

A Study on Preference of Consumers Towards Slow Fashion and Awareness on The Impacts Created by E-Commerce and Fast Fashion in Chennai

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Abstract— Fashion is a term that is often connected with change and evolution. The fashion cycle has evolved and impacted the globe in many ways since ancient times. The development of e-commerce, particularly in the textile domain, has seen a remarkable improvement in the past few years. Especially with the effect of the pandemic, every trade, be it small or big, has translated itself to online mode due to the new digital era. In this fast-moving world, slow fashion has lost its way with various social media interventions. E-commerce increases the risk in the fashion industry by impacting the supply chain. New technologies and shifting markets have hugely impacted the fast fashion trend. The importance of slow fashion that considers the supply chain and the wellbeing of the environment is the need of the hour. This research mainly aims at creating awareness about slow fashion and changing consumer preference towards the same. For this purpose, the study aims at quantifying the before and after preferential aspects of college going women. The quantified data is to be analysed using statistical tools.

Indexed Terms-- Fast fashion, Slow fashion, e-commerce, consumer preference, shifting market trends, social media

I. INTRODUCTION

Fast fashion is the term used for Fast fashion is the mass production of cheap, poor quality, disposable clothing. Recent statistics state that the fashion industry produces 80 billion garments a year which roughly calculates to 10 clothing for each human on this planet. The average amount of garment used before throwing away is 10 times, according to clothes

waste charity TRAIID. This level of usage and disposing of garments are due to the low pricing, low quality and increase in fashion trends. While prices are dropping, fashion trends are accelerating. This in turn creates a separate expenditure that can be dedicated for buying clothes to travel with the ongoing fashion trends (pebblemag.com)

E-commerce and social media play an important role in fueling the growth of fast fashion. The post-pandemic effect of online shopping has led to a shooting rise in the graph of e-commerce. The comfort of shopping with the click of a button has enabled sellers to utilise the opportunity by creating mass production of fashion items and selling them at a lower rate. This is possible because of the low-quality raw materials and labour exploitation. This not only exploits the labour force but also the environment.

The supply chain is highly disturbed because of the fast fashion movement. Slow fashion has lost its way in this fast-moving world. The primary goal of this study is to raise awareness about slow fashion and its benefits, as well as to test the preferences of college-aged women.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To raise awareness about the effects of e-commerce on fast fashion.
- To assess the magnitude of the impact made by using social media to promote fast fashion.
- To make the younger generation understand the backend problems such as labour exploitation and environmental hazards of fast fashion adoption.
- to raise awareness about the benefits of slow fashion.

- To spread the concepts of reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- The study's limitations are the cost of slow fashion clothing, which may cause difficulty in quick adaptation.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

3.1 E-commerce

E-Commerce "Electronic commerce, commonly written as E-Commerce, is the trading in products or services using computer networks, such as the Internet. Electronic commerce draws on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, Internet marketing, online transaction processing, electronic data interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems. Modern electronic commerce typically uses the World Wide Web for at least one part of the transaction's life cycle, although it may also use other technologies such as E-Mail." (Kutz, Martin)

3.2 Fast fashion

The fashion industry is known for its trend-driven clothing. Therefore, the textile industry is a major sector in the general economy, involving more than a milliard of people. Fashion has shown significant changes in recent decades. Not only has the design of the clothes changed but the entire industry, including our behavior towards fashion, has transformed over time. At this moment, we discovered that the ecological footprint of the current fashion industry is too large for the environment and people area. The problem keeps getting worse and we can no longer ignore them. (Vries, Melanie De)

3.3 Fast Fashion and Labor Exploitation

The garment industry continues to use workers' low-cost labor to make mass profits. These 'commitments' by brands to ensure proper wages have in fact made little or no real difference to workers. Big fashion companies wield huge power and millions of dollars of business every year in the garment industry. They have the freedom to pick and choose from low-cost and low-wage economies and in these markets, brands can dictate prices, quantity, and quality, with little

consideration for the impact on supplier factories and their workers. (Muller, Dominique)

3.4 Fast Fashion and Environmental Hazard

3.4.1 Excessive Usage of Water

The fashion industry consumes one tenth of all of the water used industrially to run factories and clean products. To put this into perspective, it takes 10,000 liters of water to produce one kilogram of cotton or approximately 3,000 liters of water for one cotton shirt.

