



A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF FAST FASHION ON THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF BHOPAL CITY

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ABSTRACT

From the idea of being swanky at an affordable cost to wearing the most flattering outfit from the latest fashion week, fast fashion has paved the way for fashionistas. Over the last twenty years apparel industry has never seen a setback whether inflation or deflation, demonetization, G.S.T. implementation, or a pandemic the industry has a record of its most remarkable journey from fashion to fast fashion and now from fast fashion to ultra-fast fashion. In capturing the minds and wardrobes of the mass population, especially the youth, fashion houses have been successful in introducing cheap, trendy, and affordable clothing lines through their online and traditional retail stores, along with digital marketing. The increased clothing expenditure has also led to fast fashion creating a huge economic impact. Since the growth in the apparel market has been witnessed faster than in the global economy, it is responsible for the recent economic growth (on average 4.78%) and future growth (5.90% in the next three years) of the apparel industry. The study also focuses on the desires of the students to keep pace with trends at all times under some social influences. But since everything comes at a cost, the idea of disposable clothing has created a huge negative impact on our environment.

Keywords: *Economy, Fast Fashion, Apparel Industry, Trendy and Affordable clothing, Social Influences, Environment (disposable clothing)*

INTRODUCTION

Fast fashion is a concept of designing, manufacturing, and marketing high volumes of cheap and trendy clothes for constant fashion-conscious customers. It is described as the apparel industry's business model which replicates outfits from fashion and couture weeks and quickly launches the line in the market when the demand for that fashion is high, under its label. The global fast fashion market is segmented by gender, age, and type. Gone are the days when there used to be only three or four seasons of fashion and when the designers struggled to predict consumers' wants, now there are fifty-two seasons of fashion and the ever-rising demands of consumers worldwide.

As the population worldwide is spending fortunes in the textile industry either for investment or consumption purposes to vie with their social station, their expenditure also profoundly impacts the economy. Fast fashion is responsible for the recent growth (on average 4.78%) and future growth (5.91% in the next three years) of the apparel industry, marking its contribution of 2.3% to the GDP of our economy. This expenditure on the clothing business is also addressing employment issues in our country.



Fast fashion's growth during the late 20th century, especially after the industrial revolution, has indicated that manufacturing of clothing has become economical in terms of both time and money owing to the use of cheap fabric, high-tech manufacturing methods, low-cost labor, efficient supply chains, and sufficient credit facilities provided for investments by various financial institutions. However, the thirst of MNCs to drive high turnovers in less time by maintaining marginal cost has led to the exploitation of the workforce engaged in the apparel industry, especially women being vulnerable the most since they constitute 85-90% of the total garment workforce.

According to a report, fast fashion is also held responsible for the damage caused to the environment, since the global fashion industry is a contributor of 8-10% of global carbon emissions per year. The practice of producing cheap and trendy clothes on a large scale was possible due to the low cost of production which favors synthetic materials, chemicals, and minimal pollution abatement measures which leads to excess waste and thus comes at the cost of the environment.

