

THE IMPACT OF SLOW AND CIRCULAR FASHION ON CONSUMERS' CHOICE OF CLOTHING APPAREL

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Abstract

In the current period characterised by heightened awareness of environmental sustainability and ethical consumerism, the fashion industry is undergoing a significant transformation as it embraces slow and circular fashion practices. This development has been very promising due to the environmental dangers associated with fast fashion. There are many factors that shape consumer preferences within the context of sustainable fashion. The emergence of slow fashion, which is defined by deliberate consumption and ethical manufacturing and circular fashion, prioritises closed-loop systems and responsible end-of-life practices, have presented an attractive and a new dimension of producing environmental-friendly fashion for consumers. Irrespective, of the global efforts in protecting the environment through the right choice of clothes, which is supported by the slow fashion paradigm, some people are still glued to fast fashion model without necessarily considering its associated impacts. This study examines the impact of slow and circular fashion on customers' clothing choices and their effects on the environment. Again, it underscores the psychological, social, economic, and environmental issues that influence the adoption of slow and circular fashion. Data was obtained via online questionnaire. The study revealed that the development of slow and circular fashion models among customers has been impeded due to a deficiency in proactive communication from various retailers who contribute to the sustainability mission.

Keywords: Consumers Choice of Clothing, Apparel, Slow and Circular Fashion, Sustainable fashion and Fast fashion.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary period characterised by dynamic trends and quick turnover within the fashion business, there is an observable transformation taking place in customers' perspectives on their selection of clothing. The dominant culture of fast fashion, which is characterised by transient trends and throwaway clothing, is now being challenged by an emerging trend towards sustainability and ethical consumerism. The ideas of slow and circular fashion are leading the way in this transformational wave (Castro-López, Iglesias & Puento, 2021).

The fashion industry, renowned for its ingenuity and artistic expression, has seen increasing scrutiny due to its adverse environmental consequences and labour practises linked to large-scale manufacturing. In response, the concepts of slow fashion and circular fashion have arisen as viable alternatives, placing emphasis on factors such as superior quality, extended lifespan, and ecological accountability. The concept of slow fashion promotes a conscious and intentional attitude among customers towards their clothing selections, prioritising enduring garments and environmentally-friendly methods. In contrast, circular fashion promotes the implementation of a closed-loop system, which aims

to minimise waste by means of recycling and prolonging the lifespan of clothes (Khan et al., 2022).

In the current period characterised by an increased awareness of environmental issues, consumers are displaying a growing inclination to connect their own beliefs with their choices in the marketplace. The observed change is not only a transient pattern, but rather a manifestation of a more profound inclination towards accountability and responsibility in the decision-making process of individuals as customers. The influence of slow and cyclical fashion on consumer choices has extensive implications, including not just individual buying patterns but also posing challenges to the established conventions within the fashion business.

This research aims to examine the potential disparities in customers' knowledge of irresponsibility by conducting a disaggregated analysis of both firm and consumer behaviour. Specifically, the focus is on exploring the link between slow and circular fashion (SCF) and consumers' incentive to participate in customers' choice of clothing apparel (CCC). The first phase of this research entails an examination of consumers' inclination towards slow and circular fashion orientation (SCF). The underlying hypothesis posits that consumers possess a positive attitude towards the qualities associated with SCF and actively consider them in their practices related to garment consumption, maintenance, and disposal. After establishing the existence of a favourable inclination among consumers towards CCC, the study proceeds to examine the correlation between respondents' social consciousness factor (SCF) and their motivation for engaging in CCC pertaining to socially responsible clothes. Again, it provides two distinct categories of indicators that measure irresponsibility, namely those pertaining to business and those pertaining to individuals. Various sources, including industry executives and scholars (Cuesta-Valiño, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez & Núñez-Barriopedro, 2022; Khan et al., 2022; Cooper & Claxton, 2022), have identified the fast fashion sector as a catalyst for irresponsible business and consumer behaviours. Apparently, individuals possess an understanding of the absence of social responsibility shown by the fast fashion business, often referred to as industrial irresponsibility. However, their awareness about the inherent irresponsibility associated with their personal consumption patterns is comparatively lower. In order to ascertain the veracity of this claim, hypotheses about the relationship between participants' self-control fatigue (SCF) and cognitive control capacity (CCC), and their level of knowledge pertaining to industry and consumer irresponsibility has been formulated.

LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Consumer Choice of Clothing Apparel

Consumer choice in the realm of clothing apparel is a dynamic and intricate aspect of contemporary culture, intertwining personal expression, societal influences, economic considerations, and retail dynamics (Castro-López, Iglesias & Puente, 2021). Understanding the factors that influence consumers' clothing choices is of paramount importance to the fashion business, as it offers valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of human behaviour. This literature review provides a detailed examination of the many variables that

influence consumer choices in wearing items. It delves into the psychological, sociological, economic, and marketing factors that play a role in shaping this complex decision-making process.

Psychological Factors

Perception and Identity: The psychology of perception and identity underlies the fundamental aspects of clothing decisions. Rashad (2023) highlights the significance attributed by scholars to the utilisation of clothes as a means of self-expression, serving as a reflection of one's personality and ideals. This psychological phenomenon explores the complex interplay between an individual's self-perception and their need for external validation via their selection of attire.

Emotional Resonance: Emotional connections play a pivotal role in clothing selection. Kim and Sullivan (2019) on the interplay of emotions and decision-making sheds light on how consumers seek emotional satisfaction through their clothing, whether it is the comfort of familiar fabrics, the confidence derived from a well-chosen outfit, or the sense of identity and belonging that certain garments evoke.

Social and Cultural Influences

Social Identity and Group Dynamics: Clothing serves as a powerful tool for social identity and group affiliation. Social identity theory underscores the significance of clothing as a symbolic representation of belonging to specific social groups or subcultures (Akdemir, 2018). The study of clothing choices, therefore, becomes a lens through which to understand broader social dynamics (Ndi Wanki, 2018).

Cultural Trends and Globalization: The ever-changing landscape of cultural trends significantly shapes clothing preferences. Everett (2021) explores the global impact of cultural influences on fashion, emphasizing the interconnectedness of diverse cultural trends in shaping the choices consumers make in different parts of the world.

Economic Considerations

Price Sensitivity and Status: Clothing choices are influenced by economic considerations such as price sensitivity and social standing. The research conducted by Elhajjar (2023) examines the complex interplay between materialism, financial well-being, and clothes purchasing, shedding insight on the interconnectedness of economic factors and consumer behaviours within the realm of fashion.

