

Fast-Fashion: Determining How Consumers Have Driven this Market from 1990-2024

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ABSTRACT

This inquiry aims to understand how individualism and self-expression will play a more substantial part in the evolution of art when the Internet supplants traditional media and routes of communication. It also explains how independent designers and the sustainability movement will triumph over the imperialist fast fashion business and continue to motivate and inspire people to act. This article provides a clear comprehension of how the Internet is vital to the growth of art and how it replaces traditional media and communication routes. It also provides examples of how designers have changed steadily and how upcoming designers are constructing robust businesses. Brands can begin creating clothing from recycled materials and old garments, representing fashion's future. This investigation describes the excessive water use, waste, and pollution associated with fast fashion and demonstrates how quickly the manufacture of clothing wastes water and degrades the environment. It also includes a list of techniques for continuing their love of fashion while keeping it environmentally sustainable. This information is vital since it makes both points of view evident and boosts the source's trustworthiness by showing that it tries to present all relevant information. Equally important is the investigation's emphasis on how consumers support this fashion of clothing, which asserts that it is reasonable for most people to want to spend less on clothing.

Introduction

This study aims to explain how and why individualism and self-expression will become more critical in the development of art as the Internet replaces traditional media and methods of communication. The investigation's second objective is to explain how and why sustainable fashion and independent designers will beat the imperialist fast fashion industry and inspire more people to act. There are now two distant sectors in the fashion industry. Independent designers actively support and maintain a sustainable industry that uses green products because they are aware of the harm that fast fashion causes to the environment. The piece outlines a few things that could be improved by moving quickly. One shows how fast fashion causes extra waste, pollution, and water use. In this essay, the reader is given a thorough grasp of the steps they can take to stop fast fashion. It also shows how quickly water is wasted in the textile business, harming the environment. These facts are known to the average fashion consumer. The little-discussed element of fashion will become more widely known as a result. It helps spread knowledge of fast fashion among consumers. The average consumer may applaud fast fashion as a sign of change that makes producing inexpensive and stylish purchases possible. Although the last argument is correct, fast fashion also imprisons workers and depletes natural resources. Its supporters claim people can recover clothing. This information provides a list of methods people can use to maintain their love of fashion while keeping it environmentally friendly. This deeper comprehension will help new companies and creators. This investigation aims to highlight the harm fast fashion is doing to the planet. This information is critical in pointing out the importance of recycling clothes; this information will eventually reduce waste and bring new creative possibilities to the space.

The fashion industry has become increasingly concerned about sustainability and ethical practices in recent years. The fast fashion business model, characterized by low-quality, low-pricing, and frequently changing inventory,

has been criticized for its detrimental environmental and social impacts. Young consumers, in particular, have played a significant role in driving this market (Pencarelli et al., 2019) (Bick et al., 2018) (JenniAI, 2024).

The fashion industry produces an estimated 80 billion garments annually, but only 25% are recycled (Singh, 2023). The overconsumption of "fast fashion" has led to increased textile waste, pollution, and the exploitation of workers in developing countries. Consumers, especially younger generations, are becoming more aware of these issues and are demanding greater transparency and sustainability from fashion brands. (Gazzola et al., 2020) (JenniAI, 2024)

As a result, many fashion brands are now responding to these challenges by striving to be more transparent about their supply chains and implementing more sustainable practices. These efforts include recycling programs, the use of eco-friendly materials, and improved worker rights and conditions (Singh, 2023) (Gazzola et al., 2020) (Bick et al., 2018) (JenniAI, 2024).

However, some authors remain skeptical about the fashion industry's sustainability efforts, arguing that they are often superficial, and that the industry is still primarily driven by hyper-consumption and low prices. Independent designers and sustainable fashion brands have emerged due to fast fashion's dominance. These brands prioritize the use of eco-friendly materials, ethical production practices, and long-lasting, high-quality designs (Bick et al., 2018) (Singh, 2023) (Gazzola et al., 2020). Young consumers have been at the forefront of this shift, recognizing the fast fashion industry's negative impacts and seeking more sustainable alternatives (Bick et al., 2018). The growing interest in sustainable fashion is evident in the rise of eco-conscious marketing campaigns and the increasing popularity of secondhand clothing and rental services; these trends suggest that the future of fashion will be shaped by a continued emphasis on sustainability, ethical production, and a shift away from the unsustainable practices of the fast fashion industry.

Research Questions

1. How have young consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward fashion influenced the growth of the sustainable fashion industry?
2. What are the effects of fast fashion, and how will this affect our near future?

Literature Review

How and Why Independent Designers and the Sustainability Movement Will Triumph Over the Imperialist Fast Fashion Business

The fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world, contributing to environmental degradation through the extensive use of natural resources, the generation of waste, and the emission of greenhouse gases. The fast fashion business model, characterized by low-quality, low-pricing, and frequently changing inventory, has been a primary driver of this environmental impact (JenniAI, 2024). This investigation aims to clarify how and why individualism and self-expression will play a more significant role in the evolution of art when the Internet replaces traditional media and channels of communication. The second objective of the inquiry is to explain how and why independent designers and the sustainability movement will triumph over the imperialist fast fashion business and continue to motivate and inspire people to act. There are now two different areas of the fashion industry. Independent designers and their field of work actively support and preserve a sustainable sector that uses green products because they are aware of the harm that fast fashion causes to the environment. Independent designers should imitate the production of textiles and clothing from recyclable materials, such as mycelium-based fabrics. After reading this information, readers will fully comprehend how the Internet has supplanted traditional media and communication channels while simultaneously advancing art. It also depicts how independent designers and the green movement triumph over the imperialist fast fashion industry. This argument is clarified in the following piece by the facts that follow:

Independent artists have an indelible effect on upcoming trends and movements. The purpose of this source was to create awareness within the fashion community regarding the path a new generation of designers is taking. Among the awareness it strives to create, the source continues to explain and describe the work of over 10 new designers doing innovative labels and garments to spread further knowledge surrounding this topic. The design method and methodology are Documentary Analysis. The target population of the investigation is people interested in gaining knowledge of the change occurring within the fashion industry and people looking to learn about new trends and designers active in the community. This new generation of independent talents: Continue to strive to provide answers to some of life's more difficult problems while embracing creativity in the pursuit of self-expression. This isn't to suggest that the prominent competitors in fashion aren't struggling with the same issues: they simply often have a ton of resources and support to help them find solutions. (Hernandez, 2023)

The fashion industry is experiencing a significant shift, primarily driven by young consumers' influential and powerful voices. Their increasing awareness and demand for more sustainable practices are reshaping the industry. Fast fashion, focusing on low prices and rapid turnover, has significantly contributed to the industry's environmental impact, leading to a surge in textile waste, pollution, and worker exploitation. However, the power of the young consumer is now steering the industry towards a more sustainable future (JenniAI, 2024).