This research study will also help future scholars to identify and analyze the trends in the fast fashion industry, the impact of fast fashion on the undergraduates of Bhopal city, the various strategies adopted by different fast fashion brands, and the changing perception of both customers and manufacturers towards throwaway fashion, considering environmental issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Bhardwaj Vertica and Fairhurst Ann (February 2010) in the paper "Fast fashion: response to changes in fashion industry" concluded that the next decade in the fashion industry would be dedicated to fast fashion. It would be very important to analyze and research the attitude of customers towards throwaway fashion and due emphasis should also be given on the supply side of chain, so that the suppliers can thoroughly understand the market and perform effectively.
2. Linden Annie Radner (December 2016) in the paper "An Analysis of the Fast Fashion Industry" concluded that the consumer side of fast fashion should also be thoroughly examined along with supply side of chain, since they have the power to influence what and how fast fashion industries offers to the society like the fabric they chose. Also, he highlights the understanding nature of the consumers of fast fashion and writes that although eco-friendly products are not in style but the consumers would probably switch over their choices once they learn about the production process of their clothes.
3. Bick Rachel, Halsey Erika & Ekenga Christine C. (December 2018) in the paper "The global environmental injustice of fast fashion" discussed the role of various stakeholders in promoting ethical consumption of fast fashion in an equitable manner. He adds since the two decades have evolved the trend of fast fashion, big fashion houses have recklessly accepted it as their norm. The widely available of-the-moment garments have resulted in negative externalities at each step of production. He also highlighted how the communities in LMICs are most vulnerable to suffer post-consumer process due to disproportionate distribution of environmental exposures.
4. Chan Ricky, Joy Annamma, Sherry F. John, Venkatesh Jr. Alladi and Wang Jeff in the paper "Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands" discussed the views of their participants regarding luxury fashion, which in turn emerged the three themes- dreams, exclusivity, and beauty/art. Despite their concern for environmental issues and support for the idea of sustainability, consumers often overlook and do not apply such ethics when it comes to sustainable fashion. Eco-fashion is considered drab and boring by them, and not fit for all social occasions. At the end of the paper the authors have shown a hope for the evolution in attitude of the consumers in near future, like the way they shifted for the slow food movement.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the influence of fast fashion among the undergraduate students of Bhopal city
2. To examine the various strategies adopted by the fast fashion brand which is preferred the most by the youth
3. To study the effect of fast fashion on the environment and various concerns of environmentalists with the idea of fast fashion and disposable clothing

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀: - There is **no** influence of fast fashion on the undergraduate students of Bhopal city.

H₁: - Undergraduate students of Bhopal city is influenced by fast fashion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is quantitative, descriptive, and based on both primary and secondary data. The due emphasis was given to collecting data from primary sources by preparing a questionnaire which was filled by 200 undergraduate students studying in various government and private colleges of Bhopal city. The questionnaire design was built to know the overall impact of fast fashion on young undergraduates, their different shopping patterns and preferences, how much they spend on average monthly on buying fashion, what motivates them to do so, and their concern for the environment.

The information was also collected from various secondary sources including research papers, government publications, blogs, fashion magazines, and many verified websites.

ANALYSIS

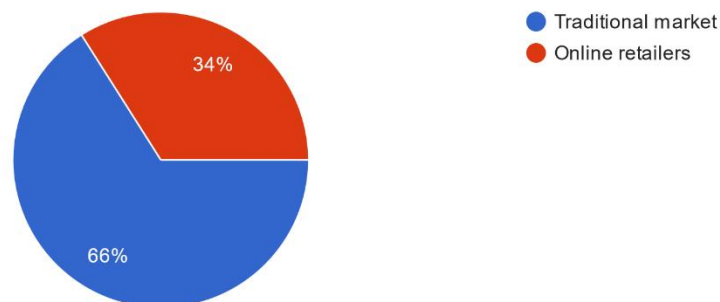
Objective 1- To study the influence of fast fashion among the undergraduate students of Bhopal city

Analysis-

- Gen-Z Perception: - The young fashion-hungry individuals never run out of opinions to talk about fashion. They shop for the latest clothing, footwear, and accessories and harmonize the outfit pieces to make the best style combination for them. They have the zeal to create an aura everywhere they go, with their chic, aesthetic, and affordable outfits to get on the bandwagon.

From where do you prefer to shop your wardrobe essentials ?

200 responses

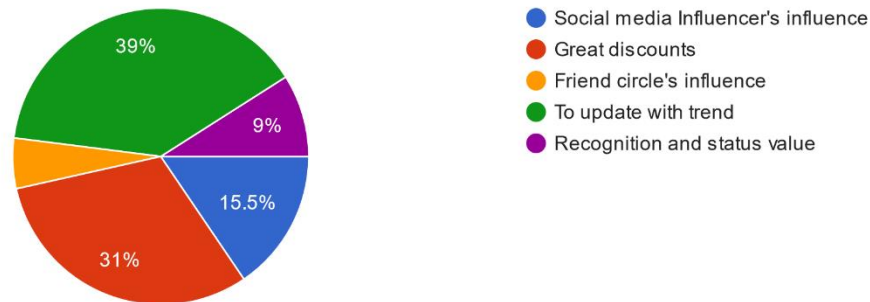




- According to our findings, the majority of Bhopal undergraduate students (66% of the total sample size) tend to shop from traditional markets of the city while 34% of them prefer online shopping from different online retail platforms.
- Thus, undergraduate students of Bhopal city prefer high-street shopping over online shopping.