Sustainability and Ethical Considerations: There is a growing trend among modern consumers to prioritise ethical and environmental practises when making decisions about their apparel purchases. The study conducted by D'Adamo, Lupi, Morone and Settembre-Blundo (2022) examines the phenomenon of sustainable fashion consumption, highlighting the increasing significance of environmentally friendly practises and ethical concerns in influencing customer choices.

Retail and Marketing Dynamics

Brand Loyalty and Perception: The appeal of brands and the subsequent loyalty they elicit are significant determinants in the process of making apparel choices. Cuesta-Valiño, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez and Núñez-Barriopedro (2022) provides a comprehensive analysis of the importance of brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty in influencing consumer choices for garments. This study sheds light on the intricate connection between customers and fashion companies in the market.

Retail Environments and Experience: The influence of both physical and virtual retail environments on customer decision-making is substantial. The study conducted by Khan et al., (2022) examined the impact of atmospherics in retail environments on customer behaviour and apparel choices. It emphasises the significance of the complete shopping experience, including store atmosphere and layout, in shaping consumer preferences.

The process of consumer decision-making in the realm of clothes apparel involves a complex interplay of individual psychological factors, cultural influences, economic factors, and retail forces. This literature study offers a comprehensive examination of the many aspects that influence consumer decision-making within the domain of fashion. In light of the on-going evolution of the business, it is essential for fashion stakeholders to recognise the intricate interaction between these many factors. This recognition is crucial for effectively navigating the dynamic terrain of customer preferences in the realm of clothing apparel. This investigation establishes a foundation for more scholarly inquiry and more profound understandings of consumer behaviour within the ever-evolving realm of fashion.

Slow and Circular Fashion

A Sustainable Evolution in the Fashion Industry: The rise of slow and cyclical fashion in contemporary society signifies a significant departure from the prevailing dominance of fast fashion. This transition is characterised by a renewed emphasis on sustainability, ethical considerations, and a redefined dynamic between customers and their garments (Domingos, Vale & Faria, 2022). This article examines the ideas, relevance, and transformational effects of slow and circular fashion. It investigates how these paradigms are reconfiguring the fashion industry and shifting consumer behaviour towards more sustainable choices. The concept of Slow Fashion encompasses a philosophy rooted on the practise of mindfulness.

The concept of slow fashion encompasses a deliberate approach, encouraging individuals to deviate from the rapid pace of transient trends and impulsive buying behaviours (Pal, Shen & Sandberg, 2019). The aforementioned statement promotes the practise of deliberate contemplation over each article of clothing, underscoring the need of making long-term investments in enduring items that endure the trials of time, including both fashion and resilience.

The Importance of Ethical Sourcing and Transparency in Business Operations: Fundamentally, slow fashion is deeply grounded in ethical principles (Centobelli, Abbate, Nadeem & Garza-Reyes, 2022). Brands who adopt the slow fashion movement prioritise transparency and fair labour practises across several stages, including material procurement

and the production process. This ethical framework guarantees that buyers are not just purchasing garments; rather, they are engaging in a story of accountable and mindful manufacturing.

Cultivating long-term connections is a key aspect of slow fashion, since it aims to counteract the disposable character of fast fashion by establishing a stronger bond between customers and their garments (Ta, Aarikka-Stenroos & Litovuo, 2022). Apparel is crafted with the intention of not just providing visual appeal but also fostering an enduring connection with the individual who wears it. This deliberate strategy promotes a departure from the mindset of using and disposing. The concept of circular fashion refers to a sustainable approach to the fashion industry, whereby the whole lifecycle of a garment is taken into consideration.

Closing the Loop: The concept of circular fashion proposes a significant change from the traditional linear paradigm of fashion manufacturing (Khandual & Pradhan, 2019). The concept encourages the implementation of closed-loop systems, whereby garments possess an extended life cycle that is beyond their original period of use. The adoption of recycling, up-cycling, and waste minimization strategies has become essential in the fashion industry, as they play a crucial role in promoting a sustainable ecosystem and mitigating environmental degradation.

Recycling and up-cycling initiatives serve to rejuvenate the traditional life cycle of the garment industry (Centobelli et al., 2022). Circular fashion promotes the practise of recycling textiles, hence mitigating the need for new materials. Concurrently, the process of upcycling involves the conversion of discarded clothing into distinct and frequently custom-made items, therefore infusing sustainability with a sense of creativity.

The Empowerment of Customers in the Context of Sustainability: The concept of circular fashion places a strong emphasis on engaging customers in the pursuit of sustainability (Dissanayake & Weerasinghe, 2021). The promotion of repairing, reusing, and returning old clothing for recycling is advocated, fostering a feeling of accountability. Many brands that embrace circular principles often implement take-back programmes, effectively involving customers in the fashion industry's circularity.

The significance and impact of a given phenomenon or event are crucial aspects to consider in academic analysis. Understanding the importance and consequences of a certain subject matter allows for a comprehensive examination. The concept of environmental resilience is shown by the adoption of slow and circular fashion practises, which aim to mitigate the environmental impact caused by the fashion industry (Centobelli et al., 2022). The use of sustainable resources, the reduction of waste, and the implementation of recycling practises together contribute to the enhancement of environmental resilience. These measures effectively mitigate the adverse effects of industrial activities on ecosystems, fostering a more harmonious and sustainable connection with the natural environment.

Ethical integrity is shown by the growing inclination towards slow and cyclical fashion, which is in line with the increased consciousness among consumers about ethical concerns within the fashion industry (Aus & Kapur, 2021). Companies who embrace these principles demonstrate their dedication to upholding fair labour practises, maintaining

transparent supply chains, and engaging in responsible sourcing. This commitment contributes to the development of an industry that values and upholds human rights and dignity. The concept of consumer empowerment is shown via the adoption of slow and circular fashion, which enables customers to assume the role of change agents (Okur & Saricam, 2019) via the promotion of conscientious consumerism and the provision of opportunities for sustainable alternatives, these models empower consumers to have a constructive influence via their routine choices in apparel.

The use of slow and circular fashion concepts serves as a driver for innovation within the fashion sector (Dissanayake, 2022). The use of sustainable resources and the implementation of advanced recycling technologies serve as sources of inspiration for the advancement of novel environmentally conscious practises, therefore establishing a foundation for a future characterised by innovation and sustainability. It can be inferred that the evidence presented supports the stated hypothesis.

