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## The Transition Towards Slow Fashion: A Bibliometric Analysis of Sustainable Consumer Behavior and Future Research Opportunities

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**Abstract:** The growing global concern for sustainability in the fashion industry underscores the need for a comprehensive scientific mapping of trends in slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior. This study employs a quantitative-descriptive bibliometric approach, analyzing 137 scholarly documents published between 2014 and the first quarter of 2025. The analysis utilizes Biblioshiny to generate descriptive statistics and thematic maps, while VOSviewer is used to visualize keyword co-occurrence networks and author collaborations. The results reveal a significant annual growth in publications, dominated by themes such as sustainability, consumer behavior, and the fashion industry. The United States emerges as the most prolific contributor, with the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management being the primary source of publications. Keyword mapping highlights major thematic clusters related to ethical consumption, circular economy, and purchase intention. The thematic map positions slow fashion as an emerging yet underdeveloped theme with considerable academic potential. This study emphasizes the importance of adopting a more holistic perspective by integrating qualitative methods, expanding geographic contexts to include the Global South, and exploring the role of digital technologies and social dynamics in driving more equitable and sustainable fashion consumption behavior.

**Keywords:** Bibliometric, circular economy, consumer behavior, fashion industry, slow fashion.

### INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry is a major contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions and is known for its environmentally unfriendly production practices and labor exploitation. The fast fashion business model has exacerbated this situation through mass production, rapidly changing trends, and instant consumption that encourages impulse buying and high volumes of textile waste (Suxia et al., 2025). This excessive consumption of waste generates over 92 million tons of textile waste and consumes approximately 79 trillion liters of water annually globally, making the sector one of the most significant contributors to environmental damage

(Niinimäki et al., 2020). This situation poses a significant obstacle to the fashion industry's transition to more sustainable practices. Therefore, there is a global push for fundamental changes to the fashion business model, one of which is to slow the rate of production and consumption.

In response to the environmental impact of the fashion industry, slow fashion emerged as a strategic approach considering sustainable production and consumption. This approach encourages consumers to prioritize quality over quantity, by purchasing fewer, more durable products (Aggarwal et al., 2024). Furthermore, slow fashion emphasizes the importance of consumer awareness of product origins, environmental impacts, and sustainability values in the purchasing decision-making process (Domingos et al., 2022). Despite the growing trend of environmental awareness, the adoption of slow fashion still faces various challenges, including a mismatch between pro-environmental attitudes and actual consumer behavior (attitude-behavior gap) (Reimers et al., 2016). This paradigm is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda, particularly Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), which emphasize mindful consumption, transparent supply chains, and fair labor practices, all core principles of the slow fashion movement that also support a circular economy (Aggarwal et al., 2024).

Consumer behavior is a key factor in the transition to a sustainable fashion system. Over the past decade, this issue has become the focus of numerous studies seeking to understand the motivations, barriers, and behavioral patterns of consumers in choosing eco-friendly fashion products (Upadhyay et al., 2025). Therefore, a comprehensive mapping of the global literature on consumer behavior in the context of slow fashion is crucial. Using a bibliometric approach, this study aims to identify key trends, contributions from the most influential scholars and institutions, dominant theories and methodological approaches, and remaining research gaps. The results of this analysis are expected to strengthen the scientific foundation for driving the transformation of the fashion industry towards a more sustainable direction (Tamilarasan & Ramasamy, 2025). More specifically, the research questions (RQ) to be answered in this study are as follows:

1. RQ1. How have publication trends and literature growth on slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior evolved over the past decade (2014–Q1 2025)?
2. RQ2. Which parties (authors, countries, journals, and institutions) have contributed most to and collaborated on the literature on slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior?
3. RQ3. What are the dominant themes, conceptual approaches, and interrelationships between topics in the study of slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior?
4. RQ4. What are the research gaps in the literature on slow fashion and sustainable fashion consumption, and what are the directions for future research to support the implementation of a sustainable circular economy?