In response to these challenges, a new generation of independent designers and sustainable fashion brands have emerged, offering eco-friendly alternatives that prioritize ethical production, recycled or organic materials (Wagner et al., 2017) (Ban, 2020), and long-lasting, high-quality designs. Regarding the information in this source and its importance within this investigation, the data provides a detailed grasp of how the internet is crucial to the growth of art and how it replaces traditional media and communication channels. It also depicts how independent designers and the green movement triumph over the fast fashion industry. This source contributes to the investigation by providing various examples of how designers have changed. It serves as an example of how upcoming designers are building robust businesses. Brands can begin creating clothing from recycled materials and old garments. These garments are called upcycled garments, which may represent the future of fashion.

What Society Can Do to Counter Fast Fashion

Recent studies have shown that the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries globally, contributing significantly to environmental degradation through the extensive use of natural resources, the generation of waste, and the emission of greenhouse gases (Wagner et al., 2017) (JenniAI, 2024). Fast fashion, characterized by low-quality, low-pricing, and frequently changing inventory, has significantly influenced this environmental impact. The following study aims to inform the public about ways that they may stop fast fashion. The article outlines several disadvantages to working quickly. To demonstrate the excessive waste, pollution, and water use related to fast fashion is one of many. In this essay, the reader is given a detailed grasp of the steps they can take to stop fast fashion. It also shows how quickly the production of garments wastes water and pollutes the environment. These details will be provided to the average fashion shopper. This article will help make people more aware of the rarely addressed component of fashion. The source explains this further by stating the following:

Learn about the ethics and operations of the brands you buy. Do they pay workers more than enough to love on? Protect the environment? Instead of buying new "brand-name" clothes, swap, re-use, buy used, remake, and recycle clothes as much as you can. Shop at online and IRL thrift shops. They disrupt fast fashion's cycle of trends, overconsumption, and trashing clothes. And they're a blast! Just don't consume so much, even if you buy from sustainable brands. It's best for the environment to consume less, no matter what you're consuming. Act through organizations like Re/Make, Sustain Your Style, War on Want, and more. From your household to the world, use your voice to make change! (Jackson, 2020)

The research indicates that the fashion industry's environmental impact is severe and that consumers play a crucial role in driving change. Individuals can make a significant difference by being more conscious of their consumption habits, favoring ethical and sustainable brands, and engaging in clothing recycling and reuse initiatives. In

this essay, the reader is provided a thorough understanding of the actions they might take to halt rapid fashion. It also demonstrates how quickly water is wasted and the environment gets harmed throughout the textile industry. The typical fashion consumer will be aware of these facts. This article will raise awareness of the little-discussed aspect of fashion. This information sheds light on the under-appreciated drawbacks of fast fashion, making it crucial to the research. Excessive water is one of them, which many people would not anticipate.

Consciously Engaging with Fashion

The new generation of fashion designers and brands is working to create sustainable products and educate and change consumer mindsets. Many of these independent labels are prioritizing transparency, highlighting the origins of their materials and the conditions under which their garments are produced (JenniAI, 2024). They are empowering consumers to make more informed choices and take an active role in supporting ethical, eco-friendly fashion. The principal objective of this inquiry is to demonstrate how quick fashion would be ideal in a world free of pollution. It helps make consumers more conscious of fast fashion. The average consumer may applaud fast fashion as a sign of democratization that makes it possible to make inexpensive and stylish purchases. Although the final element is accurate, fast fashion also imprisons workers and depletes natural resources. People can recycle clothing, say some of its proponents. This information provides a list of methods people can use to maintain their love of fashion while keeping it environmentally friendly. This enhanced insight will help upcoming brands and designers. In this regard, the investigators were able to state the following:

It's the first day of school and you want to showcase your best outfit. You scrupulously pick from your closet and confidently stride out. At school, you get all the ooohs and ahhs. Meanwhile, the other clothes in your closet gloomily collect dust. They dread their looming fate: the landfills. Fast fashion is hurting the planet and your clothing's feelings. So, what exactly is fast fashion? It's cheap and trendy clothing made in a fast fashion. If you're shopping for the hottest holiday deals, fast fashion! You buy clothes affordably, and stores make profits. Nothing wrong in the ideal consumerist scheme. Right? As always, the answer is No. Numbers don't lie. Here are some that you wish were untrue. According to a Nature article, "The Environmental Price of Fast Fashion," over 1.5 trillion liters of water are used a year to make clothing. The fashion industry is also the second largest industrial polluter and is responsible for about 10% of global carbon emissions, largely due to the increase in production and consumption. (Yoon, 2021)

The previous paragraph highlights the problem of fast fashion and its environmental impact while providing practical solutions for conscious consumption; this data offers a list of ways that individuals can continue to enjoy fashion while keeping it environmentally sustainable. New brands and designers will benefit from this increased awareness (JenniAI, 2024). This information is essential since it makes both points of view clear. The positives are discussed in this article alongside the drawbacks; this increases the source's credibility by showing that it makes an effort to include all relevant information. This investigation's focus on how buyers support this type of clothing is equally significant. It claims that it is reasonable for most individuals to want to spend less on clothing. However, to convince them that fast fashion is unsustainable, it is necessary to present data on the environmental impact.

Economic Impacts of Sustainable Practices

As previously mentioned, the fashion industry is a major contributor to environmental degradation and human rights violations. Textile manufacturing involves significant water usage, chemical pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, garment workers in developing countries often face exploitative labor practices with low wages and poor working conditions (Bick et al., 2018) (JenniAI, 2024). One of the most significant setbacks for sustainable brands and designers is the economic challenge behind such practices. Clothing and textile companies that pursue sustainable products will likely see more considerable operation costs than those that operate through fast fashion. This investigation looks at possible outcomes in the fashion industry if the way clothes were made and used were altered.

