



# A Study on Consumer Behavior towards Fast Fashion with Reference to Jhansi District of Uttar Pradesh

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In the moving fast-fashion world's market, consumers are the most significant part of the ecosystem, as they have the buying power in their hands. Fast fashion clothes production advantage trend replication and low-quality materials in order to bring cheap style to the end consumer. Fast fashion can impact consumers themselves, encouraging a "throw-away" culture because of both the built-in obsolescence of the products and the speed at which trends emerge. Today, the fast fashion industry is considered among the top polluting domains. This research addresses the impact of fast fashion on consumer behavior and proportion of income spend by the consumer on fast fashion and how fast fashion play significant role in consumers life. The main results from the analyses are respectively obtains in 3 main terms: Decision making process while purchasing commodities (related to fast fashion); involvement of the consumer and their awareness level towards sustainable fashion. The aspects try to cover the main topics according to general consumer behavior theories. And the outcomes were further developed into marketing policy and implication, also offering ideas for further research.

**Keywords:** *Fast fashion, Sustainability, Consumer behavior, Sustainable Fashion.*



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

***"As Consumer we have so much power to change the world by just being careful in what we buy" ~ Emma Watson***

Fast fashion has become trendy now-days and consumers loved to style different vogue

fashion garments influenced by their friends, relative, peers, favorite celebrities, and social media personalities. Digitalization play's significant role in the promotion of fast fashion globally. Without knowing the impact of fast fashion consumers usually frequently buy goods being ignorant that it is socially and

environmentally damaging. Now-days fast fashion has become a fun activity for consumers to look stylish with affordable clothing. Fast fashion not only harms environment but it has changed the consumer perception towards fashion risking the planet, humans, and animal's lives at the same time. Fast fashion industries exploit and abuse labor with insecure working conditions, paid below minimum wages, forced labor, no access to healthcare (Assoune, 2016). Surprisingly fast fashion industry produces about 10% of annual global carbon emissions, which is more than all maritime shipping and international flights combined. Fashion emissions of harmful greenhouse gases are projected to grow by more than 50% by 2030. Fashion industry used about 93 billion cubic meters of water annually, representing 4% of all global fresh water used. For manufacturing a single pair of jeans around 3,781 liters of water is used, and every second day a truck full of textiles garbage is burned or added to landfill, while textile dyeing utilises the second largest water, globally. At the end the main culprit for environmental damage is fast fashion (ZURICH, 2023) which is really a big concern where future is aiming towards a sustainable world.

## 2. BACKGROUND

The purchases decision of consumers re-influenced by some of their individual characteristics, such as learning, attitude etc., as well as the group and their psychology to which a consumer belongs. Psychological theories are also known as learning theories. The essence of these theories lies in the fact that people learn from experience and will modify their actions on future occasions. The significance of brand loyalty and repeat purchase make learning theory more relevant in the field of marketing.

### 2.1. Consumer Behavior Theories

Basically, there are four main factors that determine the characteristics of consumer behavior: personal, psychological, social, and cultural (Radu, 2023). All these factors are identified in the theories also. The main theories considered here to identify these variables are:

- ❖ Consumer Learning Theory: According to Kotler, learning denotes changes in an individual's behavior arising out of the experience. Mostly human behavior is learned over time, from their experience. Consumer learning is a process, which frequently changes over a time and develop new awareness by reading, observing, thinking, discussing etc. Newly obtain knowledge or their personal experience are actually both applicable for future related behavior (Indiafreenotes, 2020). Thus, it tells how individuals acquire information and skills to make informed purchasing decisions.
- ❖ Innovation Diffusion Theory: This theory is developed by Everett Rogers in his book-Diffusion of Innovation, published in 1962. It tells how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread (LaMorte, 2022). This theory explains the pattern and speed at which new ideas, practices, or products spread through a population. This theory helps to understand and promote the adoption of new products. Also, decision making is a five steps process that is awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption (Halton, Kelly, & Perez, 2023) among the potential users.