According to fashion waste experts, the current abundance of clothing in circulation is so abundant that it could meet the clothing needs of humanity for the next six generations (Hovarth & Meiffren -Swango, 2024). This situation reinforces the urgency to re-evaluate the fashion industry's practices, which have relied on mass production and rapid consumption. In response to this situation, slow fashion was introduced by Kate Fletcher in 2008, espousing the principles of sustainability, quality, and ethics as an alternative to the dominance of fast fashion (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Henninger et al., 2017). More than just a new way of thinking, slow fashion represents a different production system, one oriented toward long-term value and impact. The transformation of the fashion industry over the past two decades has shown a drastic acceleration of the trend cycle. While previously only two major collections were released annually (spring/summer and fall/winter), the global market is now flooded with up to 100 mini collections annually. For example, the Zara brand from the Inditex Group, which

updates its store collections every two weeks, encourages continuous buying patterns and reinforces a culture of instant consumption, which has a major impact on increasing fashion waste (Aggarwal et al., 2024).

In context consumer behavior fast fashion tend reactive to trend, very sensitive to price, and influenced by social media. This type of consumer is also rarely consider issue environment moment buy clothes, decisions more Lots based on compatibility style and appearance, not sustainability (Sudirjo, 2021). On the other hand, consumers slow fashion show greater awareness tall to impact socio-environmental from fashion, appreciate quality products, ethical production processes, and narratives aligned brands with mark personal (Centobelli et al., 2022). Difference this is also visible from method access information, such as consumer fast fashion more influenced by social media algorithms, whereas consumer slow fashion tend look for more information deep from blogs, articles, or documentaries (Castro-López et al., 2021). In addition, slow fashion is also more involved in economy circular like purchase goods used or recycling program repeat (Domingos et al., 2022).

Although however, still there is various gap in literature that can developed. Previous research still shows several gaps, ranging from a lack of cross-cultural studies, a lack of consistency in theoretical models related to consumer perceptions of transparency and sustainability labeling, to a lack of understanding of how consumers balance considerations between price, quality, and sustainability aspects in purchasing decisions (Garcia-Huguet, 2021; Jacobs et al., 2018). thus, understanding behavior consumer in context slow fashion No Enough only through approach single. Required review cross-disciplinary for build complete understanding. Research This use analysis bibliometrics for map contribution scientific, identifying direction research, and open room study more carry on in transition going to consumption fashion that aligns with sustainable values.

## **METHOD**

Bibliometric analysis has become increasingly popular in business and management research in recent years (Donthu et al., 2021). This study uses a bibliometric approach with the help of VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to examine the dynamics of studies on slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior. Zhao et al. (2024) define bibliometrics as a quantitative method that uses statistical techniques to evaluate the development of literature and key issues in a field. This approach allows mapping research trends and identifying opportunities for further study that have not yet been explored (Voigt & von der Oelsnitz, 2024).

### **Data Collection Sources**

This review uses transparent, clear, and reproducible bibliometric analysis in data development, with Scopus as the primary database due to its extensive coverage and appropriate metadata for analysis (Aria & Cuccurollo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). The search focused on publications from 2014–Q1 2025 to identify current trends related to slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior.

### **Literature Search and Selection Strategy**

The literature selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 protocol, which uses a process of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion to ensure transparency and reduce bias in systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021; Sarker & Bartok, 2024). PRISMA is commonly used in bibliometrics as a visual guide through flowcharts. to increase the accuracy of the study (Monoarfa et al., 2024). The identification stage was carried out by searching documents through the title, abstract, and keyword search features in the Scopus database using the Boolean operators "AND" and "OR" to adjust the study focus. Keywords were used as a guide to capture literature relevant to the research topic. Table 1 presents the complete search string used in this process. Before applying the filtering criteria, the initial query resulted in 413

documents, which then proceeded to the filtering stage without any elimination during the identification stage.

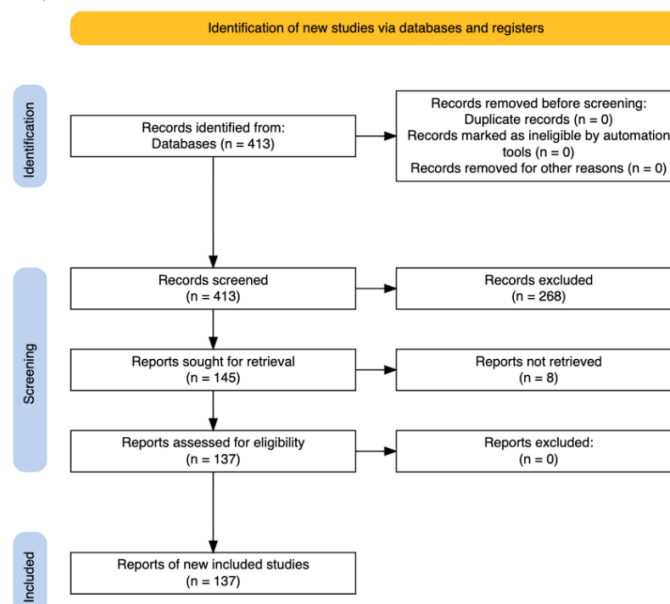
**Table 1. Full String Literature Search**

