

**ICONSPADU 2021****International Conference on Sustainable Practices, Development and Urbanisation****INCREASING KNOWLEDGE, AWARENESS, AND ATTITUDES  
ABOUT SLOW FASHION THROUGH AN EDUCATIONAL  
MODULE**

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**Abstract**

Fashion production makes up 10% of global carbon dioxide emissions every year, depletes water sources, and pollutes rivers and streams. As more people buy clothes worldwide, the increased demand for low-cost garments and new styles is putting a strain on the environment. As a result, the slow fashion concept seeks to promote clothing that is both ethically produced and environmentally friendly. The purpose of this study is to have a better understanding of the relationship between exposure to sustainable fashion education, and the changes in consumers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes (KAA) toward slow fashion apparel. The second objective is to investigate whether sustainable fashion education would influence young consumer's purchase intentions toward slow fashion. The survey responses from 208 UNISEL students participating in the Green Awareness and Sustainability in Community (GASCO) course in this study. In two lecture series, an educational module on the concept of slow fashion was introduced. In a quantity method approach, two rounds of data collection were used: a pre-educational survey with an educational module, and a post-educational survey for all pre-educational survey participants. Knowledge and attitude have also been shown to be helpful in predicting purchasing intentions. These findings demonstrated that educational exposure had a significant and positive impact on young adult consumers' comprehension and attitudes about slow fashion. As a result of this study, the slow fashion awareness module gained an educational component, which increased consumer comprehension and attitudes about slow fashion.

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## 1. Introduction

Fashion, defined by Frisby and Simmel as a social form that combines the attraction of differentiation and change with similarity and harmony, has become the focal point of many people's lives as clothing has become more easily accessible and affordable because of the fast fashion concept. Fast fashion is a modern term used by fashion retailers to recognise that designs move quickly in the market and have limited stock with the aspect of "here today, gone tomorrow" to encourage consumers to visit fast fashion stores more frequently. However, there is growing concern about the environmental impacts of textiles, which are ranked fourth in the product category. Clothing alone is responsible for 2 to 10% of the EU's life-cycle environmental impacts, according to the Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO) study. Clothing replacement on a regular basis, as well as increasing textile waste, impose an environmental burden. Consumers have an increasing number of garments with a short lifespan that were purchased hastily and used only a few times before being discarded.

Slow fashion is intended to be worn over a long period of time, and it is made with high quality and ethical values; it is long-lasting and made of sustainable materials. According to a study conducted by (Sellitto et al., 2021), young people of the population known as Generation Y would prefer to buy more low-quality, cheap, and fashionable clothes than baby boomers, who would prefer to buy fewer higher-quality clothes. Slow fashion has evolved into a sustainable consumption movement that is the opposite of fast fashion in recent years. A search for "#slowfashion" on Instagram's most popular search function yielded 11.7 million photos. Female customers have a more positive attitude about slow fashion clothes and higher income consumers are more likely to purchase slow fashion apparel. (Chi et al., 2021)

For all these reasons, the concept of KAA (Knowledge, Awareness and Attitude) will be assessed among the young generation toward the adoption of sustainable innovation in Malaysia. Therefore, the real focus of this paper is on sustainable growth and development, and the creation of innovative products that will furnish a fashion consumer with a multitude of environmentally friendly choices.

## 2. Problem Statements

The fashion industry, particularly fast fashion brands, generates a lot of waste and puts a lot of strain on the environment. Every year, more than \$500 billion is lost due to underutilization of clothing and a lack of recycling. Global apparel consumption is expected to increase from 62 billion tonnes today to 102 billion tonnes by 2030. (Global Fashion, The Boston Consulting Group, & Sustainable Apparel Coalition, 2019). More waste from fashion products, such as textiles, chemicals, and dyes, impose environmental and climate change pressures. Because almost all fashion products are outsourced and transported internationally, fashion products have one of the highest carbon footprints in the current unidirectional globalised supply chain, emitting more greenhouse gases than the aviation and shipping industries combined. If the entire lifecycle of clothing is considered, the fashion industry is estimated to be responsible for 3.3 billion tonnes, or 10% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and 20% of global waste streams (Sanders & Mawson, 2019). In response to criticism of fast fashion's waste and pollution, the concept of "slow fashion" was developed to assist consumers in considering sustainable practises related to fashion production, distribution, and use (Clark, 2008). It encourages customers to "value and know the object"