### 2.2. Consumer Awareness

Ralph Nader, American political activist, and author known as father of the consumer movement for his advocacy of consumer rights, safety regulation and corporate accountability, of which presently Consumer awareness is the most significant factor because it helps to make smart decision while shopping/purchasing. Without it, consumer can be fooled by seller, or getting an unsafe or low-quality product. Awareness protects consumer money and can even protect their health and maintain safety (Karan, 2023). The primary goal of consumer awareness is to allow consumer to make choices that are best in their interest and to protect them from fraudulent or misleading marketing practices.

### 2.3. Fast Fashion

Fast fashion is a term used to describe the clothing industry's business model of replicating recent catwalk trends and high-fashion designs, mass-producing them at low cost, and bringing them to retail stores quickly, while demand is at its

highest. Fast fashion gives consumer purchase trending new look at an affordable price (Rauturier, 2023). Now-days shopping became entertainment for consumer and they spent large amount on that. Fast fashion is not only low in price but on the other hand it is super stylish and widely available at retail stores frequently. Some companies like Zara and H&M are two very spotlight in field of fast fashion. It is created pollution, low wages to the labor, and very unsafe workplace (Hayes, Scott, & Eichler, 2023). The global fashion supply chain allowing the developing nations to produce mass amount of fast fashion clothing in unethical condition without taking the environment consequences into consideration and exporting to richer developed nations (Varghese, 2020). The speed at which clothes were produce also means that more and more clothes are disposed of by consumers, creating massive textile waste. Rapidly increase in textile demand create stress on environment which ended with landfilling. Fast fashion also creates human cost by exploiting workers while manufacturing and studies have revealed that it leads to harming animals for fashion to use leather, fur, and wool for making clothes, put animal welfare on risk (Rauturier, 2023).

#### 2.4. History of Fast Fashion

Fast fashion grew during the late 20th century as manufacturing of clothing became less expensive – the result of more efficient supply chains and new quick response manufacturing methods, and greater reliance on low-cost labor. Before the 1800s, fashion was a laborious, time-consuming process that required sourcing materials like wool, cotton, or leather, treating and preparing the materials by hands, then weaving or fashioning them into functional garments, also by hand. However, the industrial revolution forever changed the world of fashion by introducing new technology like the sewing machine and textile machines, which led to ready-made clothes and mass production factories (Idacavage, 2016). Rapidly growth in technology and post-war development in western countries constantly increase the demands for textile fashion and globalization give them boom by reducing the tariffs and cheap labor availability worldwide for making giant production (Varghese, 2020) which has become the new trend in the global market.

#### 2.5. Sustainable Fashion

The world is becoming more eco-conscious, so sustainable fashion become more important. Sustainable fashion is a term describing products, processes, activities, and policymakers aiming to achieve a carbon-neutral fashion industry, built on equality, social justice, animal welfare, and ecological integrity. Simply it is the fashion that is ethically made and environment friendly (Marshall, 2022). The textile industry is generating 4-10% of global greenhouse-gas emissions every year. Consumer's mindful consumption 'that is buy less and buy better', investing in sustainable fashion brands, shop secondhand clothes, try and promoting the rented clothing, purchase natural fabric garments, move towards vegan fashion (CHAN, 2021) can lead to more sustainable choices. Small steps taken by the buyers give great impact on sustainable fashion, Firstly educate yourself which makes you right decision-maker, invest in trans-seasonal clothes which work for you all year round, caring ensure longer life of your garments, donate your unwanted clothes rather than throwaway- it help needy people and ensure sustainability, invest in quality over quantity (DAVIS, 2023). According to a report by Global Fashion Agenda, the circular economy in fashion could be worth \$4.5 trillion by 2030 (Deeba, 2023) which is actually a menace to the concept of sustainable fashion.

#### 2.6. History of Sustainable Fashion

The origin of sustainable fashion movement is intertwined with the modern environmental movement in the book silent spring in 1962 by American biologist Rachel Carson. Carson's book exposed the serious and widespread pollution associated with the use of agricultural chemicals, a theme still relevant to the environmental and social impact of fashion today. Sustainable development, a term coined in 1987 by the Brundtland Report. In every industry, consumers are the most significant part of the ecosystem, as they have the buying power in their hands. Today, the fast fashion industry is considered among the top polluting domains, however, the coexistence of sustainable fashion and fast fashion can bring about a huge change.