What motivates you to shop fashion frequently ?

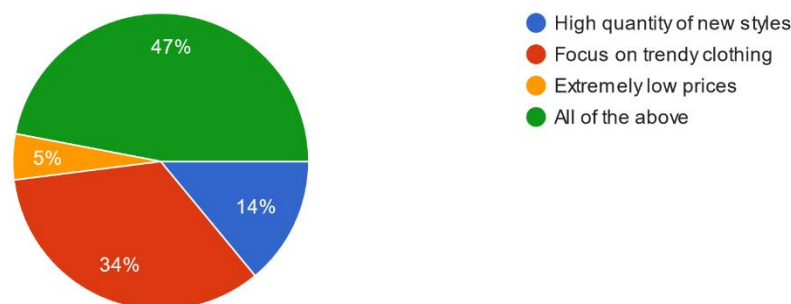
200 responses



- According to our research study, two main reasons motivate students of the town to shop for fashion frequently. 39% of the sample size say they long to hunt for fast fashion to update with the trend and 34% of the sample size is enticed towards fashionable clothes because of great discounts offered to them.
- While the rest of the constitution of the sample size is divided into three categories i.e., 15.5%, 9%, and 2.5% which are influenced by social media influencers, recognition, status value, and friend circle influence respectively.

How do you identify a fast fashion brand ?

200 responses

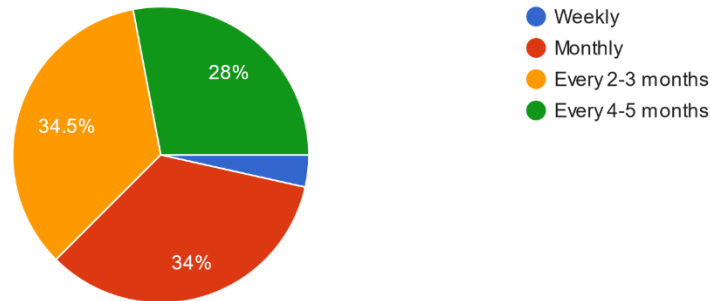


- The students of a metro and a non-metro city both conceive the idea of fashion differently. The difference in their fashion sense conveys how they recognize a fast fashion brand. According to the findings of our study, a very small proportion i.e., only 5% of the total sample size students consider it as an affordable fashion option that is available at extremely low prices, while another 14% of the sample size perceive the idea of fast fashion as a high quantity of new styles flooding in the market. 34% of the sample size students say fast fashion is focusing



on trendy clothing, and the majority (47% students of the total sample size) consider fast fashion as all of the above-mentioned factors.

How frequently do you shop fast fashion ?
200 responses



- According to our research study, 3.5% of students of the total sample size shop weekly, 34% of them prefer shopping every month while 34.5% of them shop every 2-3 months, and 28% invest in their fashion choices every 4-5 months.

“TREND” has turned out to be another link between what fast fashion serves and what its perspective customers look for. It has grasped the opportunity and offers trendy styles every fashion week, and the customers highly identify a brand as a fast fashion brand by this feature.

Thus, the influence of fast fashion on the undergraduate students of Bhopal city can be well observed and understood by acknowledging their zeal to update with trends, especially with the 52 weeks of fast fashion season. The frequency of their shopping time, which is more than a week but less than every 3 months for the majority, suggests their increasing expenditure on fast fashion apparel.