The concepts of slow and cyclical fashion transcend ordinary trends, since they embody a profound reconceptualization of the fashion business. As the need for sustainability and ethical integrity in consumer behaviour continues to grow, these paradigms provide a framework for adopting a more responsible and conscientious approach to the use of apparel. The implications of this transition reach far beyond personal decisions, impacting the practises of several industries, promoting ecological sustainability, and transforming the values and principles of the fashion sector. The adoption of slow and circular fashion is more than a mere expression of style; rather, it signifies a profound process of change aimed at fostering sustainability, ethics, and harmony within the fashion sector and the global ecosystem.

The Concept of Social Equity within the Framework of Sustainable Fashion Practises

The examination of the convergence between sustainable fashion and social equity is an essential topic of investigation in current academic discussions. Given the environmental and social ramifications associated with rapid fashion, it is crucial for the fashion industry to comprehend the intricacies of social equality within sustainable fashion practises. The objective of this literature study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate correlation between sustainable fashion and social equality, elucidating the reciprocal effect and interaction between these two components.

The Role of Sustainable Fashion in Promoting Social Equity

Fair Labour Practises: In the context of sustainable fashion, there is an increasing focus on fair labour practises (Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020). Companies that are dedicated to sustainability often place a high emphasis on safeguarding the welfare of workers throughout the whole supply chain. Sustainable fashion has the capacity to provide a positive contribution to social equity via the implementation of equitable remuneration, secure working environments, and the cultivation of a culture characterised by mutual respect.

Diversity and Inclusion: The concept of social justice is closely linked with diversity and inclusion in the fashion business (Gazzola et al., 2020). Sustainable fashion practises acknowledge the significance of inclusivity across all dimensions of the business, including design, manufacturing, and marketing. The act of embracing diversity has a significant role in fostering a fashion scene that is characterised by equity and inclusivity.

One of the primary areas of focus in academic discourse is the identification and examination of challenges and critiques. This involves a critical analysis of several aspects of a subject matter, including the issue of social equity in sustainable fashion is hindered by the constraints of price and accessibility of sustainable goods (Dan & Østergaard, 2021). Critics contend that sustainable design may be regarded as possessing elitist characteristics, particularly targeting a market demographic characterised by higher levels of affluence. It is important to confront these problems in order to guarantee that sustainable options are readily available to a wider range of individuals.

Looking at global perspectives on Social justice, the community holds diverse viewpoints on social justice within the realm of sustainable fashion. The emphasis on fair labour and inclusion in sustainable fashion practises is often seen in industrialised countries. However, the presence of a global supply chain creates intricate challenges (Matušovičová, M. (2020)). It is important to undertake an examination of the conceptualization and treatment of social equity throughout a range of socio-economic circumstances in order to get a full comprehension of this complex phenomenon.

The Importance of Consumer Awareness and Empowerment in Contemporary Society

Consumer Education: The promotion of social equity in the realm of sustainable fashion is intricately linked to the level of consumer awareness and education (Paço et al., 2021). Brands that prioritise social equity demonstrate a dedication to educate customers on the consequences of their choices. Consumers who possess knowledge and awareness are endowed with the ability to make decisions that are in line with their own principles, so contributing to the increasing demand for fashion practises that promote social equity.

Consumer Activism: According to Dragomir and Dumitru (2022), consumer activism often corresponds with sustainable fashion practises in the pursuit of social justice. There is a growing consumer inclination towards the pursuit of transparency, ethical sourcing, and fair labour practises. This activism functions as a potent catalyst, driving firms to embrace more socially fair practises in order to align with the rising demands of conscientious customers.

Government and Industry Initiatives

Policy Interventions: The implementation of governmental and industry-level efforts is of paramount importance in fostering social equity within the realm of sustainable fashion (Hawley, 2019). The implementation of policies aimed at addressing fair labour practises, working conditions, and diversity within the fashion industry serves to foster a more equal environment. The establishment of collaborative initiatives including governments,

industrial groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) plays a crucial role in facilitating enduring transformations.

Certifications and Standards: Certifications and standards, such as Fair Trade and B Corp accreditation, are used as markers of a brand's dedication to promote social equality (Mandarić, Hunjet & Vuković, 2022). These projects provide structured frameworks for evaluating and acknowledging sustainable and socially responsible practises, hence facilitating informed decision-making for customers.

The correlation between sustainable fashion and social equity is characterised by a dynamic nature, including both advancements and obstacles within the fashion sector. In light of the dynamic nature of the fashion industry, it is crucial to acknowledge and tackle concerns pertaining to equitable labour practises, inclusivity, economic accessibility, and consumer awareness in order to cultivate a future that is both socially just and environmentally sustainable. This literature review serves as a basis for comprehending the interdependence between social equality and sustainable fashion practises, therefore promoting more research and endeavours that prioritise environmental and social accountability within the fashion sector. This highlights the significance of interpersonal relationships in shaping customers' inclination towards making ethical purchasing choices. This study posits that individuals who exhibit a favourable inclination towards social equality will also exhibit a significant degree of CCC (Customers Choice of Clothing Apparel).

H1: Social Equity Positively Influences CCC

The Concept of Authenticity in the Fashion Industry

The notion of authenticity within the realm of fashion has become a prominent topic of discourse in both academic and industry circles. The concept of authenticity, which is frequently difficult to define and varies depending on individual perspectives, has a complex and significant meaning within the ever-changing and diverse realm of the fashion business (Mandarić, Hunjet & Vuković, 2022). The study explores the intricate aspects of authenticity in the realm of fashion. It will analyse the many interpretations of authenticity, explore its effects on consumer behaviour, and investigate its significance in building brand identity.

The Conceptualization of Authenticity in the Fashion Industry

Material Authenticity: The concept of authenticity in the fashion industry is often linked to the use of real materials and skilled workmanship (Kant Hvass, K., & Pedersen, E. R. G. (2019). This viewpoint highlights the significance of conventional artisanal methods, high-quality materials, and precise workmanship, placing emphasis on the tactile and material elements that contribute to the genuineness of a garment.

The topic of cultural and heritage is of significant academic interest. The concept of authenticity in fashion pertains to the preservation and commemoration of cultural aspects and traditions (Mishra, Jain & Malhotra, 2021). Companies that get inspiration from particular cultural aesthetics or engage in partnerships with skilled craftspeople to integrate old methods often aim to communicate a genuine connection to cultural heritage.