## 2.7. Need For Sustainable Fashion

The present trends based on fast fashion that create resource wastage, consumer buying more clothes and throw it away which create to landfills. This leads to the need for Sustainable fashion as it aids in diminishing pollution but also preserves natural resources like water, energy and helps protect the biodiversity of our planet (Emeritus, 2022). Sustainable clothing and products are made up of natural materials, which do not contain any kind of toxic dyes and chemicals these are pure- eco and skin friendly. Fashion brands with sustainable practices use fabrics made from organic, natural, and recycled materials these are long-lasting quality and leave less of carbon footprints. Sustainable fashion is a fashion, that is ethically made and environmentally friendly. The most significant part of adapting sustainable fashion is that, it focuses on fair and ethical practices throughout the supply chain without exploitations of the workers. By supporting sustainable fashion brands, consumers not only contribute for the environment but also contribute to fair wages, safe working conditions, and better livelihoods for the artisans and workers in local communities.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the factors that impact consumer buying behavior leading to fast fashion.
- To identify the awareness level of the consumer towards sustainable fashion

## 4. HYPOTHESIS

- ❖ **H0-** There is no significant association between consumers income and there buying behavior.
- ❖ **H1-** There is association between consumers income and their buying behavior.
- ❖ **H0-** There is no association between consumer education and their awareness towards sustainable fashion.
- ❖ **H1-** There is association between consumer education and their awareness towards sustainable fashion.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

- **Descriptive Study:** This study is based on describing the already existing data by

bringing out the awareness level about fast fashion among consumers.

- **Area of the Study:** The study deals with consumers of Jhansi district who reveal their preference and awareness towards fast fashion.
- **Sampling Strategy:** Reaching the target population was bit difficult as consumers are from different places so for finding the respondents simple Snowball Sampling was considered as a sampling technique because the population was unknown.
- **Sample size:** In this study sample of 151 consumers from Jhansi city has been considered.
- **Tools of data collection:** In order to collect the data a structured questionnaire was designed according to the objectives and the primary data was collected from the field.
- **Techniques for data analysis:** The study used both mathematical and statistical tools for the purpose of analysis. The following tools were used to reach decision such as:
  - ❖ Chi-square analysis
  - ❖ Factor analysis
- **Software:** The data collection through the questionnaire was first entered into an excel spread sheet and then transferred to SPSS data sheet for further processing. The SPSS version 2016 was used for analyzing the data.

## 6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Gupta & Gentry (2018):** This study examines fast fashion at two level that is micro and macro. At micro level this study provides an overview of fast fashion industry effect on consumer, supply chain, and retail environment and at macro level it examines the influence of the throwaway culture on environment and society. The micro perspective shows that that consumers are defining the desires and notions of self through fast fashion or new style. Fast fashion brands are successfully able to satisfy youngster because mainly youngster aged between 15 to 29 are the most customers of fast fashion. Supply chain of fast fashion in short run capture the market by various latest designs. Fast fashion retail environment encircles number of physical elements like overall store design, window display, layout, fixtures and fitting, decorations, and signage that contain both tangible and intangible



attributes. The macro perspective of fast fashion from the production side required high resources of raw material, labors and input cost and quality of output product. Maintenance of the clothes with various toxic chemical create problem for environment. Fast fashion encourages the culture of throw away. Some clothes are recycled or reused but most textiles are made of with synthetic materials and end up with create land pollution. This study ends up with as fast fashion consumption is increasing danger to the environment is also increasing. People must develop market with sustainable alternative for the healthy future.

