

# IT'S TIME FOR SUSTAINABLE FASHION

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**Abstract:** Sustainable fashion is a part of the growing design philosophy and movement towards environmental and social sustainability, the goal of which is to create a system which can be supported in terms of human impact on the environment and social responsibility.

Sustainable fashion concerns more than addressing fashion textiles or products. It comprises addressing the whole system of fashion. This means dealing with interdependent social, cultural, ecological and financial systems.

Sustainable fashion therefore belongs to, and is the responsibility of citizens, public sector and private sector.

**Key words:** Fashion, sustainability, environment, concerns, hazards, solutions.

## 1. Introductory notions about fashion, sustainability and XXI century dilemma.

The origins of the sustainable fashion movement are intertwined with those of the modern environmental movement, of which it is a part, and specifically the publication in 1962 of the book *Silent Spring* by American biologist Rachel Carson. Carson's book exposed the serious and widespread pollution associated with the use of agricultural chemicals, a theme that is still important in the debate around the environmental and social impact of fashion today. The decades which followed saw the impact of human actions on the environment to be more systemically investigated, including the effects of industrial activity, and to new concepts for mitigating these effects, notably sustainable development, a term coined in 1987 by the Brundtland Report.

In 2019, a group of researchers formed the Union for Concerned Researchers in Fashion to advocate for radical and co-ordinated research activity commensurate with the challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change.

## 2. Enviroment impact of fashion.

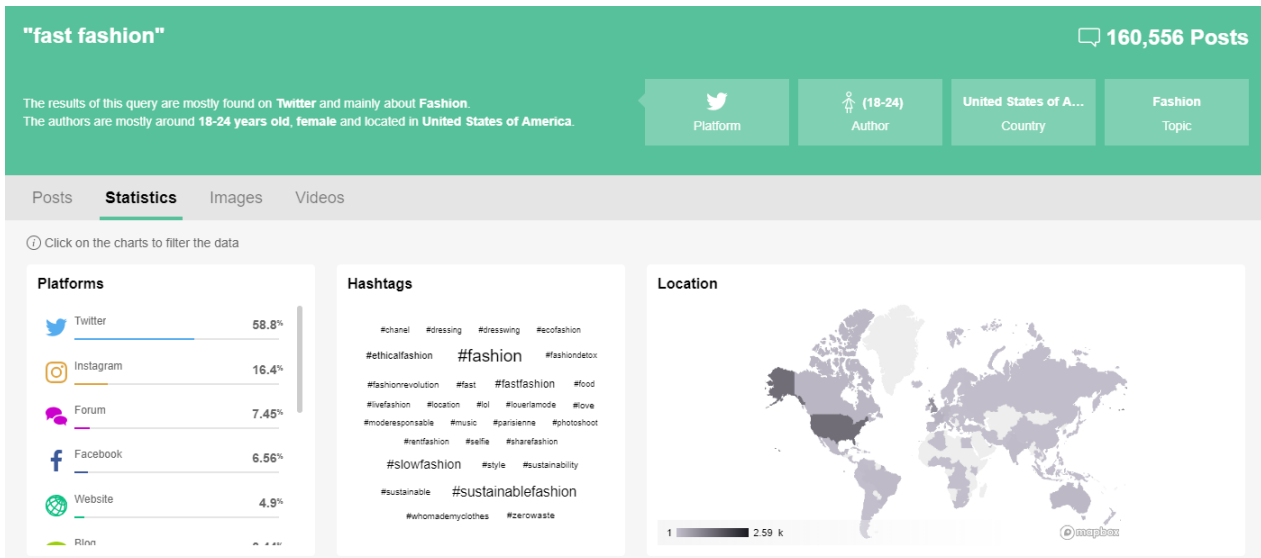
One of the most apparent reasons for the current unsustainable condition of the fashion system is related to the temporal aspects of fashion; the continuous stream of new goods onto the market, or what is popularly called "fast fashion." The term has come to signify cheap, accessible and on-trend clothes, sourced through global production chains and sold through chains such as H&M, Zara, Forever21, etc.