Keywords	String Search
Slow Fashion	"slow fashion" OR "ethical fashion" OR "eco fashion" OR "green fashion" OR "sustainable fashion"
Sustainable Consumer Behavior	"consumer behavior" OR "shopping behavior" OR "fashion consumption" OR "consumer perception" OR "fashion preferences" OR "green consumer behavior" OR "sustainable consumption" OR "environmentally conscious consumer" OR "ethical consumption" OR "eco-conscious consumer" OR "green purchase behavior"

Next, a screening stage was conducted to exclude documents outside the scope of the study, to ensure topic relevance and reduce potential bias (Page et al., 2021). Selection criteria were applied by adding specific limitations, namely the years 2014 - 2025, the field of study Business, Management, and Accounting, the type of document in the form of an article, sources from accredited journals, and literature written in English. As a result, a total of 268 documents were eliminated, leaving 145 articles for further analysis (Aria & Cuccurollo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). The feasibility stage was carried out by reviewing the full contents of the 126 screened documents. Two documents were not available in full because they had not been published, so only 137 articles were declared eligible for analysis. All documents were then re-verified and confirmed to be relevant to the research focus. A total of 137 articles that passed the final selection were then exported in CSV and BibTeX formats for further analysis.

**Data analysis**

This study used VOSviewer and Biblioshiny from R-Studio for bibliometric analysis and visualization. VOSviewer was chosen for its ability to map visual networks such as co-citations, author collaborations, and keyword occurrences (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Meanwhile, Biblioshiny offers user-friendly data exploration tools for comprehensive descriptive, network, and thematic analysis (Aria & Cuccurollo, 2017). The combination of the two is considered optimal and flexible compared to other software such as Gephi or SciMat. The latest version of VOSviewer (2023) also shows significant performance improvements (Sarker & Bartok, 2024).



**Figure 1. Literature Search and Selection Flowchart**  
Source: PRISMA 2020 (Haddaway et al., 2022)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Publication Overview

A summary of the publication statistics is available in Figure 2. shows the growth trends and basic characteristics of the literature related to slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior during the period 2014–2025. Based on the analysis of 136 documents, an annual growth rate of 22.11% was recorded, reflecting a significant increase in academic attention. A total of 349 authors were involved, with an average of 2.86 authors per article and 27.21% of which were international collaborations. Although only 17 articles were written individually, collaboration was the main trend. The documents analyzed came from 64 publication sources, with an average age of 3.25 years and an average of 29.43 citations per document. Furthermore, the diversity of topics is evident from the 465 keywords used in the literature.

