

Chapter 2


Rethinking Fashion: The Environmental Impact and the Shift Towards Sustainability

Jyoti Rani

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5577-7808>

Lovely Professional University, India

Ramratan Guru

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6142-2643>


Mody University of Science and Technology, India

Sakthivel Santhanam

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2856-7714>

Presidency University, India

Worku Tegegne Molla

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2267-7241>

Wolkite University, Ethiopia

Siddhantkumar Vasantrya Wadmare

School of Design, Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, India

ABSTRACT

The fashion industry is one of the world's most polluting sectors, as highlighted by the United Nations. It consumes vast amounts of water, uses harmful chemicals, and generates a significant carbon footprint, mainly due to production occurring far from key markets. Fast fashion, driven by consumerism and psychological obsolescence, worsens the problem by promoting impulse buying of low-cost garments with short lifespans. To mitigate this environmental impact, the industry must adopt circular economy principles, including reducing, reusing, recycling, and redesigning. While

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-7853-3.ch002

many fashion brands claim to implement sustainable practices, it raises concerns about potential greenwashing. However, some companies, like Ecoalf, offer a genuine model for sustainable fashion. Ecoalf's eco-design approach uses recycled materials, such as plastics and fishing nets, to create clothing, demonstrating a true commitment to environmental sustainability. This chapter explores the progress of these strategies and examines the fine line between true eco-friendly practices and greenwashing.

INTRODUCTION

Environmental decline is considerable within the fashion industry, affecting water and air quality, soil contamination, and dwindling resources. When dyeing textiles, toxic materials find their way into the ecosystem because not all chemicals get completely absorbed (Uddin, 2021). This industry accounts for approximately one-fifth of the total water pollution in the world generated by the discharge of dangerous compounds, including heavy metals and formaldehyde, into streams and soils and the release of toxic gases like sulfur dioxide, which endanger health (Aldal-bahi et al., 2021). Another critical problem is microfiber waste since threads detach themselves throughout the manufacturing lifecycle and afterward in both usage and disposal, affecting environmental health and calling for sustainable solutions within the industry (Liu et al., 2021). Fast fashion adds to these problems by encouraging wasteful resource use and creating vast quantities of textile waste that frequently land in landfills or get burned, damaging the environment (Sun et al., 2021). Some solutions to these impacts include creating environmentally friendly materials and producing fabrics according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Provin et al., 2021). In the fashion industry, sustainability is receiving growing attention from corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR emphasizes initiatives for safe practices and eco-friendly production methods. Still, businesses must adapt their supply chain and business models to improve sustainability (Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2020). With its worldwide linked supply chain, the apparel market encounters barriers to enforcing sustainability regulations. However, the leaders see the importance of strengthening environmental governance in textile dyeing, which frequently emits hazardous chemicals (Lewis et al., 2017). Consumer habits are essential because appropriate techniques for caring for clothes, like decreasing washing frequency and wearing garments more often, can significantly lessen our ecological footprint (Wiedemann et al., 2021). However, there is seldom a correlation between their desire for more environmentally friendly products and the readiness to pay more for sustainably produced garments. This indicates the need to match consumers' expectations and companies' actions and introduce relevant information (Lou & Cao,

26 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/rethinking-fashion/375482

Related Content

COVID-19 and Policy Responses to Tourism Entrepreneurship: A Literature Review

Sultan Nazmiye Klç (2022). *Sustainability and Competitiveness in the Hospitality Industry* (pp. 192-212).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/covid-19-and-policy-responses-to-tourism-entrepreneurship/305928

Aspects Regarding Detection of Sentiment in Web Content

Cristian Bucur (2014). *International Journal of Sustainable Economies Management* (pp. 24-32).

www.irma-international.org/article/aspects-regarding-detection-of-sentiment-in-web-content/124935

Burnout: A Challenge for Companies in the Modern Business Environments

Elvira Nica, Ana-Maria Iulia anta, Katarina Valaskovaand Maria Gabriela Horga (2020). *International Journal of Sustainable Economies Management* (pp. 21-32).

www.irma-international.org/article/burnout/269477

A Review of Heat Stress Policies in the Context of Climate Change and Its Impacts on Outdoor Workers: Evidence From Zimbabwe

Bigboy Ngwenya, Jacques Oosthuizen, Martyn Cross, Kwasi Frimpongand Cynthia Nombulelo Chaibva (2018). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-11).

www.irma-international.org/article/a-review-of-heat-stress-policies-in-the-context-of-climate-change-and-its-impacts-on-outdoor-workers/192129

Socioeconomic Study of Coastal Fishing at the Port of Tangier in Morocco

Fahd Darasi, Mustapha Aksissouand Hesham Awadh (2021). *International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-14).

www.irma-international.org/article/socioeconomic-study-of-coastal-fishing-at-the-port-of-tangier-in-morocco/287520