Sustainable Fashion Consumption Trends Of Vietnamese Youth

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Abstract
The study focuses on Vietnamese youth's preference for eco-friendly fashion. It highlights the significant environmental impact of the fashion industry and the growing awareness of its adverse effects. Sustainable fashion promotes equal working conditions while using safe, recyclable, and eco-friendly materials to reduce harm to the environment. According to the report, slow fashion, combines eco, green, and ethical fashion, including sustainable fashion. Consumer awareness of the fashion industry's impact on the environment dates back to the 1960s. The 3R Criteria for sustainable fashion – reduce, reuse, and recycle – are also considered in the study. Reducing environmental pollution, extending product life through quality of use, and increasing transparency in the fashion sector are among the goals of sustainable fashion in Vietnam. Research results demonstrate that sustainable clothing is becoming increasingly popular in Vietnam, especially among young people.

Keywords: Consumption trends, sustainable fashion, Vietnamese Youth

I. Raise the issues
The fashion industry is currently one of the most environmentally polluting sectors in the world. Many environmental impact assessments have highlighted the alarming scale of the fashion industry’s damage to the environment as it continues to grow. According to a United Nations study, the fashion industry ranks second among all industries in water consumption, contributing to 10% of global carbon emissions and nearly 20% of global wastewater.

Approximately 85% of the world's textile waste ends up in landfills, and often, these items are not easily biodegradable or cannot be decomposed at all. Many experts believe that “fast fashion” is a significant contributor to this wastefulness. (Baodantoc.vn, 2022)

Behind the apparent “prosperity” of the fashion industry, one of the world’s leading profitable sectors lies the scars on nature and the environment. In recent years, more and more people have been waking up to the negative impacts of this industry on the environment. A sustainable lifestyle, reducing hazardous products, and shifting towards eco-friendly materials are ways to protect our lives.

This study will provide an overview of sustainable fashion, its origins, and its criteria. It will examine the current state of sustainable fashion, its benefits, concerns, and the reasons behind its growing attention as a trend. Based on that, the article will propose measures to develop sustainable fashion in Vietnam.

II. Overview of Sustainable Fashion

Definition of Sustainable Fashion
Sustainable fashion is a part of the slow fashion movement that has developed over the past decades and is used interchangeably with eco-, green-, and ethical fashion (Carey & Cervellon, 2014). Sustainable fashion first emerged in the 1960s when consumers became aware of the environmental impact of the clothing industry and demanded that the industry change its practices (Jung & Jin 2014). Although eco-fashion was negatively perceived at first, this changed with the emergence of anti-fur campaigns in the 1980s/90s, followed by an interest in ethical clothing in the late 1990s. Ethical fashion is associated with fair working conditions, a sustainable business model (Joergens, 2006), organic and environmentally friendly materials (Johnston, 2012), certifications, and traceability (Henninger, 2015).
Sustainable fashion is an all-inclusive term that refers to products, processes, activities, and stakeholders (policymakers, brands, consumers) aiming to achieve a carbon-neutral fashion sector based on equality, social justice, animal welfare, and ecological integrity. Sustainability in fashion concerns more than just addressing textiles or products. It addresses the entire product lifecycle process, which includes the way the clothing is produced, consumed, and disposed of in landfills. (Emeritus, 2023)

Here, sustainability is simply understood as the product's usage lifecycle, reducing the depletion of natural resources to maintain ecological balance. Furthermore, sustainability also has a deeper meaning, which is to maintain the well-being and happiness of everyone in society. The concepts of fashion and sustainability go hand in hand, giving meaning to the term “sustainable fashion” (Style-republik, 2022)

In summary, sustainable fashion means using safe, reusable, biodegradable materials and adopting efficient, safe production processes that minimize resource consumption while ensuring product quality. Additionally, the production process must ensure fair and adequate wages for those involved in the fashion industry.

**Origins of Sustainable Fashion**

In reality, sustainable fashion began to gain prominence in the 1980s and 1990s. However, at that time, the trend was not yet widely popular. The introduction of this trend can be attributed to two renowned fashion brands, Patagonia and ESPRIT. With an emphasis on environmental protection, these brands made modifications to their materials to reduce the use of chemicals in their production processes. Additionally, Doug Tompkins and Yvon Chouinard, the founders of these brands, identified the fundamental causes of the “unsustainability” of the fashion industry, which revolved around exponential growth and consumption. (Style-republik, 2022)

The widespread awareness and recognition of sustainable fashion can be traced back to the 1990s. ESPRIT conveyed the message of “responsible consumption” in Utne Reader magazine. Similarly, Patagonia attached the slogan “Don't buy this jacket” to its fast fashion products in The New York Times. (Style-republik, 2022)

**The 3R Criteria in Sustainable Fashion**

Sustainable fashion aligns with the following 3R criteria: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (Style-republik, 2022).