In contrast, environmental, social, and economic impacts are discussed by providing an in-depth analysis and recommendations for how the United Kingdom could transform its clothing and textile industry into a sustainable and responsible business. One of the significant environmental impacts of the clothing and textile industry is the large amount of energy used and the toxic chemicals in producing these products. These procedures are mainly due to the low cost of operations compared to other production methods. One of the considerable economic challenges the United Kingdom faces is the competition from low-cost international suppliers; this forces the United Kingdom's fashion industry to offer cheaper alternatives that aren't necessarily produced with sustainable procedures. The growing competition in the fast fashion market makes it difficult for sustainable practices to take place cost-efficiently. This analysis is further explained in the text that follows:

Second-hand clothing is worth \$1 billion per year After the consumer use phase the life of a garment or textile product is not over. Some clothes and textiles are taken to recycling clothes banks operated for example by the Salvation Army (which also has door to door collection), Traid, Oxfam, or many other members of the Textile Recycling Association. The goods are transported to recycling plants to be sorted. The best quality garments are sent for resale at charity shops and a small number of items are resource of low cost clothing. The trade is only a small fraction of global trade in clothing (about 0.5% of the total value) but in many African countries it has a significant proportion of the market, up to 30% of the total value of imports and 50% in volume A10. This raises a concern that second-hand clothes inhibit the development of local industry. However, at present trade in second-hand clothing is falling as a share of total clothing imports due to the increase of cheap imports from Asia. (Allwood et al., 2006)

This passage highlights the economic impacts of sustainable practices in the fashion industry, such as the second-hand clothing market. It suggests that while second-hand clothing can have environmental benefits by reducing waste, it also poses challenges for the development of local textile industries in some African countries. This information offers an in-depth analysis of economic factors regarding secondhand clothing. It also provides statistics demonstrating that even though the secondhand clothing market is only about 0.5% of the total clothing and textile industry, in many African countries, this consumes up to 30% of the total value of their imports. The rise in low-cost imports from Asia is primarily responsible for the decline in the trading of secondhand products. Some designers from countries such as the United Kingdom can combat fast fashion products by producing custom-made garments. These designers are primarily dedicated to producing high-end goods such as tailored pieces with better quality fabrics that will last longer than fast fashion products. Expensive or high-quality pieces from these designers are also likely kept longer than exceptionally cheap clothes and textiles. This data was crucial for understanding how only a small percentage of the industry implements sustainable practices and how these practices continue to decrease as cheaper alternatives continue to strive.

Consumer Behavior and Awareness

Consumers play a vital role in the fashion industry's shift towards sustainability. The information provided highlights the importance of consumer awareness and behavior in supporting more sustainable fashion practices. According to the sources, while many consumers express concerns about the environmental impact of fashion, their actual consumption habits do not always reflect these concerns (JenniAI, 2024). Consumerism powers the fashion industry, creating a never-ending demand for new styles and trends. Many fashion consumers purchase based on trends; therefore, observing what drives the rest of the consumers to buy clothes is crucial. The paper's main objective is to examine the relationship between customers' buying patterns and their attitudes concerning sustainability in the fashion industry. The research looks at the views and actions of fashion consumers on purchasing ethical and environmentally conscious apparel. Through this, the study found fashion consumers can be grouped into three sectors: 'Self,' 'Social,' and 'Sacrifice' consumers. These groups shape the different submarkets of the fashion industry. Although they all share an interest in fashion, these groups are individually influenced by different factors when purchasing clothes. Further justification for this analysis is given in the text that follows:

Those most concerned with personal desires reflected a tendency to enhance their own self-image and other's perceptions of them through fashion acquisition. These consumers were frequent purchasers of fashion clothing and saw fashion spending as 'self'-oriented as opposed to more practical spending [...]

'Social' individuals are extremely concerned with how they are perceived by their peers. Price appears less of a concern in reality, as these individuals have relatively few reservations paying large sums of money for items of clothing they strongly desire [...]

The last group of consumers, ('Sacrifice' consumers), exhibited very high levels of concern for the environment and were adept at cognitively processing complex social issues related to ethics and social well being. As such, these consumers were particularly negative toward fast fashion and would avoid products and brands they deemed as representing fast fashion. (McNeill & Moore, 2015)

This breakdown of different types of fashion consumers provides valuable insights into how consumers' motivations and priorities shape the industry. By recognizing these distinct segments, fashion brands can better understand their target markets and tailor their sustainability initiatives accordingly (JenniAI, 2024). The document enlightens readers on what persuades different types of consumers to purchase apparel. Throughout the investigation, the source divided fashion consumers into three groups: 'Self,' 'Social,' and 'Sacrifice' consumers. 'Self' consumers are those who seek personal pleasure by purchasing clothes. Deemed as frequent shoppers, 'Self' consumers are the most likely to purchase from fast fashion brands due to low prices. 'Social' consumers purchase fashion products as a statement to create an image for themselves. This group is likelier to purchase from designer brands to impress those around them. 'Sacrifice' consumers consciously purchase products to reduce adverse environmental outcomes due to their consumption. Those who are classified as 'Sacrifice' consumers are more likely to purchase upcycled garments, likely from local artists. These classifications are crucial to understanding why people purchase products. The information shows that two of the three studied groups do not regard sustainability when purchasing clothes; this further proves that more awareness is needed, considering that only one of the three studied groups regards environmental consequences when purchasing fashion products.

