

## FASHION AND ECOLOGY: FRIENDS OR FOES

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The purpose of the research is to study and analyze the present-day interaction between fashion and ecology and to try to find the keys to their sensible balance.

It is common knowledge that fashion is a temporary pleasure which plays a significant role in people's lives and influences people's choices. With ever-changing trends and styles, consumers are forced to update their wardrobes almost every month.

However, the rapidly changing nature of fashion has led to a disturbing and terrible consequence: an increase in clothing waste. It is known that the clothes thrown into a landfill remain there for hundreds of years.

The research shows that the way in which fashion affects clothing waste is through fast fashion. According to its definition, fast fashion is the rapid production and distribution of inexpensive clothing that meets consumer desires. Its main consumers are teenagers and young people who are influenced by social networks, friends and public opinion. Therefore, they strive to buy a trendy item as early as possible. It is undeniable that teenagers are looking for any way to express themselves, but they do not always think about the fact that an extra sweater can harm the planet that is their home. Unfashionable clothes are simply put in closets and then thrown away. As a result, garments become disposable, leading to a culture of buying and discarding clothes at an unprecedented rate. Moreover, fashion brands often use synthetic materials in their production, such as polyester or nylon. These materials can take hundreds of years to decompose. Low-quality fabrics often require excessive amounts of water to produce and contribute to plastic microfiber pollution in waterways. In addition, the short lifespan of clothing made from poor quality fabrics leads to increased waste generation and increased demand for primary resources.

At present, with the rise of fast fashion, the accumulation of non-biodegradable clothing in landfills has become a major environmental problem. We suppose that until manufacturers take responsibility and stop thinking only about profit, it will be difficult for us to change anything,

because people will still continue to buy what is cheaper. Alongside with this, there are concerns about the working conditions of factory workers in developing countries who may be subjected to exploitative labor practices. The demand for low-cost but trendy production often leads to inadequate pay, long working hours, and unsafe working environments. As for brands, they must instill values in society that will have a positive impact on mass consumption. This can be done through direct or indirect advertising.

Another factor contributing to clothing discarding is the desire for exclusivity and status symbols associated with certain fashion brands. Many consumers are willing to buy expensive and luxurious clothing to demonstrate their social status. Brands take advantage of this. Marketers create advertising that says their brand will enable ordinary people to wear high-end clothing. The only problem is that such clothes have become available to everyone and people began to buy a lot of beautiful, but unnecessary pants, jackets, etc.

To solve the problem of clothing discarding it is necessary to work not with specific sectors of clothing production, but with the consciousness of society. Both teenagers and adults should ask themselves several questions before purchasing: «Do I need this thing? What prompted me to pay attention to this particular thing? Am I making the decision or did someone force it on me?»

It is worth mentioning that the rise of online shopping and e-commerce has made it easier for consumers to purchase clothing items. However, this convenience has also resulted in a surge in impulse buying and the subsequent increase in clothing waste. Consumers often purchase multiple items with the intention of returning those that do not meet their expectations, contributing to the already overwhelming amount of unused clothing.

Generally speaking, addressing the issue of clothing waste requires a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including fashion brands, consumers and policymakers. Brands can promote sustainable practices by adopting eco-friendly materials, implementing recycling programs and offering repair services to extend the lifespan of garments. Consumers can make a difference by investing in timeless pieces, and supporting ethical fashion brands. Choosing well-made and durable pieces will ensure that your wardrobe will stand the test of time. By investing in high-quality pieces, you can enjoy timeless designs and durable fabrics. Quality clothing not only looks better, but it also feels better, ensuring comfort every time you wear it. And policymakers can play a crucial role in championing sustainability in the fashion industry through a range of measures. By developing and

enforcing regulations that promote sustainable practices, such as reducing textile waste, limiting the use of hazardous chemicals and promoting ethical labor standards, governments can drive positive change within the industry.

Additionally, policymakers can also introduce incentives, such as tax breaks or subsidies, to encourage fashion companies to adopt eco-friendly technologies, use sustainable materials and invest in ethical production practices.

The problem is that many people do not benefit from being environmentally conscious because the high demand for clothing creates easy ways for brands to make money. People should think about the harm they cause. If we do not start thinking about the amount of clothing we throw away, then nature will force us to do it. Society needs to adopt innovative and effective methods to raise awareness about environmental issues, so that everyone becomes more conscious about solving them. We need to talk about the environment and instill the right attitude towards goods from kindergartens. This may include implementing educational programs, organizing environmental awareness campaigns and promoting sustainable practices in communities and industries. By increasing our understanding of environmental issues, we can work collectively to develop and adopt solutions that preserve the planet.

In conclusion, to reduce clothing waste, it is crucial for all stakeholders to promote sustainable practices and make conscious choices when it comes to fashion consumption. Only through collective action we can reduce the growth of the environmental consequences and create a more sustainable future for the fashion industry. This can lead to positive changes in behavior, policy and decision-making that will benefit both current and future generations.

If we continue to neglect the environment, we will face severe consequences. Climate change will worsen, leading to extreme weather events, rising sea levels and loss of biodiversity. The air and water quality will deteriorate, causing health problems for humans and other living beings. Natural resources will be depleted, impacting food and water security. Overall, our planet will become increasingly uninhabitable for future generations if we fail to take action to protect the environment. It is crucial to consider the long-term impact of our actions and prioritize sustainable practices to ensure a healthier future.