(Hiller, 2010) and combines experience with self-improvement values (Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014). The adoption of eco-conscious fashion purchases by consumers is dependent on consumer awareness through education on reducing waste and environmental impact (Nayak et al., 2020). It is important to understand how different factors shape consumers' ethical values to provide informative guidelines for sustainability in fashion products (Connolly & Shaw, 2006). Therefore, we intend to explore consumers' attitudes towards sustainability in fashion product purchases, which entails a review of the concept of sustainability and the research on sustainability in fashion studies.

The findings of this study will allow the fashion industry, policy makers, educators, and community groups to implement environmental and sustainability education programmes and awareness campaigns. This will later facilitate changes in consumers' purchasing behaviour and to promote knowledge and commitment to minimising the impact of their apparel purchasing decisions by understanding fashion consumers' current level of knowledge, awareness, and attitudes about the social and environmental impacts of their apparel purchasing decisions. This study also will investigate the young adult consumer behaviour literature by developing an education awareness module, Green Awareness and Sustainability in Community (GASCO) module based on the empirical findings concerning the young adult consumer awareness, their decision-making process, perceived risks, fashion involvement and purchase intention associated with fast fashion versus slow fashion consumers.

### **3. Research Questions**

This study's research questions aim to answer the changes in consumers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes (KAA) toward slow fashion apparel and investigate whether sustainable fashion education would influence young consumers' purchase intentions toward slow fashion. Consumers become aware when they are exposed and approached (Neumann, Martinez & Martinez, 2021). Despite growing interest in slow fashion, an understanding of the slow fashion consumer is significantly lacking (Jung & Jin, 2016). The following are five significant aspects that should be highlighted.

- Educational Module
- View about Slow Fashion Products
- Shopping behaviour
- Environmental values and Beliefs
- Shopping Value
- Knowing about Fashion

### **4. Objective of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to have a better understanding of the relationship between the exposure to sustainable fashion education, and the changes in consumers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes (KAA) toward slow fashion apparel among the university's students. The second objective is to investigate whether sustainable fashion education would influence young consumer's purchase intentions toward slow fashion.

## 5. Research Methods

The study is quantitative in which the data presented in a frequency and descriptive form can be made using the data. A model was developed based on the research by Preuit and Yan (2017). The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents using simple random sampling and through online surveys using google form and analyse with SPSS. The questionnaire consists of five sections, as follows:

1. SECTION A: Demographic information of the respondents
2. SECTION B: This section measures the shopping behaviours
3. SECTION C: This section measures the environmental values and beliefs
4. SECTION D: This section measures the fashion knowledge
5. SECTION E: This section measures the attitude towards buying slow fashion

The methodology was carried out in two stages, as detailed below. The pre-educational survey and educational module were phase one, and the post-educational survey was phase two. Phase I consists of a pre-educational survey and a sampling of educational modules. A total of 200 college students (both male and female) were enlisted as participants. This age group is the target market for fast fashion shops. (Morgan & Birtwistle, 2009). The students were chosen from faculty (FBA) classes at Universiti Selangor in the August 2021 semester who were studying Green Awareness & Sustainability in Community (GASCO). Young adult college students were chosen for this survey because they are H&M, Zara, Cotton On, and a few other retailers' core target market.