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

The excerpt from source (Thomas, 2019) highlights the tension between different stakeholders within the industry, such as business managers and designers, in defining and operationalizing sustainability (JenniAI, 2024). This suggests that resolving the ambiguities around fashion sustainability will require coordination and compromise across various industry actors, rather than a top-down approach. In order to ensure that businesses and individuals consume fashion responsibly, multifaceted regulatory measures must be implemented to tackle the complex environmental and social challenges associated with the fast fashion industry. This article aims to investigate and evaluate regulations meant to mitigate the fast fashion industry's detrimental effects on society and the environment. This piece assesses and lists several policy initiatives that can promote equitable, environmentally conscious, and circular fashion practices. Challenges the fashion industry faces in implementing the circular economy into practice are evaluated, and suggestions for legislative and regulatory changes that would encourage the production and consumption of fashion in a safer and ecologically responsible manner are offered. It also discusses how consumer behavior plays a crucial role in the idea of having a circular economy. It states that education and awareness about sustainable practices are pivotal to the long-term success of the proposed circular economy. International and National Initiatives promoting sustainability in the industry are also discussed, such as the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, the Australian Modern Slavery Law, and laws in France banning the destruction of unsold clothing. The aforementioned initiatives are explained in greater detail by the details that follow:

In 2019, the United Nations launched The United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, with the aim of contributing to sustainable development goals, through coordinated action in the field of fashion. Many municipal governments were already on board: In 2019 the Stockholm Municipality canceled Fashion Week in order to find

more environmentally friendly alternatives [55]. At the same time, the Paris Municipality announced that it aspired to become a sustainable fashion capital by 2024 [...]

[...] According to the law, companies with revenues above 100 million dollars (Australian) are required to publish an annual Modern Slavery Statement, reporting on all potential modern slavery risks and practices in their operations and supply chains [59]. These modern slavery statements are required to address an entity's structure, operations and supply chains, any actions taken to address modern slavery risks and the effectiveness of such actions. (Peleg Mizrahi & Tal, 2022)

The excerpts highlight government initiatives in France aimed at promoting sustainability in the fashion industry (JenniAI, 2024). The importance of this source in this inquiry affirms that large organizations are recently mobilizing toward sustainable practices within the fashion industry. Frameworks such as those provided by the United Nations have driven municipalities like Stockholm to cancel fashion events in search of ways to implement sustainability. Other places such as New York and Australia have had to implement regulations to ensure companies follow ethical practices. Companies could face fines if regulations are not adequately followed or ignored. Regulations such as the Australian Modern Slavery Law focus more on sustainable labor practices than material sustainability. These regulations must continue to be enforced, requiring companies to follow ethical and sustainable practices. This information assists the investigation by providing data on how some countries and large organizations are taking measures to ensure the fashion industry complies with some sustainability, whether it concerns labor or material.

Vendali, His Design Processes, and Choices

The objective of this interview is to explore the current views of Puerto Rican fashion designer Vendali (who granted a name-release form to have his identity revealed in this study) regarding sustainability, design processes, and design choices. The interview discusses key questions in answering how fashion designer, Vendali, views the movement of sustainability and how it influences his creative process. While his interest in fashion was sparked long before, Vendali began his studies in 2020 at Polimoda in Florence, Italy. After his second year, he decided he would stop attending Polimoda and would move back to Puerto Rico to pursue a career in the fashion industry. Through his experience studying and living in one of the fashion hearths of the world he provides insight on how several factors impact the way he designs. Vendali acknowledges sustainability to be a large problem in the fashion industry but also highlights how challenging it could be to participate of eco-friendly practices. He also shares concerns regarding the transparency behind some things such as certain fabrics being labeled as recycled or sustainable when no one is regulating them; hence, these labels could contain false information. This acknowledgment is stated when he is asked, “3. ¿Cuáles cree que son los mayores retos de la industria de la moda hoy en día, particularmente en relación con la sostenibilidad y el impacto ambiental?”/“3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in the fashion industry today, particularly in relation to sustainability and environmental impact?” The following excerpt text reveals his response:

“Pues mira.. hay un problema bien grande e incluso las mismas industrias grandes pecan de. Es como la comida, tu si sabes que estas consumiendo si vas al supermercado y vez los ingredientes de lo que te vas a comer, lo mismo es con las telas. En una tienda de telas te pueden decir que es una tela reciclada pero realmente nosotros no sabemos eso sino estamos comprandolo directamente de un suplidor de telas. Te lo digo porque cuando estaba tomando clases en Italia, en Polimoda, nuestra maestra de ciencia al textil nos estaba explicando este problema porque ella le vende a Zara, ella le vende a H&M y es el problema de que muchas de estas marcas se estaban vendiendo como eco-amigable o que esta siendo reciclado cuando realmente no era porque no hay una fiscalización detras de eso para comprobar que si era reciclado o “nature” friendly.

[...] Es un problema porque realmente no sabemos cien porciento que esta bien bajo las reglas del reciclaje y que no esta bien.

Incluso hasta el mismo Shein, te puedo vender algo que es reciclado y uno no sabe realmente de donde viene porque no hay nadie que lo fiscalize.” (Arias & Vendali, 2024)

To further understand how these opinions play a role in his production practices and choices of materials, Vendali was asked the following, “2. ¿Puede describir los factores principales que influyen en la elección de materiales y métodos de producción en sus diseños?”/“2. Can you describe the primary factors that influence your choice of materials and production methods in your designs?” His response was as follows:

“Pues mira, siempre, por lo menos en el poco tiempo que llevo diseñando, siempre me he hido a telas muchos mas rigidas. Basicamente no tengo una fibra o material especifico a la hora de seleccionar las telas, sino, si voy a una tienda de tela o voy a comprar telas online, siempre es con la intuicion que me guste. No hay un pensamiento detras de que si es polyester, nylon, o algodón. Eso si, cuando es en producción que voy a vender, cual eso es lo que estoy empezando ahora, pues eso son cosas que si hay que tener en consideración porque lo estas haciendo para venderse a un publico así que ahí tu tienes que poder darle la mejor calidad, el mejor material. Por ejemplo ya sabemos que el polyester no es lo mejor para que una persona se lo ponga. Pero para los proyectos que yo he estado haciendo que mas bien son uno de uno, trabajos para artistas o para personas en especifico, pues no tengo esa investigacion o pensamiento de que fibra voy a usar, sino es mas bien lo que yo vea en la tienda; si me llama la atencion pues lo compro.” (Arias & Vendali, 2024)

From Vendali's perspective, the lack of transparency and regulation around sustainable practices and materials in the fashion industry is a major challenge (JenniAI, 2024). Having mentioned problems with cheaper and more accessible materials such as polyester, he was asked the following, “5. En tu opinión, ¿qué pasos puede dar la industria de la moda para equilibrar la ganancia con la sostenibilidad y cómo crees que evolucionará el futuro de la moda en este sentido?”/“5. In your opinion, what steps can the fashion industry take to balance profitability with sustainability, and how do you see the future of fashion evolving in this regard?” His response was as follows:

“Pienso que como unico es fizcalizar y siento que es casi imposible porque volvemos a lo mismo de la comida. Ojala hubiese una fizcalisacion y eliminaran todos estos quimicos y pesticidas de todas las comidas pero eso no va a pasar porque ya esta generando dinero y es una industria billonaria. [...]

