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Study on Motives Underlying the Buying of Fast Fashion in India Despite Associated Sustainability Issues

Raziskava motivov za nakupovanje hitre mode v Indiji kljub problemom s trajnostjo

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify motivational factors for consumers in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. The term fast fashion is used to refer to cheaper replicas of luxury fashion trends. Apart from impacting the environment adversely, fast fashion has several other issues as well. Fast fashion has many sustainability issues but its demand is growing at a tremendous pace. The motives for the preference for fast fashion were explored in this study. Both primary and secondary data were used to conduct this research. The primary data was collected for this study via questionnaire. All the factors are rated on the 7-point Likert scale. Furthermore, the laddering technique of interviewing was employed to investigate the underlying values. The study revealed that "creating self-identity" is the most influencing motive for consumers in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, while "showing dominance" is the least influencing motive for consumers in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. This study offers insight into the factors influencing buying decisions for a fast fashion product. This research can help address the issue of sustainability in the fashion industry. These findings can also be used to promote sustainable fashion.

Keywords: sustainable fashion, fast fashion, fashion buying motives, consumer buying decision, sustainability issues, slow fashion

Izvleček

Namen te raziskave je ugotoviti motive potrošnikov pri odločanju o nakupu izdelkov hitre mode. Izraz hitra moda se uporablja za cenejše replike luksuznih modnih trendov. Hitra moda prinaša poleg škodljivega vpliva na okolje tudi številne druge težave. Čeprav je povezana z različnimi trajnostnimi problemi, povpraševanje po njej izjemno hitro raste. Za izvedbo raziskave so bili uporabljeni primarni in sekundarni podatki, pri čemer so bili primarni podatki zbrani z vprašalnikom. Vsi dejavniki so bili ocenjeni s pomočjo sedemstopenjske Likertove lestvice. Za raziskavo osnovnih vrednot je bila uporabljena tehnika anketiranja s hierarhičnim razvrščanjem. Študija razkriva, da je »ustvarjanje lastne identitete« odločilen motiv za potrošnike pri nakupu izdelka hitre mode, medtem ko je



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»izkazovanje prevlade« najmanj vpliven motiv. Študija razkriva pomembne dejavnike za nakupno odločitev za izdelek hitre mode in lahko koristi pri reševanju vprašanj trajnosti v modni industriji. Te ugotovitve lahko uporabimo tudi za promocijo trajnostne mode.

Ključne besede: trajnostna moda, hitra moda, motivi modnih nakupov, potrošniška nakupna odločitev, vprašanja trajnosti, počasna moda

1 Introduction

The term “fast fashion” is used to refer to cheaper replicas of luxury fashion trends. Fast fashion is characterized by frequent consumption, short product lifecycles and cheap production practices. Fast fashion helps in satisfying the deep desire for high-end fashion among its consumers. Generally, these consumers are from a young age group. They opt for fast fashion to satisfy these needs, even if it has unsustainable impacts on society and the environment [1]. Sustainability can be defined in many ways. One definition is “sustainability is about much more than our relationship with the environment; it’s about our relationship with ourselves, our communities, and our institutions” [2]. Along with the traditional belief of economic, environmental and social sustainability, the linking of sustainable manufacturing and consumption with the capacity to change positive design practices is offered by transformative and co-operative design actions [3]. Ethical behaviour and sustainability have become important in the fashion industry in last two decades [1]. Fast fashion brands have also realised that highly profitable, less expensive and trendy fast fashion is accompanied by ethical issues [4]. There are many sustainability issues associated with the manufacturing of fast fashion, such as the farming of cotton, which requires a huge quantity of water, the release of untreated dyes and chemicals into domestic water resources, a poor working environment and low wages for the workers [5]. Fast fashion is growing at a tremendous pace, despite the amount of emphasis placed on green and sustainable practices everywhere. Consumers seldom buy according to their ethical or environmental attitudes. This devi-

ation of consumer behaviour from their attitudes is still not explained and understood completely [6]. Consumers seldom make rational buying decisions and their decisions rarely reflect their moral values. Consumers generally give more weight to the price of the product than to sustainability [6]. Consumers throw away large quantities of clothing every year as waste that contributes to landfills. Garments that cannot be sold on the market create solid waste blocking the flow of rivers, while clogging parks and greenways [7]. Fast fashion has led consumers to see garments as disposable. This creates more environmental and health hazards in underdeveloped and developing countries than the lack proper waste disposal systems [8].