The Impact of Authenticity on Consumer Perception

Sense of Authenticity: The sense of authenticity is a subjective experience that exhibits variation across customers (Dragomir & Dumitru, 2022). The pursuit of authenticity is often seen among consumers as a reaction to the prevailing culture of mass production and rapid fashion. Perceived authenticity pertains to the conviction that a product or brand exhibits congruence with authentic ideals, transparency, and an accurate portrayal of its origins.

The relationship between authenticity and the development of customer trust and loyalty has been extensively explored in the literature (Swaminathan et al., 2019). Brands that are viewed as genuine have a higher likelihood of establishing enduring connections with customers that prioritise openness and sincerity. The establishment of trust in the authenticity of a brand plays a crucial role in fostering customer loyalty and generating good word-of-mouth.

The Impediments to Establishing Authenticity

The phenomenon of green washing and its ethical implications: The emergence of ethical and sustainable fashion has resulted in heightened examination, as firms have been accused of engaging in 'green-washing' a practise where they create an illusion of authenticity without demonstrating true dedication (Abdelmeguid, Afy-Shararah, Salonitis, 2022). The task at hand involves discerning between genuine sustainability endeavours and marketing strategies meant to exploit consumer beliefs.

The dichotomy between mass production and handicraft presents a significant obstacle to the preservation of authenticity (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). The complexity of preserving the authenticity linked to artisanal production becomes more challenging as fashion firms extend their reach and appeal to wider customers.

The Concept of Authenticity in the Digital Realm

The Impact of Digital Platforms on Authenticity in Fashion: The emergence of social media and digital platforms has significantly transformed the concept of authenticity within the fashion industry (Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014). Brands and influencers have the task of effectively portraying authenticity in the online realm, as the digital landscape offers a novel avenue for conveying and encountering genuine fashion tales.

The concept of authenticity is becoming more closely associated with customer interaction and co-creation, as discussed by Keller and Lehmann (2006). Brands that engage customers in their creative processes or integrate user-generated material add to a perception of authenticity by erasing the boundaries between producers and consumers.

The idea of authenticity in fashion is multifaceted and dynamic, extending beyond tangible elements to include cultural, perceptual, and digital components. In light of the fashion industry's engagement with sustainability, ethical concerns, and the complexities brought about by digitization, the pursuit of comprehending and upholding authenticity emerges as an essential undertaking. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a basis for further investigation into the complex concept of authenticity in the realm of

fashion. It aims to give valuable insights for scholars, professionals in the fashion industry, and consumers who are navigating the difficult terrain of fashion authenticity. This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to authenticity will also demonstrate a high level of CCC.

H2: Authenticity Positively Influences CCC

The Diverse Role of Functionality in Fashion Design

The notion of usefulness in the realm of fashion design has progressed beyond its purely aesthetic dimensions, assuming a central role in the dynamic convergence of style, comfort, and purpose. This literature study aims to investigate the many dimensions of functionality in the realm of fashion. It delves into the varied interpretations of functionality, analyses its implications for design innovation, and examines its influence on customer experiences.

The Evolution of Functional Fashion: A Comprehensive Analysis

Historical perspectives reveal that functionality in fashion design has its origins in the past, when clothes served both practical reasons and aesthetic considerations due to need (Kawamura, 2005). Over the course of time, the concept of functionality has undergone a transformation, progressing from the fulfilment of fundamental requirements to the accommodation of contemporary ways of living. This evolution has significantly impacted design philosophies and has shaped the expectations of consumers. The amalgamation of practicality and design has emerged as a distinguishing characteristic of modern functional fashion (Kim & Johnson, 2016). There is a growing trend among designers to include not just aesthetic elements but also practicality and flexibility into their garment designs. This change in perspective indicates a broader recognition of the need of a comprehensive grasp of utility.

The Concepts of Innovation and Technological Advancements

The introduction of smart fabrics and wearable technology has significantly transformed the functionality aspect of fashion (Bilney, 2018). The integration of sensors into clothes and the development of adaptive capabilities have been facilitated by technological advancements, allowing designers to produce fashion that serves practical purposes by adapting to ambient circumstances and consumer preferences.

Sustainability as a Functional Element: The incorporation of sustainability issues has become an integral aspect of functionality in contemporary fashion design (Fletcher & Tham, 2019). The integration of sustainable materials, adaptable designs, and multifunctional elements effectively addresses environmental considerations and meets the demands of consumers. This approach prioritises functionality and extends beyond just instant wearability. Consumer-Centric Functionality refers to the design and implementation of features and capabilities in a product or service that prioritise the needs and preferences

Ergonomics and Comfort: The incorporation of ergonomics and comfort is a prominent aspect within the realm of fashion design, as highlighted by Barnes and An (2018). The creation of garments involves careful consideration of the human body's motions and

comfort, recognising that functionality plays a significant role in enhancing the overall well-being of the individual wearing them.

Adaptable and Inclusive Design: The notion of usefulness has been broadened to include the concepts of adaptable and inclusive design (Boonlertvanich, 2021). Designers are integrating characteristics that accommodate a wide range of abilities and body shapes, so guaranteeing that fashion has not only aesthetic appeal but also accessibility and inclusivity.

The Role of Functional Fashion in Various Contexts

The Relationship between Sportswear and Performance: The design of sportswear prioritises utility, since these clothing are specifically intended to enhance performance and serve practical purposes (Centobelli et al, 2022). The integration of technological breakthroughs, the use of moisture-wicking textiles, and the implementation of creative designs serve to address the unique requirements of athletes, therefore exemplifying the adaptability of functioning within diverse settings.

Professional and Formal Attire: Functionality is a significant factor even in the context of professional and formal attire (Cooper & Claxton, 2022). The use of garments that possess attributes such as flexibility, breathability, and ease of movement serves as a testament to the potential of utility in augmenting the overall experience of individuals in a wide range of situations, extending beyond the realms of casual or sporting environments.

The role of functionality in fashion design has expanded beyond conventional limits, becoming a dynamic and essential element of the creative process. This literature study sheds light on the many aspects of functionality in fashion, ranging from its historical value to modern advancements. As designers grapple with the intricate interplay of contemporary consumer expectations, technological progress, and sustainability imperatives, the comprehension and integration of functionality within fashion design emerge as not merely a creative pursuit, but a vital element in addressing the ever-changing demands and inclinations of a heterogeneous and discerning clientele. This paper establishes a basis for further investigation into the intricate interplay between fashion and utility, presenting valuable perspectives for scholars, designers, and professionals within the sector. This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to functionality will also demonstrate a high level of CCC.