Mientras le este dejando mucho dinero a una compañía, la produccion de materiales o telas no va a dejar de hacerse. Siempre va a ver un mercado que no le va a importar de donde viene sino lo mas barato que sea para su bolsillo versus el otro mercado que si le importa de donde viene, que fibra, si es natural, si esta afectando el medio ambiente y pienso que el mercado, lo vemos reflejado otra vez en la comida, la gran mayoria de la gente no es de su interes. Es lamentable pero no es de su interes porque no le afecta su bolsillo tanta como lo ecoamigable. [...]

En los “jerseys” he visto que por lo menos en Mood Fabrics, las recicladas tienen un precio un poco mayor a las regular. Cuando es a nivel de produccion en escala, si me imagino, todavia no lo he hecho, que va a subir mucho [el precio de] la produccion de tu produco versus una tela polyester o telas mixtas con muchos quimicos. [...]

Cuando haya una demanda bastante grande para este producto yo pienso que puede estar al mismo costo que una tela regular o algo menos. (Arias & Vendali, 2024)

To contextualize, the interviews were guided by questions three, two, and five (in that order), which inquire the following: “3. ¿Cuáles cree que son los mayores retos de la industria de la moda hoy en día, particularmente en relación con la sostenibilidad y el impacto ambiental?”/“3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in the fashion industry today, particularly in relation to sustainability and environmental impact?”, “2. ¿Puede describir los factores principales que influyen en la elección de materiales y métodos de producción en sus diseños?”/“2. Can you describe the primary factors that influence your choice of materials and production methods in your designs?”, “5. En tu opinión, ¿qué pasos puede dar la industria de la moda para equilibrar la ganancia con la sostenibilidad y cómo crees que evolucionará el futuro de la moda en este sentido?”/“5. In your opinion, what steps can the fashion industry take to balance profitability with sustainability, and how do you see the future of fashion evolving in this regard?” These questions were crucial for understanding how Vendali, and other like-minded designers view the fashion industry when discussing sustainability. During the interview, Vendali expressed a distrust in fast fashion companies such as Zara and H&M, claiming poor transparency regarding promoted sustainable practices such as using recycled fabrics. He believes there might be a chance at opting for sustainable practices if regulations are applied by influential cooperations or governments. The interview with Vendali concludes that in a mulit-billion dollar market, if regulations aren't

set in place, large companies will continue to use environmental-damaging practices since they are more profitable and take less effort.

Through this interview, it was found that the fashion industry's approach to sustainability is complex and nuanced, with differing perspectives among key stakeholders such as designers, business managers, and consumers (Thomas, 2019). The tension between short-term economic interests and long-term ecological concerns is a major challenge, with designers often caught in the middle (JenniAI, 2024).

Diego McElroy, His Design Processes, and Choices

In contrast to Vendali's experience, the designer Diego McElroy has taken a more proactive approach to incorporating sustainability into his fashion design process (JenniAI, 2024). As a fashion designer, McElroy has found that integrating sustainable practices into his work requires a fundamental rethinking of the design process itself. This interview aims to explore the current views of Puerto Rican fashion designer Diego McElroy (who granted a name-release form to have his identity revealed in this study) regarding sustainability, design processes, and design choices. In the interview, McElroy discusses how his interest in fashion began. Several factors, like his parents' creative influence and wardrobe frustrations, sparked the desire to make his own clothes. He started by using existing clothes as source material for his projects which influenced him to continue down the path of upcycling clothes and fabrics. Eventually, Diego attended Parsons School of Design, graduating in 2024. He confirms Parsons did educate students on fast fashion and the importance of upcycling, although emphasizing more attention should be paid to these types of projects since many students just viewed it as any other project without truly understanding its importance. McElroy explains how over time he has built relations, gaining him access to clothes or fabrics that would have otherwise been thrown away. To further understand his expertise, Diego was asked the following, "3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in the fashion industry today, particularly in relation to sustainability and environmental impact?" The following text reveals his response:

"Sadly the biggest challenges have to do with the consumers and the rate at which we buy stuff. A lot of the problems stem from convenience. "Oh I have an event you know tonight, so let me go to Zara and buy a button-up shirt so I can wear it once and then throw it away." instead of investing a little more in pieces you can wear more than once of course and then hand them down to someone else after. I think that's one of the big problems and also production practices in the industry. [The industry] not conserving fabrics when we cut them when we could be doing zero-waste cutting. [...]"

You have to define what sustainability is for yourself because it is just a big buzzword now. I don't think a lot of people know what it really means to be sustainable. [...]"

There's problems with leather, while there's also problems with "vegan leather" which is just plastic. What's more sustainable, buying a leather jacket that could possibly use a lot of water in the tanning process to create the leather and offset a bunch of gasses or you could buy the vegan leather jacket which is made of plastic that while you're extracting the gas, the petroleum to then turn it into polyester, it creates tons of off-gasses and when it sits in a landfill after, it's going to turn into microplastics, create more gasses and then you know mess up all the dirt and soil around it. So what is being more sustainable? I think we have to do more research and kind of find out what actually is sustainability for each brand or try to implement some sort of consensus on that through the government. (Arias & McElroy, 2024)

So the biggest issues as a designer are: 1) Material Sourcing (trying to find materials that are actually sustainable and then prove it) 2) Educating the consumer on what sustainable fashion and making meaningful changes to the system. (JenniAI, 2024). In order to better understand how Diego's thought process affects his artistic processes and material choices, the following question was asked, "2. Can you describe the primary factors that influence your choice of materials and production methods in your designs?" His response was as follows:

"Yeah, so recently in my own work under PrettyBallads, PrettyBallads is my own fashion label; but, under PrettyBallads I have been working from existing materials that we find through some of our own partnerships that we

have created, but for the most part, come from existing materials whether it be second-hand clothing or fashion industry offcuts or leftovers. So we definitely work from a sustainability standpoint just because that's what we get our hands on. [...]