Consumers buy clothes for several reasons. People use their clothes to convey the self-image desired by society [9]. The fashion used by consumers reflects their beliefs and attitudes. It also reflects their knowledge about fashion and clothing. Clothes also depict the interest of the wearer in fashion and garments [10]. This research explored how consumers perceive fast fashion. Moreover, the factors behind their preference for fast fashion at the cost of sustainability were also studied. The findings of this research can help address the issue of sustainability in the fashion industry. These findings can also be used to promote the sustainable fashion.

1.1 Factors in the growth of fast fashion

Fast fashion is growing at a tremendous pace. Mass production was the key to success in the fashion industry until four decades back. Styles were remained standardized, as factories were restricted to fewer design options [11]. Consumers were barely conscious of fashion and style at that time, and thus

preferred very basic apparel [12]. Fashion products have a shorter lifecycle. Fashion products go through four phases during their life: launch, growth and public acceptance, mass conformity, and decline/obsolescence. In the early era of the clothing industry, fashion calendars were made on the basis of fashion shows, trade fairs and fabric exhibitions. The calendars consisted of a general pattern of seasonal development for spring/summer or autumn/winter collections. The changing business environment has transformed the global fashion industry. Competition in the fashion apparel industry had increased since the end of 1980s. This occurred as many large retailers started to dominate the industry [13]. These fashion brands developed an infrastructure with the aim of providing merchandise at low prices in less time. This helped retailers and manufacturers to maintain low costs. Hereafter, a trend emerged to source manufacturing processes to offshore countries and places with cheaper labour [14]. Although outsourcing helped to reduce costs, it increased lead times. Various additional costs also came into existence, such as the costs of forced markdowns, maintaining inventories and obsolescence. These costs outweighed the saving in the labour costs of outsourcing [15]. An improving atmosphere for fashion-oriented clothing raised the markdowns required to clear stock at the end of seasons. This has been confirmed by further studies that profits cannot be earned in fashion business through mass production [16].

A sudden rise in fashionable apparel products was observed in the early 1990s. This occurred as consumers became more concerned about fashion, and the demand for simple and classical apparel declined [17]. However, retailers began to focus upon the expansion of their collections with new and innovative products in the early 1990s [13]. Retailers also began to focus on a quick response to the demands of consumers for the latest fashion trends [18]. To sustain and grow their business, fashion and apparels retailers changed their business models to buyer-driven rather than product-driven, and allied

with suppliers on various markets and established their own unique brands. This resulted in an increase in profits. Fashion products have very short lifecycles, while consumer demand is also volatile. Fashion retailers must thus make fashion merchandise available to their consumers before their competitors do. The more rapid inclusion of customer preferences in design and product development raises profit margins for retailers [15]. Fashion shows and fashion runways, which were initially accessible by buyers, designers and fashion managers, represent the inspiration for the fashion and apparel industry. Since the beginning of 21st century, catwalks and fashion shows have been available to the public through fashion magazines or the web. This demystified the fashion development process [19]. Aware consumers are exposed to the latest designs and fashion in real time. Retailers such as Zara, Mango and H&M started to offer new collections in two to five weeks in order to attract these consumers [13]. Forecasting is a very cumbersome process. It can be very difficult to predict future fashion and bring it to the market in this reduced amount of time. To overcome this issue, the fashion industry began to utilize real-time data to understand consumers' needs [20]. Fast fashion retailers were forced to adapt and evolve their internal processes to cope with the dynamic atmosphere created by fast fashion products [21]. To bring a product to points of sale in timely manner, all key players in the fashion supply chain had to work in sequence. There was additional time loss due to ineffective communications and reworks. A fashion product could not be sold in the required season due to all these factors. These challenges have led the fashion industry to restructure in order to improve its performance [22]. Quick responses and just-in-time techniques were employed to respond quickly to consumer demands at low costs [12].