H3: Functionality Positively Influences CCC

Localism

Exploring the Dimensions of Localism in the Fashion Industry

The notion of localism has become more significant within the fashion business, as it confronts the challenges posed by globalisation, sustainability, and the pursuit of distinctive, community-oriented narratives. This literature study aims to comprehensively examine the many facets of localism in the fashion business. It delves into its cultural, economic, and environmental ramifications, while also analysing its impact on consumer behaviours and industry practises.

The Cultural Importance of Localism

The Relationship between Cultural Heritage and Identity: The phenomenon of localism in the fashion industry often intersects with the endeavour to save cultural heritage and maintain a sense of identity (Mackenzie, 2017). Designers and craftspeople get creative influence from indigenous customs, traditional craftsmanship, and storytelling, so infusing cultural depth into their clothing creations and engendering a genuine appeal that strikes a chord with customers.

The Role of Fashion in Community Expression: The concept of localism serves as a medium for communities to articulate and showcase their distinct identity via the medium of fashion (Ndi Wanki, 2018). The establishment of partnerships between designers and local craftspeople, together with the integration of traditional themes and methods, facilitates the presentation of communities' cultural uniqueness on an international platform.

The Economic Ramifications

The Impact of Localism on Fashion: Enhancing Local Economies and Artisanal workmanship: The adoption of localism in the fashion industry has been shown to have a positive effect on the sustainability of local economies and the preservation of artisanal workmanship (Okur & Saricam, 2019). The promotion of local manufacturing not only generates job possibilities but also enhances economic resilience, especially in locations where traditional crafts play a vital role in the local economy.

Challenges of Globalization: The examination of the effects of globalisation on regional economies has significant importance within the context of localism (Mishra, Jain & Malhotra, 2021). The expansion of global fashion markets has given rise to a notable contradiction between the promotion of local businesses and the susceptibility to the influences of mass manufacturing and out-sourcing. The intersection of localism and sustainability is a strategic approach to mitigate the ecological impact of the fashion industry (Abdelmeguid, Afy-Shararah & Salonitis, 2022). Apparel firms prioritise local manufacturing and sourcing in order to reduce transportation-related emissions and promote environmentally responsible practises. This strategic approach aligns with the increasing consumer demand for eco-friendly apparel.

The use of indigenous resources and adherence to the principles of slow fashion often align with the concept of localism (Kant Hvass & Pedersen, 2019). Designers that are engaged in the exploration of localism want to establish a fashion ecosystem that is more sustainable. This is achieved by giving priority to materials that are purchased from local suppliers, advocating for transparency in the production process, and placing more emphasis on longevity rather than following fast-paced fads.

The Significance of Localism as a Consumer Value: In the perspective of consumers, localism embodies a value system that is congruent with the principles of genuineness and communal backing (Matušovičová, 2020). The attractiveness of locally created fashion stems from the desire to establish a connection with the narratives associated with the items, promote local enterprises, and minimise one's environmental impact.

The Relationship between Localism and Personal Identity: The decision-making process of consumers in adopting local fashion has a significant role in shaping their personal identity and reflecting their beliefs (Gazzola et al, 2020). The phenomenon of localism in the fashion industry enables people to harmonise their own fashion choices with a more encompassing dedication to bolstering local communities and promoting ecological practises. It can be inferred that the evidence presented supports the stated hypothesis.

The phenomenon of localism in the fashion business is seen as a potent and influential factor that significantly influences the cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of the sector. Localism plays a crucial role in the fashion industry as it encompasses several aspects such as the preservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of sustainable economies, and the meaningful engagement of customers. This concept serves as a valuable perspective through which the fashion industry can effectively address the challenges and intricacies of a globalised world. This literature review aims to provide a fundamental comprehension of localism within the fashion business, presenting valuable insights that may guide future research endeavours, inform industry practises, and shape consumer interaction initiatives. The ever-changing nature of fashion is accompanied by the influential presence of localism, which serves as a powerful catalyst for transformation and cultivates a greater recognition of the many stories interwoven within local communities. This research proposes that respondents who demonstrate a positive orientation to localism will also demonstrate a high level of CCC.

H4: Localism positively influences CCC

Exploring the Mechanisms of Exclusivity within the Fashion Industry

The notion of exclusivity has significant importance within the fashion business, since it encapsulates the idea of being scarce, exclusive, and highly coveted. This literature study examines the many aspects of exclusivity, including its psychological foundations, strategic consequences for businesses, and its influence on customer behaviour in the ever-changing fashion industry.

The Psychological Dimensions of Exclusivity

The Role of Scarcity and Perceived Value: In the realm of fashion, the concept of exclusivity often utilises scarcity as a psychological mechanism (Nessim & Bardey, 2022). The presence of limited availability serves to instill a feeling of urgency among consumers and amplify the perceived worth of a product, so stimulating consumer demand and augmenting its overall appeal.

The Relationship between Social Identity and Prestige: The concept of exclusivity is closely intertwined with social identity and prestige, as discussed by Okur and Saricam (2019). The possession of rare fashion products may serve as a symbol of belonging to a privileged cohort, enabling customers to communicate their societal standing and differentiate themselves within their interpersonal networks.

The Role of Brand Strategies in Establishing Exclusivity

The use of limited editions and collaborations is a strategic approach employed by fashion businesses to capitalise on exclusivity (Grassi, 2019). Brands strategically create an air of exclusivity by collaborating with respected designers or producing limited numbers of certain items, therefore appealing to customers who want distinctive and scarce products.

The influence of brand legacy on the perception of exclusivity has been shown to be considerable (Ibrahim, Aljarah & Ababneh, 2020). The augmentation of the special ambiance around a brand's goods may be attributed to enduring traditions, meticulous workmanship, and a rich historical legacy of serving selective customers.

The Impact of Exclusivity on Consumer Behaviour

The Relationship between Exclusivity and Consumer Loyalty: The concept of exclusivity has been identified as a significant factor in influencing consumer loyalty, as highlighted by Brewer (2019). Brands that effectively nurture an exclusive image often manage to build a loyal client base, as customers want to maintain their affiliation with the brand's esteemed reputation and distinctiveness.

The Fear of Missing out (FOMO) is a psychological phenomenon that is strongly associated with the concept of exclusivity (Everett, 2021). Consumers who are motivated by the fear of missing out (FOMO) have a higher propensity for engaging in impulsive buying behaviour in order to acquire exclusive products, hence reinforcing the perceived urgency generated by restricted availability.