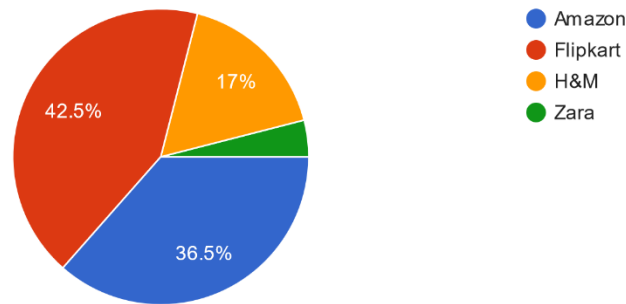
Objective 2- To examine the various strategies adopted by the fast fashion brand which is preferred the most by the youth

Analysis- According to the secondary data collected H&M and Zara are the two most prominent examples of fast fashion culture because they offer a variety of products than their competitors and they can keep pace with rapidly changing fashion trends without any delay.



Which online shopping apps do you prefer most for shopping fast fashion ?

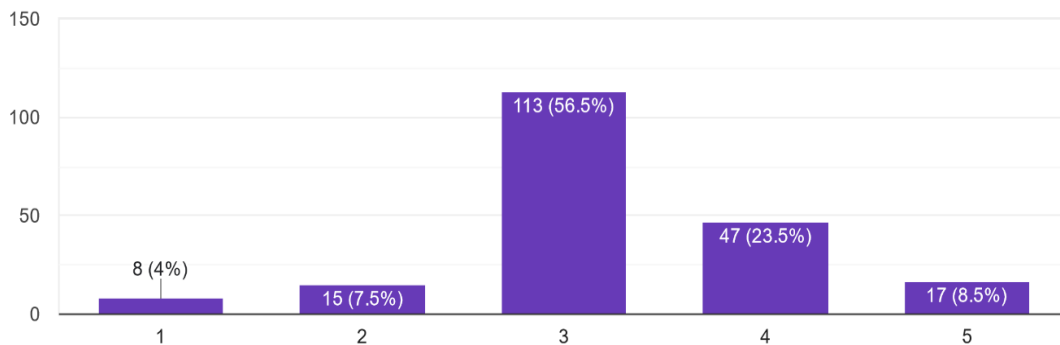
200 responses



- But according to the primary data collected through the questionnaire, the two sites H&M and Zara despite being so popular witness less traffic than Flipkart by the young undergraduate students of Bhopal city.
- The difference in the opinions can be understood from the following points:
 - Area distribution: - The primary data so collected was from the undergraduate students of Bhopal city, which is a non-metropolitan city. The incomes of people living in metro cities and non-metro cities are different and so are their expenditure preferences. Non-metropolitan city dwellers, like Bhopal graduates, prefer to spend on clothing and fashion that is not only in the trend but also affordable on the same page and pocket-friendly for their earnings.

What is your preference?

200 responses



Inexpensive clothes

Expensive Branded clothes

It is evident that out of 200 students, 113 students prefer fashionables that are neither too cheap, nor too expensive brand. Thus, a major proportion i.e., 56.5% of the total sample size says they do not want to compromise with quality by preferring cheap clothes, and they have to save their pennies also by avoiding their overindulgence in expensive branded clothing pieces. Pricing strategy: - Pricing strategy is a technique used to determine the best price for the product. Pricing of a product should be



done wisely so that it acts in favor of both shareholders and customers. The pricing strategy helps attract a targeted audience and sales. Moreover, it also helps build brand recognition value.

- Zara follows the pricing strategy- Value Based Proposition, which means it tries setting prices of the product as its customers perceive it. Also, it is less expensive than many other luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, Chanel, H&M, etc.
- While Flipkart uses the strategy of competitive pricing by providing its products at low rates than other e-commerce websites. It also gives huge discounts to boost sales and also charges a nominal amount for delivery only when the cost of the order is below INR 500.