1.2 *Fast fashion and sustainability issues*

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has defined environmental justice as “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless

of race, colour national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies” [23]. There are many sustainability issues associated with the manufacturing of fast fashion. The global fast fashion industry’s supply chain begins with textile manufacturing where both man-made and natural fibres are produced. The majority of clothing comprises polyester or cotton. Polyester is made from oil and the production of cotton requires a large amount of water. Many pesticides are also used for growing cotton. Textile processes, such as dyeing, finishing and printing, adds to hazards because wastewaters are generally discharged into domestic water resources without proper treatment. This results in the addition of heavy metals and many other toxic materials to water resources, with a negative impact on the health of local residents and animals [24]. Post-textile manufacturing, the next phase in the fast fashion supply chain, is garment manufacturing. Garment production employs more than 40 million workers across the globe [25]. Apart from impacting the environment adversely, fast fashion has several other issues as well. Some 90% of global clothing is made in low and medium income countries. Occupational hazards and safety norms are generally not enforced in these countries because of weak organizational management and the political infrastructure [26]. This has resulted in various occupational hazards, such as respiratory problems from poor synthetic air particles and cotton dust due to bad ventilation and musculoskeletal issues due to repetitive movements. Reported health issues include lung cancer, damaged endocrine function, overuse injuries, accidental injuries and death [27]. There have been many disasters due to poor working conditions, such as the factory collapse in 2013 that killed more than 1,100 Bangladeshi workers [28]. Despite such tragedies, working conditions have not improved for workers in poor countries. The apparel industries have shifted the occupational and environmental loads related to fast fashion from developed and resourceful countries to under-devel-

oped/ developing countries [5]. Fast fashion has led consumers to see garments as disposable. Consumers throw away large quantities of clothing every year as waste that contributes to landfills [7]. Garments that cannot be sold on the market create solid waste that blocks the flow of rivers, and clogs parks and greenways. This creates more environmental and health hazards in underdeveloped and developing countries that lack proper waste disposal systems. Moreover, consumers have very limited or no knowledge of the environmental impact of the fast fashion clothing. To promote sustainability in the industry, consumers must be educated about the issues [8].

1.3 Challenges for sustainable fashion brands

Sustainable fashion is an approach to satisfying consumer needs for fashion without harming the environment and society. Combining sustainability and fashion was previously considered a paradox. In recent times, however, the cooperation of these two is much anticipated, but it is difficult to define sustainable development, as the meaning of sustainability is constantly evolving. This makes it even more difficult to define sustainable fashion. Fashion is supposed to be an innovative field, but it is way behind in terms of sustainability. Fashion also lags far behind in the field of research. The research publications about fashion and sustainability that are most relevant are from the 21st century. Because fashion is continuously changing, it is very important to think wisely so that these changes can be directed towards sustainable fashion. Though the participation of global fashion brands is not very encouraging, there are many small-scale and domestic brands that are striving to make sustainability a prominent feature of the fashion industry [29].

Consumers want sustainable fashion now. This may be due to awareness about the deteriorating environment. Consumers prefer to spend on environmentally friendly fashion products. Fashion in its present form, especially fast fashion, is unsustainable. Despite the willingness of all stakeholders

to pursue sustainable fashion, actual progress in this direction is not convincing. The following constraints can be attributed to blocking the path to sustainable fashion.