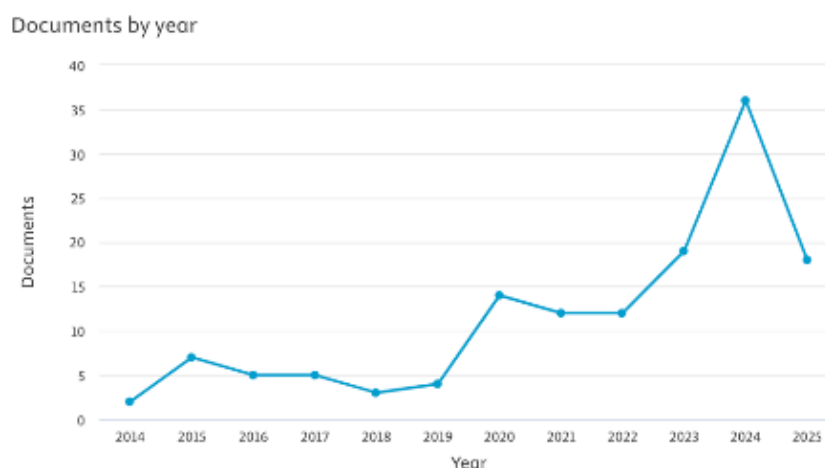


**Figure 2. General Statistics of Research Data**

Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

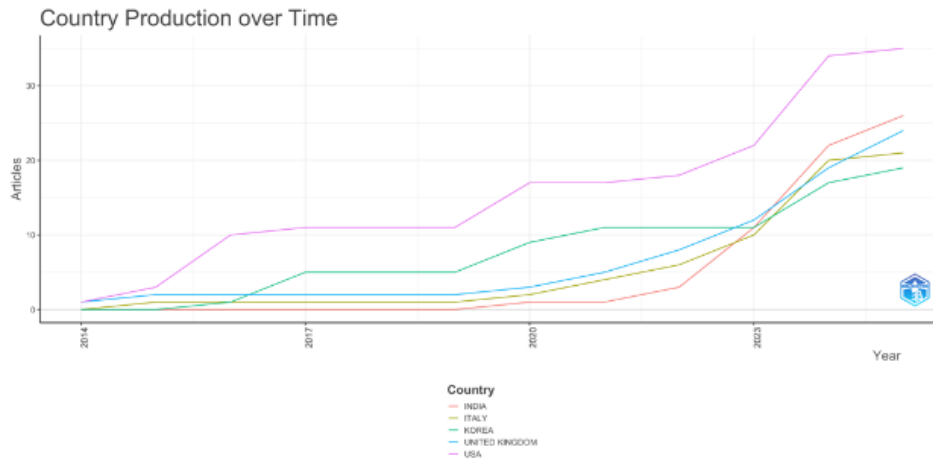
### Scientific Production and Collaboration Patterns

Publication production on the topic of slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior has shown a significant increase, particularly since 2020. After an initial period of stagnation (2014–2019) with under 10 publications per year, the number of publications surged and peaked at 37 in 2024. By the first quarter of 2025, 18 publications had been published, indicating potential for further growth through the end of the year. This trend reflects the growing academic attention to sustainability issues in fashion, influenced by the environmental crisis and changing consumer values. This increase also indicates that slow fashion has become a strategic interdisciplinary focus of study in the context of the circular economy and the transformation of consumer behavior.



**Figure 3. Number of Publications 2014–Q1 2025**

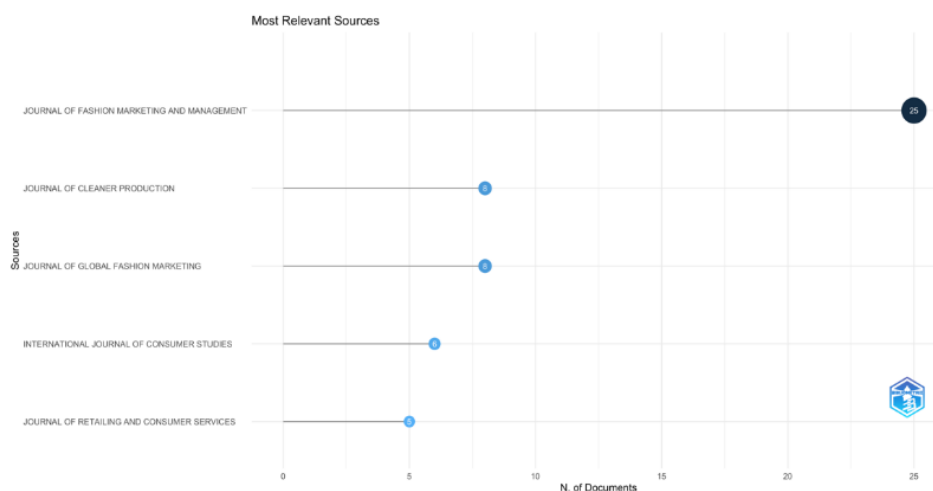
Source: Scopus



**Figure 4. Trend in Number of Publications per Country 2014–Q1 2025**  
Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

Growth publication this was also followed by an increase contribution from various countries, which shows expansion global attention to issue this. Based on Figure 4, the United States is shown as the most productive country throughout period 2014–Q1 2025, with trend steady improvement since 2015 and the surge significant post-2020. The peak occurred in 2024 with more of 30 publications. India and Italy showed growth fast in five years last and approaching number United States production, indicating increasing developing country involvement in discourse fashion sustainable. Meanwhile that, South Korea and England contribute in a way consistent However in more amount moderate. In general, pattern This reflect that issue slow fashion has become attention cross- regional, no only limited to developed countries, but also becomes a research agenda strategic at the global level.