Objective 3- To study the effect of fast fashion on the environment and various concerns of environmentalists with the idea of fast fashion and disposable clothing

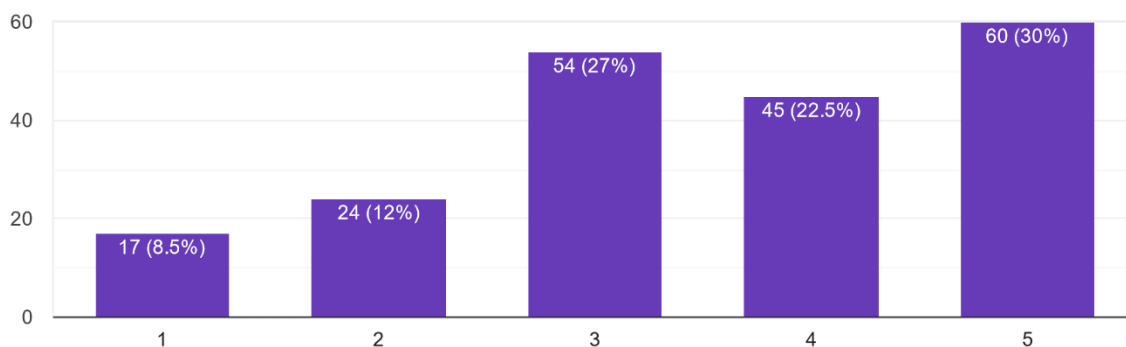
Analysis-

- Concept of Sustainable fashion: -

Sustainable fashion is a term that emphasizes more on different social and environmental factors rather than just addressing the fashion or textile industry. It is used to describe products, production processes, other activities, and actors who aim to achieve a carbon-neutral fashion industry, built on equality, social justice, animal welfare, and ecological integrity.

How often do you try to recycle or reuse your clothes ?

200 responses



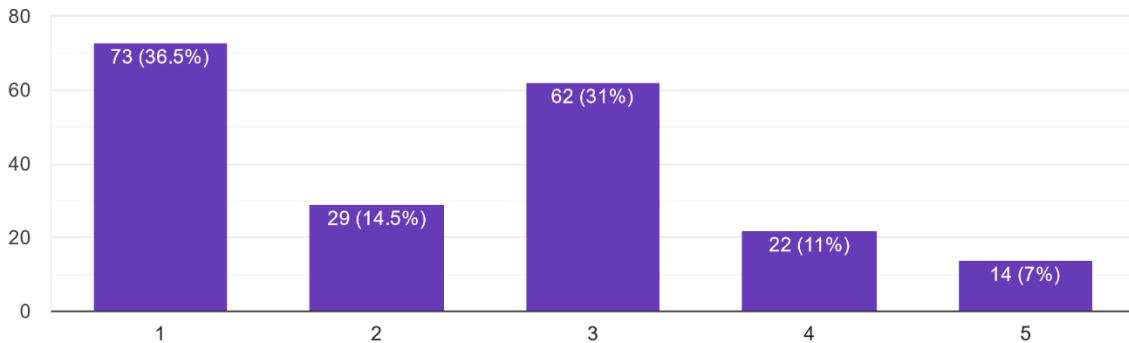
Never

Always

- According to the findings of our research study, 60 pupils (i.e. 30% of the total sample size) have agreed they always recycle or reuse clothes and have voted 5/5 on a scale, 45 pupils (i.e. 22.5% of the sample size) have voted 4/5 on a scale, 54 pupils (i.e. 27% of the sample size) have voted 3/5 on a scale, 24 pupils (i.e. 12% of the sample size) have voted 2/5 on a scale, while the rest of the constitution that is 17 pupils or 8.5% of the sample size have voted 1/5 on a scale indicating they never try to recycle or reuse their clothes.

Considering environmental issues, will you prefer sustainable fashion over fast fashion in near future ?