### 5.1. Data collection procedures

The participants were given a pre-educational survey. The survey was given out during class and took around 20 minutes to complete. The survey inquired about demographics, environmental values, shopping values, and knowledge of fast and slow fashion (knowledge of characteristics, brands, and environmental effect), as well as attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and purchase intents. Multiple-choice, true/false, and 7-point Likert scale items were included in the poll, with responses ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Students' email addresses were obtained in order to encourage them to participate in a post-educational survey. The identity of the students was kept hidden. To promote participation in the study, extra credit points were awarded to students who completed the survey with the instructor's permission.

### 5.2. Educational module

There was an educational module when the pre-educational questionnaires were completed. The module, which was presented in PowerPoint style, lasted about 40 minutes. The lesson was added to the e-learning platform as a way for young adult consumers to learn more about slow fashion and how to shop more responsibly. The content in this module was compiled using data from available publications. It was refined using themes and concepts from sub-issues in the GASCO syllabus's existing course structure.

### 5.3. Data analysis

The results of this survey were compared to the results of phase II's post-educational survey.

#### 5.3.1. Phase II: Post-Educational Survey Sampling

Two weeks following the pre-educational survey and educational module, all phase 1 participants were requested to complete the post-survey using an online google form survey. To examine the influence of greater awareness of slow and rapid fashion on attitudes and purchase intention, pre- and post-educational questionnaires were linked using the last four digits of the students' ID numbers.

Procedures for gathering data A post-educational survey was sent to all participants from phase 1 two weeks following the educational module in an online manner. The post-educational survey included the same items as the pre-educational survey, plus questions on the success of the educational module on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

## 6. Findings

The data of surveys were collected in two phases for three weeks (between September-October 2021). The phases included:

- A pre-educational survey of six groups from Green Awareness and Sustainability in Community course.
- A post-educational survey of the same group of participants.

The results from each phase are included in the following paragraphs.

### 6.1. Demographic Information

From the respondent's questionnaire results, a total of 208 respondents participated in our online questionnaire through pre-and post-survey. Table 1 shows that the respondents' age is between 19-25 years old. Most of the respondents are female students, who accounted for 65.9 percent, and 34.1 percent are male students. They are coming from various course background and year of study, mainly from year 2 and year 3 students.

The respondents were asked to state if they have some knowledge about the relationship between the exposure to sustainable fashion education, and the changes in consumers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes (KAA) toward slow fashion apparel and whether sustainable fashion education would influence young consumer's purchase intentions toward slow fashion.

**Table 1.** Profile of Respondents

Measure	Items	Percentage
Gender	Male	34.6%
	Female	65.4%
Age	19-21	33.2%
	22-25	64.4%
	Others	2.4%

Ethnicity	Malay	61.1%
	Chinese	2.4%
	Indian	32.2%
	Bumiputera	0.5%
	Others	3.8%
Year of Study	1	6.3%
	2	49.5%
	3	38.9%
	4	4.3%

## 6.2. Educational Module

According to the findings in Table 2, most of the respondents agreed that the module impacted and changed their understanding of sustainability in fashion design. They also approved the module is practical, informative, and deepens their knowledge on the environmental impacts of clothing.

**Table 2.** Impact of Educational Module

Level of Agreements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I thought the educational module was effective	2	3	34	81	88
I thought the educational module was informative	4	3	29	84	88
I paid attention to the content of the educational module	2	5	34	99	68
The session improved my understanding of how clothing affects the environment.	2	1	29	81	95

## 6.3. Knowledge

Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 indicate the respondents' knowledge levels in slow and fast fashion. The educational modules give respondents more information after being exposed to them. The information exposed changes the respondents' knowledge and perception in a slow and fast fashion.