In addition to the distribution of contributions by country, it is also important to examine which journals are the primary channels for publication on this topic. According to Figure 5, the Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management is the most dominant source with 25 documents, followed by the Journal of Cleaner Production and the Journal of Global Fashion Marketing, each contributing 8 documents. This pattern reflects the principle of Bradford's Law, where most publications are concentrated in a small number of core journals. The dominance of journals from the marketing, sustainability, and consumer fields indicates that the issue of slow fashion encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions simultaneously.



**Figure 5. Most Relevant Journals in Publication (2014–Q1 2025)**  
Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

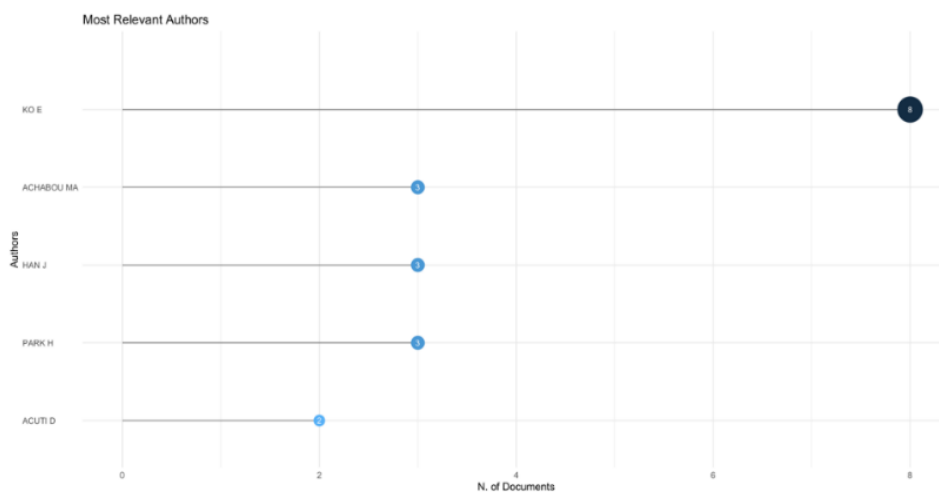
In addition to journal dominance, it is important to evaluate the documents with the highest citations to understand the literature that serves as the main reference in this field. Based on Table 2, the most influential document was written by McNeill, L. (2015) in the International Journal of Consumer Studies with 367 citations and an average of 33.36 citations per year. This was followed by Wiederhold, M. (2018) with 241 citations, and Bly, S. (2015) with 150 citations. The majority of the documents with high citations came from the same journal, demonstrating the important role of the International Journal of Consumer Studies in the development of slow fashion literature. The high number of citations reflects the strong theoretical and methodological contributions of these publications to academic studies.

**Table 2. Highest Cited Publications in Slow Fashion Studies**

Paper	Total Citations	TC per Year	Normalized TC
MCNEILL L, 2015, INT J CONSUM STUD	367	33.36	3.65
WIEDERHOLD M, 2018, INT J CONSUM STUD	241	30.13	2.22
BLY S, 2015, INT J CONSUM STUD	150	13.64	1.49
MCNEILL L, 2019, INT J CONSUM STUD	146	20.86	2.79
HAN J, 2017, J BUS RES	141	15.67	1.56

Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

To complete the literature mapping, identifying the most productive authors helps show who are the central figures in the development of slow fashion studies. Based on Figure 6, Ko, E. is recorded as the most productive author with 8 publications, far surpassing other authors. Followed by Achabou, MA, Han, J., and Park, H. with 3 documents each, and ACUTI D with 2 documents. These five names are the authors with the highest contributions, while most other authors only contributed 1-2 documents during the analysis period. This finding indicates that scientific contributions are still concentrated in a few core authors, who can be important references and collaborative partners in the development of further research.



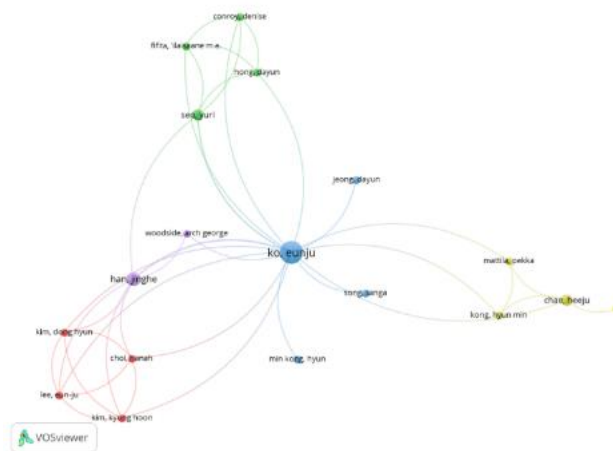
**Figure 6. Most Productive Authors in Publications (2014–Q1 2025)**

Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

After identify most productive, important writer for see How relatedness between author, topic research, and channels publication formed in study slow fashion. Visualization The three-field plot in Figure 7 provides description comprehensive about connection between three element main in bibliometrics, namely author (AU), keywords main (DE), and source publication (SO). This plot No only display focus thematic from each author, but also shows



Keywords like “sustainable fashion”, “sustainability”, and “sustainable consumption” appear as the most central and connected node wide with various term others, showing that topic sustainability is the core of research in the field this. Cluster red for example, focusing on a theme fashion consumption, ethical fashion, and purchase intention, show relatedness between mark ethics and decisions purchase. Meanwhile that, cluster blue describe connection strong between slow fashion, fast fashion, and circular economy, which mark discussion around transition to a more efficient consumption and production model sustainable. Cluster green and yellow indicates existence terms related consumer behavior, clothing industry, and fashion industry, which underlines dimensions behavior and sectors industry that becomes background from research this. This pattern reflect approach integrated between fields in study slow fashion, which includes aspect social, environmental, economic, and psychological consumers.



**Figure 9. Co-authorship Network**  
Source: VOSviewer

After mapping the thematic structure through keyword networks, the next analysis focuses on the social dimension of scientific production, namely by mapping collaborations between authors. The Co-authorship Network in Figure 9 illustrates how collaborative relationships between researchers are formed and shape the structure of scientific networks in the study of slow fashion and sustainable consumer behavior. This explain structure connection scientific through frequency and strength collaboration between individual. Visible that Ko Eunju become actor central in network this, with extensive connections to various researchers such as Jeong Dayun, Song Sanga, Min Kong Hyun, and Mattila Pekka, reflect role key as connector cross clusters and discipline. In addition to clusters main, there is several sub-networks collaborative such as those involving Han Jinghe, Kim Dong Hyun, and Lee Eun-Ju, forming community more researchers concentrated in a way thematic and geographical. Cluster This tend show close and repeated collaboration in publication together, signifying group research or institutions consistent produce literature in field This.

Interesting things found in other clusters such as existence collaboration between Conroy Denise, Seo Yuri, and Fifita Liliasiame ME, which shows existence contribution from the region or different institutions, enriching network This in a way geographical and thematic. Patterns the indicates that collaboration in studies slow fashion No only limited in scope national or institutions single, but has develop to realm international and involving various realm scientific findings this also underlines role important network academic in expand coverage influence, shaping community global research, as well as push integration perspective cross culture and discipline for respond complexity issue sustainability in industry fashion.

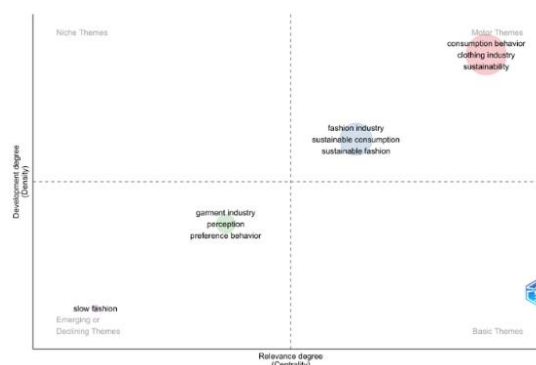
### Research Gaps and Future Research Directions

Although trend literature show improvement significant in studies about slow fashion and behavior consumer sustainable, results bibliometrics this also reveals existence a number of gap research that can made into runway development study to in front of him. In general, partial big study Still focused on approach consumer from individual perspectives, such as awareness, attitude, and intention buy. Meanwhile that, in dimension structural and contextual, such as influence norm social, infrastructure recycling repeat, and policy public in support practice fashion sustainable Still relatively not enough get attention. This is signify the need expansion a more approach systemic and holistic so that it can reflect complexity ecosystem fashion sustainable in a way more intact.

In addition, some big studies Still concentrated in developed countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Korea. Meanwhile, contribution from developing countries that have dynamics consumption different as well as challenge distinctive structural and cultural characteristics Still relatively limited. In fact, in global context, practice sustainability often grows from initiative community, such as thrifting, regeneration textiles local, or business small based eco-fashion, which plays a role as an adaptive strategy to pressure industry fast fashion. Practices This reflect form sustainability rooted in conditions socio-economic local and not always standardized by models from developed countries. Unfortunately, this approach like This Still seldom made into object study in -depth scientific.