1.3.1 Lack of understanding of sustainable products

One of the prime reasons for the slow growth of sustainable fashion is ambiguity and confusion in the understanding of sustainable products amongst all the stakeholders. For instance, natural fibres are considered more environmentally friendly than synthetic fibres, as natural fibres are biodegradable. However, there are other sustainability issues associated with the production of natural fibres, such as water consumption and chemical discharge. Consumers are thus supposed to pick the product with less sustainability issues. This makes the choice harder, as products that do not harm the environment and society do not exist. There is no universal scale to define a sustainable product. Industry would certainly prefer sustainable changes that are economical to implement. In some cases, where all the choices are non-sustainable, a cost effective alternative will always be preferred by all the stakeholders [30].

1.3.2 No scalable standard for supply chains of sustainable fashion

Supply chains are not different for sustainable fashion brands and non-sustainable fashion brands. Profitability is always given more weight when running a business. Every brand must select from existing alternatives of supply chain partners to distribute its products. This challenge becomes even more difficult with the increased scale of business. If a brand wants to opt for a completely sustainable supply chain, it would require tremendous efforts. It must assess all internal processes and would also require sustained cooperation from all supply chain partners. Thus, the non-availability of an existing supply chain model to scale up the business for sustainable fashion products is a great hindrance in the growth of sustainable fashion brands [30].

1.3.3 Investment constraints

It requires investment to replace an existing infrastructure and machines. For instance, to incorporate a new dyeing machine which consumes less water than the existing will require scrapping the old machine and buying of new machine. If the quality of product is same in both cases, this will add unnecessary cost to the business but price for the product cannot be increased due to competitive market. Many business brands may not have investment required for sustainable processes available with them. Also, majority of fashion brands are not able to control their suppliers for changing their processes to sustainable ones. Performing all the operations of the supply chain is also not a feasible alternative due to huge capital investment involved and underutilization of resources by a brand itself [30].

1.3.4 Technological constraints

Fashion brands must rely on existing manufacturing technology available with their suppliers. They cannot force suppliers to use a particular machine or technology. They bargain for the price, time and quality only. As manufacturers cater to many buyers and have very calculated profit margins, it becomes very difficult for fashion brands to persuade them to change the existing machines and technology [30].

1.3.5 Cultural constraints

The pace of change in an existing culture is always slow. This can be attributed to many factors. The major reason is the reluctance of people to accept changes, as they become part of the existing culture. The competition in the fashion apparel industry increased when many major retailers began to dominate the industry. These fashion brands developed an infrastructure with the aim of providing merchandise at low prices in less time. This helped retailers and manufacturers to maintain low costs. Hereafter, a culture of outsourcing manufacturing processes developed. In the present scenario, fashion brands function based on the outsourcing model for production activities to achieve a balance of cost, time and quality [30].

1.3.6 Short product lifecycle

The product lifecycles of fashion products has decreased dramatically. All activities, such as product development, transportation, manufacturing and the consumption of fashion goods, are happening at a faster pace. This can be attributed to fast fashion. As catwalks and fashion shows became available to the public through fashion magazines or the web, consumers have become exposed to the latest designs and fashion in real time. Retailers such as Zara, Mango and H&M offer new collections in two to five weeks in order to attract consumers. It can be very difficult to predict future fashion and bring it to the market in this reduced amount of time less time. Fast fashion retailers were forced to adapt and evolve their internal processes to cope with the dynamic atmosphere created by fast fashion products. To bring a product to points of sale in a timely manner, all the key players in the fashion supply chain had to work in sequence. These challenges led the fashion industry to restructure to improve its performance. Quick responses and just-in-time techniques are employed to respond quickly to consumer demands at low costs. However, this has resulted in an increase in transportation costs. There is increasing demand for road and air transportation. These modes of transportation create a greater carbon footprint than sea or rail transportation. Fashion brands are forced to choose less environment friendly modes of transportation, or they will lose customers who prefer faster deliveries [30].

1.3.7 Greenwashing

Greenwashing is a process adopted by companies to project themselves as more eco-friendly than they actually are. This is a very unfortunate but prevalent practice. It discourages fashion brands and other supply chain players from putting real efforts into improving the sustainability of their products and operations [30].