They [Parsons School of Design] do definitely discuss ideas of sustainability, circularity in the fashion design sort of aspect but I don't think they do talk about it as much as they need to. I definitely did learn a lot about what I know through the school, but I guess it was just because I was placed in the right classroom and I kind of went out of my own way to search for it. [...]

There is an upcycling project as well at Parsons and I believe that a couple other design schools do sort of make their students do that upcycling project but for a lot of our peers, it just feels like an upcycling project, you know it doesn't really feel like something that you'd want to really pursue but I like it. [...]

For a lot of people, it doesn't really go much further than that. For my own personal work, I love working with existing stuff because it can be a challenge. I do think designers of the future have to be working with consumers secondhand waste.” (Arias & McElroy, 2024)

While responding to question two, Diego mentioned the fashion industry's surpluses, his own fashion label which works for sustainability, and some large institutions such as Parsons School of Design teaching its students about sustainability and the importance of circularity. With many people backing the movement, sustainability seems to be far from being practiced to its full potential by large corporations. To learn what McElroy thinks could be the possible solution for this he was asked the following, “5. In your opinion, what steps can the fashion industry take to balance profitability with sustainability, and how do you see the future of fashion evolving in this regard?” His response was as follows:

“I think clothes should be made to last and for the most part well made clothes made out of good materials tend to cost a little bit more. A lot of the pieces of clothing that I grew up with and sort of really inspired me to be a designer came from my parent's closet. They wore them before I did and I still wear them to this day so I think clothes should be made well to last multiple lifetimes and all the brands that these pieces [were made by] that were handed down to me I hold them to extremely high regard and I would buy their stuff again if they were still to that quality. [...]

[...] With the modern age, with cell phones and you know wanting stuff fast, I think we have to find out a new way. (Arias & McElroy, 2024)

To contextualize, the interviews were guided by questions three, two, and five (in that order), which inquire the following: “3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in the fashion industry today, particularly in relation to sustainability and environmental impact?”, “2. Can you describe the primary factors that influence your choice of materials and production methods in your designs?”, “5. In your opinion, what steps can the fashion industry take to balance profitability with sustainability, and how do you see the future of fashion evolving in this regard?” The documented questions were able to provide a more in-depth analysis of how Puerto Rican fashion designer Diego McElroy views, implements, and forms part of the sustainability movement. Through his years of studies, Diego has been able to grow a network of suppliers that provide second-hand clothes or offcuts for his projects. With the help of these suppliers, Diego is able to produce garments for his fashion label, PrettyBallads. A key takeaway from this interview is the personal connection Diego has with his clothes. Having been passed down by various family members, the clothes hold more value and are greatly appreciated. Perhaps the social implementation of this way of seeing clothes and gratitude towards the emotional connection is a possible way to reduce fast fashion. Ultimately, this interview provides more knowledge on how upcoming designers are stepping in to reduce waste and spread awareness while still producing well-made garments.

Amanda Forastieri, Her Design Processes, and Choices

In an interview with fashion designer Amanda Forastieri, the focus was on how her personal design process and material selection are influenced by sustainability (JenniAI, 2024). This interview aims to explore the current views of Puerto Rican fashion designer Amanda Forastieri (who granted a name-release form to have his identity revealed

in this study) regarding sustainability, design processes, and design choices. Throughout the interview, Puerto Rican fashion designer, Amanda Forastieri discusses how her interest in fashion began, where she studied, and what she aspires to accomplish in the fashion industry. Fashion was a second career option since she began by studying science, later realizing it was not for her. Amanda studied fashion at Drexel University, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; graduating in 2023. Forastieri aims to explore the power of fashion in different cultural settings such as queer movements or resistance movements within society. Reconnecting with nature is very important for Forastieri when it comes to creating her art, stating it is a way of healing generational trauma and incorporating natural and ancestral connections. A tour around Amanda's workplace revealed her dedication to creating sustainable clothes. From using recycled and cut-up parts of t-shirts to using parts of palm trees to create fashion statements, she makes the best out of any material she can get her hands on. For Amanda, sustainability goes far beyond textiles as she even uses artisanal methods of dyeing clothes; for example, for one of her dyes, she imports a particular bug that when crushed creates this purple-looking color. To dive deeper into Amanda's process of creating, she was asked the following question, "3. ¿Cuáles cree que son los mayores retos de la industria de la moda hoy en día, particularmente en relación con la sostenibilidad y el impacto ambiental?"/ "3. What do you see as the biggest challenges in the fashion industry today, particularly in relation to sustainability and environmental impact?". The following text reveals her response:

"Creo que es muy grande, creo que es una industria que produce demasiado y el mercado esta ajustado a eso. Muchas veces para crecer tienes que producir mucho. [...]"

Si tu quieres crear algo sostenible pero no tienes recursos para poder hacerlos exepcto si usas t-shirts o cosas asi que son recursos que pues al final del dia son cosas cotidianos verdad, pues tienes que importar algo y muchas veces si no tienes mucho capital, no tienes el control de donde viene eso. Creo que obviamente la moda rapida y el que esta super mega multinacional que hace ropa bien rapido y esta filosofia de deshecho es un gran [factor]. La falta de sistemas circulares que es algo que observo aquí. Por donde vivo con mi familia, la gente bota todo mano. La gente bota bultos... Osea cosas buenas que se pueden reusar y no necesariamente es porque esa persona necesitaba otra cosa pero es porque no hay un sistema que lo mantenga en circulacion y tampoco nos educan como consumir mejor. [...]"