Expand focus research to the Global South region or developing countries can open room for explore more alternative models contextual, as well as enrich literature with more perspective diverse and inclusive. In addition to supporting development theory cross culture, approach this also contributes direct to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 12 concerning responsible consumption and production answer and SDG 8 which emphasizes growth economy inclusive and employment worthy. With Thus, integration a more global perspective evenly become important in push transformation industry fashion going to the right direction sustainable and fair in a way social.

Visual findings of the thematic map in Figure 10 support narrative the with map various theme in literature based on level relevance (centrality) and depth development (density). Visible that theme such as sustainability, clothing industry, and consumption behavior is at in quadrant right above (motor themes), indicating that all three is topic the main thing that is not only relevant, but also has develop in a way substantial in discourse academic. On the other hand, the theme like slow fashion appears in the quadrant left below (emerging or declining themes), which indicates that topic This Still in stage beginning development or even start decrease attention his research. This is become signal important for researchers for dig return issues fundamental in movement slow fashion, good from aspect theoretical, practical social, as well as Power pull consumers.



**Figure 10. Thematic Map**  
Source: R-Studio Biblioshiny

As for the theme like garment industry, perception, and preference behavior is in the quadrant left lower with level development low, but still own potential. For investigated more carry on as part from the agenda of forming behavioral models more sustainable complex. Themes this also reflects potential integration between dimensions cognitive and structural in influence decision consumption. This thematic map become guide strategic in identify worthy theme developed more further research in the field. This No only develop in a way quantitative, but also relevant in a way social and impactful real.

From the side methodology, approach quantitative still dominate, whereas study qualitative or mixed-method that explores narrative consumer, meaning symbolic clothes, as well as dynamics identity in consumption sustainable is still very limited. Studies ethnography, netnography (eg. through community thrifting on social media), or longitudinal tracking on change style life consumer can give outlook more deep towards the adoption process mark slow fashion. Another issue that has not been lots explored is integration digital technology and sustainability in fashion, such as use blockchain for transparency chain supply, influence influencer to perception ethical clothing, or potential of AI in personalization consumption fashion friendly environment.

On the other hand, it is also important to develop framework capable evaluative measure impact real from communication strategy or education-based sustainability to change behavior term long. This is become crucial in bridge gap between intentions and actions real consumers. In general overall, chances research upcoming open width in various line: from enrichment theory cross discipline, expansion context geographical and social, exploration studies case local, up to utilization approach technology for support transformation industry more fashion fair, transparent and sustainable.

## CONCLUSION

Study This give mapping comprehensive on development literature about slow fashion and behavior consumer sustainable through approach bibliometrics against 137 documents published scientific papers during period 2014 to quarter first 2025. Analysis done with utilizing two devices main, namely Biblioshiny (RStudio) for produce statistics descriptive and maps thematic, as well as VOSviewer for visualize keyword networks and collaboration author. Study results show that in One decade lastly, attention academic to issue This increase significant, good from aspect amount publication, diversity topics, collaboration between authors, as well as country and journal contributions main. Dominance theme like sustainability, consumer behavior, and fashion industry confirm that slow fashion has become topic intersecting multidisciplinary close with aspect social, environmental, and economic.

Although thus, the analysis also revealed existence a number of gap research that is still ongoing open. Literature moment This tend focuses on the individual perspective of consumers, while dimensions structural and contextual, such as policies, norms social and infrastructure sustainability, still not enough explored. Inequality geographically also visible, with contributions that are still concentrated in developed countries, even though practice contextual sustainability Lots developing in the Global South. In addition, the approach dominant methodology Still nature quantitative, so that needed more Lots studies qualitative and mixed-method for dig meaning symbolic, identity, and the narrative behind decision consumption sustainable.

Visualization thematic map indicates that topic slow fashion moment This be in position emerging themes but not yet fully ripe, signifying potential research a big continuation. Themes like perception, preference consumers and industry garments are still develop and can reviewed more deep, especially in relation with digital technology, the influence of social media, and transition going to economy circular. In a overall, results study This No only enrich understanding to landscape scientific slow fashion, but also provides directions strategic for

researchers and practitioners in support transformation industry more global fashion fair, ethical and sustainable.

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