

Advantages and Disadvantages of Fast Fashion and Slow Fashion

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Abstract

The main aim of the scientific article is to present advantages and disadvantages of slow fashion and fast fashion. The methods used in writing the scientific article are descriptive-analytical method, systematic approach, study of the works of authors, comparative analysis, method of observation, induction, deduction. The results obtained about the advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion can be useful for the development of sustainable policies for companies, consumers, consumer organizations, the state in the field of modern textile industry.

Keywords: fast fashion, slow fashion, fast fashion industry, textile industry

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Introduction

Fast fashion is a large and growing part from textile industry, which produce new garments with increasing global consumption of fast fashion by 400% over the past 20 years. Fast fashion industry is with high environmental price. The fast fashion industry is responsible to the climate crisis, 20% of global wastewater and 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions. The fashion industry is responsible for consuming 79 trillion liters of water for year and over 92 million tons of textile waste per year. The quick produce of fast fashion to need large quantity of raw textile materials for fast fashion industry, which generate amount textile waste, leading to pollution to air, water and nature. Development of fast fashion industry leading to negative impacts to both terrestrial and aquatic environments, and proliferation of chemicals and microplastics in oceans, seas, rivers and lakes (Shedlock and Feldstein, 2023).

Fast fashion industry is defined by high speed, high volume, and high consumption. Fast fashion is an economic tool used to increase quantity created product, consumptions and grow profit. Fast fashion generated high level the rate of disposal as textile products, which will up to last 10 washes. Designers and producers focus about production of fast fashion products with low the quality of the fabric or the construction and it's enabling the generation of low price (Ahmed, et al., 2022).

Slow fashion is cares with quality and durability of textile products and their influence to the environment and preserve the natural resources. Slow fashion use sustainable aspects as its main principles of his own development. The main idea of slow fashion production is reducing overproduction of textile products and minimize use of natural resources. The sustainability politics related slow fashion aims consumers to buy fewer textile products which can lead to a reduction in ecosystem pollution (Oliveira, et al., 2022).

Slow fashion produce local, ethical and eco-friendly textile products with respect for the people, animals and environment. Slow fashion offers the reduce of overconsumption, minimizing the negative of industry's social and environmental impacts, in line with sustainability and consumption policies in context of circular economy. Slow fashion industry created timeless designs, use organically materials, low production quantities, longer production times, higher quality and longevity apparel, and prices reflecting the real cost of a textile products. For slow fashion, it is extremely important meaning to functionality and material quality and the application of sustainable policies across the entire value chain of slow fashion product (Buckulcikova, et al., 2022).

In order to create the right policies for the sustainable development and sustainable consumption of fast fashion and slow fashion in the context of the circular economy and in accordance with the European and global development policies of the textile industry and the resulting environmental pollution, it is necessary to present and systematize the advantages and disadvantages of fast and slow fashion.

The main aim of the scientific article is to present advantages and disadvantages of slow fashion and fast fashion.

The methods used in writing the scientific article are descriptive-analytical method, systematic approach, study of the works of authors, comparative analysis, method of observation, induction, deduction.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion

1.1. Advantages of fast fashion

The advantages of fast fashion are summarized by various scientific studies and presented in several sub-points.

1.1.1. *Accelerated business model* - fast fashion generated accelerated business model characterized by with fast produce of fast fashion product (Liu, et al., 2021);

1.1.2. *The decreased need for stock replenishing* (Aponté, 2020);

1.1.3. *Increased levels of profit* - increased levels of profit due to the ability to sold large quantities of fast fashion products (Aponté, 2020);

1.1.4. *Low prices* - the low prices of fast fashion products enable a large group of people from different social groups (including consumers with limited funds) of the society to have the opportunity to buy from the textile products (Liu, et al., 2021).

1.1.5. *Quick recovery of financial losses* - quick recovery of financial losses of companies, by offering new products and generating quick income from sales

Table 1 shows consumer advantages of fast fashion.

Table 1. Consumer advantages of fast fashion

Consumer advantages of fast fashion	Authors
Low prices	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014)
Freedom of choice	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014)
Following latest trends inexpensively	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Kim et al., (2013), Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014)
Provides a social arena	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Kim et al., (2013)

Source: Kongelf and Camacho-Otero, 2020.