3.4.2 Plastic Microfibers

Synthetic materials are the primary culprits that cause plastic microfibers to enter our oceans. To be exact, approximately 35% of all microplastics are from these synthetic materials.

3.4.3 Excessive Consumption of Clothing

Due to how affordable the clothing is and how new trends convince consumers to seek out more, the value of clothes may diminish in the eyes of consumers. As of 2019, the current report shows that 62 million metric tons of apparel were consumed globally. (Le, Ngan)

3.5 Slow fashion

A step towards sustainable fashion is by reducing the number of clothes that are annually produced. So in other terms, this means ending the phenomenon of 'fast fashion'. As I mentioned before, the number of collections on offer has doubled in recent years. More and more fashion brands are becoming more aware of the fact that this is a heavy burden on people and the environment. As a result, more and more fashion brands are turning their back on fast fashion and are reducing the number of collections they produce per year. This term is also called slow fashion (Lehman, Morten)

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The study was conducted and tested using surveys before and after creating awareness of the topic. The demographic profiles of the samples are as follows,

Table 4.1 Age and Annual Household Income

Age	N	Percentage	Annual Household Income	N	Percentage
17-18	11	10.48	Below 75,000	34	32.38
19-20	62	59.05	75000 - 1,00,000	38	36.19
21-22	31	29.52	1,00,000- 2,00,000	10	9.52
Above 22	1	0.95	2,00,000 - 5,00,00	17	16.19
Total	105	100.00	5,00,000 - 8,00,000	4	3.81
			Above 8,00,000	2	1.90
			Total	105	100.00

The survey helped in testing the importance of slow fashion; the impact of fast fashion; and the impact

created by e-commerce & social media. The results analysed has been formulated in the table below,

Table 4.3 Before and After testing of preferential aspects

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means										
	Shopping with Fast Fashion Brands (H&M, Zara, Shein, Forever 21)		Purchase made through social media advertisements		Repeating clothes		Repairing, Caring & Donating Clothes		Importance of Slow Fashion	
	<i>BEFORE</i>	<i>AFTER</i>	<i>BEFORE</i>	<i>AFTER</i>	<i>BEFORE</i>	<i>AFTER</i>	<i>BEFORE</i>	<i>AFTER</i>	<i>BEFORE</i>	<i>AFTER</i>
Mean	0.43	0.75	0.88	0.75	0.90	0.82	0.77	0.80	0.79	0.84
Variance	0.25	0.19	0.11	0.19	0.09	0.15	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.14
Observations	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105	105
Pearson Correlation	0.10		0.19		0.18		0.46		0.22	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00	
df	104.00		104.00		104.00		104.00		104.00	
t Stat	-5.29		2.57		1.99		-0.69		-1.00	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00		0.01		0.02		0.25		0.16	
t Critical one-tail	1.66		1.66		1.66		1.66		1.66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.00		0.01		0.05		0.49		0.32	
t Critical two-tail	1.98		1.98		1.98		1.98		1.98	

The survey tested the various aspects of the impacts related to fast fashion and e-commerce influence. The results infer the following:

1. Keeping in mind the brand factor, samples prefer to buy from fast fashion brands before and after the awareness given. The awareness has not created a significant impact because of the branding image created by these companies.
2. The factor of purchasing via social media advertisement had no discernible impact. This study demonstrates that the influence of social media on e-commerce is high.
3. Following the awareness provided, there is a significant change in people's preference for repeating their clothes.
4. The difference between repairing, caring, and donating clothes instead of throwing them away has changed significantly.
5. The importance of slow fashion that uses environmental conservation methods has created an impact to a great extent.

V. SUGGESTIONS

The awareness created through online platforms is basic and better methods of promoting slow fashion can be conducted to achieve a remarkable change in the mindset of the chosen sample. The limitations of the study will be the cost of slow fashion clothing, the brand image of the companies, and the high influence of e-commerce and social media platforms. Furthermore, the age and annual household income of the samples can be related to the preference and calculated for identifying better promotional methods.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study proves that people are aware of fast fashion and its consequences, but the preference is still towards fast fashion brands due to the influence of social media and e-commerce. However, the samples have responded that there will be a change in their preference. Especially after learning about the overall detrimental effects of fast fashion on both the environment and the economy, The study proves that there will be a positive change in the mindset of consumers with more awareness of the different aspects of the negative influences and impacts of fast fashion. The study also caters for further research

through extending the impacts of e-commerce and social media in different domains other than fashion.

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