The Role of Retail Strategies in Establishing Exclusivity

The use of temporary pop-up shops and events by retailers is a strategy employed to create unique and exclusive shopping experiences (Hoyt et al., 2018). The presence of limited-time products enhances a perception of exclusivity, since customers interpret these options as distinct and temporally constrained. The use of VIP memberships and personalised shopping experiences serves as a means to augment client exclusivity, as proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). Companies that provide VIP memberships or customise their products and services based on individual preferences enhance the customer experience, hence strengthening the perception of exclusivity. It can be inferred that the aforementioned evidence supports the notion of the proposed hypothesis.

The concept of exclusivity within the fashion business is a multifaceted and powerful phenomenon that significantly impacts customer choices, brand tactics, and the broader market environment. Exclusivity, with its psychological implications on the perception of value and its strategic use by brands, continues to play a significant role in fostering desirability and cultivating brand loyalty. This literature review offers a comprehensive analysis of the complex dynamics surrounding exclusivity. It serves as a basis for future research and strategic decision-making in an industry where scarcity and prestige significantly influence customer behaviour and brand image.

H5: Exclusivity Positively Influences CCC

According to the authors' literature assessment, no studies have looked at how slow and cyclical fashion affects consumers' awareness or shopping habits. This research fills a need in the existing literature by investigating the link between SCF and CCC motivation among consumers, taking into account the moderating influence of both industry and consumer irresponsibility as indicated in figure 1.

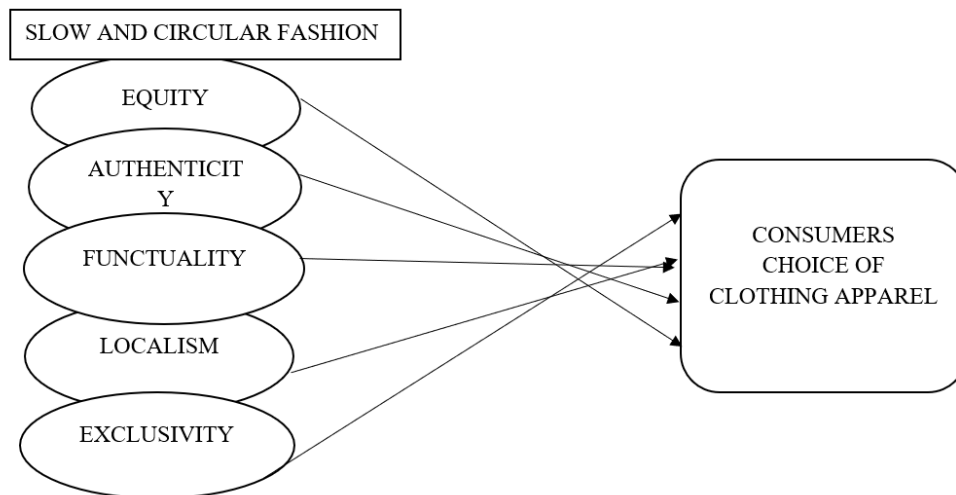


Figure 1: Link between SCF and CCC

Source: Researchers' Construct (2024)

METHOD

The study used a self-administered online questionnaire as the survey instrument. The questionnaire included 8 demographic items and 24 closed-ended interrogative questions, which were rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The scales used for the measurement of SCF were derived from the works of Jung and Jin (2016). The scale used for assessing CCC was derived from the work of Schlaile et al. (2018), namely their investigation into individual duties pertaining to socially responsible consumption. The duties mentioned in the text are consistent with the theoretical framework of the current research, which posits that consumers exhibit both sustainable and unsustainable consumption behaviours, and are constantly making efforts to adopt more environmentally-friendly practises in their lives (Adamkiewicz et al, 2022). Consumers modify their purchasing, utilisation, and disposal practises in response to their heightened comprehension of sustainability as a shared obligation between the apparel industry and its customers (McEachern, Middleton & Cassidy, 2020). According to Soyer and Dittrich (2021), the CCC scale is seen by researchers as a suitable starting measure for assessing consumers' inclination towards slow fashion. This is because behaviours associated with seeking information are considered to be a precursor to actual behavioural changes. The authors believe that no previous research has examined irresponsibility as two separate aspects, namely consumer irresponsibility and industry irresponsibility. This study examines the variables of industry and consumer irresponsibility in the context of fast fashion (FF). Both practitioners and academics have identified the apparel industry's fast fashion sector as the primary source of irresponsible

behaviours exhibited by companies and consumers. In order to be eligible for inclusion in the research, students were required to self-identify as consumers of fast fashion (FF). The current research used Kant Hvass and Pedersen (2019) framework of irresponsibility in the fast fashion sector as the basis for developing the industry irresponsibility scale. In order to address the issue of consumer irresponsibility, there was the need to create a novel metric for assessing the prevalence of two specific consumer behaviours in the fast fashion industry: the frequency and amount of consumption (Shrivastava et al, 2021). Given the exploratory nature of this study, the researchers considered these newly devised measures to be suitable indications of respondents' knowledge of their own irresponsible consuming behaviours. Data was obtained from a convenience sampling of retailing students at two institutions in Ghana, resulting in a total of 385 valid replies. Out of the entire sample size of 90 respondents, it was found that 76.6 percent ($n = 295$) were female, while 23.4 percent ($n = 90$) were male. The survey participants aged 18-30 exhibited a proportion of ninety-seven per cent, suggesting a higher inclination towards fashion among this particular age group in comparison to other age cohorts. A total of 295 respondents, accounting for 76% of the sample, indicated that they engage in garment buying more than three times each month. Additionally, 217 respondents, representing 56% of the sample, reported spending less than 100 Cedis on each shopping trip. In addition to self-identifying as consumers of fashion (CF), the respondents also expressed a preference for various other retail formats. This includes a significant majority (82.3%) who favoured high-end retailers, as well as a substantial majority (85.8%) who showed interest in second-hand marketplaces that offer luxury merchandise for sale or rent. A notable proportion (52.9%) of the respondents indicated a preference for second-hand marketplaces that offer luxury mass merchandise for sale or rent.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study employed the partial least squares (PLS) approach since it was recommended for use with small samples by Ringle et al. (2005). Individual principal component analysis was done to explore the dimensions of the components. One-dimensionality was shared by all constructs, with each explaining over 67% of average variation. All item loadings were over 0.70. Each construct had a reliability rating between 0.78 and 0.95. As can be seen in Table 1, the results of the PLS path model analysis confirmed that all measures were sufficiently reliable and valid to be used for evaluating the constructs. There was sufficient evidence for the model's predictive significance since all of the Stone Geisser's Q^2 values of the exogenous latent variables were above zero ($Q^2 = 0.340$). Discriminant validity evaluates the degree to which two elements are differentiated from one another statistically.