200 responses



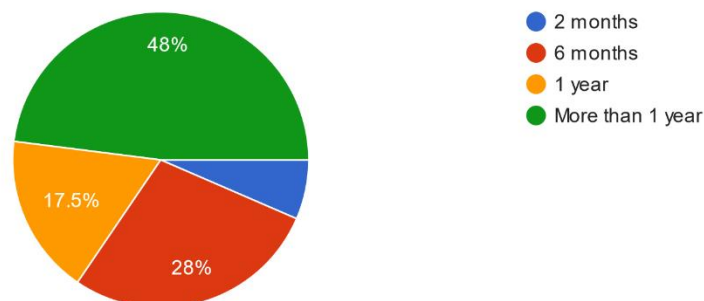
Strongly agree

Strongly disagree

- The data so obtained gives a satisfactory and clear result as 73 students (i.e., 36.5% of the total sample size) are willing to shift their preferences toward sustainable fashion shortly, while 62 students (i.e., 31% of the total sample size) have voted three on a scale of five indicating that they are partially willing to shift towards sustainable fashion but do not want to completely switch away from fast fashion, and would rather look for alternatives to maintain a balance among the two. Also, 14 students (i.e., 7% of the total sample size) say they would prefer fast fashion over sustainable fashion in the future also.
- Wardrobe life of clothes: -
Since the fashion industry is a large contributor to carbon footprints in the environment, increasing the wardrobe life of clothes will not only help us with our finances but also save our planet.

What is the wardrobe life of your clothes ?

200 responses



- According to the results of our research study, only 6.5% of undergraduate students of the total sample size claim that the wardrobe life of their clothes is two months, 28% claim it to be six



months, 17.5% claim it to be one year while a major proportion and almost half of the total sample size i.e., 48% students affirm it to be more than one year.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H₀. There is **no** influence of fast fashion on the undergraduate students of Bhopal city.

H₁- The undergraduate students of Bhopal city **are** influenced by fast fashion

We have applied a T-Test (Two Tailed Test) using the popular statistical software **Base SAS**

$$T = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$

{ ∴ \bar{X} = Sample Mean, μ = population mean,

S = sample standard deviation, n = sample size }

$$= 16.364 \qquad \{ \therefore s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2}{n-1}} \}$$

Calculated value of T-Test $\alpha=0.05$:- 16.364

Tabulated value of T-Test $\alpha=0.05$:- 1.65

Since, Calculated value > Tabulated value

Hence, the null hypothesis H₀ is **rejected** and the alternative hypothesis H₁ is **accepted**. It means there is Influence of Fast Fashion on the Undergraduate Students of Bhopal City.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Fast fashion is increasingly becoming popular in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities and contributing to the GDP of our economy. The T-Test applied to test hypothesis clearly indicates there is great influence of fast fashion on the undergraduate students of Bhopal city. The geographical division of a metro and a non-metro city has never been a barrier in captivating the interest of youngsters in fashion. Though the variations in the disposable income of these cities have affected the brand preferences to some extent. It is also addressing employment issues in our country and is a new option available for business ventures. But since fast fashion is still a great threat to our environment, it is time that both the manufacturers and customers should look for alternatives to it. The positive attitude depicted, through our research, of the majority youngsters for sustainable and eco-fashion depicts their concern and awareness for the environmental issues. However, our research had a geographical limitation, but could provide a basis for future research prospects and thus, could be overcome by increasing and diversifying the sample population from different parts of the country and abroad. Here are some suggestions for producers and consumers to help them go green :-

➤ **Cohesive Outfit**

The term cohesive means “the act of sticking together”. The wardrobe should be maintained in such a way that most of the tops go with most of the bottoms. In this way, we can create the maximum number of outfits from just a few pieces of clothing. The idea of a capsule wardrobe is also economical and eco-friendly. Thus, we should buy clothing pieces that can be reused for a long period in multiple ways and ensure they have a second life too.



➤ **Green marketing:**

Green marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on selling products and services that have environmental benefits. It includes adopting sustainable business practices, creating eco-friendly products, and shifting towards eco-friendly packaging, etc. It is the need of the hour that now the fashion houses shift towards green marketing, though its initial cost of incurring such expenditures might be high over time it will also cut down. It will also help build a positive brand image among customers and they will also try to change their purchasing behavior for benefiting the environment. Here's an example of green marketing by Vogues: -

Vogues Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Fashion

1. Buy less and buy better
2. Invest in sustainable brands
3. Shop second-hand and vintage
4. Try renting
5. Avoid greenwashing
6. Know your materials, etc.

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