The advantages of fast fashion found in the scientific literature are related to accelerated business model; the decreased need for stock replenishing; increased levels of profit; the low prices of fast fashion products; quick recovery of financial losses; freedom of consumer choice; following latest trends inexpensively and provides a social arena.

Fast fashion creates to accelerated business model, due to the fast production, supply, customer consumption, sales generated, turnover and profit of fast fashion. The decreased need for stock replenishing is due to the fast turnover and consumption of fast fashion and therefore the need for restocking is reduced. The low prices and the large quantities of fast fashion products sold generate the increased levels of profit. The increased levels of profit of fast fashion lead to quick recovery of financial losses for companies.

Following latest trends about the low prices and the large quantities of fast fashion products gives freedom of consumer choice, which enables consumers with lower incomes to buy fast fashion products, which also has a social effect on certain groups of society.

The summary of the advantages of fast fashion gives an opportunity to present the positives of the creation and use of fast fashion products.

1.2. Disadvantages of fast fashion

1.2.1. *Generating large amounts of textile waste from fast fashion products* - fast fashion is to encourage a "throw away" of textile waste (Aponté, 2020);

1.2.2. *Increases environmental pollution* - fast fashion contributes to an toxic fashion system, which made increases pollution (Aponté, 2020);

1.2.3. *Low levels of quality of fast fashion products and customer service* (Aponté, 2020);

1.2.4. *Poor and unhealthy working of conditions* (Aponté, 2020);

1.2.5. *Unregulated use of intellectual property of fashion designers* (Aponté, 2020).

Table 2 shows consumer disadvantages of fast fashion.

Table 2. Consumer disadvantages of fast fashion

Consumer disadvantages of fast fashion	Authors
Low quality of products	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Kim et al., (2013), Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik (2014)
Low quality of service experience	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Kim et al., (2013)
Encourages overconsumption	Gabrielli et al., (2013), Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014)
Irresponsible business model	Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014), Gabrielli et al., (2013), Kim et al., (2013)
Deindividuation and homogenization of design	Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik, (2014), Kim et al., (2013)

Source: Kongelf and Camacho-Otero, 2020.

The fast production, supply and consumption of fast fashion products leads to generating large amounts of textile waste from fast fashion products. This is one of the main reasons for increases environmental pollution.

In addition, in the fast fashion industry is observed low levels of quality of fast fashion products and customer service. The low quality levels of fast fashion products are expressed in the rapid reduction of their quality and the generation of new amounts of textile waste, which is detrimental to our ecosystem. The reason for the low quality of fast fashion products can be found in the quality of the textile materials, the applied production technology and the various processes related to it. Consumers of fast fashion products may be dissatisfied with the purchased textile products of low quality.

In addition, in certain places in the world it is observed poor and unhealthy working of conditions, which should be changed in a positive direction by the policies of the companies. Poor and unhealthy working conditions of fast fashion products could negatively affect the quality of textile products, as well as being a major social problem related to poor working conditions and dissatisfaction of workers employed in the sector.

In the fast fashion industry, there is another negative phenomenon associated with unregulated use of intellectual property of fashion designers, which is outside the regulated legislation and is subject to various statutory regulations.

The study of the disadvantages of fast fashion is necessary to identify measures and policies related to reducing the harmful impact of the fast fashion industry regarding the reduction of textile waste, environmental pollution, the quality of fast fashion products, unsatisfactory working conditions, etc.

2. Advantages and disadvantages of slow fashion

2.1. Advantages of slow fashion

2.1.1. *The use of natural fibers and fabrics* - the fashion designers have introduced environmentally friendly natural fibers and fabrics. The natural textile materials compared with chemical synthetic textile materials, they are lower in energy consumption, and pollution, which have great environmental benefits (Liu, et al., 2021).

2.1.2. *The use of natural dyes* - natural plant dyes are extracted from plants, flowers, fruits, roots, leaves, and other natural parts. The natural pigments of different parts of the plants can be divided into 7 variety color - red, yellow, green, blue, black, purple and brown. Natural plant dye for slow fashion products is safety, non-toxic, and non-polluting (Liu, et al., 2021).

2.1.3. *Recyclability* - sustainable fashion design is based on the principle of recycling of various textile materials (Liu, et al., 2021).

2.1.4. *Effective consumption* - slow fashion create conditions for effective consumption of textile products, and with the implementation of certain sustainable policies the consumer can thinking about their true needs before buying of clothes (Ahmed, et al., 2022).

Figure 1 shows ten advantages of slow fashion.