1.4 Motives for buying fast fashion

As economic goods, fast fashion goods are bound by the basic laws of economics. Demand for fast fashion

goods depends on the price and income. A higher price for a product leads to lower demand, while higher income creates higher demand. However, economic perspective does not recognize the emotional aspect of consumer buying behaviour. Humans are unable to make decisions in a rational way like machines do. There will always be a difference between the buying decision predicted by economics and buying decision actually made. Social, emotional and cognitive needs must thus be taken into considerations to understand fast fashion buying behaviour. According to Maslow, different product consumptions are related to different types of needs. For instance, clothing is related to physiological needs, while fashion is related to love, belongingness and esteem needs. From an anthropological perspective, consumer behaviour is a cultural phenomenon. It is considered to be an unnatural culture that pushes consumers to consume in a particular way. Thus, a consumer buying decision is a complex process. Factors affecting consumer buying decisions are price, self-image, perceived risks, additional cost of buying, hedonism and social factors [31].

Consumers buy clothes for several reasons. People use their clothes to convey the self-image desired by society [9]. The fashion used by consumers reflects their beliefs and attitudes. It also reflects their knowledge about fashion and clothing. Clothes also depict the interest of the wearer in fashion and garments. A study on kids' wear brands showed that over 85% of consumers considered the fit of the garments a very important aspect for satisfaction [10]. The buying decisions of fashion consumers are found to be affected by uniqueness, self-concept, brand image, word of mouth and perceived quality [32]. Consumers seldom buy according to their ethical or environmental attitudes. This deviation of consumer behaviour from their attitudes is still not explained and understood completely. Consumers seldom make their buying decision in a rational way and, for the most part, their decisions hardly reflect their moral values. Consumers generally give more importance to the price of the product than to sus-

tainability. It has been cited by many researchers that sustainability alone cannot be sufficient motivation for consumers to change their purchase behaviour. Three different reasons could be attributed to this. One is the complex nature of fashion sustainability. The second is the diversity of consumers’ ethical spheres. The third is that fashion buying does not come under an altruistic act. Sustainability is found to be of low significance for consumers when making a buying decision [6].

It can thus be concluded that apart from the economic factors that influence the fast fashion buying, there are also emotional and social factors. The emotional and social factors affecting fast fashion buying decision can be summed up as being trendy, earning respect, appreciation and praise, showing dominance, blending in with social groups and creating self-identity. Research has been conducted to identify the impact of these factors on fast fashion buying. The extent of the impact was studied to understand the dominating factors for buying fast fashion.

3 Methodology

Exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling was employed to collect data from students aged 17–22 years from various universities in India. This sampling method is primarily used in research for unknown and rare population. It is used for situations where it is hard to select respondents for a sample. It is a very fast, cost effective and convenient method of sampling for such studies. A total 396 responses were received. Questionnaires were distributed using e-mail and completed questionnaires were received in the same way. The required sample size, at a confidence level of 95% and margin of error 5% for a population size exceeding 2,500, is 384 (research advisors, 2006). Fifty respondents selected randomly were called for a telephone interview to further investigate the underlying values for fast fashion buying. Both primary as well as

secondary data were used to conduct this research. The primary data was collected for this study via questionnaire. After studying literature relevant to emotional factors influencing fast fashion buying, the identified prominent factors were being trendy, earning respect, appreciation and praise, showing dominance, blending in with social group and creating a self-identity. All the factors were rated on the 7-point Likert scale. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of various factors in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. A score of 1 for least important and a score of 7 for most important were assigned. A pilot test was conducted before the actual data collection to discover the face validity of the measurement scale. The pretest of the questionnaire proved that all the measurement factors were relevant and sufficient in terms of coverage. The value of Cronbach’s alpha (Table 1) was found to be 0.74. A multiple-question Likert scale with a Cronbach’s alpha value greater than 0.7 is considered acceptable. The face validity of the measurement scale used for the study was thus established. A total 396 responses were received from various participants from different universities in India. Responses received were sufficient for this study, as the required sample was 386. Furthermore, the laddering technique of interviewing was employed to investigate the underlying values. Telephone interviews were conducted to assess the underlying reason for the preference of a particular factor over others.