Reduce: This involves minimizing waste generation by adopting minimal consumption practices, lifestyles, and production processes. The less waste created, the more optimized the outcome.

Reuse: This refers to maximizing the functionality and lifespan of products for different purposes.

Recycle: This involves utilizing discarded materials to create useful products.

**Objectives of Sustainable Fashion**

According to Style-republik (2022), the objectives of sustainable fashion include:

- Maximizing the reduction of environmental pollution from the fashion industry.
- Prolonging the product lifecycle by creating truly durable and sustainable products that meet the 3R criteria.
- Enhancing transparency in the fashion industry regarding origins, production, and materials.
- Creating better working conditions and protecting the rights of laborers in the fashion industry.
- Educating, promoting, and encouraging consumers to become “green customers”
- Establishing a sustainable economy, prosperous communities, and an eco-friendly ecosystem throughout the entire operation.

**III. Research Methodology**

To examine the “Sustainable fashion consumption trends among Vietnamese youth”, the research team used two research methods: desk research (reviewing published materials in various media) and a sociological survey (collecting responses from Generation Z youth born between 1995 and 2010 in Vietnam). The data was then compiled and analyzed using Excel software.

Through the desk research method, the research team examined materials on sustainable fashion consumption trends, criteria for sustainable fashion products, benefits, and challenges related to sustainable fashion from both domestic and international studies. They proceeded to develop a survey questionnaire to conduct the sociological survey on sustainable fashion consumption trends among Generation Z youth in Vietnam.

Data collection was carried out using two methods: convenience sampling and snowball sampling - a method where subsequent subjects are identified based on the suggestions or introductions of the already surveyed subjects. The survey questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and was initially tested with eight young individuals who regularly use sustainable fashion products. The final questionnaire link (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSds_73xVuPexk7vcUR7dsXP48hAPt_pzzvTn4Hw5pt2EpEH4w/viewform) was then distributed to Generation Z youth in Vietnam through social media platforms such as Facebook.
Zalo, and Email. A total of 636 completed surveys were collected. The survey data was compiled, statistically analyzed using Excel software, and then used to analyze and support the research issue.

Some content in the survey questionnaire was designed using a 5-point Likert scale, with the following options: 1. Not interested at all; 2. Not interested; 3. Neutral; 4. Interested; 5. Very interested.

The research team collected survey data and calculated the average values for each aspect included in the survey. Therefore, when evaluating the level of perception for each aspect, the research team used the following calculations:

Value of range = (Maximum - Minimum) / n = (5-1)/5 = 0.8

The average value for each aspect was then categorized as follows:
- 1.00 - 1.80: Not interested at all;
- 1.81 - 2.60: Not interested;
- 2.61 - 3.40: Neutral;
- 3.41 - 4.20: Interested;
- 4.21 - 5.00: Very interested.

IV. The Current Situation of Sustainable Fashion in Vietnam

In Vietnam, the sustainable fashion industry started to gain prominence around 2016. Some well-known Vietnamese designers have introduced fashion collections that embrace sustainable trends. There have also been numerous campaigns addressing fashion waste, attracting a significant number of young people to participate. The event “Turn Off Lights, Turn On Ideas 2021” organized by BOO, aimed to raise awareness among the youth about the harmful effects of fast fashion and promote environmental responsibility (VTV.vn, 2022).

According to a study by Linh Hoang Nguyen and Hoa Phuong Nguyen (2020), Generation Z (born from 1995 onwards) constitutes 30% of the total population in Vietnam and has a tendency to seek fashion brands committed to social issues. Therefore, businesses need to establish their fashion brands in a sustainable direction, as “sustainable fashion” is becoming and will continue to be a necessity now and in the near future (quoted by Lam Hong Lan, 2022).

The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes to the global and Vietnamese fashion industries. In recent years, the Vietnamese fashion market has experienced robust development with the emergence of many local designer fashion brands. Among them, some have chosen the challenging path of sustainable fashion, which brings positive values to society. These brands have sought to understand and balance creative thinking, business philosophies, and market trends to produce sustainable fashion products that benefit consumers. Sustainable fashion is not just a passing trend; it is considered a goal that all fashion brands and businesses should strive to achieve. However, the reality in Vietnam shows that although many brands have pursued sustainable development in clothing and accessories, the prices of sustainable fashion products are not cheap. As a result, these products are currently targeted mainly at niche and high-end customers in major urban areas (Yody, 2023).