**Table 3.** 'Fast fashion' is a word I'm familiar with.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	5%	10%	47%	29%	9%
Post	1%	4%	29%	42%	24%

**Table 4.** 'Slow fashion' is a word I'm familiar with.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	5%	12%	57%	18%	8%
Post	1%	4%	28%	40%	27%

**Table 5.** I'm aware of the negative effects of fast fashion clothing on the environment.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	4%	10%	47%	27%	12%
Post	3%	4%	21%	44%	28%

**Table 6.** I'm aware of the negative effects of slow fashion clothing on the environment.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	3%	13%	54%	24%	6%
Post	2%	3%	26%	41%	28%

#### 6.4. Awareness

It is hard to change values practiced by the community. The knowledge, value, and perception of the community towards sustainability in fashion design is something new. In Malaysia, the awareness in this field remains low among consumers (Rosli, 2018). As shown in our survey before the educational module was exposed and delivered to our respondents, it was the impact of the fast fashion industry in our market. Exposure to the module through the post-survey, the awareness level increased significantly, as shown in Tables 7 and 8.

**Table 7.** When I go shopping, I consider the environmental effect of my purchases.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	2%	9%	56%	22%	11%
Post	1%	3%	38%	39%	19%

**Table 8.** I am someone who is concerned about the environment.

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	0.5%	0.5%	27%	46%	26%
Post	0.5%	0.5%	20%	44%	35%

#### 6.5. Attitude

Usually, perception and information influence consumers' attitudes. Tables 9 and 10 showed positive changes in consumers' purchase intentions towards slow fashion as their knowledge and awareness significantly changed their attitude.

**Table 9.** I consider the environmental impacts of my purchase

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	2%	4%	55%	27%	12%
Post	0%	4%	26%	49%	21%

**Table 10.** I try to purchase sustainably made apparel

Measure	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Pre	0.5%	3.5%	50%	40%	6%
Post	0%	2%	33%	47%	18%

## 6.6. Purchase Intentions Towards Slow Fashion

Table 11 measures whether sustainable fashion education would influence young consumer's purchase intentions toward slow fashion. The reliability test was conducted to check the reliability of the statements of the questionnaire which link to the young consumer purchase intentions toward slow fashion.

**Table 11.** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.865	23

Tables 12, 13 and 14 below show the frequency of responses from respondents regarding their attitudes towards slow fashion purchases. These experiments were conducted at the pre-module and post-module, which involved 6 groups of Green Awareness and Sustainability in Community (GASCO) courses. Findings show a similar score that more than half agree for the item in Tables 12 and 13(a) on their immersion in exciting new products and why they shop. While the items in Table 13(b) indicates 71.2% of the respondents agreed on their need while shopping on pre-module survey and higher score of 75.5% on the post-module survey.

**Table 12.** I adore immersing myself in innovative new things

Measure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Pre	1.4% (3)	3.8% (8)	41.8% (87)	40.4% (84)	12.5% (26)
Post	0.5% (1)	8.2% (17)	38.0% (79)	40.9% (85)	12.5% (26)

**Table 13. (a).** I go shopping because I want to, not because I feel obligated to

Measure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Pre	4.3% (9)	13.5% (28)	41.3% (86)	26.4% (55)	14.4% (30)
Post	1.9% (4)	14.4% (30)	37.0% (77)	33.7% (70)	11.5% (24)

**Table 13. (b).** I shop for what I need

Measure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Pre	1.4% (3)	2.9% (6)	24.0% (50)	38.5% (80)	32.7% (68)
Post	0.5% (1)	4.3% (9)	18.8% (39)	42.8% (89)	32.7% (68)

Table 14 shows the attitudes of the young generation in slow fashion purchasing. The young generation's understanding is at a low level at pre module level learning, which is around 37% has positive attitudes. Meanwhile, after they learned about the module in Green Awareness and Sustainability in Community courses, their understanding of the purchase of slow fashion products increased to a moderate level of around 61.1%.