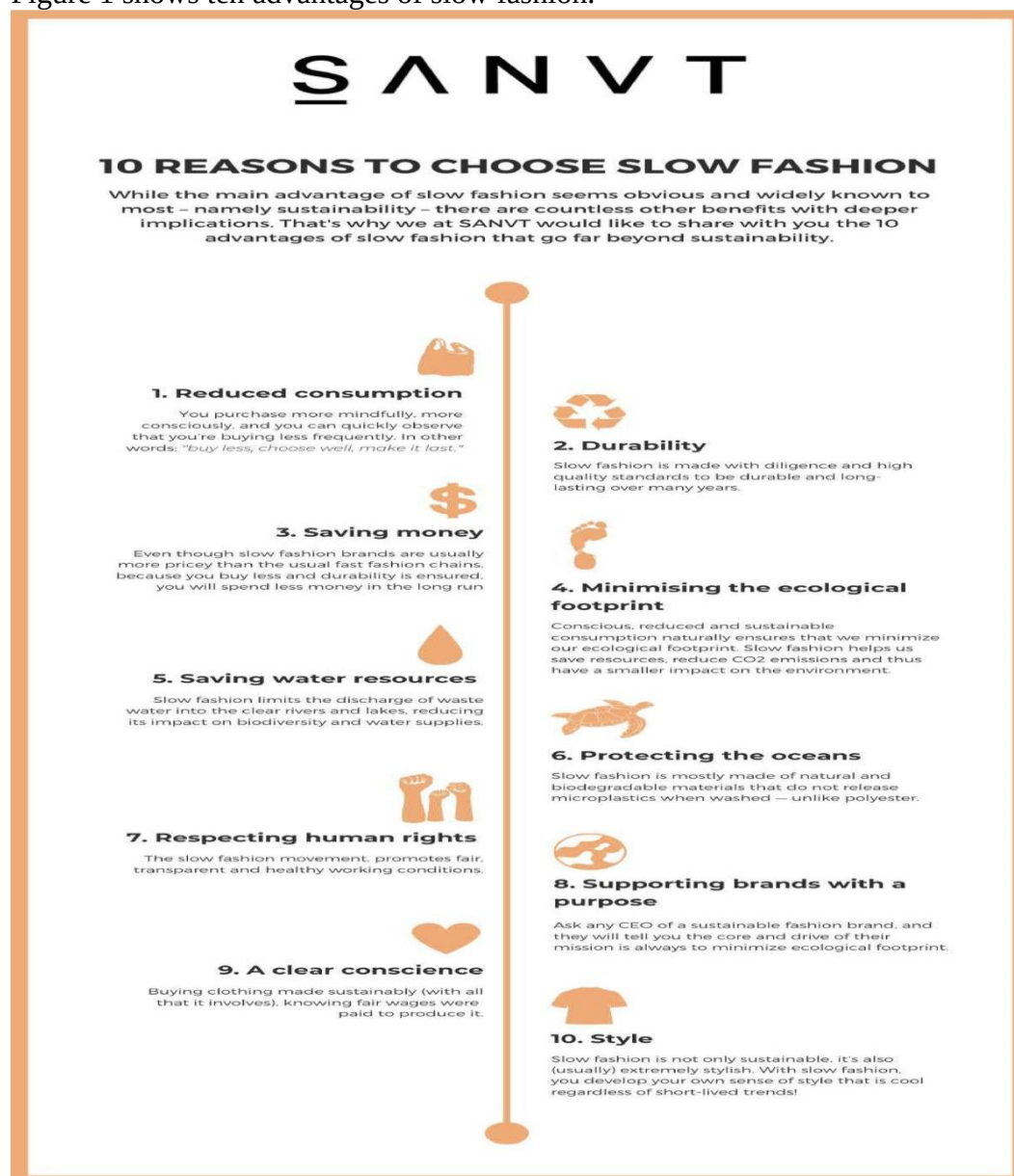


Figure 1. Ten advantages of slow fashion (Kulczycki, 2021)

The figure 1 shows the advantages of slow fashion, which include reduced consumption, durability, saving money, minimizing the ecological footprint, saving water resources, protecting the oceans, respecting human rights, supporting brands with a purpose, a clear conscience and style.

Slow fashion lead to reduced consumption of this type textile goods; higher levels of durability of slow fashion products; slower consumption leading to saving money of consumers.