Table 1: Reliability test for multiple-question Likert scale

$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum S^2y}{S^2x} \right)$			
Variables	Description	Values	Internal consistency
K	number of items	50	Acceptable
S ² y	sum of item variance	17.24	
S ² x	variance of total score	63.21	
α	Cronbach’s alpha	0.74	

Questionnaire for buying fast fashion (closed-ended)

Fast fashion describes low-priced but stylish clothing that moves quickly from design to retail stores to meet trends, with new collections being introduced continuously. Brands like Zara, H&M, UNIQLO, GAP and Topshop are from the fast fashion field.

** Required*

- 1) Name *
- 2) E-mail
- 3) Mobile number
- 4) Age *
- 5) Gender *
- 6) City
- 7) How important is “being trendy” for you when buying fast fashion products? *
- 8) How important is “gaining respect from others” for you when buying fast fashion products? *
- 9) How important are “appreciation and praise” for you when buying fast fashion products? *
- 10) How important is “dominating in a peer group” for you when buying fast fashion products? *
- 11) How important is “blending with a social group” for you when buying fast fashion products? *
- 12) How important is “creating a self-identity” for you when buying fast fashion products? *

The questions 7-12 could be answered on a scale as follows:

Not important at all ○1 ○2 ○3 ○4 ○5 ○6 ○7
extremely important

Questionnaire for buying fast fashion products (telephone interview)

- 1) Why do you buy fast fashion products?
- 2) Why is that important to you?
- 3) Why is that relevant to you?
- 4) Are you aware of sustainability issues, i.e. social and environmental hazards caused by fast fashion products?
- 5) If yes, why don't you switch to sustainable fashion products/brands?

Questions in the questionnaire regarding motive to buy fast fashion products

- 1) How important is “being trendy” for you when buying fast fashion products?
- 2) How important is “gaining respect from others” for you when buying fast fashion products?
- 3) How important is “appreciation and praise” for you when buying fast fashion products?
- 4) How important is “dominating in a peer group” for you when buying fast fashion products?
- 5) How important is “blending with a social group” for you when buying fast fashion products?
- 6) How important is “creating a self-identity” for you when buying fast fashion products?

3 Results and discussion

The respondents rated the importance of various factors in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product (Table 2). They gave 7 for the most important factor and 1 for the least important factor. Many of the respondents gave the same ratings to more than one factor. There was thus an overlap in the data. A total of 92 (23%) respondents rated “being trendy” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 127 (32%) respondents rated “earning respect” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 108 (27%) respondents rated “appreciation and praise” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 67 (17%) respondents rated “showing dominance” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 70 (18%) respondents rated “blending with a social group” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product and 166 (42%) respondents rated “creating a self-identity” as the most important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. As evident from Table 2, the highest number of respondents rated “creating a self-identity” as the most

important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. Thus, “creating a self-identity” is the most influential factor for consumers in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product.

Moreover, 8 (2%) respondents rated “being trendy” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 19 (5%) respondents rated “earning respect” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 13 (3%) respondents rated “appreciation and praise” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 33 (8%) respondents rated “showing dominance” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, 14 (4%) respondents rated “blending with a social group” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product and 12 (3%) respondents rated “creating a self-identity” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. As summarized in Table 3,

the highest number of respondents rated “showing dominance” as the least important factor in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. Thus, “showing dominance” is the least influential factor for consumers in making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product. The findings of telephone interviews reveal that consumers prefer fast fashion to stay updated with ever-changing fashion trends. Moreover, the majority of consumers found using fast fashion as a way to convey their personality. Thus, the underlying motives found are “creating a self-identity” and “being trendy”, which is also supported by the questionnaire responses. Furthermore, telephone interactions showed that the majority of respondents were not aware of the social and environmental hazards caused by fast fashion products. Some respondents who understood the adverse impact of fast fashion do not find themselves capable of changing their behaviour due to peer pressure and the unavailability of alternatives.