Es super caro lo sostenible y pagarle a alguien bien. Es inaccesible por lo menos en una economia de intercambio monetario, creo que eso tambien es otro reto. Estamos super desconectados de la tierra, eso es otro reto. Muchas personas no saben de donde viene su comida, de donde vienen su telas, de donde vienen los muebles que tienen en sus casas. (Arias & Forastieri, 2024)

To further explore how these challenges impact Amanda's work, she was asked the following, "2. ¿Puede describir los factores principales que influyen en la elección de materiales y métodos de producción en sus diseños?"/ "2. Can you describe the primary factors that influence your choice of materials and production methods in your designs?" Her response was as follows:

"Pues eso como ya observaste, ha cambiado. Antes era mi capacidad y todavia lo es, verdad para comunicar imagenes graficas sobre mi conexion con la tierra y sobre mi conexion conmigo misma. Pero ahora eso a cambiado a que se han influido por lo que necesitamos nosotros en este territorio [Puerto Rico] especificamente encorporar nuestro objetos y nuestras practicas creativas en nuestro diarioo vivir para poder entonces si movernos a un sistema sostenible. Ahi entra la utilizacion de articulos cotinianos como t-shirts y tambien la utilizacion de materiales que son cosechados, sembrados en Puerto Rico de una manera regenerativa. La palabra regeneracion me gusta un monton y la practico en muchas areas que vayan de acorde a lo que nosotros ecologicamente tenemos en abundancia y lo que necesita nuestra tierra para poder movernos a un espacio mas sostenible que cuide de ella. Eso son cosas que eligen. Mas en lo estetico, me gustan mucho los colores, soy bien colorida. Me gusta mucho usar los colores para expresar emociones y convocar emociones en la persona. Me gusta mucho la geometria. [...]"

Me gusta lo cambiante y me gusta jugar con la geometria para crear siluetas bien grandes y bien impactantes al ojo pero que tambien sean transformable a traves de su vida. [...]"

Hay algunos [tintes] que importo como la cochinilla eso no se da aqui, hay algunos que voy a la finca como este tinte de aqui que son flores coreopsis. [...]"

Trabajo por donaciones, la gente me trae sus bolsas de basuras y yo las incorporo o voy por ejemplo a la eco-tienda Salvation Army o algun thrift store y ahi tambien puedo curar un poco mas los colores. Por lo general me gusta que me traigan lo que tengan porque pues me gusta tener una conexion con quien lo uso.” (Arias & Forastieri, 2024)

Having emphasized the problem of large quantities of waste, particularly produced by everyday products such as t-shirts, Amanda was asked the following, “5. En tu opinión, ¿qué pasos puede dar la industria de la moda para equilibrar la ganancia con la sostenibilidad y cómo crees que evolucionará el futuro de la moda en este sentido?”/“5. In your opinion, what steps can the fashion industry take to balance profitability with sustainability, and how do you see the future of fashion evolving in this regard?” Her response was as follows:

Yo creo en la descentralizacion de la moda so yo pienso que no va a ser tanto como una mecca al cual estamos mirando y aspirando ser sino va a ver de acuerdo a cada territorio y a cada fabrica cultural o “cultural fabric” va aver una subcultura de moda. Asi yo veo que puede ser algo sostenible globalmente. Creo que puede crecer, puede ser mas lenta, debe ser mas lenta. [...]

[...] Sale mucho al modelo de *Doughnut Economics*, es un modelo de economia que cree en que el planeta tiene recursos finitos, nosotros no tenemos recursos infinitos para explotar. Trabaja dentro de esos recursos finitos para crear una economia y una economia puede ser cualquier cosa no solamente tiene que ser intercambio monetario con reservas de oro. Una economia es truece, una economia es intercambio de objetos a comida y pues creo en eso. Yo creo que la moda tiene que pasar a operar dentro de esas limitaciones para poder crear un modelo sostenible y especifico a cada territorio verdad, yo no creo que es algo universal para todos los territorios del planeta. Todos tienen fibras diferentes, todos tienen necesidades diferentes verdad. Como cada comunidad o pais o cultura se adapta a su territorio para poder trabajar con el para poder crear ropa verdad y crear sistemas de moda ecoamigables.” (Arias & Foratieri, 2024)

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answer to these questions provided crucial knowledge to understanding sustainability to its furthest extent. Amanda brought concepts such as recycling, circularity, economic practices, and more to the conversation. It's important to note that Forastieri doesn't only recycle clothes, but she creates clothes with nature such as using parts of palm trees as fabric or using cochineal and coreopsis flowers to dye her fabrics. This information contributes to the knowledge of different ways to approach a sustainable fashion industry. Ultimately, Amanda Forastieri determined that a practical way to have a sustainable fashion industry is to decentralize the market and convert fashion into a very local concept; hence, each region will use what is available to them to produce fabrics and clothes.

Methods

The data for this research was obtained through in-depth interviews with three fashion designers to investigate their perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable fashion. Throughout the investigation, a personal computer equipped with an Ethernet connection and running the Google Chrome web browser was the primary tool for sourcing essential information. Despite occasional disruptions in internet connectivity, the vast resources available online, mainly through the use of the Google search engine, were instrumental in identifying and procuring the necessary sources to address the research question comprehensively. Every source utilized in this investigation underwent a rigorous vetting process, and each peer was reviewed and approved by the investigation mentor, guaranteeing their credibility and relevance to the research. It's important to highlight that a meticulous reading and summarizing approach was diligently employed, ensuring a thorough understanding of the sources and their implications. The seamless orchestration of these vital components within the investigation created an optimal environment, ensuring the successful consummation of the project. It is also noteworthy that this investigation adopted a qualitative research methodology. Specifically, the research design incorporated a documentary analysis approach and a descriptive analysis methodology.

Findings

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of the fashion industry's dynamics concerning sustainability. First, the research reveals a fundamental divide in how fashion industry participants define and operationalize sustainability (Thomas, 2019). Business managers typically approach sustainability from a profit-maximizing perspective, focusing on cost savings and brand reputation (Thomas, 2019). The utilized search engine proved most beneficial for the selected sources of this investigation. One of the sources was very recent (2023), and it dealt with information regarding the fashion industry and how it is gradually splitting into two distinct segments. Independent designers and companies are conscious of the harm caused by fast fashion to the environment and actively support and maintain a sustainable sector that uses green production. Independent designers are good role models to look up to because they use recyclable materials to make linens and clothing, like mycelium-based textiles. After reading this information, readers will understand how the internet has replaced conventional media and communication channels while advancing art. The second source was very recent (2020). It discussed information regarding many cons of working with fast fashion. These include showing how fast fashion produces an excess of waste and pollution and how it uses an excess of water. The third source was very recent (2021); it elucidates that an average consumer may tout fast fashion as a model of democratization, enabling cheap and trendy purchases. While the latter portion is accurate, fast fashion ensnares workers and exhausts natural resources. Its proponents may say that society can recycle clothes. However, these clothes often end up in landfills or incineration sites, polluting the environment. The fourth source was not recent (2006); however, it provided salient that highlights the economic impacts of sustainable practices in the fashion industry, such as second-hand clothing market; this source provided statistics demonstrating that, even though the second-hand clothing market is only about 0.5% of the total textile industry, in many African countries, this consumes up to 30% of the total value of their imports. The rise of low-cost imports from Asia is primarily responsible for the decline in the trading of second-hand products. The fifth source was not recent, as it was published