Sustainable slow fashion policies are related to minimizing the ecological footprint, saving water resources, protecting the oceans and respecting of human rights. supporting brands with a purpose, a clear conscience and style.

In addition, the slow fashion industry and its sustainable policies lead to the support of certain brands with the aim of forming a clear consumer consciousness and style of consumption.

Advantages of slow fashion related to the use of natural fibers and fabrics, which have very good user properties and have less energy consumption and environmental pollution.

In addition, in the production of slow fashion products, natural dyes of plant and animal origin are used, which are safe, non-toxic and non-polluting compared to synthetic dyes.

Slow fashion produced from natural textile materials have the possibility of recycling, which is a prerequisite for the development of environmental policies, technologies related to their production, consumption of recycled products.

The development of slow fashion is a prerequisite for creating conditions of efficient and sustainable consumption and consumption behavior related to the purchase of slow fashion products that are really needed.

2.2. Disadvantages of slow fashion

Disadvantages of slow fashion are presented in the following few points:

2.2.1. *Long time of production* - the time need to make a luxury garment is much longer than the fast fashion production and their textile products (Liu, et al., 2021).

2.2.2. *Luxury consumption* - slow fashion products are high quality, but it's not suitable for everyone consumers. In times of economic difficulties, a large number of consumers would prefer to buy fast fashion products that look good and cheaper. The young consumers prefer fast fashion products and cheap clothing (Liu, et al., 2021).

2.2.3. *Used limited types color variety* (Juniati, 2019) - in the production of slow fashion products, a limited number and type of natural dyes are used, which reduces the assortment and color variety.

2.2.4. *Natural dyeing for slow fashion must be made longer time* (Juniati, 2019) - slower dyeing with natural textile dyes of slow fashion products lengthens overall production time, at high cost of natural dyes and thus can negatively affect economic efficiency.

2.2.5. *Used natural fibers and naturally colors for slow fashion are susceptible to attack by fungi, moths etc* (Juniati, 2019) - the susceptibility of natural textile materials and natural dyes of slow fashion to fungi, moths and other microorganisms has negative moments for the quality and consumer properties of slow fashion products.

The disadvantages of slow fashion found in the scientific literature are long time of production which may affect the variety of the offered assortment; luxury consumption, which in the times of economic problems, can be replaced by cheaper and lower quality fast fashion products, which is preferred by some of the younger consumers; used limited types color variety which reduces the assortment and color variety; natural dyeing for slow fashion must be made longer time; used natural fibers and naturally colors for slow fashion are susceptible to attack by fungi, moths ect., and this can be a prerequisite for creating deficiencies regarding the quality and consumer properties of slow fashion products.

3. Advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion

In this point of scientific development, the advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion are presented.

Table 3 shows the difference between fast and slow fashion.

Table 3. The difference between fast and slow fashion

Category	Fast fashion	Slow fashion
Scope of the industry	Turnover \$ 1.44 trillion dollars annually	Small business firms
Raw materials	Petroleum based materials	Locally sourced, biodegradable, organic, natural dyes and natural materials. It also includes recycled, repurposed, upcycled materials.
Manufacturing	Cause environmental implications during production	It uses less harmful ingredients and employs eco-friendly traditional methods of production
Protocols involved	Modern and unethical methods	Less harm to the environment as it involves conventional methods
Production	New styles every 2 week and more than 10 seasons in a year	Low volume, handmade, made-on-order and available in limited edition
Presence of toxins	Large amounts of carcinogens	Organic materials and safe eco-friendly materials for manufacturing
Cost & Quality	Cheap and low quality	Expensive and lasts long
Labours	Involves factory or workshop which uses workers in low wages, poor working condition and long working hours	Uses people from local or nearby area. Serves as a means of providing livelihood
Morale/ ethics	Poor working conditions, low standards in working place	Small industry with good profit and fair wages.
Sustainability	It is not possible to create eco-friendly product as it involves chemicals	Made in small quantity with high quality, with motto to live with nature and not against it
Brands	H&M, Zara, C&A, Peacocks, Primark, Xcel Brands, and Topshop	Reformation, Amour Vert, Eileen Fisher, Alternative Apparel, Everlane, Re/done, Stella McCartney, Cuyana,

Source: Aishwariya, 2019.

The difference between fast and slow fashion are presented (table 3).