However, the "fast" aspect of consumption is a problem to the environment first when done in massive scale. As long as fast conspicuous consumption was reserved to the rich, the global impact was not reaching public attention or seen as a problem. Slow fashion can be seen as an alternative approach against fast fashion. Characteristics of sustainable fashion match the philosophies of "slow fashion". Slow fashion represents a vision of sustainability in the fashion sector based on different values and goals to the present day. The clothing industry has one of the highest impacts on the planet. High water usage, pollution from chemical treatments used in dyeing and preparation and the disposal of large amounts of unsold clothing through incineration or landfill deposits are hazardous to the environment.

There is an increasing concern as microfibers from synthetic fabrics are polluting the earths waters through the process of laundering. Microfibers are tiny threads that are shed from fabric. These microfibers are too small to be captured in waste water treatment plants filtration systems and they end up entering our natural water systems and as a result contaminating our food chain.

## 3. Social opinion about sustainability and problems in fashion.

One powerful aspect of social media data is the ability to look deeply at certain topics or issues and see who's talking about them. A quick search for the keyword "fast fashion" over the past 12 months tells us a little about the kinds of people interested in the issue:



1 Source: [Linkfluence Search](#)

Whenever you're looking for social media insights, audience analysis is a great place to start. And in this case, the ethical clothing debate appeals mostly to Millennial women. (*Reminder: Millennials today are anywhere from 18-37 years old, with some definitions limiting the group to 18-34.*) It was written before, but most major social media trends are led by Millennials. This is both because they have strong opinions and want to share, and because there are simply more Millennials on social media than any other age range.

**4. Potential solutions for next generations**

- ✓ More Sustainable Fabrics
  - Lyocell Fiber: also called Tencel, this 100% biodegradable fiber is produced in an environmentally-friendly manner from cellulose - the main material in plant cells. Counterpoint: potential health issues.
  - Organic Cotton Fiber: cotton grown without the use of artificial chemicals such as herbicides or pesticides (additional information).
  - Organic Hemp Fiber: a durable natural fibers that can be grown without pesticides and with minimal water use. The hemp plant has long roots which help to prevent erosion and retain topsoil (additional information).
  - As well other types of fabrics such as Organic Linen Fiber, Sasawashi, Non-GMO Soy Clothing, Compassionate Clothing Guide, Organic Jute.
- ✓ Reusing and Upcycling Fabric
- ✓ Sustainable Textile Certifications and Standards
- ✓ Green Cleaning

**5. Pros and Cons for Sustainability. Conclusions.**

- ✓ Pros:
  - Brand are turning waste materials into new products.
  - People are being treated well and paid fairly.
  - Brand are being kinder to the environment.
  - Ethical fashion is higher quality.
  - You get to feel great beeing a promotor of sustainability.
- ✓ Cons:
  - Sustainable fashion brands don't keep up with the trends.
  - Hard to shop sustainable brands.
  - Can't know for sure if the brands are sustainable.

## Conclusions

Executives know very well that their current business model is not future-fit. In the absence of global rules or major changes on the consumer side, the fashion industry is now carefully exploring options on how to improve its social and environmental impact while successfully operating in a highly price-competitive environment.

Reinventing an industry built on growing consumption, cheap labor, free public goods such as access to water and environmental pollution is not an easy undertaking.

Good old as well as new ideas are floating: regenerative agriculture, organic cotton, living wages in the supply chain, and reusing fibers to create circular material flow.

It is hoped that executives are willing to step up and collaborate, in the industry's own interest and for the benefit of all. Only while group thinking proces and actions we can protect environment and as well create a new fashion era, which will be more eco friendly, more creative and more responsible.

Nowadays is even more harder to convince society that consumes alot in the needs of sustainability and for everyone of us its a big challenge.

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