and women that recycled clothes are easy to maintain (average value 3.21).

Table 1. Consumers' driving factors

| Statement   | Average value |
|---|---------------|
| Clothing made from recycled materials is of good quality                      | 2,48          |
| Clothes made from recycled materials last a long time                         | 2,82          |
| Clothes made of recycled materials are easier to maintain, iron, and wash)    | 3,32          |
| Clothing made of recycled materials does not cause allergic actions/rashes    | 2,93          |
| Clothes made from recycled materials are unaffordable expensive)              | 2,85          |
| Clothing made from recycled materials is timeless and subject to trends)      | <b>3,4</b>    |
| Clothing made from recycled materials is a small selection                    | 2,48          |
| Making clothes from recycled materials is environmentally friendly            | 2,37          |
| Disposing of clothes made from recycled materials is environmentally friendly | 2,58          |
| Wearing clothes made from recycled materials is trendy                        | <b>2,25</b>   |

Source: own research

Through the t-test, it was verified whether men and women agreed with these statements on average equally. Table 1 shows more significant differences in the average rating for some claims. This fact was also confirmed by the test carried out for six claims; results of Chi-Square tests are presented in Table 2. It can be seen that the average rating of men is always higher, except for the statement, "Clothes made from recycled materials are unaffordable (expensive)". This means that they expressed a

lower level of approval than women. Both men and women were the most likely to agree that wearing clothes made from recycled materials is trendy (an average of 2.1 for women and 2.36 for men). Men disagreed with the statement that clothes made from recycled materials are not subject to trends (average value 3.6), and women that recycled clothes are easy to maintain (average value 3.21).

Table 2. Dependence between consumer factors when purchasing clothing

| Pearson Chi-Square Tests |        |        |           |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
|                          | Gender | Age    | Education |
| Chi-square               | 46,632 | 18,720 | 51,669    |
| df                       | 8      | 16     | 16        |
| Sig.                     | <.001  | .283   | <.001     |

Source: own research

Table 3. Dependence on level of education

|   |                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  | Welch Sig. |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|------------|
| Clothes made from recycled materials is of high quality   | Between Groups | 0,032          | 2   | 0,016       | 0,018 | 0,982 | 0,982      |
|   | Within Groups  | 223,588        | 252 | 0,887       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 223,621        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes Made from recycled materials to last a long time  | Between Groups | 1,020          | 2   | 0,510       | 0,524 | 0,593 | 0,589      |
|   | Within Groups  | 245,354        | 252 | 0,974       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 246,374        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes Recycled materials are easier to maintain (iron wash)                                   | Between Groups | 1,568          | 2   | 0,784       | 0,937 | 0,393 | 0,432      |
|   | Within Groups  | 210,967        | 252 | 0,837       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 212,535        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes from recycled materials does not cause allergy reaction/rash                            | Between Groups | 3,793          | 2   | 1,896       | 2,049 | 0,131 | 0,191      |
|   | Within Groups  | 233,258        | 252 | 0,926       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 237,051        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes made of recycled materials is unaffordable (expensive)                                  | Between Groups | 4,076          | 2   | 2,038       | 1,393 | 0,250 | 0,310      |
|   | Within Groups  | 368,769        | 252 | 1,463       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 372,846        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes made of recycled materials is timeless (not subject to trends)                          | Between Groups | 2,396          | 2   | 1,198       | 1,027 | 0,359 | 0,382      |
|   | Within Groups  | 293,878        | 252 | 1,166       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 296,274        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| In clothes There is little choice of recycled materials   | Between Groups | 3,895          | 2   | 1,948       | 2,015 | 0,136 | 0,169      |
|   | Within Groups  | 243,629        | 252 | 0,967       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 247,524        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothing production made from recycled materials is environmentally friendly to the environment | Between Groups | 0,379          | 2   | 0,189       | 0,207 | 0,813 | 0,833      |
|   | Within Groups  | 229,948        | 252 | 0,912       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 230,326        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Disposal of clothes made from recycled materials is gentle to the environment                   | Between Groups | 0,191          | 2   | 0,096       | 0,101 | 0,904 | 0,914      |
|   | Within Groups  | 237,444        | 252 | 0,942       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 237,635        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Wear clothes Recycled materials are trendy  | Between Groups | 2,823          | 2   | 1,411       | 1,026 | 0,360 | 0,342      |
|   | Within Groups  | 346,575        | 252 | 1,375       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 349,398        | 254 |             |       |       |            |

Source: own research

The ANOVA variance analysis verified the differences in the evaluation according to the respondents' age, education, and income. The performance of this test did not demonstrate that the average value of consent to a claim is independent of age. When verifying the Dependence on Education Table 3, this was proven in two statements: "Clothing made of recycled materials

lasts a long time." Moreover, "Clothing made from recycled materials does not cause allergic reactions/rash."