**Varghese (2020):** In their study emphasis focus on environmental instability due to overconsumption of commodities and the consequent wastage increase the instability and make environment polluted. This study reveals that fashion sector or clothing industry is the third largest among the global manufacturing sector. This industry making crucial environmental impact by dumping non-biodegradable cloth wastes into oceans bodies and landfills which create water and soil pollution respectively. Booming fast fashion in early 21's exposed the behavior of an average consumer trying to convey their identity through what they wear or purchase, and advancement in technologies make it easier to exchange new style or trends quickly. To reduce the cost at make that product available in the market at a very low cost, manufacturer reduce the material quality. These products greatly acceptable by consumer in the fast fashion market. This reveals the negative side of the fast fashion industry where no environmental aspect taken into consideration but merely strengthen of the customer strong desire for high-street fashion at a cheaper price. These high demand for fast fashion made by consumer making these industries strong. These industries not only having socio-economic problem faced by workers having extremely poor working condition but also create huge environmental pollution. Huge plastic material deposited in the ocean bed are from the micro fibers from clothes waste and micro fibers deposited the ocean and its entering back to food chain through consumption of seafoods, its harmful for environment also for human health. In this study researcher noticed lack of information about sustainable fashion, this research purpose is

to motivated consumer towards great awareness about fast fashion. The study aimed at examining the awareness level of the consumer while consuming fast fashion, factors that are affecting the consumer's behavior to choose between cloth renting and fast fashion, to examine how will low cost attract consumers towards fast fashion and what consumer think about hygiene of product as a factor affecting the cloth renting business model. The study determines the awareness level about pollution in fashion industry and behavioral patterns of consumer in their choose between fast fashion and cloth renting.

**Bhardwaj & Fairhurst (2010):** In their study titled fast fashion response to change in the fashion industry, highlighting the emerging concept of 'throwaway' or fast fashion. This study describes fast fashion from both the side from supplier as well as consumer side. Throwaway fashion increases the problem of mass production, increase in number of fashion industry and rapidly growth in supply chain which forced retailers to desire low cost and many design, low quality and speed to market. It increases competition level in the fashion industry. Fashion retailers increase their sales by saying to customer 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow'. This indicates shorter life cycle of the garments with the higher profit margin for the producers. Mainly sum components play a greater role to increase fast fashion such as supplier role, behavior of the buyer, and their financial states. Main purpose of this study to find out the changes that have rising in the fashion industry in past two decades. In the mid 1980's the fashion industry survived on low-cost mass production with standardized style that did not change frequently due to the design restriction of the factories, there were only few industries in the textile market and that time consumer were very less sensitive towards their style and fashion. A typical life cycle of fashion having four stages adoption by fashion leaders, then accepted by public, mass conformity and finally decline of the fashion. Fast fashion also based on different season, summer season have different style of cloths and winter have different, same with rainy season. Different generation having different perception towards throwaway fashion, younger people of the pullulation prefer higher number of low-quality fashionable cloths while on the other hand baby boomers prefer few numbers of higher

quality cloths. Conservative consumer looking fast fashion as a 'waste' because in their perspective rather than buying one higher quality product to satisfy a wardrobe need, consumer buy multiple that are lower in quality and then start a throw away process as quickly they bring a new-ones. The examination of consumer side perception on fast fashion is more important than the supply side. The crux stated that by increasing the understanding level of consumer and their purchasing behavior and by make them aware about sustainable fashion can reduce the throwaway culture.

**Ishak (2012):** This research examines the relationship between consumer awareness and knowledge to effective consumer behavior. A survey is conduct to measure three variables that is consumer awareness, knowledge, and behavior. Consumer play significant role as they must express their dissatisfaction towards product. Unawareness and lack of information on consumer rights distort consumers capacity and ability to defend themselves against sellers. This study tried to find out the relationship between awareness and effective consumer behavior, as well as consumer knowledge and effective consumer behavior. Sample of 60 respondent were be taken and data was collected through the questionnaires. Correlation was used to analysis between variables, and T-test also apply consumer awareness level across location, gender, and education level. Analysis indicates that consumer awareness has relationship with effective consumer behavior in term of protecting their rights. Awareness level had imposed more significant influence on effective consumer behavior compared to knowledge level. Through self-awareness, consumer can easily protect their rights from market players. Consumer awareness can promote effectiveness of consumer protection legislation, which currently emphasized by the government. The awareness of consumer rights served as soft-control mechanism aiming at creating more responsible business society.