Table 2: Responses to all factors

Question	Likert Score 1 (%)	Likert Score 2 (%)	Likert Score 3 (%)	Likert Score 4 (%)	Likert Score 5 (%)	Likert Score 6 (%)	Likert Score 7 (%)
How important is “being trendy” for you when buying fast fashion products?	2	4	6	14	26	24	23
How important is “gaining respect from others” for you when buying fast fashion products?	5	6	5	14	18	20	32
How important is “appreciation and praise” for you when buying fast fashion products?	3	3	5	14	22	24	27
How important is “dominating in peer group” for you when buying fast fashion products?	8	8	12	19	23	13	17
How important is “blending with a social group” for you when buying fast fashion products?	4	8	7	17	17	29	18
How important is “creating a self-identity” for you when buying fast fashion products?	3	3	3	11	14	24	42

The most influential factors (Table 3) and least influential factors (Table 4) should be taken into consideration while devising any marketing strategy to gain the desired results.

Table 3: Most influential factor

Factor	Being trendy (%)	Earning respect (%)	Appreciation and praise (%)	Showing dominance (%)	Blending with a social group (%)	Creating a self-identity (%)
Percentage of respondents	23	32	27	17	18	42

Table 4: Least influential factor

Factor	Being trendy (%)	Earning respect (%)	Appreciation and praise (%)	Showing dominance (%)	Blending with a social group (%)	Creating a self-identity (%)
Percentage of respondents	2	5	3	8	4	3

4 Conclusion

Fashion is all about change. It is continuously changing and evolving. With the advent of fast fashion, the pace of this change has increased tremendously. Apart from impacting the environment adversely, fast fashion has several other issues as well. There are various occupational hazards, such as respiratory problems from synthetic particles and cotton dust due to bad ventilation and musculoskeletal issues due to repetitive movements. Waste in the form of landfills is increasing continuously as garments are thrown away every season. The impact of fast fashion is more severe in underdeveloped and developing countries, as there is a lack of proper waste disposal systems. Fast fashion buying is influenced by various economical, emotional and social factors, such as price, income, self-image, perceived risks, hedonism, beliefs/attitudes, peer group and awareness about fashion. This study sheds light on the factors that influence consumer decisions to purchase fast fashion products. The factors whose impact on fast fashion buying has been studied are, being trendy, earning respect, appreciation and praise, showing dominance, blending with a social group and creating a self-identity. This study offers insight into the factors that influence buying decisions for a fast

fashion product. It can be concluded from this study that “creating a self-identity” the is most influential factor while making a purchase decision for a fast fashion product, while “showing dominance” is least important factor. The factors identified in this study can be used create a consumer base for sustainable fashion brands. This research can help address the issue of sustainability in the fashion industry. These findings can also be used to promote sustainable fashion. Sustainable fashion brands should focus on the predominant factor, i.e. “creating a self-identity” to make consumers buy sustainable/slow fashion. The findings of telephone interviews reveal that the majority of respondents were not aware of the social and environmental hazards caused by fast fashion products. Thus, educating consumers about the sustainability issues of fast fashion will help mitigate the adverse effects of fast fashion. The promotion of sustainable fashion and slow fashion may result in a reduction in fast fashion consumption. This may reduce the negative social and environmental impacts due to fast fashion.

A more comprehensive study can be conducted to prove the extent of the impact of these factors on the buying behaviour of fast fashion consumers. This study was limited to university students from National Capital Region of India, aged 17–22 only.

Further research can be conducted to include participants from different countries and age groups. The findings may differ in other states in India and other countries of the world.

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