**Table 14.** Young people attitudes towards buying slow fashion

Measure	Extremely negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Extremely Positive
Pre	5.0% (1)	3.8% (8)	57.7% (120)	31.7% (66)	5.3% (11)
Post	1.0% (2)	3.4% (7)	34.1% (71)	43.3% (90)	17.8% (37)

Tables 15, 16, and 17 below show the attitudes and perceptions of the young generation on the benefits of buying slow fashion apparel to slow fashion concepts, their preferences, and the perception of whether apparel products are slow fashion or not. The table shows an increase in the younger generation's views after they follow the modules provided even though their level of understanding is at a moderate level.

**Table 15.** Young people attitude towards buying slow fashion apparel on the benefit of slow fashion

Measure	Extremely Harmful	Harmful	Neutral	Beneficials	Extremely Beneficial
Pre	5.0% (1)	1.4% (3)	64.9% (135)	26% (54)	6.7%(14)
Post	1.0% (2)	1.9% (4)	32.7% (68)	4.1% (10)	15.9%(33)

**Table 16.** Young people attitude – on favorable

Measure	Extremely Unfavorable	Unfavorable	Neutral	Favorable	Extremely Favourable
Pre	1.0% (2)	4.8% (10)	63.9% (133)	25% (52)	4.8% (10)
Post	0.0% (0)	4.8% (10)	38.9% (81)	42.3% (88)	13.0% (27)

**Table 17.** People who are important to me are not bothered/are concerned about whether clothes goods are sluggish fashion, according to the view of young people

Measure	Are not Concerned	Are slightly Concerned	Neutral	Are almost Concerned	Are Concerned
Pre	8.2% (17)	19.7% (41)	50.0% (104)	16.8% (35)	3.8% (8)
Post	8.2% (17)	14.9% (31)	40.9% (85)	30.8% (64)	5.3% (11)

They were asked about the purchase of fashion apparel and the intention to purchase it in the future, and they stated in Table 18 fashion apparel was easy to buy at low levels of 29.8% (pre) and 45.6% (post). Meanwhile, in Table 19, half of the respondents, namely 51.5% (pre), stated their intention to buy slow fashion apparel in the future. However, their purpose increased to 74.6% in the experiment after attending the module.

**Table 18.** Purchasing slow fashion clothes is a must for me

Measure	Extremely Difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Extremely Easy
Pre	1.4% (3)	10.6% (22)	57.7% (120)	26.0% (54)	3.8% (8)
Post	1.0% (2)	6.7% (14)	45.2% (94)	38.9% (81)	6.7% (14)

**Table 19.** In the future, I plan to acquire slow fashion clothing

Measure	Definitely not	No	Unsure	Yes	Definitely
Pre	5.0% (1)	3.8% (8)	42.8% (89)	40.9% (85)	10.6% (22)
Post	5.0% (1)	1.9% (4)	22.1% (46)	51.0% (106)	23.6% (49)

60.5% of respondents stated that they would share information related to slow fashion apparel products with friends in the future. While the percentage increased to 78.9% after attending the module is shown in Table 20.

**Table 20.** I'll tell my friends about slow fashion clothing in the future

Measure	Definitely not	No	Unsure	Yes	Definitely
Pre	1.0% (2)	2.4% (5)	34.6% (72)	41.3% (86)	19.2% (40)
Post	5.0% (1)	1.9% (4)	18.8% (39)	39.4% (82)	38.9% (81)

## 7. Conclusion

The young adult consumer has a moderate grasp of slow fashion, according to the results of a pre-educational survey; the participants did not feel they understood much about it. When the pre-educational and post-educational knowledge levels were compared, the findings demonstrated that a 2-hour educational module might have a considerable impact on the level of knowledge of young adult consumers. The teaching session discusses the negative effects of rapid fashion and the benefits of buying slow fashion. Consumer views regarding slow fashion were also positively influenced by the module, suggesting that education has an impact on attitudes. The contrast of fast and slow fashion serves to emphasise the environmental benefits of slow fashion purchases. The research has ramifications in other areas as well.

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