**Teerawattananon, Khuanpad, Hitopakorn, Lapkritkhom, & Limwattana (2021):** In their research they are trying to throw light on public attitudes towards fast fashion. It is poorly made so they were not long-lasting and people worn them very few times and then dispose of, which create landfill and pollution. Fast

fashion impact on both wearer and manufacturer health, because it contains fabric dyes and chemical while making. Basically, the purpose of this study to explore the attitude and accessibility of fast fashion in each generation to realize the impact and problem of fast fashion. Try to find out various factors which motivate people of shopping. The generation is divided into 3 parts that is X, Y and Z. Sample of 510 individuals from generations was taken. Data was collected through online survey in the form of google forms. The Z generation contain (under 23yrs old), Y generation (23-40yrs), X generation group of (41-55yrs) and baby boomers (56-74yrs old). For analysis of data descriptive statistics and percentage method were used. Results shows that 216 people out of 510 had moderate awareness. Mostly, people handover and donate their used clothes, which accounted for 85.3%. Many people understand the problem of fast fashion, but only few people are aware with them. Reduction in the use of fast fashion can be done by reuse old clothes, spreading awareness to reduce purchasing of fast fashion, beside preferred quality/natural fabric clothes, encourage rental or second-hand clothes and supporting ecofriendly brands rather than fast fashion brands.

**Zhang, Zhang, & Zhou (2021):** In their study they try to provide an up-to-date depiction and analysis of the consumer's attitude towards eco-friendly fast fashion product in the UK. After technology and automotive industries fashion industry is reportedly world's third biggest manufacturing industry. Comparison to others the fast fashion business model is success in this vogue because of its low price and huge varieties leads over-consumption. In 2005 when WTO eliminated the quota system of outsourcing abroad this leads hike in fast fashion by making use of cheap labor and material all over the world. Psychological, Anthropological and Marketing theory of consumer behavior theories, all three were impact on consumer buying behavior. For analyses of the components of attitude the work ABC theory of attitude lays out a conceptual framework, this define 'what is the attitude' towards sustainability. This research aims to explore consumer attitude towards sustainability of fast fashion in the UK. Random sample of young consumer were taken, primary data were collected through online questionnaire 18-27yr old youth is taken into consideration. 128 valid responses

were collected and Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used. Finding of this study shows that females are less aware of the social equality issue, confirming the simple correlation analysis.

**Bailey, Basu, & Sharma (2022):** This research study emphasis on impact of fast fashion on water quality. Textile industries create high amount of environmental degradation, generation of wastewater and solid waste. With growing world growth of human beings and changing attitude of individuals create huge demand of trending clothes and accessories. Mostly fast fashion production is outsourced to low-to middle-income countries. The business model is dependent on the desire of consumers to stay up-to-date with the trend, booming off constant and desire purchases. This research analyzed 3315 articles and comprehensive them which were completely centered on the topic at hand. Bibliometric analysis and text analysis were used for systematic review. Finding of this research indicate the negative impact of fast fashion on environment, through carbon emission, energy footprints and ended with lots of landfills. These impact results on diminution the quality of water, soil and make climate changes. Highlights of this research finding is that, China are observed to be key players in

global consumerism and the fast fashion industry. China solely produces about 2.5 billion tons of wastewater annually. To escape the pitfalls of fast fashion, used alternative business models, slow, ethical, and sustainable fashion, change in consumer behavior and perception towards fashion.

## 7. ANALYSIS

### 7.1. Association between buying behavior and income.

The table shows the reliability of the factors used for identifying the buying behaviour and the consumers behaviour. As the value of Cronbach Alfa is .845 which is greater than 0.7 so it shows that the factors considered here were found to be highly reliable.

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.845	11

Source: (SPSS generated result)

In order to find the association between buying behavior and consumer income, Chi square test was used to test the set hypothesis of the study.

VARIABLES	P-Value (chi-square)	H0 accepted or rejected
1. Affordability	.000	H0 rejected
2. Huge varieties	.022	H0 rejected
3. Influence by internet	.013	H0 rejected
4. Influence by friends	.001	H0 rejected
5. Latest design	.039	H0 rejected
6. Stylish clothes	.051	H0 rejected
7. Quick delivery	.128	H0 accepted
8. Every time different out fits.	.000	H0 rejected
9. Trendy clothes	.002	H0 rejected
10. Clothes is medium of self-expression	.009	H0 rejected

11. Brand choice while shopping for clothes.	.000	H0 rejected
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Source: (Author's calculation using SPSS)

The results of Chi square as represented in the table given above shows the P values which is greater than 0.05 which denote that there is no significant association between buying behavior and consumer income.