Table 2 clearly displayed the measurement model's discriminant validity. Since the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its connection with other components, as indicated in the table, the measurement model showed strong discriminant validity. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for CCC was 0.485, indicating that 48.5% of the variation in CCC could be attributed to external factors.

Table 1. Factor Loadings and Construct Reliability

Constructs	Loadings	CR	AVE
Slow and Circular Fashion			
Social Equity		0.874	0.783
I possess apprehensions about the concept of fair trade in the context of my clothing purchases.	0.815		
Ensuring equitable remuneration for workers throughout the garment supply chain has significant importance for me in the context of purchasing clothing items.	0.885		
I have apprehensions over the labour circumstances experienced by individuals throughout the garment supply chain at the time of my clothing purchases.	0.807		
Authenticity		0.902	0.739
I try to only purchase clothes that have been carefully made.	0.816		
The inherent value of handcrafted clothes surpasses that of mass-produced garments.	0.797		
I like garments that are crafted in the conventional manner	0.853		
Functionality		0.868	0.708
I like having a lot of options for how to wear an item of clothing.	0.852		
I am not one to throw away clothing fast and instead like to retain them for as long as feasible.	0.708		
I am more into timeless, traditional styles.	0.747		
Localism		0.897	0.738
To me, garments created in Ghana are of higher quality than those made elsewhere.	0.881		
In my opinion, locally manufactured apparel is superior than that which is created from imported materials.	0.817		
Ghanaian fashion labels require consumer backing.	0.786		
Exclusivity		0.853	0.788
I have a soft spot for limited editions	0.893		
Unique pieces of clothing fascinate me	0.796		
I am interested in distinct and exceptional apparel	0.985		
Consumers Choice of Clothing Apparel (CCC)		0.938	0.884
I want to buy, use, and throw away clothing and clothing-related goods in a more socially responsible way.	0.851		
My purchasing habits change depending on whether or not I know the clothing brands I support are engaged in environmental and social sustainability programmes.	0.906		

I am aware of the steps I need to take to become a more conscientious buyer, user, and disposer of clothing and textiles.	0.875		
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Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Equity	Authenticity	Functionality	Localism	Exclusivity	CCC
Equity	0.832					
Authenticity	0.421	0.886				
Functionality	0.265	0.482	0.872			
Localism	0.164	0.254	0.154	0.895		
Exclusivity	0.327	0.187	0.361	0.241	0.874	
CCC	0.403	0.065	0.221	0.318	0.164	0.853

Direct Effects: Slow Fashion Orientation and Consumers' Choice of Clothing Apparel

Nonparametric bootstrapping was used to examine the significance of a correlation between SCF and CCC. In PLS analysis, the bootstrapping procedure yields t-statistics. If the t-statistic for the path coefficient is greater than 1.96, then the test was statistically significant at the 5% level of confidence for two-tailed t-tests. The five hypotheses and their implications were discussed for slow fashion businesses and other institutional actors who want to increase consumer participation in the movement towards a more sustainable fashion system (Henninger et al., 2016).

The first hypothesis looked at the possibility that social equity has a positive and substantial effect on CCC. A 0.289 path correlation between social equity and CCC is seen in Table 3. There is a significant correlation between customers' preferences for clothing that was produced under ethical working circumstances and fair trade practises (= 0.289, p 0.001), as shown by the t-statistic of 5.875. Therefore, as there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between social equality and CCC motivation, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. Given that the idea of social sustainability is related to human-based ethical concerns in the garment sector. This conclusion was anticipated and offers more evidence for consumers having positive views towards social sustainability. This study agrees with McDonald et al. (2012), who argue that consumers may and should adopt CCC-friendly practices simply by becoming more informed and gaining new perspectives over time. However, sustainable consumption is sometimes hindered by the separation of production and consumption, as well as by a lack of awareness of the sources of resources and the environmental impacts of common consumption patterns (Grassi, 2019). Therefore, slow fashion firms, NGOs, and governments should emphasise the human-based implications of the garment sector in their message. This communication can increase consumers' awareness of the human cost of their consumption, and further, can encourage them to practise CCC by shopping from businesses that provide clear information about how they ensure ethical treatment of workers throughout their supply chains. Lack of company transparency is a hindrance to the mobilisation of the slow fashion system; until consumers stop buying from companies that are not open about their commitment to environmental and social

sustainability, those businesses are not likely to start doing so on their own as asserted by Nessim & Bardey (2022).

Since a route coefficient of 0.198 is considered to be statistically significant, the results lend credence to H2. With a t-statistic of 2.582 and a p-value lower than 0.05, this variable is statistically significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 2, which argued that authenticity is a significant driver of CCC, was accepted. The human element of clothing is emphasised by both social equality and authenticity. Authenticity emphasises the value contributed to goods when businesses choose for a gradual manufacturing strategy rather than a mass production model, while social equity is concerned with the ethical treatment of workers. If customers learn about the human rights problems that are commonly connected with mass manufacturing, this study implies that authenticity might be a significant driver of CCC. Suppliers to fast fashion (FF) stores, in particular, are under pressure from retailers to create large quantities rapidly (Webster, 2019). Slow fashion producers, on the other hand, make high-quality items in limited quantities while minimising their impact on the environment. Many slow fashion brands make it easy for customers to learn about the human and environmental costs of their clothing by providing detailed information about each item on their websites. Sharing such information with customers, as proposed by Hypothesis 2, may boost CCC. Many high-end companies have made it a point to highlight their commitment to social and environmental responsibility by sharing stories about their goods and the people who use them (Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020). Similarly, slow fashion brands may utilise storytelling to weave messages about sustainability into their marketing and advertising. Consumers are more likely to develop sentimental ties to products if they are told stories about their origins and their journeys to the store shelf (Mishra, Jain & Malhotra, 2021). This link promotes CCC-related behaviours such as considerate use, maintenance, and disposal of clothing.