The degree of agreement with these statements was lowest among respondents with an income of CZK 50,000 or more, see Table 4 Dependence on income. The average approval rate depended on the income group for the statement "Clothes made of recycled materials are easier to maintain (ironing, washing)." Moreover, "Making clothes from recycled materials is environmentally friendly."

The above factors were divided into two groups. **The first factor, personal and environmental benefits**, includes six original variables. Specifically, the following statements were assigned: "Wearing clothes made from recycled materials is trendy", "Disposing of clothes made from recycled materials is environmentally friendly", "Clothes made from recycled materials do not cause allergic reactions/rash", "Clothes made from recycled materials are of good quality", "Making clothes from recycled materials is environmentally friendly" and "There is little choice in clothing made from recycled materials".

Table 4. Dependence on income

|   |                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.  | Welch Sig. |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|------------|
| Clothes made from recycled materials is of high quality   | Between Groups | 4,960          | 5   | 0,992       | 1,130 | 0,345 | 0,220      |
|   | Within Groups  | 218,661        | 249 | 0,878       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 223,621        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes Made from recycled materials to last a long time  | Between Groups | 8,476          | 5   | 1,695       | 1,774 | 0,119 | 0,127      |
|   | Within Groups  | 237,898        | 249 | 0,955       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 246,374        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes Recycled materials are easier to maintain (iron, wash)                                  | Between Groups | 10,611         | 5   | 2,122       | 2,617 | 0,025 | 0,030      |
|   | Within Groups  | 201,924        | 249 | 0,811       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 212,535        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes from recycled materials does not cause allergy reaction/rash                            | Between Groups | 9,036          | 5   | 1,807       | 1,974 | 0,083 | 0,103      |
|   | Within Groups  | 228,015        | 249 | 0,916       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 237,051        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes made of recycled materials is unaffordable (expensive)                                  | Between Groups | 8,619          | 5   | 1,724       | 1,178 | 0,320 | 0,288      |
|   | Within Groups  | 364,227        | 249 | 1,463       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 372,846        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothes made of recycled materials is timeless (not subject to trends)                          | Between Groups | 9,096          | 5   | 1,819       | 1,577 | 0,167 | 0,151      |
|   | Within Groups  | 287,178        | 249 | 1,153       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 296,274        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| In clothes There is little choice of recycled materials   | Between Groups | 8,874          | 5   | 1,775       | 1,852 | 0,103 | 0,122      |
|   | Within Groups  | 238,651        | 249 | 0,958       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 247,524        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Clothing production made from recycled materials is environmentally friendly to the environment | Between Groups | 18,640         | 5   | 3,728       | 4,385 | 0,001 | 0,015      |
|   | Within Groups  | 211,686        | 249 | 0,850       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 230,326        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Disposal of clothes made from recycled materials is gentle to the environment                   | Between Groups | 7,551          | 5   | 1,510       | 1,634 | 0,151 | 0,233      |
|   | Within Groups  | 230,084        | 249 | 0,924       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 237,635        | 254 |             |       |       |            |
| Wear clothes Recycled materials are trendy  | Between Groups | 12,330         | 5   | 2,466       | 1,822 | 0,109 | 0,138      |
|   | Within Groups  | 337,068        | 249 | 1,354       |       |       |            |
|   | Total          | 349,398        | 254 |             |       |       |            |

Source: own research

**The second factor – practical benefits** – contains the four remaining statements – "Clothes made from recycled materials are unaffordable", "Clothes made from recycled materials are easier to maintain", "Clothes made from recycled materials last a long time" and "Clothes made from recycled materials are timeless".

By performing the t-test, only the Dependence of the second factor on sex was identified. Women rate this factor above average and agree with the practical benefits of clothing made from recycled materials, while men rate this factor below average. Similarly, the first factor – personal and environmental – rates women above average and men below average. Thus, both factors are more favorably evaluated by women who agree with them to a higher extent.

Based on Anna's test, there was no evidence of Dependence on age, education, or income.

## 4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the slow fashion movement has made significant strides in advocating for ethical and sustainable practices in the fashion industry. Emphasizing the importance of quality, durability, and environmentally friendly materials has resonated with consumers who are increasingly aware of the impact of their clothing choices. While there are contrasting perspectives on its accessibility and reach, the principles of slow fashion have undeniably influenced consumer behavior and prompted a shift towards more mindful and responsible consumption. Consumers are driven to buy slow fashion due to the desire for ethical and sustainable practices, support for local artisans and small businesses, the appreciation of unique cultural heritage and craftsmanship, the pursuit of individuality and authenticity, and the shift towards conscious and well-planned consumption.

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### **Contribution of Individual Authors to the Creation of a Scientific Article (Ghostwriting Policy)**

The authors equally contributed to the present research, at all stages from formulating the problem to the final findings and Solution.

### **Sources of Funding for Research Presented in a Scientific Article or Scientific Article Itself**

No funding was received for conducting this study.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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