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.900	11

Source: (SPSS generated result)

## 8. AWARENESS LEVEL OF THE CONSUMERS

11 items were considered to test the awareness level of consumers towards fast fashion. The awareness of consumers was seen through the core factors that influence their decision of blogging. Based on the literature review 11 factors were identified and an attempt was made to identify the major factors out of these. For this Factor Analysis of PCA technique was used for factor reduction.

The first step for perform Factor Analysis is to check the reliability of factors before extracting the major factors, so a reliability test was run to ascertain that are these factors majorly related to the study. The results of the test run as mentioned under the Reliability Statistics

The above table shows the reliability of the factors used for identifying the awareness level in consumers. As the value of Cronbach Alfa is .900 which is greater than 0.7 so it shows that the factors considered here were found to be highly reliable.

After checking the reliability factor analysis was run with Varimax Rotation and Eigen Value 1 was used. The result extracted 3 major factors out of 11. Only those factors whose value was greater than 0.5 were included in clubbing the factors.

11 items were considered to test the awareness level of consumers towards fast fashion that were found to be highly reliable as the Cronbach alpha value is .900.

LEVELS	SUB FACTORS
<b>FACTOR-1 AWARENESS ON RESOURCE CONSERVATIONS.</b>	1. AWARE ABOUT FAST FASHION (.804)
	2. WATER REQUIRED FOR MAKING ONE PAIR OF JEANS (.793)
	3. LANDFILLS DUE TO FAST FASHION (.814)
	4. CAUSES SKIN DISEASES (.745)
	5. CAUSES STRESS (.652)
	6. LABOR EXPOLITATION (.714)



	7. WORKING HOURS FOR LABOURS (.781)
<b>FACTOR-2 CULTURAL FACTORS</b>	1. IMPACT ON OWN CULTURE (.658)
	2. SALE INCREASE DUE TO FESTIVALS (.631)
<b>FACTOR-3 ECO-FASHION</b>	1. SUSTAINABLE FASHION MADE WITH NATURAL FABRIC (.624)
	2. ECO-FRIENDLY (.607)

Source: (Factor Reduction using PCA Techniques in SPSS)

These are 3 factors which reflect the awareness level of the consumers, were formed by clubbing same nature of factors.

- Factor 1 was AWARENESS ON RESOURCE CONSERVATIONS which contain basic awareness about fast fashion, water required for making only one pair of jeans which is most popular among fast fashion consumers, landfills due to fast fashion, skin disease and stress due to consumption of fast fashion, exploitation, and long working hours for labours due to fast fashion. This factor manifests these are factor which emphasis the focus on the awareness level and resource conservation by consumers.
- Factor 2 came out to be CULTURAL FACTORS which included fast fashion impact on your own culture, sale of fast fashion increase due to festival season, these cultural -factors reflecting towards cultural perspective of the consumers.
- Factor 3 runs out to be ECO-FASHION that sets out with awareness about sustainable fashion which include sustainable fashion made with natural fabric, sustainable fashion is eco-friendly.

Thus, these were the three major factors extracted to know the awareness level among consumers about sustainable fashion.

## 9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESSTIONS

The world is moving towards achieving SDG 2030, and as a human being it is a responsibility of each one to give a healthy world/environment to the future generation. As

per SGD-11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and SGD-12 (Responsible consumption and Production) we need to make mind-full consumption of the resources. Thus, considering the various factors that actually lead to fast fashion can be dealt with for creating awareness related to sustainable fashion. By supporting sustainable fashion brands, we not only contribute for the environment but also contribute to fair wages, safe working conditions, and better livelihoods for the artisans and workers in local communities. Sustainable brands, purpose to reduce waste generation by manufacturing premium apparel for durable material. Also, it is not only the consumer who needs to be informed but also stakeholders like producer, suppliers and government can actually play a pivotal role in reducing wastage and conserving our resources for a better tomorrow.

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