Several pioneering Vietnamese fashion designers have launched collections with a sustainable fashion approach. Designers such as Vu Thao, Vo Cong Khanh, Tran Hung, and Tom Trandt have contributed to the sustainable fashion trend. Additionally, renowned designers like Le Thanh Hoa and Do Long have also started exploring the mass market segment. They use environmentally friendly materials and switch to online sales to reduce costs, all contributing to the sustainable fashion movement. Furthermore, the rise of the Sustainable Fashion trend is being strongly disseminated by famous Vietnamese models and fashionistas who choose and promote a wide range of Sustainable Fashion products to their fan community (Coupletx, 2023).

V. Research results of young people on sustainable fashion trends in Vietnam

General information about survey subjects

Figure 1. Subjects’ gender

Source: Survey results

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Of the 636 people who participated in the survey, there are 89 boys (14%), 529 girls (83%), and 18 people (3%) who do not want to be specific.

![Figure 2. Subjects’ career](chart.png)

**Figure 2. Subjects’ career**

- 82.2% college student
- 10.5% working
- 7.2% high school student

*Source: Survey results*

Of the 636 people who participated in the survey, there were 523 college students (82.2%), 46 high school students (7.2%) were high school students and 67 people (10.5%) were working. In terms of living area, 367 people live in urban areas (58%) and 269 people live in rural areas (42%).

**The trend of using sustainable fashion products**

Regarding the consumption of sustainable fashion products, 77.1% of the subjects have used the products, and 22.9% of them have not used the products.

![Figure 3. The reason for not using sustainable fashion products](chart2.png)

**Figure 3. The reason for not using sustainable fashion products**

- Prices rise beyond the reach of the average user: 64 responses
- Overpriced due to the additional costs: 40 responses
- Products are not diverse: 40 responses
- Take time to inquire about brands that provide sustainable fashion products: 21 responses
- Not many brands provide products interested in expressing personality: 30 responses
- The lack of knowledge in sustainable fashion: 57 responses
- Doubts about the lucidity of products suppliers: 17 responses
- Other: 9 responses

*Source: Survey results*

Regarding the reason for not using sustainable fashion, the largest number of responses was 64 people accounting for 43% who found that "Price increases beyond the average user's reach", followed by the use of fashion, interested in expressing personality, style, and modernity, following personal fashion taste, not sustainable factors. The results also noted a lack of knowledge and understanding, not knowing how to distinguish sustainable fashion from fast fashion. In addition, sustainable fashion products are often overpriced due to additional costs such as organic certification or new dyeing processes; Products of the sustainable fashion industry are not diverse...

The survey results recorded that 487 people have been using sustainable fashion products, with 278 people (57.1%) having used the product recently and only 209 people (42.9%) having been using it for a long time. And in terms of frequency of use, 64.3% of customers use it occasionally, only 27.9% use it regularly and 7.8% rarely use it.
Figure 4. Sustainable fashion brands preferred by young people

The survey results show that Fashion4Freedom is the most popular brand, followed by Boo and Lemo eco-fashion.

Figure 5. Percentage of sustainable fashion in all fashion products

The survey results show that the rate of sustainable fashion is from 10-30% for all fashion products (accounted for the highest rate at 34.9%), less than 10% (accounted for 27.1%), from 30-50% (25.3%), from 50-70% (only 9%) and over 70% (only 3.7%).

About the sustainable use of fashion by people around with the convention: 1. Very little, 2. Little, 3. Normal, 4. Many and 5 a lot. The survey results show that the average score achieved is 2.65. This result shows that people around are using sustainable fashion at a “Normal” level.

Regarding the sustainable fashion shopping channel, the survey results show that 64.3% of the users buy products online, followed by 47.2% buying at stores, 46% buying at shops, and 26.7% buying at shopping centers. Additionally, 12.9% of them buy products from distribution channels of sustainable fashion brands, 8.2% buy from Kols’ consignment stores, while buying from friends/relatives accounts for 5.7%...

And when searching for online shopping for sustainable fashion, the results show that 87.7% of people use online channels, and only 12.3% of them do not. And the most popular online shopping channel was recorded as Shopee with 76.8% of the choices, followed by Tiktok with 50.1%, Facebook with 37.2%, Instagram with 33%, and on the Web of Fashion brands. sustainability is 28.6%.
Figure 6. Online shopping channels for sustainable fashion products

Source: Survey results

For the survey participants, the income/subsidy from the family was mainly below 500,000 VND (34.4%), from 500,000 VND to less than 1 million VND (29.8%), from 1 million to less than 2 million VND (18.4%), from 2 million to 5 million VND (12.4%), and over 5 million VND (accounted for only 5%).