in 2015, and the information provided highlighted the importance of consumer awareness and behavior in supporting more sustainable fashion practices. The sixth source was very recent (2022), and it delineated the tension between different stakeholders within the industry, such as business managers and designers, in defining and operationalizing sustainability. The seventh, eighth, and ninth source were very recent, as they were interviews that were conducted in 2024. The seventh source discusses key questions in answering how fashion designer Vendali views the movement of sustainability and how it influences his creative process. The eighth source was an interview with Diego McElroy, and it probed into his thoughts on the feasibility and challenges of implementing sustainable practices from a designer's perspective. Finally, the ninth source was Amanda Forastieri, who provided a unique perspective on how local sourcing and production could be a pathway to a more sustainable fashion industry. Overall, the findings demonstrate the dichotomy between the fashion industry's profit-driven approach and the sustainable practices advocated by independent designers and conscious consumers.

Discussion

The industry's need for a unified understanding of sustainability poses a significant challenge (Kim & Oh, 2020) (Pencarelli et al., 2019) (Thomas, 2019). Business managers prioritize cost savings and brand reputation over environmental and social considerations. In contrast, designers are more inclined to focus on reducing waste, using eco-friendly materials, and ensuring ethical labor practices. There are now two different areas of the fashion industry. Independent designers and businesses actively support and preserve a sustainable industry that will use green products because they are aware of the harm that fast fashion causes to the environment.

An excellent example is independent artists who use reusable materials to make textiles and clothing, such as from mycelium. The article outlines a few disadvantages to working quickly. One of them is demonstrating the excessive waste, pollution, and water use related to fast fashion. The average consumer may applaud fast fashion as a sign of democratization that makes it possible to make inexpensive and stylish purchases. Although the final element is truthful, fast fashion also imprisons workers and depletes natural resources. People can recycle clothing, say some of its proponents. All these sources mentioned how fast fashion is currently affecting the world and how it will continue to affect the environment. The articles above also provide different solutions to fast fashion, including how new designers can implement sustainability and how people can recycle their clothes, amongst many other ways to tackle the increasing risks of fast fashion. These articles bring awareness and add importance to regular fashion consumers unaware of fast fashion's side effects on the Earth.

Conclusion

The fashion industry is at a critical crossroads, with a growing divide between mainstream fast fashion and a burgeoning sustainable fashion movement (JenniAI, 2024). While mainstream fashion companies prioritize cost savings and brand reputation, independent designers and sustainable fashion advocates lead the charge toward a more environmentally and socially conscious industry.

The lack of a unified understanding of sustainability within the industry poses a significant challenge. Business managers are often more concerned with the bottom line, while designers focus on reducing waste, using eco-friendly materials, and ensuring ethical labor practices. This divide reflects the broader tension between the profit-driven nature of the fashion industry and the growing societal demand for greater environmental and social responsibility (JenniAI, 2024).

The search tools (Google Scholar, EbscoHOST & JenniAI) employed for this investigation was very beneficial. One of the sources, which was very recent, covered details regarding the fashion industry's gradual division into two distinct sectors. (2023). Because they are aware of the damage that fast fashion causes to the environment, independent designers and businesses actively support and maintain a sustainable industry that uses green production.

Independent designers are inspiring role models because they use recyclable materials to make clothing and linens, like fabrics made from mycelium. After perusing this information, readers will understand how the internet has replaced conventional media and contact channels while advancing art. The second was a fresh source. (2020). It provided details on a number of the problems with working in the fast fashion industry. One of them is demonstrating the excessive waste, pollution, and water use related to fast fashion. The third source, released in 2021, explains how an average consumer may hail fast fashion as a role model for democratization that makes it possible to make inexpensive and stylish purchases. Although the final element is truthful, fast fashion also imprisons workers and depletes natural resources. Humans can recycle clothing, say some of its proponents. There are now two sectors in the fashion industry. Independent designers and companies actively support and maintain a sustainable industry that employs green production because they are aware of the harm fast fashion causes to the environment. An excellent example is independent artists who use reusable materials to make fabrics and clothing, such as textiles made from mycelium. A few disadvantages of fast fashion are discussed in the essay. One shows how fast fashion causes extra waste, pollution, and water use. The average consumer may applaud fast fashion as a sign of change that makes making inexpensive and stylish purchases possible. Although the last argument is truthful, fast fashion also imprisons workers and depletes natural resources. Its supporters claim that people can recover clothing. These websites all talked about how rapid fashion is already changing the world and will do so in the future. The articles above also provide a range of fast fashion solutions, such as ways that people can recycle their clothing and new designers can integrate sustainability, among many other strategies to address the fast fashion industry's rising risks. These pieces inform and emphasize the significance of fast fashion for regular clothing consumers, unaware of its detrimental environmental impacts.

Limitations

The study has several significant limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the investigation was conducted with a relatively small sample size of fashion designers, which may not fully represent the diverse perspectives within the industry. Additionally, the study focused primarily on the European market, particularly Italy, and the results may not be generalizable to other regions with differing cultural and economic contexts (JenniAI, 2024).

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data from fashion designers, which could be subject to social desirability bias or other potential biases. Further research is needed to corroborate the findings and explore the issue of sustainability in fashion design from a broader, more representative perspective.

Though the articles provided sufficient information, further supporting the investigation, investigating some that belong to these articles revealed an existing broad number that belongs to limitations. The first source, "How and Why Independent Designers and the Sustainability Movement Will Triumph Over the Imperialist Fast Fashion Business," investigated the subject comprehensively and provided more than sufficient information. The second source, "What Society Can Do to Counter Fast Fashion," highlighted pollution, waste, and water consumption that fast fashion produces; however, it failed to provide details at the same time, and it happened to be very limited in information. The third source, "Consciously Consuming Fashion," reveals how the environment is polluted, except for not mentioning how society could work against it. Additional limitations found inside the second and third sources were the need for more information on how future designers could provide environmental and economic sustainability inside the market that belongs to upcycling.

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