The textile industry turnover \$ 1.44 trillion dollars annually for fast fashion and small business firms for slow fashion, which determines the high economic interest of companies for development in the fast fashion industry.

The use of textile materials are petroleum based materials in fast fashion, which pollute the environment and ecological natural textile materials (includes recycled) and natural dyes.

Manufacturing of fast fashion has negative aspects about environmental influence due to the generation of large amounts of textile waste, but slow fashion uses less harmful components and ecological methods of production of the slow fashion products.

Fast fashion use modern and unethical methods compared slow fashion about less harm to the environment as it involves conventional methods.

Production of fast fashion is new styles every 2 week, which is reason for generated of textile waste. Slow fashion produces low volume, handmade, made-on-order and available in limited edition, as this approach is more environmentally friendly.

The presence of toxins in fast fashion products in large amounts are carcinogens as opposed to produce of slow fashion with organic textile materials and safe eco-friendly materials.

A difference between fast fashion (cheap and low quality) and slow fashion (expensive and lasts long) is also observed in terms of their cost and quality.

The companies in fast fashion area uses workers in low wages, poor working condition and long working hours. Slow fashion uses people from local area and help to development the region, as provides livelihood.

The morals and ethics rules in fast fashion related to poor working conditions, low standards of working place, but characteristic of slow fashion is good profit and fair salaries.

Sustainability is characteristic of slow fashion of made in small quantity with high quality, create of ecological principle. Fast fashion not possible to create eco-friendly textile products as it involves different chemicals that pollute the environment.

Brands of fast fashion industry are H&M, Zara, C&A, Peacocks, Primark, Xcel Brands, and Topshop. Brands of slow fashion industry are Reformation, Amour Vert, Eileen Fisher, Alternative Apparel, Everlane, Re/done, Stella McCartney, Cuyana.

Slow vs. Fast Fashion

	FAST FASHION	SLOW FASHION
High-quality garments	×	✓
Carbon neutral or carbon positive labor & production	×	✓
Biodegradable and non-toxic materials	×	✓
Uses eco-friendly, durable garments	×	✓
Emphasis on quality over quantity	×	✓
Reuse, upcycle, and recycles existing materials	×	✓

Figure 2. The difference between slow and fast fashion (Matthews, 2023)

In figure 2. are presents the advantages of slow fashion - high-quality garments; carbon neutral or carbon positive labor and production; biodegradable and non-toxic materials; uses eco-friendly, durable garments; emphasis on quality over quantity; reuse, upcycle and recycles existing materials, but the presented advantages are disadvantages of fast fashion.

The presented advantages of slow fashion and the disadvantages of fast fashion give direction for their understanding and the development of sustainable policies related to minimizing the negative aspects of the production and consumption of fast fashion products.

The following lines summarize information from the above points in this research paper regarding the advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion.

The advantages of fast fashion summarized by the scientific literature are related to accelerated business model; the decreased need for stock replenishing; increased levels of profit; the low prices of fast fashion products; quick recovery of financial losses; freedom of consumer choice; following latest trends inexpensively and provides a social arena.

The advantages of slow fashion include reduced consumption, durability, saving money, minimizing the ecological footprint, saving water resources, protecting the oceans, respecting human rights, supporting brands with a purpose, clear conscience, style, use of natural dyes, use of natural fibers and fabrics.

The disadvantages of fast fashion are related to create of irresponsible business model, encourages of overconsumption, to generation of large amounts of textile waste, increases to environmental pollution, low levels of quality of fast fashion products and customer service, poor and unhealthy working of conditions, unregulated use of intellectual property of fashion designers, deindividuation and homogenization of design.

The disadvantages of slow fashion found in the scientific literature are long time of production; luxury consumption; used limited types of colors; used natural dyeing for slow fashion and made longer time and used natural fibers and naturally colors for slow fashion products are susceptible to attack by fungi, moths etc.

Conclusion

In the course of scientific research, it was found that not a large number of scientific studies were found to summarize the advantages and disadvantages of slow fashion and fast fashion. An attempt has been made in the present study to summarize the main advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion.

Systematizing the advantages and disadvantages of slow fashion and fast fashion can lead to the understanding and development of their advantages and the creation of approaches to reduce the negative impact of their disadvantages.

The results obtained about the advantages and disadvantages of fast fashion and slow fashion can be useful for the development of sustainable policies for companies, consumers, consumer organizations, the state in the field of modern textile industry.

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