The results also lent credence to the third hypothesis. The route coefficient of functionality with CCC is 0.156, which surpasses the limit of a substantial path. The t-statistic for this variable is 2.834, and the p-value is less than 0.01, thus the functionality dimension of SCF is an important determinant of CCC motivation. Consumers are prompted to think on their actions after making a purchase by SCF's functionality dimension. All participants confirmed via survey that they were regular users of FF. The study hypothesised that respondents who scored low on this dimension either bought fast fashion (FF) items of poor quality, so they did not last long, or favoured trendy styles over classic ones, and as a result did not get their money's worth (Dissanayake & Weerasinghe, 2021). However, the data revealed that 72.4% of respondents favour classic and simple patterns, 86.6% of respondents love wearing the same garments in numerous ways, and 85.2% of respondents maintain items as long as possible rather than discarding them immediately. Thus, customers who purchase from FF companies nevertheless respect quality, exhibit a propensity to retain their goods for extended durations, and to wear products in numerous ways to establish their own distinctive styles. These actions are consistent with CCC standards. This is a promising discovery because it suggests that consumers who have a favourable attitude towards the practicality of slow fashion may be attracted to retailers that promote the brands' quality

commitment in their brand communications and create versatile product lines with mix-and-match separates.

The path coefficient of 0.148 is positive and statistically significant, supporting the fourth hypothesis that localism is a key factor influencing CCC. This variable has a t-statistic of 2.282 and a p-value of 0.05. This lends credence to the fourth hypothesis. High scorers on the SCF's localism component may be cognizant of the extra ecological and social costs associated with manufacturing in developing countries, according to the study's authors. It might also be that they are more likely to patronise locally owned establishments or those located in Ghana. Closer evaluation of the localism variable suggests that respondents indeed feel it is vital to support Ghana clothing businesses. However, they do substantially worse when asked whether they would rather buy clothes made in Ghana or elsewhere and whether they think utilising locally obtained materials increases the worth of the clothes they buy. Because of this, slow fashion businesses in Ghana have a chance to raise awareness about the social and environmental costs associated with mass-produced goods made in other countries (Webster, 2019). Although, customers should not feel pressured to buy only from firms in Ghana, they may be able to raise their CCC if they learn more about the many elements that affect the social responsibility of their clothing choices. Consumers may find this data useful in making the case for the increased cost of delayed fashion. Consumers' perceptions of the cost of ethically made clothing are mostly based on assumptions rather than real experiences, according to research published in 2016 by Henninger et al. Slow fashion is more expensive than fast fashion because of a number of factors, including sustainable materials and manufacturing processes, higher labour costs for trained craftspeople, and smaller batch sizes (Henninger et al., 2016). Companies in the slow fashion industry that provide their customers with accurate information help shoppers make more educated selections as they continue their "greening" journey (McDonald et al., 2012). It is believed that the slow fashion movement will play a crucial role in reviving Ghana's garment manufacturing sector (Jung & Jin, 2014; 2016), hence it is important that this knowledge gets out to the public.

Results also corroborated the fifth hypothesis, which proposed that the desire for monopoly would be a major factor in improving CCC. There is not a statistically significant relationship between the two variables (0.126 path coefficient, 2.258 t-statistics and 0.05 p-values). Small-batch manufacturing in slow fashion is defined by the exclusivity factor of SCF, whereas fast fashion's mass production of trend products floods the market with comparable designs and gives birth to the poverty among abundance problem (Jung & Jin, 2014). Future studies should dig further on the link between exclusivity and CCC. Consumers in the sample may not be experiencing DE individuation, or the perception that FF hinders the creation of a unique personal style (Cavender & Lee, 2018; Kim et al., 2013), which could account for the lack of significance in the relationship between the two variables. Consumers in the sample may share the view of previous researchers that fast and slow fashion are complimentary to one another (Joy et al., 2012; Joy, 2015). Buying from a wide variety of retailers and the fact that 86.6% of respondents like to get multiple uses out of an item of clothing (i.e., the functionality dimension) may suggest that these consumers

are already curating wardrobes made up of products from their favourite brands that express their personal style. This would account for why they are not crediting the uniqueness of SCF or CCC.

Table 3. Results of Direct Effects of SCF to CCC

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	t-Value	Supported (Yes/No)
H1: Equity --> CCC	0.289	5.875	Yes ***
H2: Authenticity--> CCC	0.198	2.582	Yes **
H3: Functionality--> CCC	0.156	2.834	Yes **
H4: Localism --> CCC	0.148	2.282	Yes *
H5: Exclusivity --> CCC	0.126	2.258	Yes *

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Numerous scholars specialising in consumer social responsibility and apparel sustainability have proposed a macro institutional approach that emphasises the involvement of buyers in resolving social issues, rather than solely attributing responsibility to companies. Nevertheless, the progress of the slow fashion movement among consumers has been impeded due to a deficiency in proactive communication from various retailers who contribute to the sustainability mission (such as luxury brands, born-sustainable brands, and second-hand marketplaces), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and governments that have the potential to assign shared responsibility to consumers. The acceptance of a paradigm changes towards a more sustainable clothing system in the garment industry and among its retailers is contingent upon the active participation of both industry stakeholders and consumers. The current consumption ideology was primarily driven by traditional marketing strategies that employed a push approach. However, in the era of sustainability, it is imperative for marketing to embrace a more genuine, transparent and credible approach in order to generate customer value. Despite the growing body of research on social responsibility, it is worth noting that there is currently no existing study that specifically examines the distinct aspects of consumers' awareness about industrial irresponsibility and consumer irresponsibility, as far as the authors are aware. The differentiation of the two manifestations of irresponsibility may assist researchers in comprehending the degree to which customers undertake responsibility within the slow fashion movement, as well as elucidate strategies for establishing responsibility as a shared obligation between the consumer and the firm. The primary objective of this research was to fill a void in the existing body of literature. This was achieved by first investigating the impact of consumers' socially responsible consumption (CSRC) on their socially responsible consumption motivation (SRCM). Additionally, the study sought to analyse the moderating impacts of customers' knowledge regarding both consumer and industrial irresponsibility. The results of the study validate the notion that consumers continue to lack awareness regarding the consequences of industrial misconduct, particularly in relation to environmental and social issues. However, they do exhibit a certain level of recognition about the repercussions of their own reckless consuming habits. The aforementioned discovery is promising and warrants more exploration in future scholarly inquiries.

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Acknowledgements

The authors thank all the participants who directly or indirectly participated in this research. We really appreciate their contributions to making this study a success.

Funding: *The authors received no external funding.*

Conflict of Interest: *The authors declare no conflict of interest.*