With the given income, the amount of money willing to spend on sustainable fashion shopping is at 200-400 thousand VND, accounting for the highest percentage (37%), less than 200,000 VND (23.8%), and from 400 to 400 thousand VND. 800 thousand VND (23.2%), at 800-1000 thousand VND (9.2%) and 1-2 million VND (4.5%), and over 2 million VND (only 2.3%).

Factors affecting the decision to buy sustainable fashion products are considered by the research team in two aspects, personal factors, and external factors. Personal preference is the most chosen factor by 322 (66.1%) of the customers, followed by the environmentally friendly trend by 197 people (40.5%) and creating their fashion style by 73 people (35.5%).

Figure 7. Personal factors affect the decision to buy sustainable fashion products

Source: Survey results

External factors affecting the decision to buy sustainable fashion products are depicted in Figure 8.
The results show that young people are influenced by the uniqueness of the product to decide to buy the product (293 people, 60.2%), followed by the influence of marketing activities and wide product promotion widely (167 people, 34.3%), influenced by friends and relatives (152 people, 31.2%), and influenced by Kols' fashion style (134 people, 27.5%).

Regarding aspects of concern, when young people buy sustainable fashion products, the results are shown in Table 1.

### Table 1. Aspects to be considered when buying sustainable fashion products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Not interested at all</th>
<th>Not interested</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Interested</th>
<th>Very interested</th>
<th>Average Evaluation</th>
<th>Order of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>Interested 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prices</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>Interested 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>Interested 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>Interested 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>Interested 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental friendliness</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>Interested 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>Interested 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey results

Thus, in the 7 aspects surveyed by the group, the results show that the average score is from 3.56 to 3.96, in which the product quality aspect is the most concerned, followed by the product price aspect, the aspect of least concern is the origin of the product.
“Protecting the living environment/Reducing environmental pollution” is the most chosen benefit, followed by “Designing fashion products from waste materials has the potential to reduce prices into sustainable fashion products.” sustainability”, and “Reusing inventory to create new products”…

Figure 10. Concerns about using sustainable fashion products

Source: Survey results

The biggest concern selected was “Price increases beyond the average consumer”, followed by “Usually overpriced due to additional costs such as organic certification or new dyeing processes”, and “Products of the sustainable fashion industry are not yet diverse”…

Figure 11. Reasons why sustainable fashion is trending

Source: Survey results

Regarding the trend of using sustainable fashion in the future, it shows the survey respondents’ desire for products ranked in order from high to low: Firstly, Extend product life cycle by creating truly durable quality products that can meet 3R criteria: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (Reduce - Reuse - Recycle); Second, sustainable fashion saves natural resources; Third, sustainable fashion helps to reduce carbon emissions and reduce environmental pollution; Fourth, to create a sustainable economy, a prosperous community, and a green ecology during the operation process; Fifth, create working conditions for employees, better protect all labor rights; Sixth, educate, promote and propagate users towards “green customer”.

VI. Some methods to promote sustainable fashion development in Vietnam

For the producer:

Sourcing eco-friendly materials: Vietnamese fashion brands need to invest in technology to be able to find environmentally friendly, vegan, and recycled materials. Diversifying raw material sources and aiming for a sustainable fashion industry
Reducing production costs by modern technology: Applying 3D technology to create suitable costumes for customers without wasting raw materials as fashion designer Danit Peleg is applying; Or applying high technology to reduce costs while keeping the product fresh for longer…

Rent high-end, expensive brands. Through this service, high-class clothes will be exchanged without being left out to the outside environment. That contributes to reducing a large amount of waste in the living environment.

VII. For consumers:

Towards shopping for second-hand clothing. Shopping for jeans, t-shirts, sweaters, etc. fashion items with the status of second-hand products is also a solution to help limit the negative effects of the fashion industry on the environment. Not only that, but Second-hand clothing also helps customers reduce the costs to buy products. This is one of the important transition steps towards sustainable fashion. (Exzoomclass, 2020)

Consumers can also re-rent high-end clothes, both reducing the cost of use and having access to branded, high-end, expensive products.

VIII. Conclusion

Fashion is about breaking all limits. But we still need to maximize the sustainability of fashion so that it can bring the appearance of a beautiful and positive lifestyle to the environment and society. The action goal of Coolmate, SaiTeX, and other fashion brands is a valuable effort for us to change our shopping habits and improve the living environment now and in the future. (Style-republik, 2022)

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